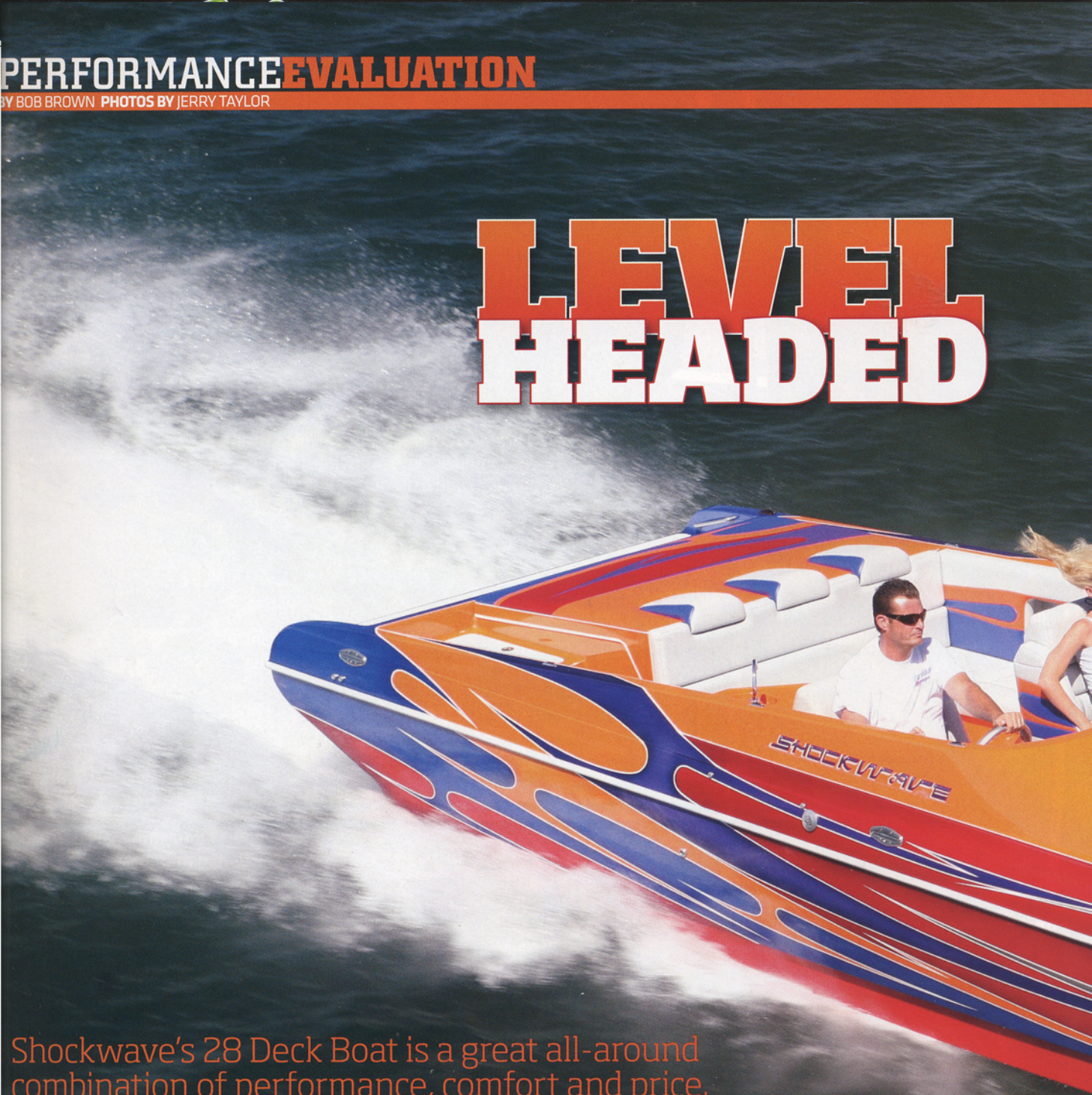
BY BOB BROWN **PHOTOS BY** JERRY TAYLOR

LEVEL HEADED



Shockwave's 28 Deck Boat is a great all-around combination of performance, comfort and price.

With many deckboats, there are multiple cockpit levels. Whether you step up or down from the dash console area to the aft or forward section, or vice versa, there are two problems with the staggered floors. One is that someone always seems to stumble when moving through the boat. Second, and more important, is that even with molded fiberglass liners, you can never get all the dirt out of the corners where the sole steps up or down. This is maddening to proud owners who want to keep their boats clean.

Shockwave eliminates that problem with its 28 Deck Boat by using a single-level cockpit sole from the bow seats to the aft bench. You can board with an armful of stuff without tripping and there aren't any corners where dirt can get trapped. Anal-retentive boat owners rejoice.

There's a lot more to like about this 28 Deck Boat, from the wild, four-color flaming graphics to the surplus of stowage space to the seating. It's everything you'd want in a deckboat, including the price. Let's take a closer look.

Entering the boat from the bow, there's a flat deck surface with an anchor locker that is higher than the cockpit level. It's a smart idea because it creates a natural recess for the bow seating and helps contain the little ones when the boat is moving.

Once you're in the cockpit, the long lounges on each side can accommodate a crowd if you sit facing across the boat. If there are fewer people on board, lean up against the angled backrest, put your feet on the forward cushions and say, "Aah." You can grab onto the stainless-steel bowrails that run up each side of the deck if the water gets bumpy. In a nice bit of custom craftsmanship, Shockwave incorporated the speakers into the upholstery. As you move aft through the boat, you see the integration.

Any deckboat worth consideration needs to have some serious stowage and our test model delivers with two huge in-sole lockers that are at least 4' long. One of our inspectors crawled down inside one, curled up and closed the hatch. That's spacious! Plus in the two dash consoles we found lockers that were so large some of our inspectors were calling them closets. After picking up the top gullwing hatches and opening the twin doors below, you can either crawl in and install some big plastic tubs for stowage or put a padded cushion in this area so kids can take a nap.

Shockwave is following the trend set by other deck builders by using an extra-large driver's seat to accommodate a wider variety of skippers. For the custom look, the seat is built on billet aluminum brackets. We found the same thing on the port side. There's also an extra-large glove box in the port dash. As we saw with other upscale deckboats, Shockwave molds the cup holders right into the deck for a high-quality look and feel.

At the helm, the Auto Meter Pro Comp gauges were decked out with satin faces and matched pewter bezels. Livorsi Marine's billet engine controls complimented the instruments perfectly. Just ahead on the starboard side of the dash is a mechanical trim indicator. IMCO hydraulic steering is capped with a tilt helm and color-matched steering wheel. In the starboard side walkway, a billet cover protects the stereo. White accessory switches from Carling are in two billet panels to the right of the wheel.

Just aft of the driver's seat is an entertainment center including a sink and small locker in the base that would be perfect for cleaning supplies. Abaft the port bucket, the area is open as you move aft to the three-person bench seat that's offset to the same side. The starboard passage to the stern remains open and there's a locker on the swim platform that's perfect for wet towlines. As on the bow, you step up to the walkway, which provides the same security for keeping people and gear aboard.

There's space for one person to lay out on top of the sunlounge or a couple can relax against the headrests and dangle their

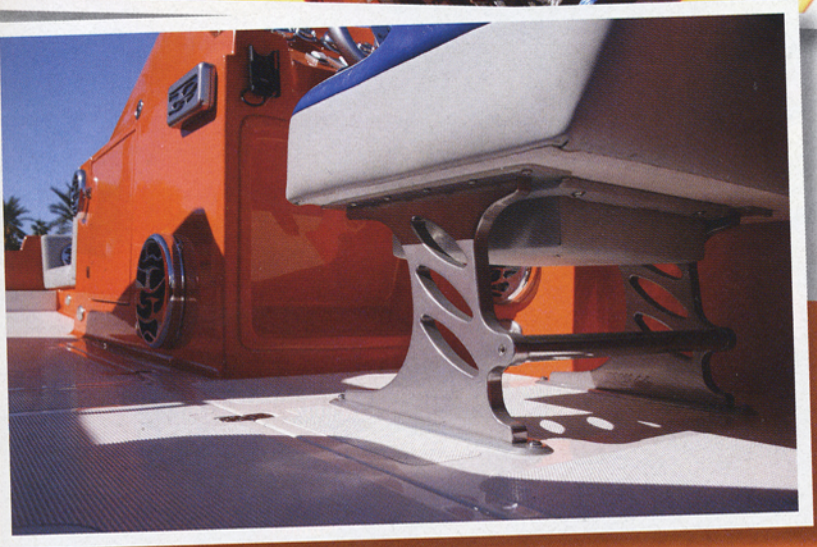
feet over the molded-in swim steps.

That hatch rises on Dana Marine scissor hinges to provide good access to the Mercury HP525 EFI. The engine is installed with stock mounts through-bolted to the stringers. For an impressive 80 mph package, we'd, however, opt in this case for a set of more rigid solid mounts. Shockwave did receive good marks from our dry land inspection team for its use of stainless steel cushioned Adel clamps for supporting the wire harnesses and cables. Very neat. Gelcoat work on the underside of the hatch looked great, as it did on the outside of the 28 Deck Boat. Shockwave constructs the boat with hand-applied laminates including vinylester resin, tri- and quad-directional fiberglass around a balsa core. An extruded plastic rubrail with a rubber insert protects those flaming graphics when the boat is at the docks. In addition to the bowrails, deck hardware included six pop-up cleats and billet fuel fills.

The proven laminate provided the 28 Deck Boat with a solid feeling when on the water. When you're coming on plane, be sure and trim the drive fully under to minimize bow rise.

The boat ran out to a top speed of 79.2 mph at 5400 rpm, which is actually a little above the 5250 rpm that the HP525 EFI's rev limiter is set at. Mid-range acceleration felt strong, and with any boat that runs 80 mph, we wouldn't have minded some wind deflectors for the driver and co-pilot.

Because Shockwave designs the 28 Deck Boat with a center pod that extends deeper than the outer sponsons, when the boat is up and running it will lean into turns a little more easily than a conventional tunnel. With the deeper center pod, Shockwave was smart to go with a 2" drive spacer to ensure that the propeller got a good efficient bite in clean water. At slower speeds, it started out like any other cat, turning flat, but at cruising and higher speeds, it transitioned easily into the corners, which makes the boat a good candidate for someone stepping out of a V-bottom and into an air-entrapment hull. And that single-level cockpit sole makes the 28 Deck Boat a good candidate for anyone who wants a family-friendly deckster that's easy to keep clean. HB



SPECIFICATIONS:

Test conditions: Calm
Centerline: 28'
Beam: 102"
Bottom: catamaran
Deadrise 13
Drivetrain Mercury Racing HP525 EFI/Bravo One XR
HP @ Prop 500
Overall weight 4,600 lbs.
Base price $90,000
Standard features: MerCruiser 496 MAG HO, 7-year hull warranty, Extreme tandem-axle trailer, two showers, through-transom exhaust, twin heavy-duty marine batteries, AM/FM/CD stereo w/6 speakers and wireless remote, interior lights, bimini top, boat cover, interior fans, full instrumentation, depthfinder, offshore-style controls.

Options on test boat: Upgrade to Mercury Racing HP525 EFI Bravo One XR ($1,4500), S-shaped exhaust pipes ($1,500), Upgrade to IMCO full hydraulic steering w/dual rams ($4,500), full fade paint job ($3,500), upgrade to Auto Meter gauges ($650), Dana drive shower ($225), transom-mounted trim switch ($135), upgrade to GPS speedometer ($550), trailer upgrade including LED lights, large step, drive guard, stainless-steel fenders and custom rims and tires ($5,850), boat tie downs ($135), trim indicator upgrade ($550), Dana hinges ($1,500), billet seat bases ($1,100), upgrade to billet controls ($550), sink w/freshwater tank ($1,200), two washdown stations ($850), AquaStep boarding ladder upgrades ($750), bimini top stripes ($180), Odyssey battery upgrade ($480), stereo upgrade ($4,250), Sirius radio upgrade ($250), iPod hookup and mount ($150), billet speaker covers and face plate ($1,200).

Price as tested $134,555

Top speed 79.2 mph at 5400 rpm

Shockwave Custom Boats
1800 Capital Street
Corona, CA 92880
(951) 898-9360
www.shockwaveboats.com