Designed to impress you

You don't pick up the European Yacht of the Year Award for nothing, but **Duncan Kent** was keen to try her out and discover just what it was that had won the judges over. in doing so, he found a well mannered boat with some good interior design features as well.

Established in 1990, family-owned and run Delphia Yachts started by building Sportina trailer sailers and one or two other small cruisers at its yard just outside Olecko in Poland. In 1999 it completely rebuilt its production facilities and launched a brand new range of Delphia performance cruisers. Having now grown into one of the largest boat builders in Poland, it now produces around 500 of its 24ft, 29ft, 33ft, 37ft and 40ft sailing cruisers for export worldwide every year, as well as continuing to build a further 2,000 or so of its trailer sailers, together with the Quicksilver and Arvor motorboat range.

The Delphia 33, recently named European Boat of the Year 2007-8, is a mid-range, Category A (Ocean) cruiser that slots neatly between the company's 29ft starter boat and the larger 37-footer, providing an ideal platform for those wishing to cruise offshore as well as take shorter trips along the coast. Her fractional rig is easily handled, yet she is a sprightly performer under sail and a doddle to manoeuvre under power – even in the tight confines of a modern marina.

She also has comfortable accommodation with a minimum of 1.83m/6ft headroom and six berths in two double cabins plus saloon. Her standard spec also includes many of the features usually found as options.

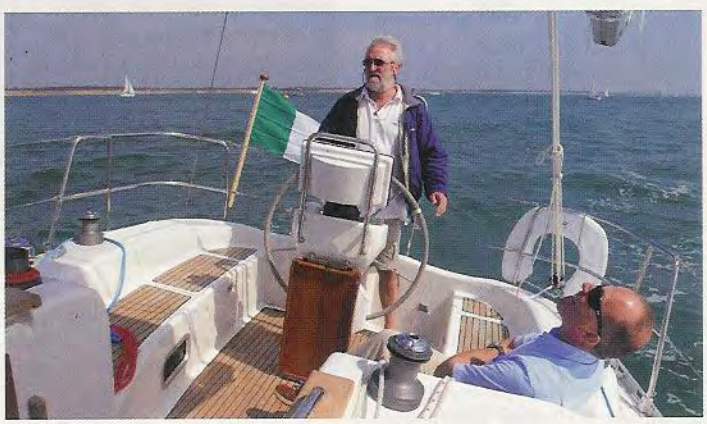
All Delphias are built to exacting Germanischer Lloyd's quality standards. They are conventionally laid up by hand using a solid polyester laminate below the waterline, with double the thickness around the keel area. The topsides, deck and superstructure are made from an Airex foam-cored composite for weight reduction and sound insulation.

Down below

Her accommodation is surprisingly spacious for a 33-footer and would be ideal for a couple with guests or young children on holiday. She has two double cabins, one aft and one forward, both of which have generously dimensioned berths that would comfortably accommodate large adults.

Her saloon has 1.92m/6ft 3in headroom at the foot of the steps, dropping just a little going forward. The mahogany woodwork is darker than in many new boats, but with the abundant light entering the large portlights it looks warm rather than gloomy. The quality of joinery is very good, with many trims being crafted from single pieces of solid wood to lessen the number of visible joints.

Rather than offer a twin after cabin model by squeezing the heads into the main cabin, Delphia has sensibly opted to install a roomy heads and shower where the second after cabin might have gone. To my mind this really opens the boat up, leaving you with almost as much living space as many 36ft+ boats with twin cabins aft. For those that are happy with just two double cabins this is a commendably sensible use of space and frees up enough room in the main cabin to allow for a proper navigation station.



Left: The Delphia 33 slots neatly between the 29ft and 37ft models and is easily large enough to be a proper offshore cruising yacht. She points well, offers a comfortable ride and gives a good turn of speed. Above: Her smart-looking cockpit is inlaid with teak and is wide enough for easy access around the wheel. It needs a foot bar, however, as the seats are too far apart for bracing against.

The after cabin is on the starboard side, but spreads across the boat beyond the centreline, making the berth a huge 2.10m/6ft 10½in long by 1.75m/5ft 9in wide. The only downside is the clearance above the inboard side, which at just 0.36m/1ft 2in under the cockpit well might prevent a large adult from sleeping on their side. Headroom in the dressing area is 1.83m/6ft and there are two opening ports – one inboard and one outboard – to allow a good circulation of air. Stowage is good in a hanging locker, shelves and cave lockers, but most of the space beneath the berth is taken up with the batteries and fuel tank.

The heads again boasts 1.83m/6ft headroom and has plenty of elbow swinging room, but on our boat the toilet impinged a little on the showering space. Mounting it just a few inches further aft would solve the problem. The compartment is fully moulded/lined, so it's easy to keep clean and there's a short hanging rail for oilskins behind the loo. Pressurised hot water is standard and an opening port provides light and ventilation.

Forward of the heads is the navigation station with its own seat, large instrument console and comprehensive electrical switch panel with multi-function gauge that gives tank levels and battery condition. The hollow seat is ideal for the bosun's stores or flares and grab bag and there's a decent size chart table with stowage under for charts. A few books can be kept in

Above: Her saloon is well arranged, surprisingly spacious and really quite cosy. The quality of woodwork and joinery is exceptionally good. Below: For a 33ft boat, having a dedicated, forward-facing navigation area is rare and a strong feature for those wanting to cruise offshore.

the adjacent bin and there's even a tray for pencils etc. A red/white light is also provided.

Opposite is an L-shaped galley, which is well enough equipped for long term cruising, including a fully gimballed two-ring cooker/oven, twin stainless sinks, compressor driven fridge, Corian worktop and plenty of partitioned stowage in drawers and lockers for cutlery, crockery and foodstuffs. A fluorescent light is mounted under the side deck to illuminate the worktop without shadows.

Her saloon has seating for six, four to port and two to starboard. The port settee has a return forward and can be converted to a 2.05m/6ft 9in L x 1.20m/4ft double berth using an optional seatback infill if required. As standard it makes a wide single sea berth measuring 0.86m/2ft 10in wide and the seatback can be hinged up to stow bedding etc behind it.

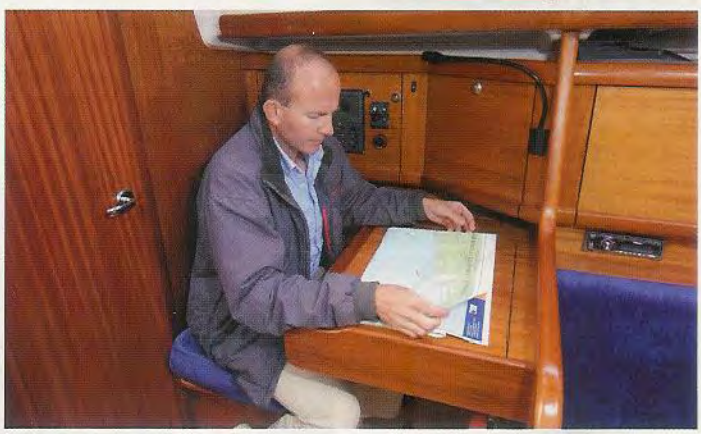
The table is solid wood with a central bottle store and a waste bin drawer aft. Although it is sturdily fixed down to the cabin sole, simply undoing two locks in the sole board allows it to be tilted to one side, revealing a section of the bilge some 1.50m/5ft long.

The settee to starboard is much shorter and has a handy cabinet at the forward end. Stowage is good, with two deep, closing lockers and a slim bookshelf each side and there is a fiddled shelf all round for bits and bobs.

Handholds for getting about below at sea are well positioned and plentiful. There's a solid, full-length wooden rail each side just below the portlights and two grabs on the top edges of the half bulkheads. Two small and one large hatch in the coachroof allow plenty of air to circulate through the saloon.

You step down a couple of inches into the forecabin, which puts the headroom back up to 1.90m/6ft 3in. As standard, the berth is almost a vee, but without an infill. This creates two roomy berths measuring 2.10m/6ft 10½in long x 0.60m/2ft wide, with the foot reducing to 0.53m/1ft 9in wide across both. The addition of an infill would make it 1.95m/6ft 5in across the top, although this has yet to become an option. There is a spacious dressing area with a seat and plenty of clothes stowage in two tall lockers and two further bins under the berth. The water tank is housed in the forward section, underneath the berth and there's an access panel for the windlass motor and electrics forward.

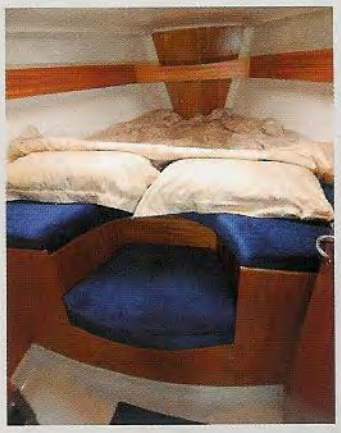
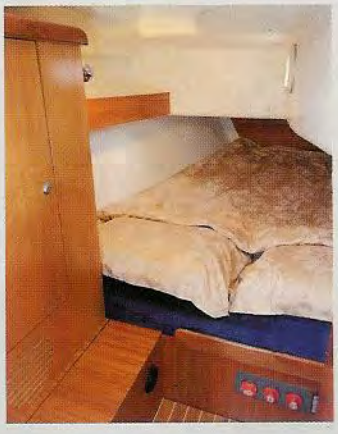
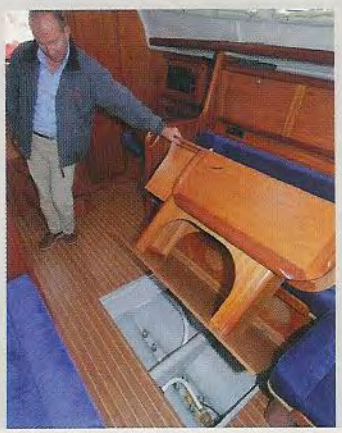
The engine is simple to reach all round and to service by lifting off the steps in several small sections and access to the saildrive is from under the aft berth.



On deck

Simple, safe sailing is always made easier when the deck is well designed and functional – and the Delphia's deck is just that. She has a modern, stylishly shaped coachroof that blends into the foredeck without a step. Her side decks are wide, her genoa tracks mounted well inboard and the moulded non-slip is reasonably grippy, so getting about under way is undemanding.

Her cockpit is teak inlaid as standard and quite wide – too wide, in fact, to allow easy bracing on the seat opposite. I would recommend a foot bar be ordered as the table is a folding type hung from the pedestal and provides no support. That said, the ample distance between seats allows easy access around the wheel without having to climb over. The Lewmar 32ST genoa winches are on the cockpit coamings and there are two decent size self-tailing 16ST halyard winches on the coachroof to handle all the sail controls that are fed aft through two banks of five clutches, including those from the mainsheet traveller just forward of the large sprayhood. A neat row of rope ties on the bulkhead stops excess lines from creating a hazard.

Top (clockwise from top left): A good size galley that is well equipped for cruising; the forecabin is spacious, but the berth needs an infill; the after cabin berth is wider than the centreline; her deck is logically laid out and easy to negotiate at sea; her wheel is small enough to allow the helmsman to walk around it without climbing over the seats; good size heads, although the loo could do with moving aft a tad; simple, but sensible bilge access.
Above (from left): Her cockpit is large enough for entertaining, but too wide to brace against the seats under way; an inboard genoa track gives her a nice tight sheeting angle and her simple standing rigging and good handholds makes deck access safe and easy; the fold down twin-leaf cockpit table is large enough for four to dine off; good protection from the large sprayhood; two powerful, self-tailing winches, quality clutches and rope ties make sail control a doddle.

A full depth locker to port takes a huge amount of gear without any bother, but I would be tempted to build some sort of box around the calorifier to protect it before dropping the kedge onto it. The toilet outlet seacock is also at the bottom, but can be accessed through a panel in the heads as well. To starboard is a shallow locker, which has a door through to a two-bottle gas locker. The problem here, however, is that you will have to virtually empty the »

Specs and Info

LOA	9.95m	32ft 8in
Beam	3.47m	11ft 5in
Draught (shoal/deep)	1.80m	5ft 11in
Displacement	5,200kg	11,440lb
Ballast	1,330kg	2,926lb
Sail Area	50.30m²	540ft²
Fuel	125ltr	27.5gal
Water	210ltr	46.25gal
Berths	5-6	
Engine	20hp Volvo D1-20 Saildrive	
RCD category	A-Ocean	

Designer Andrerzej Skrzat
Builder Delphia Yachts, Poland
UK main agent Delphia Yachts UK 01489 482045
www.delphiayachts.co.uk
Price from £69,275 including UK delivery (not commissioning).
Price includes: White hull, cast iron keel, 2-bladed fixed propeller, engine panel, mechanical Rodkicker, gas oven, holding tank, pressurised hot water, fridge, Raymarine ST60 Tri-Data (log/speed/depth), semi-battened mainsail, 115 per cent genoa, masthead tricolour/anchor light, two batteries with VSR isolator, electric bilge pump.
Popular options: Lead keel £3,105, 30hp engine upgrade £1,459, 2-bladed folding propeller £635, heating £2,135, in-mast furling £1,249, fully-battened mainsail £739, genoa UV strip £165, lazyjacks and bag £497, electric windlass £895, anchor and 40m chain £370, sprayhood £849, tiller £495, cockpit table £498, cockpit shower £399, saloon double £388, autopilot £1,198.

Verdict

The Delphia 33 is a very competent performer without being hard to handle or at all twitchy. She is stiff, well balanced and pretty quick for her size, but also manages to give a comfortable ride along the way. Below decks she has the accommodation of a much larger boat and has everything a small family might need during an extended spell on board.

For

- Well balanced and easily handled under sail
- Comfortable and spacious accommodation
- High standard specification

Against

- Awkward gas locker access
- Slippery coaming tops forward of the winches
- An infill in the forward berth would provide a more conventional vee berth

locker to swing the gas locker door open, so a gas solenoid valve might be a good investment.

The transom is accessed via one of two gates and there are steps down to the narrow, teak inset bathing platform. The ladder is a good length (quite rare these days) and the central stern light support makes a sturdy handhold when boarding. A hot water deck shower is standard.

Rig and sails

She has the now familiar 7/8ths fractional rig using a deck-stepped Selden mast with twin, seriously swept spreaders and supported by discontinuous cap and intermediate shrouds with single lowers. Her backstay splits well above the cockpit and can have an optional rope tackle adjuster on one side. A mechanical Selden Rodkicker supports the boom, controlled by a rope kicking strap.

The standard mainsail is semi-battened with two cockpit-led, single-line reefs and her 115 per cent genoa is on a Profurl furler.

Under way

As with her sisterships, the Delphia 33 has a deep, bulbed keel to keep the ballast down low and a deep spade rudder for maximum grip on the water. Her shape is modern, with vertical ends and relatively shallow underwater sections, but she is by no means a partcicularly extreme design.

We set sail from Warsash on the Hamble River on a bright summer's day with a pleasant F3-4 blowing offshore. As soon as we had motored out into the Solent to pick up the best of the wind we hoisted full sail and off she went. Her sail plan is quite high aspect, which means sail handling is less strenuous and her deep, bulbed keel means she is a stiff boat. She's also quick, thanks to a long waterline, and nicely balanced. Little effort is required on the wheel, regardless of gusts, but her rod linkage returns just enough feel to the helm. She tacks quickly and quietly through 85° – a one-person job providing you don't let her whip around too quickly – and she's soon accelerating back up to speed on her new course.

Hard on the wind, we easily made 6.2kn and when we freed her off a little this picked up to 6.8kn with 15kn or so of wind across the deck. On a reach she settled in to a steady 6.4kn jaunt, taking the light chop in her stride and even broad reaching she still took us through the water at a creditable 5.4kn. Goose winging was a little tricky, thanks to the severely swept spreaders, but we managed a reasonable 5kn dead downwind and only lost it when the wash from a large motorboat hit us beam on.

I enjoyed sailing the Delphia 33 – as indeed I have the previous models. She's quick, easy and great fun to sail.

When we sailed the 40 last year she performed admirably in a F6 with big seas and I have no reason to doubt this 33 would be equally steadfast in the rough.

Insurance Price Guide
Delphia 33
Value £69,000: £313.30 Premium, £150 Excess
Comprehensive insurance includes: £3,000,000 Third Party Indemnity and Legal Protection with all taxes paid. Cruising range: UK coastal and inland waters extended to include Continental waters Elbe to La Rochelle.
Premium is representative example of what it would cost assuming maximum no claims bonus has been earned and that the mooring is acceptable to the underwriters.
For a personal quotation, call 0800 018 0012
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