

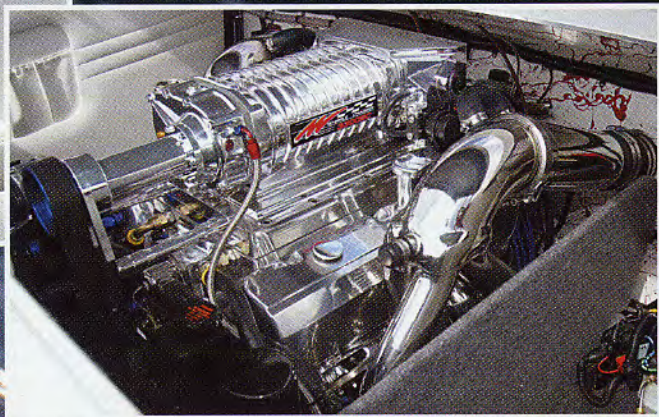


One might think, judging strictly by all of the hype and the boat-show bluster you see, that every innovative or interesting bit of tooling to emerge from the custom performance houses in the last decade has arrived with a set of sponsors carved therein. Boat a bit in Shockwave's 29-foot Magnatude, one of the new breed of streamlined vee-bottom bruisers, and you get a savory cutaway of the new vee-bottom reality—a realm that is every bit as impressive as its air-entrapping contemporaries.

Shockwave's own refined vision of this reality combines an inspired design, one that combines a very strong artistic personality with the exhilarating performance possibilities of an effective, drag-repelling step-bottomed vee. This potential was prudently navigated with the assistance of a 775-horsepower, Whipplecharged HP500, an HP500EFI that was surgically impacted by the installation of a set of a bigger Crane roller cam, CNC-modified, Dart aluminum heads and an intercooled, big-displacement 3.3-litre Whipple Charger system.

The engine, which reflected the same show-quality presentation as its fiberglass chassis, was a product of Gary Teague's Montclair-based GT Performance, an

2004 Evaluations Shockwave 29' Magnatude



accomplished and highly regarded performance shop that specializes in big-inch, fuel-injected and carbureted motors, a lot of them Whipped.

The blown, injected, 502-based HP transformed a beautifully finished, big-water, deep-cockpit family boat into a damned nice hot-rod that will thrill on command and do so reliably. The setup of this boat made it as delightful to drive on takeoff and low rpm as it was through the midrange and into the 80s, with eight pounds of boost at our immediate disposal.

We have been consistently impressed with Shockwave's prime-level finish quality virtually since the first day we drove one, and never has that production sheen been more apparent than within this very impressive, high-end, family lake rod. Shockwave held nothing back in their creation of a high-amperage water driver that was outfitted for high-intensity play.

That end point took legs



lends impressive substance to its \$78,000 base price.

This boat's makeover from stocker to stud began with a \$16,000 upgrade charge, from the base boat's 375-horse 496 Magnum/Bravo One to the HP500EFI/XZ-drive upgrade, an indulgence that embraces more than 100 additional horsepower, and which on its own will drive the Magnatude into the low 70s. That was the starting point for GT Performance's tier-two treatment and concurrent destruction of the factory warranty, a trade-off that returns 775 horsepower in the bargain.

When said and done, Teague's transformation tagged on another \$16,500, including the polishing.

Shockwave followed

four-blade. With just three hours logged on this setup before we got it, possibly it wasn't a big-enough-caliber spinner: We repeatedly encountered the rev limiter on our forays into the boat's upper-rpm spectrum, and there was definitely more to be found beyond the 81 mph we recorded. Of course, we're not sure you need it: Go too far beyond 80 in a vee-bottom, and the ride ceases to be an appropriate family activity. A big, artfully cut, very red powdercoated set of Dana tabs expanded the Shockwave's impressive baseline handling, integrating precision low-speed drivability and enhanced rough-water armor into its mix. Shockwave includes a set of Bennett tabs in its stock boat.

The Magnatude, second largest in the line behind Shockwave's 34-footer, rides on a big, deep vee-bottom with a piercingly sharp entry, which tapers to 24 degrees deadrise at the transom. This size class is supposed to wrap its occupants in a reassuring, safe-feeling environment, and that's exactly what the Shockwave does. The topside shape gracefully absorbs the design's impressive height, which creates the basis of one of sport boating's tallest, roomiest cabins. This is one cuddy cabin that will not be relegated to the role of a glorified storage cupboard.

Power is the ultimate source

through a firm, high-definition foundation.

High end from the start, the Shockwave compiles an impressive cache of standard features, a list that extends far beyond the accepted "standards." In building every one so equipped, as a starting point, Shockwave assures a certain baseline standard and also

up a prudent \$4,500 upgrade to dual-ram external steering and full-hydraulic components to the helm, using proven pieces from WPM. The HP comes with solid motor mounts.

The anchor player in this hard-hitting combination was a lab-finished 30-inch Bravo

of truth: Nothing will reveal a design's inherent characteristics, good or bad, with more clarity than a good hot-rod motor. If you get the impression so far that our drivers liked this boat, you're right; the degree of this hull's positive response to modified power, however, is best illustrated in its acceleration data. The Magnatude was quicker than 20 of the 24 boats tested at this year's trials from zero to 50 and was the quickest single-engine vee at this year's tests. It was sixth quickest from 40 to 60 mph, perhaps the most impressive statistic of all, given the boat's 5,000 pounds and 90-plus-gallon fuel load and vee cut. A dialed, high-powered cat will slaughter most vee-bottoms from 40 to 60 miles an hour—this Shockwave was nobody's prey in that range. The satisfying throttle play was only one element of what made the boat a very impressive drive.

One of the keys to Shockwave's impressive progress in just four years in business is its consistent fiberglass work, very much in evidence in the most challenging boat in the company's lineup. The company gelcoaters were clearly up to the occasion, articulating the boat's natural lines and engulfing the boat's forward quarters with a flamed sunrise. The design was delineated with clean, blue pin play, and the fades were pulled off neatly.

White powdercoated railing played accent to the brilliant bow colors and also to the interior: The drop-through bolsters were mounted to white rail hardware as well. Most of the boat's standard issue Dana billet, however, was powdercoated in the same brilliant red. Four pop-up deck cleats are standard. A bolt-on fiberglass swim step is bolted up with powdercoated billet brackets, and a drop-down ladder is standard.

ON BOARD

On board, the Magnatude feels like its name sounds. This is a big, deep, roomy vee-bot-

tom boat that has many characteristics of an offshore machine, aside from its piercing 24-degree bottom. Breakaway bolster seats are standard, and you can easily drive this boat seated or standing. Footrests are tooled into the dash. The Magnatude's deck incorporates a large crown, further enhancing a secure feel brought on by a lot of freeboard and a deep cockpit. This is one of the bigger boats, in every meaningful way, in this size class. Unlike the biggest, deepest, roomiest performance cruiser of yesteryear, however, the Shockwave retains its sport-boat feel.

Running the blower setup necessitated the addition of blower boost and fuel-pressure gauges, requiring a move from the standard Shockwave Beedee gauges, which don't offer these instruments. Instead, the boat featured a set of Autometer Pro Comp gauges, including a performance-verifying GPS system, entailing a \$790 upgrade. They were

framed in two-tone bezels and elevated to a convenient sight angle. An oversized grab rail anchored into the dash, and a glove box is also standard.

Shockwave's starter boat creates an enviable baseline. Included in the mix: Zero Effort offshore controls, interior lighting, Pioneer CD system with four speakers, bimini top and boat cover, power hatch (this one was upgraded to the fast-action Dana variety, a \$1,500 move), tilt wheel, two 12-volt receptacles and depth gauge. There are more cup holders than you'll ever want passengers: 16 in all, including eight in the cabin. A bimini top, boat cover, power hatch, dual batteries and Extreme trailer are all also standard.

The presentation of the Whipped-out 500 was clean, all business and done right. The backdrop was a nicely organized well with clean wiring and mounting and fabric trim. The Dana hinges looked very much at home alongside the polished blower installation,

and the whole business back there just fit the feel of this boat.

The stock Shockwave is properly fitted with Zero Effort controls. A Ritchie compass was standard, along with mechanical trim indicators. Although we had Dana flaps, we had no indicators; they aren't used often enough for Shockwave to consider indicators necessary. Color-matched billet neatly trimmed the driver's area. A Dino wheel tilted to suit.

Each of our three drivers liked the first seat's environment. The mechanical bolsters had nice action and played comfortable host both ways. Shockwave builds its interior components internally, and the workmanship hit the desired mark. The vinyl artistry was exceptional, with variously heated flames engulfing but not overplaying the side panels from bow backward.

The expanse and depth of the bow seating area makes it impossible to mistake this boat for a midsized boat—it is absolutely huge. The Shockwave's forward pen is a rarity: It will seat four more than comfortably.

One must negotiate a very large step downward, around 17 inches, in moving from the bow section, or the main cockpit from the other side, into the cabin. An intermediate step would create a much less precipitous drop. The fact that this is an issue reflects the existence of one of performance boating's roomiest cabins. "Serious headroom," wrote one of our test team members. "You can almost stand up in the forward cabin."

Two large facing lounge couches provide comfortable sanctuary, and there is also a sizeable amount of legroom. Flushed lighting, fans, concealed storage in the seating and cup holders are standard. Our probing inspection found the carpet installation tidy, and the hidden storage areas—a locker and anchor storage compartment in the bow section, cavities behind

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Test conditions: Moderate

Centerline: 30'6"

Beam: 102"

Bottom: 24-degree dual step

Drivetrain: GT Performance Whipped

HP500/Bravo One XZ

HP @ prop: 775

Overall weight: 5,000 lbs.

Base price: \$78,000

Standard features: MerCruiser 496

Magnum/Bravo One, powdercoated Dana

billet hardware, interior lighting, Pioneer

CD w/remote, bimini top, boat cover,

power hatch, dual batteries, tabs, drop-

down bolsters, depth gauge, interior

fans, swim step, glove box, tilt wheel,

pop-up cleats, Extreme triple trailer

Options on test boat: MerCruiser HP500

EFI Upgrade (\$16,000), GT Performance

Polished Whipple kit/installation w/alu-

minium heads (\$17,700), WPM dual-ram

external steering to helm (\$4,500), Dana

power hatch hinges (\$1,500), lab-finished

prop (\$1,200), drive indicator

(\$960), Autometer Pro Comp gauges

w/GPS (\$790)

Price as tested: \$122,640

Top speed, radar: 81 mph

Mfg. est. speed: 88 mph

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