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Tempest 27 Cover Story: The New Black Watch 40



TURBINE TIME

The future is now when the Tempest XPE-27, powered by a helicopter turbine, takes to the waves.

Story by LOUISA REIDEN Photo by FOREST JOHNSON

The crowd at Shooters in North Miami Beach couldn't believe it when we pulled up to the dock in the floating version of a concept car, the aerodynamic Tempest XPE-27. As if the boat's exterior wasn't wild enough, the power plant inside was a whistling gas-turbine helicopter engine.

"Ready for takeoff?" Adam Erd-

berg, president of Tempest Engineering, had asked when he picked me up in the XPE-27 that morning. From that moment on, we turned more heads to rubber than a four-car pile-up on I-95.

When we stopped for a bit, everyone at Shooters came over to ask questions. Here's what we told them:

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TEMPEST

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Top end is about 70 mph. The boat gives a great ride on inshore waters.

That's an air scoop thrusting up from the sunpad. (One person wanted to know if it blew hot air like a hair-dryer.) The scoop is necessary because the turbine consumes a huge amount of air.

This power plant is a marinized, 425-hp GTD-350 gas turbine manufactured in Poland. A hybrid of the Allison engine used in Jet Ranger helicopters, it weighs only 290 pounds including the reduction gear, which keeps the boat very lightweight.

Diesel gas turbine

The "gas turbine" actually runs on diesel fuel; the name comes from the fact that gas (not gasoline) is generated internally. The turbine is connected to a standard MerCruiser Bravo One outdrive with a four-bladed prop.

If you buy a 27, you do not have to have a helicopter mechanic for a brother-in-law. Erdberg has developed a couple of innovative black-box systems that bring the 27 down to earth. The SSM (Simplified Starting Module) "allows the engine to be started by an operator with no pilot skills," he says. You simply turn the key and hold it until the compressor rpm comes up to 40 percent on the dial.

The ETCM (Electronic Turbine Control Module) prevents potential engine damage by governing the temperature and rpm. Turbine maintenance is easy, according to Erdberg. "After 250 hours of running, I still haven't had to add any oil," he says.

As we whistled away again, I had to grin. There's nothing like showing up at Shooters packing aviation power in a futuristic flyer like this one. 🙃

Tempest XPE-27'

LOA	27'2"
Beam	8'
Draft	2'
Weight	5,000 lbs.
Fuel	125 gals.
Power	425-hp gas turbine
Price	\$97,500

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