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AUGUST 2000

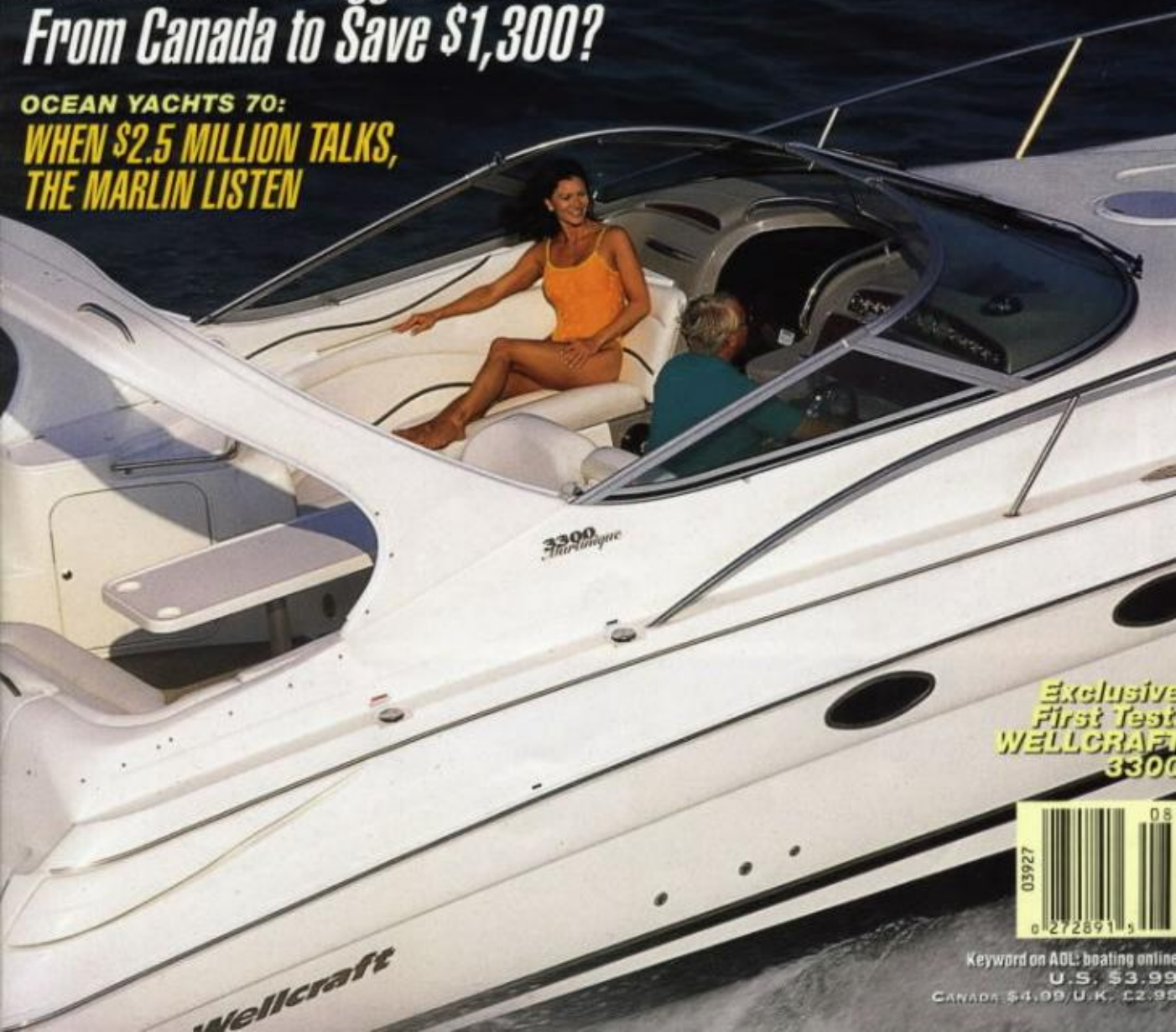
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SURFACE TO AIR

Tempest 60: You buy. You fly.

BY ERIC COLBY

AS THE TEMPEST 60 HARDTOP DRIFTED, I HAMMERED the throttles. Whoosh! What a surprise! I had expected the boat to struggle to get on plane with its bow pointed toward the moon. Instead, the bow barely rose and I never lost sight of the water ahead. Why the big surprise? The 60 Hardtop is equipped with surface drives, which are notorious for dragging down sterns as they fight to get on plane. This big silver missile planed without trim tabs and charged to a top speed of 56 mph. Even when the 60 Hardtop moved along at 1200 rpm, the ride angle measured only five degrees.

The ability to plane without the assistance of trim tabs is only one of the surface-drive myths the 60 Hardtop debunks. Another? Surface-drive-equipped boats are difficult to maneuver around the docks. Again, untrue here. When I pulled out of the slip, the 60 Hardtop responded to all directional changes as I drove it tank style with only the gear shifts. I never touched the bow thruster.

Need more? There's the notion that surface drives stick out past the transom with their props just waiting to chop you up after a swim or bend a blade against a piling or dock. Because the 60 Hardtop is designed exclusively for the T-Torque drives, the hull has a 3'-by-3' notch in the aft section of the bottom that extends over and past the propellers and rudders. If you back into a dock, the boat, not the rudders, absorbs the hit. Forward of this notch, the bottom is a conventional deep-V with four strakes and a wide chine.

SURFACE EFFECT. Unlike Arneson surface drives, which are trimmable and used for steering, T-Torques are fixed. The boat steers with a rudder, and the shafts maintain a six-degree angle. To help stabilize the boat's longitudinal center of gravity just ahead of the motors, there are twin 500-gallon fuel tanks

equipped with an equalizer to ensure that each tank has the same amount of diesel. Having the fuel centered here rather than in long tanks that extend into the bow means the location of the load hardly changes.

Efficiency is a surface-drive buzzword. With half of the props spinning out of the water, the engines are under less load. The result? *Speeded*. While our test boat's 56-mph top end is noteworthy, if you back off to a cruising rpm of 2100, it still runs an outstanding 51.3 mph.

Sporting a pair of Arneson drives, Pershing's 65-footer runs 47 mph on a pair of 1,400-bhp CAT 3412s. The Pershing does not have a hardtop; instead, it has a retractable soft top. The boat retails for \$2.1 million. Sea Ray's 63 Sundancer is available with an optional hardtop (\$42,500) and with twin CAT 3412s and Arneson drives, it retails for \$2.1 million and gives the 60 Hardtop a run for its money at 52 mph.

Some surface drives create more noise than conventional inboards because their props spin partially out of the water. To combat that, in the T-Torque system, the shafts spin in 4" cutlass bearings that absorb vibrations. At the 60 Hardtop's helm, the decibel level never exceeded 83 dB-A. In the cabin, the sound output was a peaceful 73 dB-A with the door closed.

Your learning curve aboard



A hardtop and a soft interior mean year-round boating. Top end: 56.0 mph.



the 60 Hardtop will be brief. It's an easy boat to handle. The feeling at the wheel is lighter than that of a standard propellered yacht of the same size. This is due to the 60 Hardtop's speed and ability to ride more like a performance hull with the water breaking farther aft. I put the 60 Hardtop through sweeping slalom turns and it responded well, transitioning smoothly from side to side.

STRUT YOUR STUFF. The most unique element of this drive system is a T-shaped mount for the rudders made of 316L stainless steel. The base of the "T" bolts to the transom and the horizontal top is bolted in place beneath the hull overhang with a rudder hanging off of each end. Within the "T" are all the hydraulic hoses, protected from the elements. Separate stainless-steel struts support the propshafts. Above the hull overhang, the steps that lead to the cockpit from the swim platform raise to reveal a tender locker. But you'll need a crane to get a tender in here (a \$10,000 option along with a cradle).

In the 60 Hardtop's engine compartment, the big CAT diesels are installed on huge, I-beam-style mounts that cover and bolt through the stringers. Aft, the fuel/water separators are easy to get to, and the batteries are protected in aluminum diamond-plate boxes. Wiring is neatly routed and well supported. This boat can take serious abuse: It has transverse frames or supports every two feet. Stringers in the engine compartment are formed out of glass-encapsulated marine plywood. Forward of the engine room, stringers are made from Baltek balsa.

Tempest builds the 60 Hardtop with a solid fiberglass bottom, closed-cell foam in the hullsides, and balsa coring in the deck. Kevlar is used to reinforce high-stress areas and to lighten things up, a big consideration when you factor in the weight of the 6,000-pound top.

LOW BRIDGE. One thing to consider with this boat is its height—you're going to be waiting for lots of bridges. The clearance on the 60 Hardtop is 19', compared to 12'8" for the Sea Ray and just under 17' for the Pershing. Within the con-

THE HIGHS: Terrific performance. Hull is matched to an efficient and practical surface-drive system. Retractable 42" TV is just too cool. You'll never get lost in the crowd.

THE LOWS: Tight squeeze past steering wheel to copilot's seat. High hardtop will leave you cooling your jets at the drawbridge. Those stealth fighter looks might scare the natives.

BOATING CERTIFIED TEST RESULTS Tempest 60 Hardtop

SPEED			EFFICIENCY				OPERATION		
rpm	knots	mph	gph	fuel/mph	stat. mpg	n. mi. range	s. mi. range	run angle	sound level
900	9.4	10.8	28.2	0.3	0.4	300	345	5	70
1200	9.6	11.1	45.8	0.2	0.2	190	218	5	72
1500	19.9	22.9	60.3	0.3	0.4	297	342	4	74
1800	35.2	40.5	81.9	0.4	0.5	387	445	2	80
2100	44.6	51.3	100.2	0.4	0.5	400	461	1	83
2300	48.7	56.0	129.8	0.4	0.4	337	388	2	83

Advertised fuel capacity 1,000 gallons. Range based on 90 percent of that figure. Performance measured with three persons aboard, half fuel, full water. Sound levels taken at helm, in dB-A.



LOA	60'0"
Beam	15'9"
Draft	3'7"
Displacement (lbs., approx.)	53,000
Transom deadrise	21°
Bridge clearance	19'0"
Minimum cockpit depth	3'8"
Max. cabin headroom	8'0"
Fuel capacity (gal.)	1,000
Water capacity (gal.)	250
Price (w/standard power)	\$1,500,000
Price (w/test power)	\$1,500,000

STANDARD POWER: Twin 1,250-bhp Caterpillar 3412 in-line-6 diesel inboard surface drives.

OPTIONAL POWER: Twin diesel inboards up to 2,800 bhp total.

TEST BOAT POWER: Twin 1,250-bhp Caterpillar 3412 in-line-6 diesel with T-Torque surface drives with 1,649 cid, 5.4" bore x 6.0" stroke, swinging five-blad-

ed Nibral props through 1.087:1 reductions.

STANDARD EQUIPMENT (major items): Anchor and windlass; ss trim tabs; sea strainers; ss bowrails; bow, stern and spring cleats; fender cleats; navigation lights; transom shower; fuel/water separators; microwave; refrigerator/freezer; sink; twin heads w/shower, vacuum-flush toilets; portable fire extinguishers; auto. Halon system; compass; fuel gauge; Caterpillar ECM system; high bilge water alarm; 2 hourmeters; trim tab indicators; water tank gauge; contaminated fuel alarm; 15kW AC/DC distribution panel; 10 heavy-duty batteries; battery chargers; 12 bilge pumps; 50-amp dockside power; 2 horns; cablemaster with 50' shorepower cable; water heater; power steering; a/c; convertible dinette; 2 entertainment centers w/TV, VCR, and DVD; retractable flat-screen TV; wetbar.

microwave; twin refrigerators offer excellent cold stowage. The dishwasher and stainless-steel sinks make for easy cleanups.

The forward cabin on our test boat was set up for kids with twin bunks and stowage, but it can be laid out as another full cabin. Either way, it sports a fully equipped head. ↓

LAST WORD. Hard, fast, and beau...uh, unique. This boat will turn heads—guaranteed. For more information, contact: Tempest Yachts of Florida, Dept. B, 3333 NE 188th St., Aventura, FL 33180, 305/705-0008, www.tempestyachts.com.

finer of the hardtop, the boat belies its almost military-looking appearance with a wraparound lounge, retractable 42" Sony TV, and a full entertainment center with VCR, DVD player, and stereo. Beneath the driver's seat is a refrigerator.

The two seats at the helm are air-suspension models more commonly found on trucks. Getting to the copilot's seat is a tight squeeze; the cabinet on which it's installed is too close to the steering wheel. At the helm, all engine functions are monitored by the Caterpillar ECM digital information system. The helm also features a radar/chart-plotter, an autopilot, and a trim gauge for the tabs. To starboard, a monitor displays the closed-circuit camera that you can use to look aft while docking or to check the fuel level or the engine compartment. The aft cockpit door has a small window on top, but I'd prefer it to be full-length glass. Lose your closed-circuit camera and you're blind.

In the aft cockpit stretch out on the recessed sunlounge with a raised headrest. The base of the lounge contains a large stowage locker that also leads down to the engine compartment. Indoor comfort is provided belowdecks, including the aft master cabin with a double berth, plenty of stowage, a TV/VCR, and a stereo. A full tub and shower highlight the master head, which also includes a vacuum-flush toilet, and a vanity with sink.

The salon has a horseshoe-shaped lounge and a table that lowers to create a berth. To port, the aft entertainment center features a TV and VCR. The galley's Corian countertop should be fiddled to contain spills. There is a three-burner stove and a