



Shockwave

26' CAT

A relatively recent addition to the stable of Shockwave Custom Boats (Corona, CA) is its 26' Cat, which our staff first tested four years ago. That boat was a walk-through bowrider that impressed our team with its docile ride, smart interior, plentiful storage space and flawless handling. The 26' represents part of the middle ground in a lineup that starts with a 20-foot tunnel and ends with the 35' Magnitude, one of its deep-vee lake rods.

Since its release in 2008, Shockwave has dutifully exhibited this family tunnel at the annual Los Angeles Boat Show, which has helped boost the model's recognition factor. Shockwave owner Bob Anderson recently brought us another to 26' Cat to evaluate, and as with our previous tester, it was a walk-through bowrider. The company also offers it in a closed-bow and midcabin cuddy configuration, but the walk-through—which is roomy enough to qualify as a deckboat—seems to be the most popular version.

"It really runs really well," he says. "It's really stable and handles rough water extremely well. It's got a full fiberglass liner inside of it."

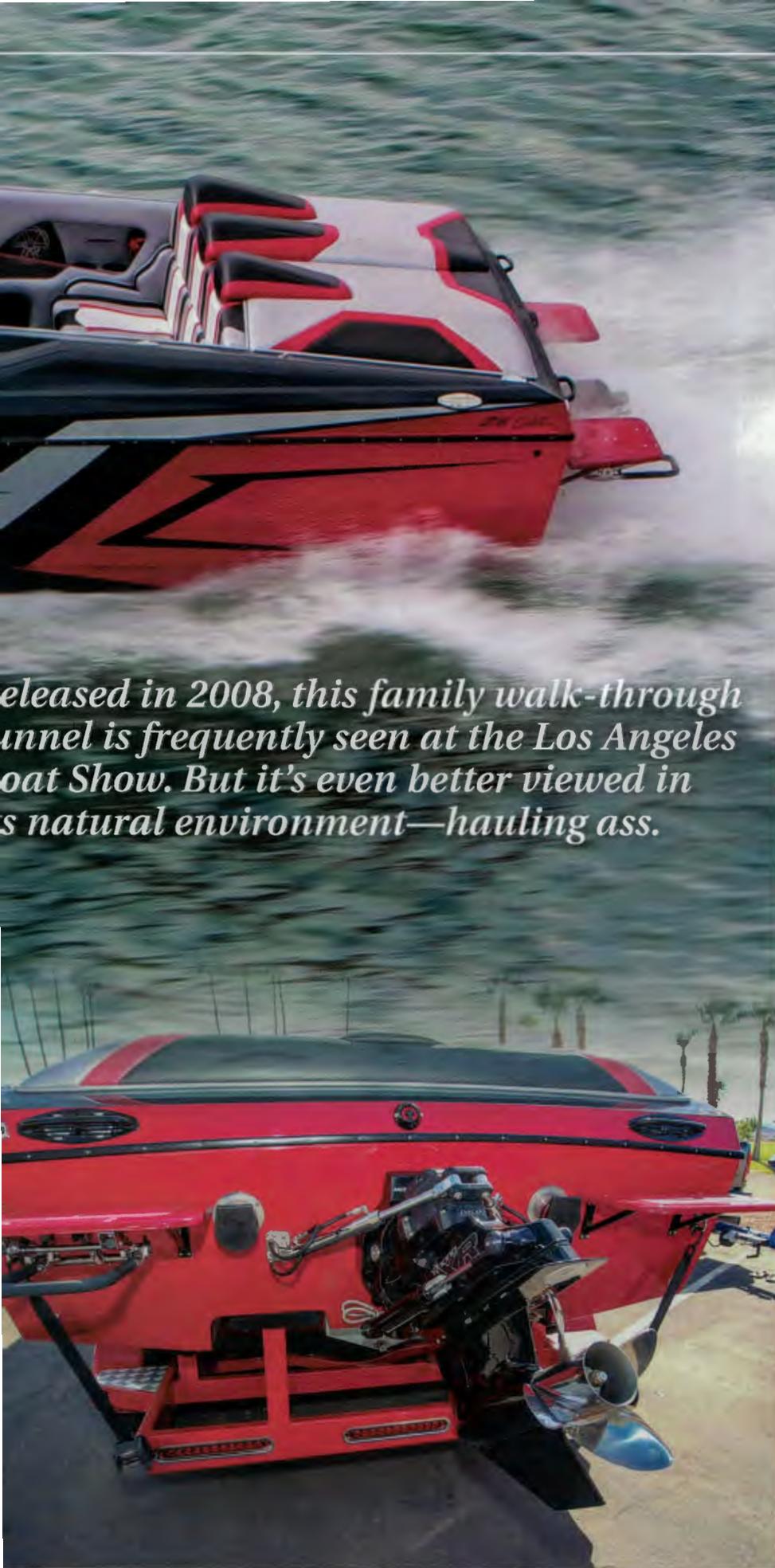
The boat's owner, Christian Aguayo—who runs Prestige Paint and Decorative (Riverside, CA)—says he's passionate about his ride because of the way Shockwave customized it to his precise specifications. "It's not just a boat—it's something more personal. It has more meaning. I love how we were able to tell them our ideas and create something that we watched come to life. What I like most about the boat that it's personalized." Aguayo, a first-time Shockwave customer, wanted a single Mercury Racing 600 SCi with Bravo drive, and had Shockwave install a "ridiculous" JL Audio stereo—one of the biggest such stereos that Shockwave has ever rigged, according to Anderson.

"I was actually thinking about getting a deckboat, and this is probably the closest we got to it without going with the full on deck," Aguayo says. "We wanted

the boat to have a little more performance along with the comfort. I guess, the Shockwave is a super solid boat. It doesn't feel light; it feels like a heavy solid boat. I love the speed as it gets out of the hole—I'm already at 50, 60 mph per hour a few seconds after putting the throttle down."

The Package: Beginning at the transom, we observed two separate fiberglass platforms, the port side sports a thru-bolted retractable Aqua Performance boarding step, which is handy for helping swimmers reboard. The Bravo XR console works with Imco dual-ram full hydraulic steering and is coupled to a Mercury pitch lab-finished four-blade prop.

The engine compartment is covered by a hatch carpeted on the inside and upholstered on the outside. Engine installation was executed with style and talent; the 600 SCi was billet mounted and nicely painted to match the hull. Also inside the hatch were a TCM Fuel Strainer and three Interstate batteries on the starboard side, and stereo a



SHOCKWAVE 26' CAT

Length: 26' **Beam:** 102"

Engine on test boat: Mercury Racing 600SCi / XR drive

Options on test boat: Mercury Racing 600SCi upgrade, full hydraulic steering, Interliner with Gator step, billet seat bases, billet hatch hinges, JL Audio stereo system, upgraded interior, etc..

Top speed: 86 mph @ 5,400 rpm

SHOCKWAVE CUSTOM BOATS

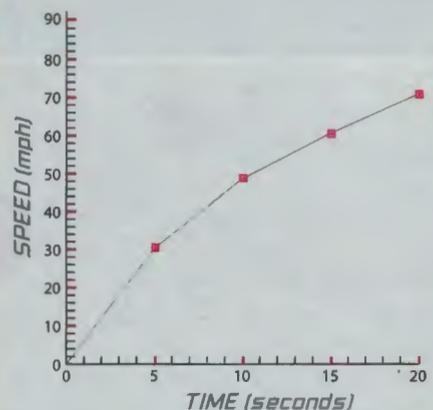
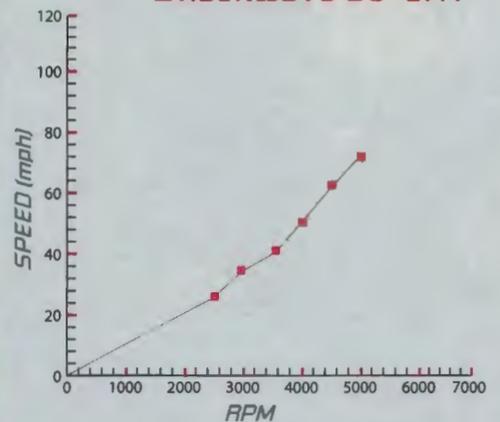
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shockwaveboats.com

Released in 2008, this family walk-through tunnel is frequently seen at the Los Angeles Boat Show. But it's even better viewed in its natural environment—hauling ass.

Speedboat
performance evaluations

Shockwave 26' CAT



SHOCKWAVE



The 26' Cat features a large storage locker in the floor, and more storage under the seats. Our dash had an Isotta wheel and a full complement of Livorsi gauges. The rocker switches were found on the port side of the helm. Our team admired the excellent job Shockwave did on wiring under the dash.



“Shockwave has been doing this for a long time, and they pride themselves in making a good-quality boat for the money. I think they’re achieving that goal pretty well.”

—Bob Teague



Left: On either side of the Mercury Racing 600 SCi engine are two vertical carpeted pieces that help keep things secure.



port side. Our dry-land inspection team took note of the fuel selector valve switch, a top-of-the-line item. Also, on either side of the engine are two vertical carpeted pieces that are bolted into place to keep things secure and prevent anything from falling into the center of the engine well. "It's an above-average installation," says Bob Teague. "Shockwave has been doing this for a long time, and they pride themselves in making a good-quality boat for the money. I think they're achieving that goal pretty well." He rated access to services as highly: "It's about as good as it gets."

The main cockpit consists of two bucket seats on billet bases and a rear bench with matching upholstery colors. The rear bench is probably wide enough for four adults, but has been molded with headrests for three; this 26' Cat has a spacious 102" beam, so it's very roomy. The seats were well built and very comfortable.

There's a large storage locker in the floor, and more storage under the seats, as well as an ice chest with drainage.

The dash on this boat features an Isotta wheel and a full complement of Livorsi gauges, including speedo, tach, water volts, fuel levels (one for each tank) and oil pressure. Rocker switches were found on the port side of the helm. Our team admired the great job Shockwave did on wiring under the dash. Cupholders have been placed everywhere, including on top of the bulkheads—two each for driver and passenger. Test driver Myrick Coil admired the placement of the gauges, overall workmanship and the comfort of the seats.

In front of both the driver and co-pilot—just beyond a step down—are small cushioned areas under the bulkheads where small fry can get out of the sun. Moving forward—and taking one small step down—there's a square-shaped bowrider area for 4-6 passengers—or for two passengers who want to take advantage of the forward-facing seat backs and stretch out. There's nothing radically different about the layout of this 26' Cat than the one we tested a few years back, but chalk that up to the fact that the boat is irresistible to families who like to go fast together while enjoying a roomy cockpit with plenty of amenities—and on a budget. Altering that would be foolhardy.

While the color scheme of this 26' Cat wasn't exactly our team's #1 favorite that Shockwave has done, the builder gave their customer precisely what he asked for (those are his company's official colors). The actual execution of the gelcoat was first-rate, as usual.

Performance: The Shockwave gets on plane quickly without a lot of bowrise to cause the pilot to lose visibility of the horizon. "The boat likes a little trim," notes test driver Myrick Coil. "As soon as you get on plane, just grab the trim button for three or four seconds—then it really takes off. It's a fun boat to drive. It really goes. It feels nimble, and we went across some pretty decent waves and the boat handled them without any problem."

Test driver Bob Teague was also quite impressed by the boat's overall handling and drivability. "It actually feels bigger than a 26," he says, "and it's very well mannered, and it turns fantastic in the slaloms—lefts, rights, cruising, high speeds... it never skips. It's crisp. No deceleration issues. We went over some waves out there and the boat is really forgiving."

Both of our test teams agreed that the 26' Cat tracked perfectly all the time. "It's so predictable it's ridiculous," Teague adds. "We had great throttle response—of all the boats we tested, it was actually one of the fastest to come on plane." Our top speed was 86 mph at 5,400 rpm.

The Bottom Line: For a boat that offers a sensible layout, high-octane comfort, great attitude and a lot of speed, the 26' Cat is a natural choice for family torn between a standard open-bow and a full-blown deckboat. It offers plenty of bang for your buck. **SB**