

Beyond Measure

Sunsation Boats' fine 32-foot, twin-engine XRT delivers form and function—in a big way.



When it comes to designing the cockpit of an offshore boat, inspiration can come in unusual ways. For the 32 XRT from Sunsation Boats, the dash and much more were inspired by an air speed gauge commonly found in airplanes.

Sunsation carried that theme throughout its new 32 XRT, which made its debut at the Miami International Boat Show earlier this year. From F-16-style canopies to side-intake air vents that look like they belonged on a fighter jet, the model was over the top.

Incorporate terrific paintwork from Mitcher T and some choice billet pieces, and the Michigan-based builder believes it has added a winner to its lineup.

At \$230,545, Sunsation's latest twin-engine 32-footer from the mold was the largest and most expensive boat in the Speed & Value roundup. A pair of cosmetically enhanced MerCruiser 496 Mag HO engines provided a combined 850 horsepower, which explains much of the two-step V-hull's significantly higher-than-the-pack sticker price in this roundup.

Without question, the 6,900-pound boat made excellent use of the power. With its engines turning 4,700 rpm, the 32 XRT reached 85.6 mph and felt solid all the way there. Getting that power to the water was a pair of 1.5:1 Bravo One X drives with Bravo One 32"-pitch lab-finished propellers.

Time to plane was 4.7 seconds with the 32 XRT's Mercury Racing 280S K-Planes down. From a standing start, the boat reached 76 mph in 20 seconds. Equally peppy in midrange drills, the 32-footer ran from 30 to 50 mph in 3.9 seconds and from 40 to 60 mph in 4.7 seconds.

"The 496 Mag HO engines are the right power for this boat," said Bob Teague, *Powerboat's* lead test driver. "It's zippy enough."

Both Teague and fellow test driver John Tomlinson agreed that the 32 XRT ran particularly flat. Drivers accustomed to a bow-high running attitude might find its running characteristics take a bit of getting used to, but once they do they should appreciate the boat's handling manners and rough-water ability.

Sunsation painted the boat's dash and kick panels in-house, as well as the valve and plenum covers for the engines that matched the boat's gray, black and red exterior. At the dash, the Livorsi Marine and Mercury SmartCraft instruments were back-mounted in square black housings and rectangular billet panels to follow the aircraft-style theme. Continuing the theme were toggle switches for the accessories.

The cockpit boasted a McLeod interior with manual dropout-bottom bolsters and a sculpted rear bench. A frosted acrylic door slid along a substantial track for access to the cabin.

As for the spacious cabin interior, it was pure "poker run," meaning frills were minimized in favor of durability and function. Unlike the cabin in its 32 Dominator sibling, the 32 XRT's cabin had no wet bar. According to Wayne Schaldenbrand, owner of Sunsation, that saves approximately 250 pounds, which partially accounts for the 2- to 2 1/2-mph difference in top speed over a 32 Dominator with the same power.

To maintain the 32 XRT's clean deck lines, the builder did not install any deck hatches. Instead, small, flush-mounted acrylic windows were laminated into the hullsides.

Sunsation has built and sold five 32 XRT's to date, all of which have been ordered with twin 496 Mag HO engines. Based on the success of the model, the builder plans to offer an XRT version of its 28-footer with a single Mercury Racing HP525EFI engine. Like its larger sibling, it should

be a winner.—**Matt Trulio**



Specifications/Test Results

Centerline/beam: 31'10"/8'1"

Hull weight/fuel capacity: 6,900 pounds/140 gallons

Price as tested: \$230,545

Engine/horsepower: (2) MerCruiser 496 Mag HO/425

Propeller: Lab-finished Mercury Bravo One 15 1/4" x 32"

Time to plane: 4.7 seconds

Zero to 10 seconds: 50 mph

30 to 50 mph: 3.9 seconds

Top speed at rpm: 85.6 mph at 4,700

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