

In the impressive presence of its family flagship, the 21-foot Skier, Shockwave Boats unfurled upon our test team the latest in a consistent string of well-built, well-dressed performance customs. The path to prominence of this obviously skilled company is lined with an endless procession of details that is beginning to take form as a production signature, which is showing up with increasing frequency on the West's favored hot water.

THE PACKAGE

From the deep, neatly sculpted front passenger area to the dramatic cut of its transom, the Skier's interior design and execution are dedicated to the task of maximizing the comfort of and putting smiles on the faces of its occupants. Remarkably, the interior work, which elicited unanimous, enthusiastic praise as some of the best we saw during the week, is done in-house.

The tone of the Shockwave experience is established by its open, space-efficient cockpit design—a layout that ex-

MODEL: 21' SKIER ENGINE: 350 MPI/BRAVO ONE

tracts maximum convenience and open area from its 21 feet and its 96-inch beam. Company stylists mined some of the additional passenger room by cutting down the size of the dash panels, and the wide-open effect is further exaggerated with by the boat's wide walk-through area.

Seating on our test boat was deep, rich, roomy, supportive and comfortable. Front buckets wrapped front occupants and backed two rear seats. Taking into account the expansive rear bench—which had integrated lumbar sup-

ports and armrests—and a bow that seated two adults very comfortably, the Skier offers enough passenger capacity for full-scale water parties. The Shockwave's interior finish work, like the intricately stitched logos through the boat, and gelcoated storage areas (beneath the seats, and in all of the floor storage) piled on the style points, and was made even more effective by the perfect, seamless fit of the interior components.

The MerCruiser throttle/shifter was perfectly placed, and nearly all of the

gauges were easily legible. Its placement, relative to the gauges and wheel, prompted fatigue-free control of the 300 horsepower on tap, served by MerCruiser's impressive, multiport fuel-injected 350 MPI/Alpha One. Though we're accustomed to seeing the Bravo gearcase in this setup, the Alpha seemed to handle the 300-horse allocation with no ill effects.

This Shockwave is rich with storage space, most notably two floor-mounted ice chests (one large one in the rear, a small one in front), a ski locker suitable for multiple wakeboards and gear and a very cool secure space that's secretly carved into the bow. All of it is dressed with gelcoat. Pockets abound, and the gunnel area is also suitable for stashing small items, as well as home to a string of anodized cup holders.

A full array of powdercoated Eddie Marine hardware, much of it tailored specifically for the Shockwave, dresses the stock Skier. Low-profile powdercoated bow railing wrapped beyond the bow seating area to the main cockpit and matched a full, nicely detailed array of exterior hardware that included transom-mounted, vented grab handles; recessed deck cleats; flush rollover lights; and such.



All hardware was through-bolted, and even wood framework buried in the bowels of the Skier's most obscure storage areas—of which there are many—showed off a protective, resin sheen. Hardware screwed into the deck used stainless bolts through Allen heads for mounting. Talk about overkill: Even the screw patterns were perfectly aligned.

Beneath the electrically raised, illuminated engine hatch (the entire cockpit is lit), we found more of the familiar intricate detail reflected in Shockwave's custom wiring conduit.

Shockwave's renowned gel-coat artistry—one of its principals is tape-and-spray master Danny Mancini, who painted his share of various, high-end lake fare through the years—was in full blossom on our test machine, which used a gleaming white base to show off four dramatic interwoven spills of color. The effect is finished off with all the white powdercoated hardware and a full-dress, matching rub railing. Shockwave customers have an unlimited range of color selection.

Shockwave's tooling drew notice for its detail in areas like the clean, neatly angled stern design. It incorporated nicely sized, textured, twin fiberglass swim steps; a softly carved

terrace used for a deepwater boarding step; and a large, wide, padded overmatch area that was tailor-made for the family sun worshiper.

PERFORMANCE

Performance in the Midas is an admirable feat for a small-block vee-bottom, which in most applications runs out of cubic inches right around the time the speedometer hits 60. While our 23-inch Quicksilver three-blade spun 64 mph flat, somewhat of a toll for all the performance was extracted at the bottom end, where the Shockwave trailed in the acceleration wars. It required 7.80 seconds to hit a 30-mile-an-hour pace and took 14.34 seconds to hit 50.

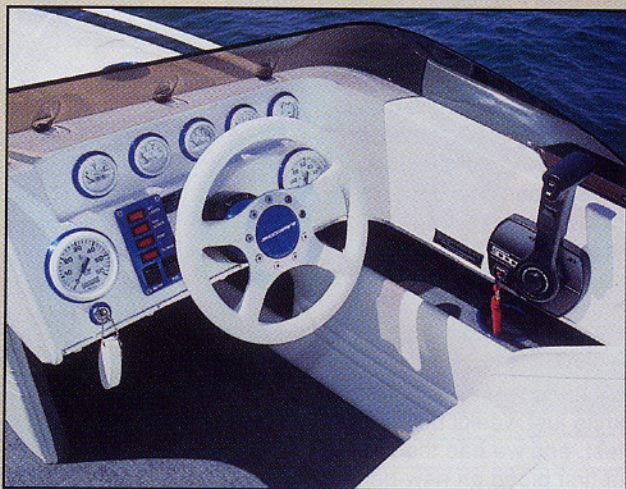
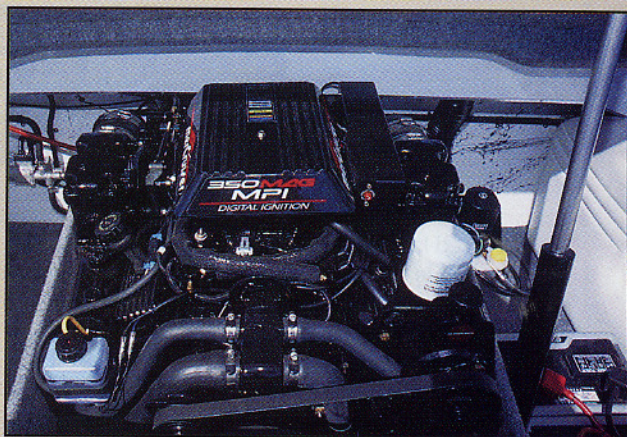
Low-speed maneuverability, around the docks and such, elicited best-possible marks from our evaluators. The 350 was extremely user-friendly, started easily, and idled and shifted smoothly. It trimmed up easily, and felt smooth and natural off the line. Our ride through the midrange showed off the Skier's soft, stable side, and as we throttled through and beyond the cruise range, the ride only got better.

Low-speed sweeper turns (20 to 30 mph) revealed the Skier's tendency to bank and lean a bit more than we're used to in this model class. This tendency disappeared at 30-mph-plus; the faster, harder the turn, the better this boat felt. It carried a nice, high ride, and passengers remained dry throughout its power range. One of its best qualities was its strong, stable ride while in the wide-open mode.

Overall, the Shockwave proved a dandy driver for anyone from the beginner anxious to sink both feet into the custom boating experience to the practiced family boater looking for deep, satisfying indulgence in the sport.

THE BOTTOM LINE

We know, we know—this was supposed to be an "entry-level" test, and our review correctly identifies the Skier as pure high-end stuff. To the benefit of their clientele, Shockwave only builds 'em one way. May that never change.



SPECIFICATIONS

Length: 21'

Beam: 94"

Bottom style: 18-degree vee

Engine/drive: MerCruiser 350 MPI/Bravo One

Horsepower at prop: 300

Standard features: Powdercoated Eddie's hardware, low-profile bow railing, two ice chests, ten drink holders, unlimited gelcoat, through-bolted hardware, gelcoated ski locker, electric fuel valve, windshields, hatch graphics.

Base price (including trailer): \$25,900

Options on test boat: MerCruis-

er 350 MPI/Bravo One (\$3,600), thru-hull exhaust (\$450).

Price as tested: \$29,950

Performance

Top speed, radar: 64 mph
Builder's estimated top speed in optimum conditions: 66 mph

0-30: 7.80 seconds

0-40: 10.48 seconds

0-50: 14.34 seconds

0-60: 23.89 seconds

Speed at 3,000 rpm: 39.5 mph

Speed at 4,000 rpm: 55.8 mph

Shockwave Boats

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