

# PARAGON

## 31 FLYBRIDGE

Greg Copp considers the reborn 31 Flybridge from Paragon Yachts - an exclusive boat that beckons to be driven hard in big seas ...







The question you may be asking is why we are featuring a boat that first hit the water 12 years ago. Two reasons: firstly, it has been reborn in a revised form; and secondly, it is such a superb sea boat that getting an opportunity to try this new model can't be ignored. If you are not familiar with the Paragon 31, it comes from a Swedish yard, whose purist approach to design and construction is legendary across just the two hull sizes they build. The 31 comes in Flybridge and Cabin form, while the 25 comes in Open and Cabin versions. Such a small line-up is unusual, but this is a company very focused on its specific skill set.

When it was launched in 2009, the Paragon 31 had a hefty price tag, and in cost terms it still compares to quite a few 40-footers. However, this is a boat that appeals to a skipper who knows he is buying into a niche sector, for which inevitably there is a price to be paid and a reward to be had. Though it has

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quite a few very capable close rivals, it does have a character all of its own.

The new Paragon 31 Flybridge and 31 Cabin have had a few changes. The foam-filled collar, which gave it a 'RIB-like appearance', has now been replaced by a chunky rubbing strake. The collar might have given

it some extra buoyancy on the extremities of the hull, but did it really need it? The fold-out windlass has gone. This gave the boat a super-clean look, having no visible anchor, but it was a bit of a handful to get into action when needed. Now it has that through-stem design, enabling the claw anchor

to poke discreetly out of the bow ready for use. There is now a handy cockpit storage locker across the back of the wheelhouse, providing a step up to the flybridge. With a closer focus on the non-commercial aspect of this boat, Paragon have seen fit to now provide two bench seats down each side of the cockpit,

Forward visibility is excellent



with a small drop-in teak table facing the port seat. It has lost the rather handy quick-access hatch to the aft cabin on the back of the wheelhouse, but you forget this loss when you lift the engine hatch.

The first-generation 31s had the option of either a single 330/350/370hp Volvo D6 on a DPH duo-prop sterndrive or twin 220hp Volvo D3s on duo-props. Now the sensible single option is a 400hp

**... what really gives this boat its appeal is the rush it provides driving hard in rough weather.**

or 440hp D6 on the latest DPI sterndrive, and the twin set-up is either twin 300hp or twin 320hp D4s on DPIs. Many will favour the single D6 for the lower running costs, while still enjoying a near 40-knot top speed. However, the twin 320hp D4s, as fitted to our test boat, really do this boat justice. Apart from the mid-Channel security of two engines, its twin-engine manoeuvrability is enhanced by the optional sterndrive joystick. This new twin D4 engine option is an improvement over the previous D3s, as these did not provide much of a performance increase over a single 370hp D6. As is to be expected of this brand, the standard of engineering in the engine bay is outstanding. The twin cockpit hatches rise up on substantial gas struts, revealing plenty of soundproofing on the undersides. Though engine access in front of the engines is good, and all service items come easily to hand, the twin-engine installation does make full use of the beam available to fit in two D4s. On the other hand, one D6 in this compartment enjoys bags of space.

The lower helm has perfect ergonomics with throttles and wheel where you want them, complemented by adjustable bucket seats. There is a folding armrest to accommodate the joystick, which folds up out of the way when you want to exit the starboard side door. Apart from across the stern, where the wheelhouse design reduces window space, visibility is great. The wrap-around windscreen



1. Sensibly wide side doors. 2. The galley is also available with a ceramic gas hob. 3. Different table options are on offer. 4. The wheelhouse table slides up when out of use.





provides a fantastic forward view, and the abundance of windows on either beam, plus a sunroof, provide plenty of natural light. The twin side doors are suitably wide - crucial if you intend to go single-crewed. In terms of internal seating, taking into consideration the rear bench seat, five is the comfortable limit if you are planning on covering any

distance. The pole-mounted table cleverly slides up into the ceiling when not in use.

At a glance, you could easily think this boat has nothing more to offer below than a convertible dinette. However, it actually manages to pack in five berths. Three berths are located in an aft cabin - one twin to port and one single starboard - accessed through a lift-up section in the saloon seating. There is also a reasonable degree of storage, and over 6ft of headroom between the beds. It manages this by locating the feet of both beds under the

**it is constructed with a zero-compromise approach, reflected in its solid construction and substantial price tag.**

mouldings of the aft saloon seats. A convertible dinette is located in the forward cabin, providing a second double bed if you need it, though headroom here is limited to 5ft 6in. The galley, equipped with a gas ceramic hob, 49L fridge and a sink, sits to port just aft of the dinette. Opposite there is a sensibly sized heads compartment with shower - and like the galley it has full standing headroom. This accommodation design, placing the cabins at either end of the saloon, works well in terms of privacy.

Weather permitting, the flybridge/

coachroof helm will always be a favourite. It is a simple two-seat set-up and, not surprisingly, limited in terms of space. However, the dash has enough room for a large plotter, a few repeaters and on the test boat a second joystick. It is a quick

two steps up, courtesy of the cockpit locker and one recessed step. This has the advantage of providing that perfect all-round view, while being quick to descend from when berthing.

In typical Scandinavian style, the



A tall hanging locker sits in the aft cabin.



The forward dinette converts to a double v-berth.

**Built on a rakish deep-vee hull, the steering is superbly responsive, and with a transom deadrise angle of 24.5 degrees, this boat enjoys incredible angles of heel in the turns.**

Paragon 31 is hugely practical both inside and out. Deck access does not get much better for a boat this size. Wide side decks, enclosed by mini bulwarks topped by sturdy guard rails, make fender duties a breeze, and the bulwarks are just the right height for stepping ashore. Though reasonably specified in standard form, including a Sleipner bow thruster, Eberspacher heating and a 12in Simrad NSS evo3, there are a few options to take note of. If you want a second set of electronics up top and a VHF, these are extra, as are radar, AIS and external teak decking - to name just some of the 'tempting items' on offer. One extra

that our boat had over standard trim tabs is a Humphree Interceptor X-450 auto trim and auto list system. This is a great piece of kit - I just won't mention the price.

#### Driving the Paragon 31

If you have spent your boating career in a RIB or a sports boat, the Paragon 31 will certainly appeal, since it drives like a perfectly balanced sports boat. Having twin 320hp D4s certainly puts a sting in the tail, as the response to the throttle is impressive. She is off past 30 knots before you realise it, and you have to think about keeping the boat down to its slow cruising speed of 28 knots if you want maximum economy. More realistically, the low-to mid-30s is a speed most skippers will feel inclined to sit at, and the Paragon has no problems hitting just over 40 knots with a bit of trim out on the sterndrives.

Built on a rakish deep-vee hull, the steering is superbly responsive, and with a transom deadrise angle of 24.5 degrees, this boat enjoys incredible angles of heel in the turns. If you are sitting in



Top. Full standing headroom in the heads. For a 31 footer the cockpit is big.



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#### SPECIFICATIONS

**Length overall:** 10.59m (31ft 07in)

**Beam:** 3.38m (11ft 03in)

**Draught:** 1.18m (3ft 10in)

**Displacement:** 6.2 tonnes (light - single D6)

**Transom deadrise:** 24.5 degrees

**RCD category:** B for 8

**Fuel capacity:** 450L (100 gal)

**Fuel capacity optional:** 650L (143 gal)

**Water capacity:** 200L (44 gal)

**Engine options:** Single Volvo D6 - 400hp or 440hp on duo-prop DPI sterndrives

**Twin Volvo D4** - 300hp or 320hp on duo-prop DPI sterndrives

**Cruising range:** 220 miles with a 20% reserve at 28 knots - 143-gallon fuel capacity

**Performance:** 40.6 knots (2-way average), 50% fuel, crew 1

#### PRICE

**From:** £345,000 (inc. VAT)

**As tested:** £430,000 (inc. VAT)

#### CONTACT

[www.offshorepowerboats.co.uk](http://www.offshorepowerboats.co.uk)





its flybridge, it takes a moment or two to adjust to the reality of the situation, and on occasions you will feel that you can reach out and touch the water. Regardless, it always hangs on, never losing its grip. The ride is deceptively super-smooth, even in the confused waters in the western approaches to the Solent. Getting the boat to complain is easier said than done, as we found out off the Needles. Coming down off big waves, the bow will pick up again very quickly, and

with a degree of composure that not many 31-footers are capable of. Its natural fore and aft trim is good – hence it starts to plane at 12 knots, and it cuts with a precision that you would simply not expect from a 31ft boat with an 11ft beam. The sharp transom deadrise angle migrates to a suitably sharp forefoot, which also provides a fairly dry ride, providing you trim out the sterndrive just enough for a bit of bow lift. Any water that does make it past the spray rails then comes



The aft cabin - if you did not know you would never guess its existence.

up against the thick rubbing strake that runs around the hull topsides. Even when driving up top where this white-knuckle ride is really enjoyed, you are in little doubt about how sure-footed this boat is.

**Verdict**

Like many Scandinavian boats, the Paragon is built to be used in a variety of weather conditions, often out of necessity. Consequently, it is constructed with a zero-compromise approach, reflected in its solid build and substantial price tag. Though serving plenty of commercial skippers, it still has a high degree of fit and finish, as well as an extensive list of features. However, what really gives this boat its appeal is the rush it provides driving hard in rough weather. ■

**WHAT WE THOUGHT**

**FOR**

- ▲ Perfectly poised steering
- ▲ Soft-riding hull
- ▲ Outstanding seakeeping
- ▲ Good performance
- ▲ Very solid build quality
- ▲ Safety/practicality

**AGAINST**

- ▼ Price – though some will argue you get what you pay for
- ▼ Quite a few extras, including a VHF set, 12kg anchor and shore power.



**PERFORMANCE**

Twin 320hp Volvo D4s on DPI duo-prop sterndrives (Volvo fuel flow meter)

RPM	Speed (knots)	LPH	Fuel consumption (nmpg)
1500	5.6	20.2	1.3
2000	11.0	44.0	1.1
2500	19.1	53.2	1.6
3000	28.2	84.0	1.5
3500	36.3	127.0	1.3
3600 (wot)	40.6	142.1	1.3