

# SUNSATION

# FUN RUNNER

## *The 25 Aggressor is built tough!*

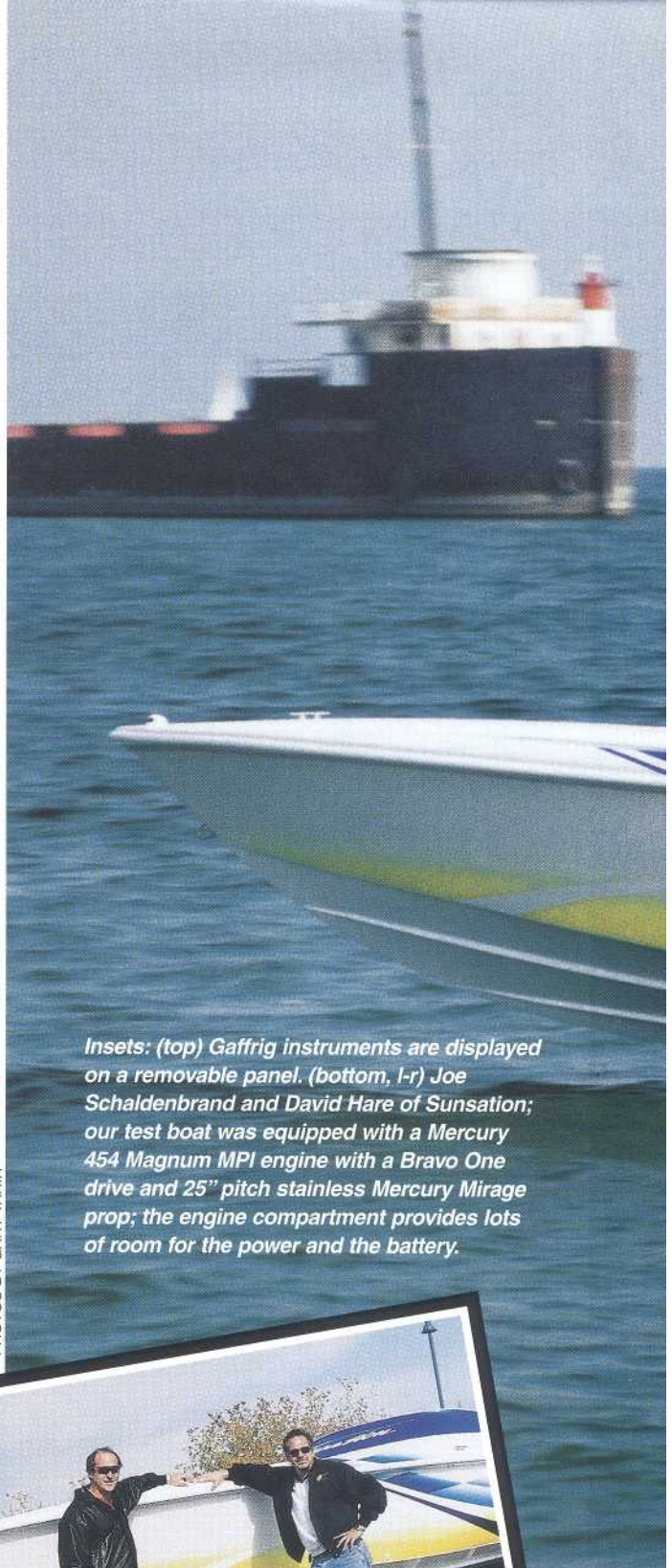
by Steve Sandier

If the next boat you buy fits into the category of a great looking fast 25-foot high performance offshore boat that's fun to drive and built to withstand anything that you can throw at it, test drive the Sunsation 25 Aggressor.

During the past 17 years, Sunsation has produced some of the finest quality custom built, performance boats available. Sunsation produces about 70 boats a year and each boat built is the object of special attention. Perhaps that is why demand for Sunsation product is increasing. Last summer, I had the pleasure of testing the 32 Dominator and was extremely impressed. As a result, I had great expectations for the 25 Aggressor. I wasn't disappointed.

The Aggressor measures 25 feet overall in length, including a solidly built and anchored aluminum swim platform. It has a relatively narrow 7-foot beam that Sunsation created to help the boat slice through rough water. The hull has a single step 75 inches forward of the transom. The step goes from the chines to the outer of two pair of lifting strakes. The outer strakes run the length of the boat while the inner pair end 8 feet from the transom. The keel has a delta pad which runs from a point 15 feet forward of the transom to 10 inches wide at the transom. Deadrise is a constant 24 degrees and the transom angle is 17 degrees. The transom has a small notch raising it from the hull to the running surface.

The hull and deck are joined in shoebox fashion, screwed together at 8-inch intervals, and laminated with Knytex. A rub rail, with changeable insert, is mounted at the hull and deck joint. The hull and deck are joined to form a lip below the rub rail which deflects water to provide a dryer ride and also allows cover snaps to be mounted beneath, out of sight. Both hull and deck are 100 percent balsa cored, providing an extremely solid structure without excess weight. Stringers run the length of the hull. The boat, engine and drive have a dry weight of only 3,500 pounds. The deck has a non-skid center area for safe footing, recessed cleats, and snap-in fender fittings to accommodate pre-set fender line lengths for easy use. A race fairing with flared edge is positioned to effectively deflect the wind away from the cockpit.



*Insets: (top) Gafrig instruments are displayed on a removable panel. (bottom, l-r) Joe Schaldenbrand and David Hare of Sunsation; our test boat was equipped with a Mercury 454 Magnum MPI engine with a Bravo One drive and 25" pitch stainless Mercury Mirage prop; the engine compartment provides lots of room for the power and the battery.*

PHOTOS BY GARY TAHIR





Polyurethane paint, covered by clearcoat, is standard.

Up front, the cockpit has two stand-up bolsters with manually positioned seats. Bolsters are through-bolted to the cockpit floor and sides. A balsa cored bench seat, with carpet-lined storage beneath, provides comfortable seating for three large passengers. An ample number of stainless grab rails are well positioned and again through-bolted for passenger support. The cockpit liner extends all the way back to the transom providing a finished engine compartment. Carpeted storage compartments on each side run the length of the cockpit and engine compartment. There are four drink holders and side courtesy lights. Included is a weather-enclosed high-output Sony stereo with a pair of speakers in both the cockpit and cabin. Removable carpet is part of the package. A 55-gallon gas tank sits beneath the floor.

Gaffrig instruments are displayed on a removable panel at the helm, with standards like tachometer, speedometer, drive time indicator, water temperature, oil pressure, voltmeter and fuel gauge. There's also a Lowrance depth finder.

Rocker trim switches to control the Bravo Drive and Bennett trim tabs are conveniently placed on the instrument panel above the Zero Effort throttle and shift controls. A drive trim switch is provided in the throttle handle. The engine kill-switch and lanyard is located below and to the left of the steering wheel for safety's sake. Lighted rocker switches and circuit breakers are provided for electronics and lighting.

A lockable acrylic sliding door leads to the cabin. The large padded V-berth with balsa cored liner provides excellent storage beneath. A balsa cored galley, with sink, lies to port in front of the V-berth. There is a covered area that can be used for storage or to house a porta-potty. Opposing seats are situated at each side of the entrance aisle. Beaded hidden lights surround the cabin and Bomar hatch just beyond the entrance provides natural light and fresh air. I found the cabin to be quite spacious for a performance boat of this size.

The engine hatch, raised and lowered by hydraulic lift, is made of cored fiber-

glass and padded to provide a sun deck. The extension of the cockpit liner to the transom results in a smart-looking and easy-to-maintain engine compartment. It also forms a floor that provides added comfort when engine maintenance is required.

Fiberglass ribs in the bilge beneath the engine provide additional strength. The extension of cockpit side storage into the engine compartment is a bonus. The engine compartment provides lots of room for the power and battery. Solid engine mounts are through-bolted. Wiring is neat and well secured and runs upward before it's routed forward to protect it from water.

Our test boat was equipped with a Mercury 454 Magnum MPI engine, through-transom exhaust and Corsa muffler tips. Power options range from the 250 hp Mercury 5.7L to the 500 hp Mercury 502. Corsa Silent Choice exhaust is also available. The Bravo drive had a 1.5:1 reduction gear ratio and a 25-inch pitch, stainless steel Mercury Mirage propeller. Maximum RPM is rev-limited to 5150. An interesting feature is the 3/8-inch engine offset to starboard that is intended to help the torque tab balance prop torque and better level the boat when it leaves the water.

The Sunsation 25 Aggressor is beautifully built and appointed boat and I was looking forward to getting it in the water. With the assistance of Jamie Cascadden from 1000 Islands Boat World, the boat was launched on the St. Lawrence River in the 1000 Islands. Joe Schaldenbrand and David Hare of Sunsation had just delivered the boat.

The weather was mild and the water was flat. Unfortunately, these are not the best conditions to test an offshore performance boat designed to handle rough water. We idled out of the marina and Joe put the boat through its paces. Typical of Sunsation, the boat provided a rock-solid ride. I was particularly impressed with the tight and steady turns. We tried to create rough water conditions and the wakes of two 1000 Islands Boat World's Sunsations, a 32 Dominator and a 288 Intimidator proved to be no challenge for the Aggressor.

## SUNSATION TEST

Then it was my turn at the helm. I trimmed in the drive and advanced the throttle. The bow rose and fell and we were on plane in less than five seconds. I played with the trim and throttles to create different running attitudes.

Trimmed out loose with 600 pounds of passengers, more than half a tank of fuel, engine mufflers, and bathtub-flat water, we topped out at 75 mph, as indicated by the speedometer. Engine speed was a touch over 5100 RPM. Based on calculations of theoretical top speed and slip factor for the prop, gear ratio and engine speed, our measured top speed was probably a few mph optimistic. However, I believe that if we had removed a couple of hundred pounds of occupants, reduced the fuel load, removed the mufflers, increased the prop pitch and inch, and ran in water with a bit of a chop, the boat could have run faster.

The Sunsation 25 is a fun boat, responsive to trim, throttle and steering. When you want to play, trim up the drives and tabs to optimize performance, and let the boat dance across the water. When the family is aboard, drop the tabs a touch to tighten up the boat and correct ride attitude to account for passenger weight distribution and prop torque. With trim tabs and drive set for my taste in our test conditions, top speed only dropped 2 mph and engine speed 150 RPM.

This is a lot of boat for the bucks. Similar to the 32 Dominator that I tested in a previous issue, this baby feels like a bigger boat than its size and weight. Congratulations, Sunsation you're batting 1000!

### VITAL STATS

Length: ....24'7" (w/platform)  
 Beam: .....85"  
 Weight: .....3500 lb (approx.)  
 Fuel Tank: .....55 gal  
 Transom: .....17 degrees  
 Power as Tested: ....Merc 454  
 Magnum MPI  
 Price as Tested: .....\$68,639

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