

Magazine Articles Testing Summaries

EXECUTIVE 2300 BOWRIDER REVIEW HOT BOAT MAGAZINE OCTOBER 1997



The long and the short of it is this: Cougar builds one of the water's tastiest performance customs and the 2300 Executive bowrider is among the best of their impressive family fleet. This deep and rangy family vee is a thoroughly equipped and highly polished ambassador of the full-sized bowrider fleet, and it generated the same internal heat our test squadron has come to expect from the proud Cougar marque.

The difference is in the details and cougar rends to them like no one else. From the flawless intricacies of their standard, fade-accented six-color gelcoat to their trademark parquet engine flooring, Cougar goes the extra mile on the installation work and the evidence is everywhere: in the clean wiring, top-drawer fasteners and hardware installation, and finish work in both exposed and unexposed areas.

Nearly all of the boat's metal is powder coated and designed specifically for the Executive, including a switch panel, bezels (which framed Gaffrig dials), billet rear vents with incorporated handles, steering extension and trick pop-up deck cleats. Low-profile railing lined the perimeter of a roomy and practical bow section, which easily accommodated four up front in its deeply cut, secure enclave.

Our testers tossed raves at the Executive's well-proportioned floor plan and high-quality interior, which allotted portioned room to the main cockpit and bow seating areas. The flawless, in-house upholstery installation enhanced a very cool, snug wraparound design, which offered great support and comfort throughout the boat.

Cougar's many interior standards included pop-up ski tow, upgraded Jensen sound system, dash-mounted 12V outlet, drink holders throughout and engraved knobs. A front mounted ice chest (standard) is nice and roomy, and there's also plenty of room to store skis and gear.

Our Executive drew power from a copy of MerCruiser's 385-horse, 454 Magnum EFI/Bravo train, through-bolted to powdercoated, heavy-duty mounts and spinning a stainless four-blade prop. A set of trick Bennett sport tabs with LED indicators (\$1,198.00) was an appreciated touch. Placement of the controls promoted fatigue-free use. A built-in swim platform wrapped around the drive which could be raised and lowered with a remote transom switch.

Our test Executive was four to five mph faster than others we've driven, a gain that didn't come without some compromise out of the gate - though we had plenty of bottom-end power for ski needs and to hit plane instantly without bowrise. It responded instantly to trim and tab, which effectively responded to changing cargo weight

and water surface.

Low-speed handling drew superior marks, based on the cougar's smooth docking, backing and tracking tendencies. The sweet handling and responsive feel remained as we marched up the rev ladder and through the midrange, where turning and cruising were equally satisfying. At high speed (we topped out at 66 mph), we elicited more of the same smooth feel and soft ride that made the Executive a favorite among our drivers - newcomers and old performance hands alike.

We were also taken with its splendid rough-water gait, which dampened late-afternoon lake chop and absorbed the impact in a manner fitting such luxurious, hand-built custom.