



# True Colors

Howard Custom Boats' 28 Sport Deck excels when the water gets rough.

A true test of any boat is when water conditions are at their roughest. That's the position we found ourselves in when taking the 28 Sport Deck out for an evaluation. A strong wind had turned the water into mush on the Colorado River, and what few boats were left on the river were heading in for the day.

There we were, having a blast as we tried to wring every bit of speed from the catamaran. Whether it was sidewinds or wind-blown rollers, nothing seemed to disturb the 28 Sport Deck.

"This is the sloppiest I've seen it in Parker (Ariz.) and this boat just motors right past it," said test driver John Tomlinson.

Howard equipped the deck boat with an 800-horsepower engine from Teague Custom Marine. On the business end was a Teague Platinum XR drive with a 32"-pitch Bravo One propeller.

The package was good for 101.3 mph at 5,600 rpm, an impressive number for a single-engine catamaran. In better conditions, our lead test driver has gotten 104 mph on GPS.

The 28-footer got on plane in 3.9 seconds and in 15 seconds it was cruising at 75 mph with the engine turning a comfortable 4,500 rpm. In what calm water we could find, the deck boat shot from 30 to 50 mph in 3.8 seconds and took 6.7 seconds to go from 40 to 70 mph. While running some of the drills, a strong wind gust would come up and the 28 Sport Deck ran straight and true.

Howard set up the boat with individual bucket seats on billet bases for the driver and co-pilot. If you can't get one of those spots, there's nothing wrong with either the L-shape rear bench or the facing lounges up front.

No doubt any performance boater will covet the driver's spot, though. Livorsi Marine provided the throttle and shifter as well as an assortment of gauges including a GPS speedometer and a depthfinder. Other notable features were a Sony remote to the left of the IMCO Marine tilt helm and a flip-up windscreen.

Over at the co-pilot's spot there was a glove box with a 12-volt receptacle inside. The lockers in front of the driver and observer were carpeted and could be used to stash gear or hold an extra cooler. Finding a spot to stash drinks and food won't be a problem on the 28 Sport Deck. Under every cushion of the L-shape lounge was a draining cooler.

The bow was a fiberglass platform done in nonskid with some slots to allow water and sand to drain below. A washdown nozzle was tucked away in a billet glove box. There also was a stereo remote from Access Technologies as well as another one on the transom.

Aft of the swim platform, Howard installed a couple of doors that slid on a track to help reduce the wind coming through the boat. The cockpit sole was finished in a gray carpet.

When the conditions were less than ideal, the 28 Sport Deck shined. There's no doubt that helps separate a boat from the pack. —GM P

From left: The fiberglass bow platform was covered in nonskid with slots for drainage. An 800 EFI engine from Teague Custom Marine provided the power for the well-handling deck-boat. There was plenty of stowage space on the boat, including a locker with a cooler in it.

Engine .....Teague Custom Marine 800 EFI  
Propeller .....Mercury Bravo One 15 1/4" x 32"  
Top speed .....101.3 mph at 5,600 rpm  
Price as tested .....\$174,245  
Contact .....661-257-9275, www.howardboats.com  
Additional test results on Page 108.

SPECIFICATIONS

