

Shockwave

Here's a terrific tunnel that carves through rough chop like nobody's business.

26 Cat



One of the biggest hits of our Havasu trials was not the biggest, fastest or best-accelerating boat, but a family open-bow model that topped out at 65 mph. It was the 26' Cat from Shockwave Custom Boats of Corona, CA—the newest in the builder's line, and one that thoroughly impressed our team with its docile ride, smart interior, plentiful storage space and flawless handling.

Shockwave's 26' Cat represents the middle ground in a line that begins with a 20' tunnel, on up to its Magnitude series of 29' to 35' deep-vees that are available in both closed-deck and mid-cabin cuddy configurations.

Though at least 10 years old, this was our first encounter

with Shockwave's 26' Cat, a good-sized tunnel that company owner-founder Bob Anderson describes as "sort of a mini-deckboat that's very strong structurally and able to handle rough water extremely well." (The 26' is also available in closed-bow and mid-cabin cuddy versions.)

The boat's interior is smartly designed and roomy, with a wide cockpit that boasts a beam of 102". Seating for driver and front passenger is wide and quite comfortable, with solid billet seat bases; the rear offshore-style bench is wide enough for four large adults (or perhaps five smaller people).

There's a walk-through and step-down to the wraparound open-bow section with two forward-facing seats. Shockwave



Shockwave 26 Cat

Length: 26' Beam: 102" Deadrise: 16°

Engine on test boat: Mercury 8.2 Mag HO

Drive on test boat: Bravo One X

Base price: \$82,000 Price as tested: \$95,050

Options on test boat: Merc 8.2/Bravo package (\$5,300), billet power hinges (\$1,500), billet seat bases (\$1,200), stereo upgrade (\$2,200), Livorsi digital gauges (\$850), Livorsi billet shifter (\$550), interior upgrade (\$1,450)

Top speed: 65 mph @ 5,000 rpm

Shockwave Custom Boats

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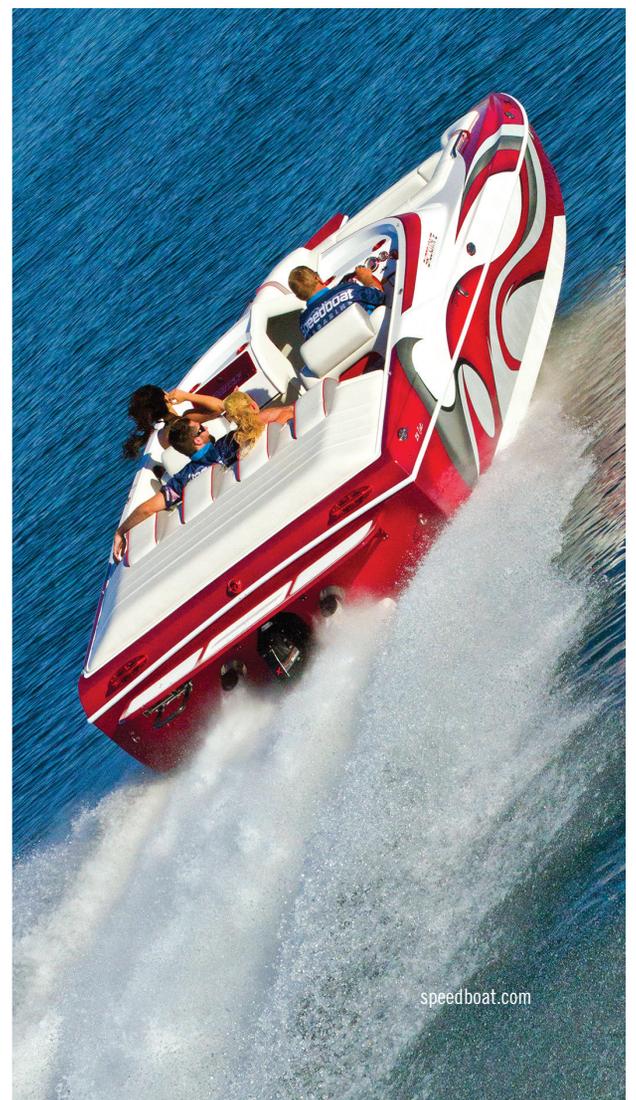
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Shockwave 26 Cat



Adorning the dash are Livorsi gauges and an attractive switch panel, augmented by a stylish red Spragi steering wheel with black grip. Below left: Underneath the pilot and passenger bulkheads are small cushioned areas for the small fry to get out of the sun.



“For the power it has and the weight of this boat, handling is very respectable. We hit some pretty big rollers, and the boat stayed remarkably stable.”
—Alexi Sahagian



has obviously paid attention to the details of the seats and the design; everything about the interior drew high marks from our test crew (although the step-down area in the front is a bit narrow). Underneath the pilot and passenger bulkheads are small cushioned areas for the small fry to get out of the sun. Cupholders have been placed everywhere, including on top of the bulkheads—two each for driver and passenger.

Adorning the dash are Livorsi gauges and an attractive switch panel, augmented by a stylish red Spragi steering wheel with black grip. Ample storage is everywhere on this offering, another plus. Shockwave has installed special lighting underneath the cuddy area and two small bow rails. Our 26 Cat featured plush gray glued-in carpeting throughout, but Shockwave also offers a popular full fiberglass interliner as an alternative.

For power, they've installed a stock Mercury 8.2-Liter (430 hp) motor with Bravo X drive—an admittedly mild package, although Anderson assures us

that he can power this boat up to 9,000 hp, if that's what the customer wants.

This boat starts very quietly, gets on plane easily and is, in the words of test driver Alexi Sahagian, “very docile.” As with many cats, you’ll experience some bowrise, but not for very long. Once on plane, its ride is flat—it drives well through all of the speed ranges, and handled surprisingly well, given the relatively tame engine under the hood. “For the power it has and the weight of this boat, it’s very respectable,” Sahagian reports. “We hit some pretty big rollers and this boat really didn’t move much—it stayed remarkably stable. It wasn’t weird in any way, and I’ve got to give it a 10 for that.” The Shockwave was also one of the few boats we tested that earned perfect scores in the slaloms, “because you cannot screw up in it,” says driver Bob Teague. “Turn the wheel, and it just goes there. It tracks nicely, and it’s the same with all the turns. Deceleration reaction was also outstanding.” Moreover, we were impressed to find that this setup was

fairly economical, fuelwise—about 2 miles to the gallon almost everywhere. Both of our test drivers gave high marks to the boat’s handling capabilities; it just needs more power—a 565 or a 600 SCi would be ideal. “I think I’ve even run a couple of these boats with 800 or 825 TCMs, and they work really well,” says Teague. Even so, he’s quick to point out that this boat is “much safer than a similarly sized vee-bottom with the same power—for handling, control, going over boat wakes, and not jostling up passengers,” he says. The 26' is not extremely fast—the speedo was about 5 mph faster than the GPS indicated—but it handles superbly. You could turn it at full throttle; it tracks all the time, never skips, and it leans into the turns at all speeds. Shockwave has got that part figured out, and there are no rattles in the boat—none.

Bottom line: there’s a place for a model like this as a family boat instead of a big open-bow v-bottom—assuming, of course, that you can live without a cabin. **SB**