

**INSIDE**

**SHOCKWAVE'S BLAZING  
29' MAGNATUDE**



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# **Hot Boat**®

**THE ONLY PERFORMANCE BOATING MAGAZINE THAT MATTERS**



# SHOCKWAVE

## 29' MAGNITUDE/TWIN MERCUISER 7.4L/BRAVOS

### Expanded Horizons With a New, Open-Water Stepper

**H**igh-performance powerboating has made great gains in the full-sized cruiser realm in recent years, with nearly every custom builder stoking up their tooling talent in the effort to carry their devotees into rougher, more demanding surfaces. Shockwave has taken the plunge into this emerging market with the 29-foot Magnitude, the new flagship in a growing fleet of impressive, high-gloss beauties.

With topside tooling as cool and smooth as an icicle and a twin-step bottom that's cut with a piercing 24-degree vee that was bred for rough, salt-optional water, the Magnitude charges into the ongoing West Coast size wars with a gorgeous execution that gives Shockwave an immediate and distinctive presence in this evolving size realm.

Possessed of a broad beam and cut with generous freeboard, the Magnitude was built for open water; thus far, early in the game, sales have been fairly evenly split between those using the boat on inland water and those running offshore. Certainly, the prospect of an extra engine appeals to those who would venture outside the coastal breakwater, the primary consideration in the building of our test boat. Shockwave eschewed the more conventional HP500 pathway common to West Coast offerings in this size class for a matched set of MerCruiser's base-issue, 310-hp, big-block Bravo bullets.

Before you dismiss twin as overkill within the domain of a whole passel of high-output factory MerCruiser muscle motors, consider this amazing bit of statistical bliss: The new Shockwave ran to 50 miles per hour in 11.69 seconds and 60 in 14.82. That's

quicker than 19 of the other 20 boats we tested. Only a 25-footer with a well full of 625 horsepower was quicker.

While debate was sparked over the relative value and efficiency of a single, 470-horsepower package (5,300 pounds, \$83,000) versus a 610-hp twin setup (6,500 pounds, \$88,000), there was no debate on the efficiency factor of the twins: Shockwave proceeded to rack up one of the most impressive performance trials of anything we tested all week.

It must be noted that Shockwave's numbers were extracted during a separate day of testing some weeks after our original event, after a clogged water intake forced engine temperatures upward and our test boat to the trailer. In fairness, we followed up at Lake Elsinore, where water conditions were not as good—not so much as a ripple was there to help loosen the underside from the lake. However, it was also 20 degrees cooler, a negligible difference in today's reactive fuel-injection systems.

#### THE PACKAGE

Shockwave's owners are boaters, and they rigged this one up exactly as they'd have one done—rigged out to the tens. The 7.4s ran exhaust through polished Eddie Marine systems with four-inch stainless tips, a \$3,600 bump over stock. Dana's 1000-series Offshore tabs (\$3,000) tuned the deep-vee's attitude and were monitored (along with the drive trim) through Bluewater actuators and Gaffrig mechanical indicators. Dual-ram external WPM steering and tie bar (\$4,200) liquefied the feel at the helm. Add in the 15





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grand for the second 7.4/Bravo setup, and going twin absorbed right at \$20,000 of the boat's \$97,500 as-tested price. The setup, says Shockwave, is slightly faster than the HP version.

There are other considerations that must be addressed in running a twin 29: stern weight, for instance. The Magnatude's profile was fairly unaffected by the extra poundage due to the liberal freeboard, and the weight certainly didn't soften its acceleration. The setup is, however, significantly more challenging to work on: You'd have to literally pull the motors for access to the distributor, for example. Also, placement of the trim pumps at the transom, beneath the motor, was questionable. Workmanship in the well was pin clean and first-rate, and Shockwave's attention to detail and concern for clean, quality appearance are evident.

Expect to see a single 500 version battling in next year's Factory

Offshore racing action.

Shockwave does a remarkable job of fully exploiting the expanse of the 29-footer in their pursuit of the full-bodied, multidirectional family lake boating experience. The Magnatude's cockpit plays roomy host to the full-scale family gathering with a large, well-protected passenger area that makes use of the rangy, 102-inch beam. It's also deeper than most anything in its class, a dynamic that did not detract one iota from the boat's stunning lines and beautifully detailed tooling.

Shockwave's in-house interior execution rivals anything you'll get at the best custom houses in terms of show-level appearance, comfort and support—our test boat's interior was nothing short of gorgeous. Mechanical, offshore-styled bolsters provided superb driver and passenger comfort. Standing felt the best, but the seated position was also relatively comfortable.



Front seats were easily adjustable by braille and were mounted on powdercoated rail assemblies that were equal parts flash and function. Their lumbar panels were beautifully cut and accented with the same dramatic purple and checker graphics that dressed the rear bench and the padded deck lid. The black checker gelcoat melded into the purple depth of the finely cut, integrated swim platform at the corners; the windshield area was also blacked out. It was a very

effective use of four colors, and Shockwave again showcased their considerable talent with a gelcoat gun.

The Magnatude lays before its driver a sloped, elevated bank of very visible Gaffrig gauges, and our dash was trimmed with flat, purple bezels and matching cup holders, switch panels and steering hub from Dana. We were surprised to note some uneven powdercoating on the Dana switch panel, a fluke we've not seen before.

Morse tilt steering is standard. A





bank of four Gaffrig sticks was smoothly integrated into a padded panel at the driver's left hand, along with the tab and trim indicators. Rockers lie a finger's length away on both sides of the wheel, tabs to the right and individual rockers for the drives to the left. A compass and drink holders are absorbed nicely into a flat panel just above. The dash wiring was exceptionally clean and was accessible through a cabin hatch (which could have used a shock or spring).

Traditional gunnel-to-gunnel carpeting was installed throughout the boat, a Shockwave production practice that flies in the face of trends toward the snap-in variety on nonskid glass floors. Plans are to offer the nonskid/snap-out carpeting as an option.

Seven cup holders are spread through the cockpit (and four below), the Magnitude's interior lighting floods the side panels and seat bases, and dome lights dress the bulkhead, seat bases and engine well. A large grab handle is within easy passenger



reach. A Pioneer CD system with four speakers is standard.

Dana's trick, hidden hardware (\$1,500) lifted the electric hatch on our test boat; we were surprised that the port hinge was cut in the side interior panel. Dual

batteries are standard.

The rear seat elicited matching, excellent ratings for its comfort, styling, support and feel. Its wood base was sectioned for storage and a draining ice chest. More storage was cut into large

compartments carved into the side panels and was abundant below. Interior pouches also provided stowage.

The cabin, while sparsely equipped, was tailored to the use of the day boater looking for truly





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functional shelter. A stylish, functional slider (\$800) granted easy access, and facing bench seating for four was among the best engineered and most comfortable we've seen in this size class. There was enough headroom for a seven-footer, and the cabin was tastefully finished in gray seat fabrics, headliner and carpeting. A large, padded vee-berth is finished in the same fabric that dresses the seats. The cabin's standards include two fans, two cup holders, floor and overhead lighting, storage shelves behind the seats and a large deck hatch. Carpeted storage below the vee-berth was large enough for two wakeboards, and incidentals stashed easily into finished bow storage accessed through a snap cover. Workmanship throughout the cabin was tight, and the feel was high end to the extreme.

The exterior finish work and hardware installation were predictably tight and clean. White rubber molding insert dressed the cap line, and gas fills lay flush to the hull. Four pop-up cleats are standard. Our tester was delivered without bowrailing, an omission made in consideration of the clean, free flow of the lines. With the Magnatude's elevated glass, beach boarding is difficult without the railing, but access over the transom—aided with a large boarding handle—is not.

### PERFORMANCE

There is no more smoother-starting, easier-shifting, more controlled performance package

than MerCruiser's 7.4L setup. Double up on the premise, and you add another dimension of control around the docks, where we countered the drives and nuzzled into the tightest imaginable dock holes.

Off the line, the Magnatude rolls easily onto plane, and when the drives trim out, you really feel the hit of the motors. Credit the hull's standout acceleration performance to the hard leave initiated by the matched Merc four-blades and the hull's reactive tendencies: We went 0-to-30 in 6.43 seconds.

The package showed excellent throttle response in the critical midrange area, where we picked up great lift and aired out easily. Once you reach a certain point in the cruise range, throttle alone won't bring more speed: That's left to hull attitude, which continues to pick up lift with the introduction of trim. The hull is a very efficient platform and carries extremely well. Skeptics of the twin setup, here are more numbers to chew on: 63.3 miles per hour at a relaxed 4,000 rpm!

Work the throttles against one another, and you cut down on the assumed, large turning radius of the twin installation. The hull handled sweepers and hard carves with equal grace and laid down nice and flat in the turns. Every move was predictable, and the hull's response to driver command was crisp and immediate.

Despite our sticky water conditions, the Magnatude offered up a stable, nicely elevated ride at

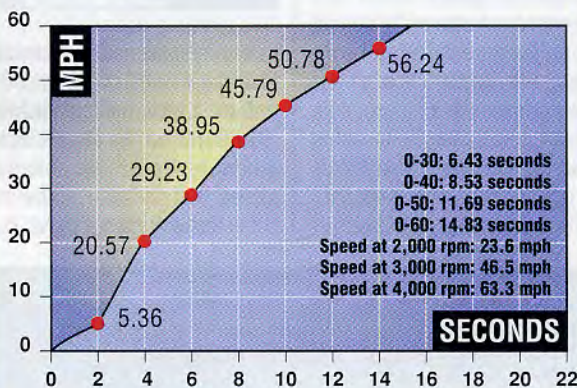
## SPECIFICATIONS

Test conditions: Flat, calm  
Centerline length: 29'  
Beam: 102"  
Bottom: 24-degree twin-step V  
Engines/drives: Twin MerCruiser 7.4L/Bravos  
Horsepower @ prop: 310  
Ratio: 1.5:1  
Props: Bravo 28-inch four-blades  
Overall weight: 6,500 lbs.  
Base retail price (incl. trailer): \$68,000  
Standard features: 7.4L/Bravo, thru-transom exhaust, electric hatch, trim tabs, dual batteries, Pioneer CD w/four speakers, cabin lighting, interior lights, engine bay lights, billet hardware, stainless seat pedestals, Gaffrig offshore controls, compass, running lights, unlimited

gelcoat, two cabin fans, padded head liner, tilt wheel, 12 cup holders, stainless prop, triple axle trailer.

Options on test boat: Twin 7.4L/Bravo upgrade (\$15,000), Eddie Marine exhaust (\$3,600), sliding cabin door (\$800), Dana power hidden hatch package (\$1,500), dual external WPM steering (\$4,200), mechanical drive/tab indicators (\$1,400).  
Price as tested: \$97,500  
Top speed, radar: 71.1 mph  
Builder's estimated speed in optimum conditions: 75 mph  
Maximum rpm: 4,600

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speed, and we felt the steps at work beneath us as we pushed the revs toward peak of 4,600. Trim the hull out too far, and the bottom lets you know with a slight, perceptible rock. Trim it back down into the sweet spot, and the boat resumes its flat, stable stance. We loved the boat's drivability at speed.

### THE BOTTOM LINE

Shockwave's Magnatude is the real goods, an impressively built, obedient open-water machine that showed surprising versatility and unexpected acceleration under the influence of twins. Another fine effort from Shockwave, which continues to solidify its presence in the quality-oriented, custom market.

