

# Proven COMMODITY

With an Ilmor MV10-710 under the hatch, the Cougar 27 MTR shows why it continues to be one of the most popular tunnels on the market.

Cougar's 27 Modified Tunnel Runner (MTR) has been a fixture on the performance-cat market for close to a decade for one simple reason—because the bottom works. We've seen it with big blocks, twin outboards; you name it and have always been impressed with the way the boat performed.

Taking advantage of the weight savings offered by an aluminum-block V-10 engine this time around, Cougar brought it to us with the most powerful model in the Ilmor lineup, the MV10-710 with a Teague Custom Marine Platinum XR drive.

Cougar estimates the top end of the boat at 90 mph. We were only able to get 76.6 mph out of the boat at about 5600 rpm, which is considerably less than the full potential of this potent motor package. When we ran it, the throttle lever was hitting the dash panel as we tried to advance it to wide open, thus keeping the engine from reaching its recommended top rpm of 6300. Once that fine-tuning takes place, we can easily see this boat and engine combination approaching the manufacturer's estimated mark.

The 27 MTR handles lake chop well and never porpoises, a benefit that you can only get from a tunnel hull with a center pod. The triple steps per side allow the boat to make the most of any power package. It planed off easily without requiring any feathering of the throttle or other slight of hand from the driver and tracked arrow-straight in speed runs. With the 700-hp engine doing the pushing, acceleration was strong, and in turns the boat exhibited good manners.

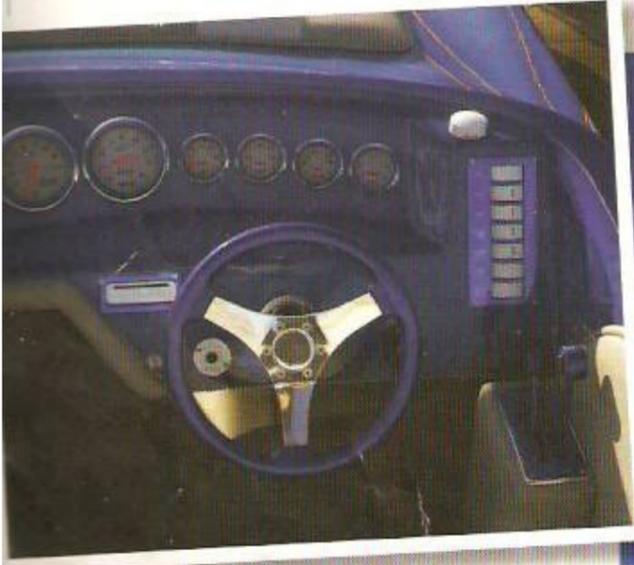
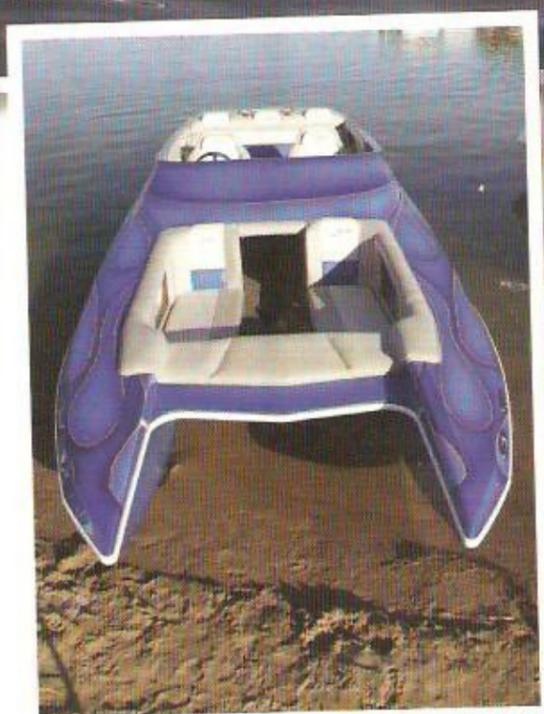
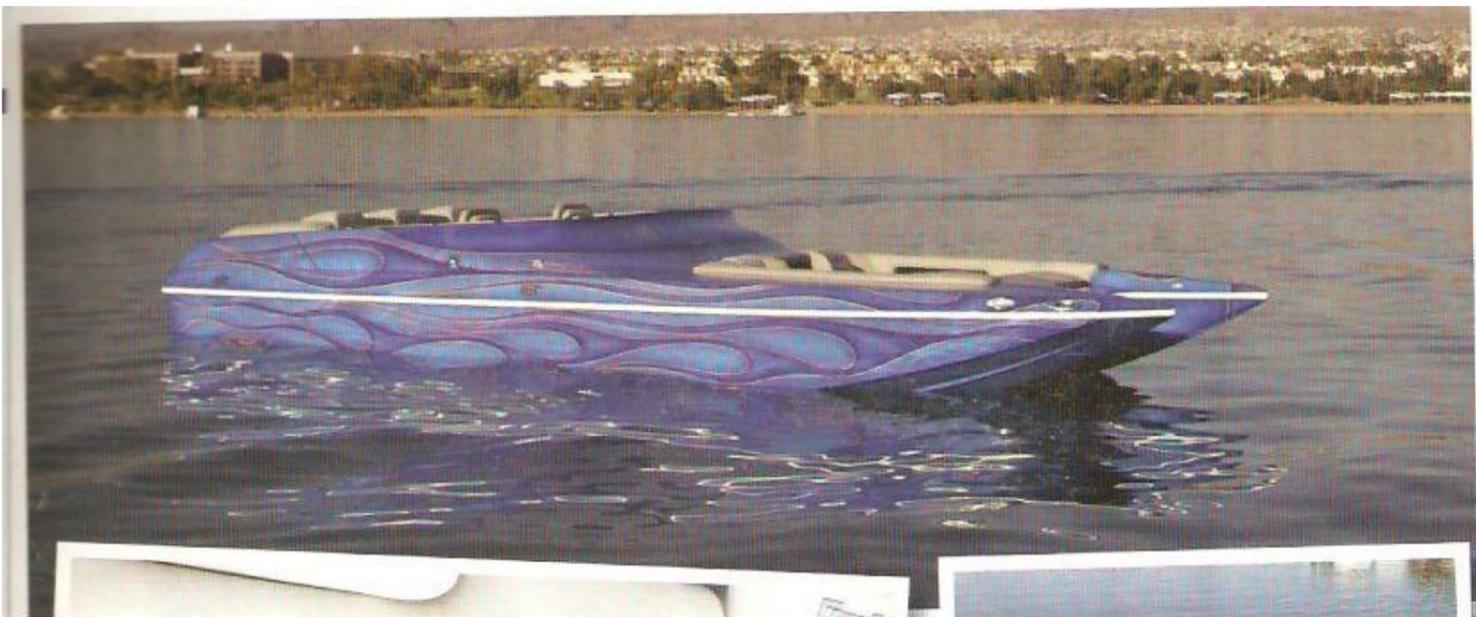
The other reason the boat has been around so long is that Cougar builds it well. The manufacturer lays up the boat with hand-laid glass and vinylester resins with composite coring materials. The mold work and gelcoat finish earned solid marks from our inspectors, as did the installation of the molded plastic rubrail that protected the flaming graphics.

In the engine compartment, custom solid mounts secured the Ilmor V-10 to aluminum L-angles that were through-bolted to the wood stringers. Twin Optima batteries were in billet aluminum boxes to port ahead of the IMCO fuel changeover valve that was mounted on the transom. All wires and hoses were routed neatly and supported in evenly spaced Adel stainless-steel cushioned clamps.

With the hatch closed, the 27 MTR's cockpit had a classic feel with some decent space between the aft bench and the front bucket seats. In the cockpit, there's space for three to sit comfortably on the aft bench that has stowage in the base. There are map pockets on the gunwales for more convenient small-item stowage as well. There's also room to stretch out and tan on the padded engine hatch. On the transom, the boat was equipped with an optional Dana Marine bolt-on swim step fitted with an Aqua-Step ladder.

Up front the driver and co-pilot travel in high-backed bucket seats that provide decent support and you have a good view of all the Livorsi instruments. Given that this model doesn't have an expansive dash panel, the gauge layout worked well. The Livorsi Marine instruments are in a single row above the steering wheel with a mechanical trim indicator for the drive horizontally installed to the left of the helm. Fortunately it won't be hard to get the throttle repositioned to let the engine rev up all the way because it's in a separate box to starboard. Just move the whole assembly back an inch or two and the lever should have ample full clearance.

With the boat's low profile, the optional cuddy area is what you'd expect. You crawl to enter and once you're down there, you can relax in the facing lounges. The bowrider area has a playpen-like feel that should make it inviting to kids, which should ensure that the 27 MTR stays around for another decade. **10**



#### SPECIFICATIONS:

Centerline:	27'3"
Beam:	102"
Bottom:	catamaran/modified tunnel
Deadrise:	15
Drivetrain:	Ilmor Marine MV10-710 w/Teague Custom Marine Platinum XR drive
HP @ Prop:	700
Overall weight:	3,900
Base price:	\$80,000 w/MerCruiser 496 MAG HO
Top speed:	76.6 mph at 5550 rpm

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