

LOADED DECK

THE 30 SPORT DECK FROM DAVE'S CUSTOM BOATS SETS THE BAR—AND SETS IT MIGHTY HIGH—FOR CUSTOM DECK BOATS.

WE CAN HEAR THE GROANS COMING FROM THE EAST. TRUE ENOUGH, CUSTOM DECK BOATS are as hard to find east of the Mississippi River as good pizza is to find west of it, but that doesn't mean the go-fast deck-boat class isn't worth covering. It's even safe to say that out West, high-performance deck boats have, to a significant extent, carried the performance-boat market for the past few years.

Call us crazy or worse, but we think even the most hardened deck-boat hater would be converted by a ride in the phenomenal 30 Sport Deck from Dave's Custom Boats. The 30-footer, at least the one we tested in Parker, Ariz., handled as well as any sport catamaran in its class, was built with almost maniacal attention to detail and boasted a decidedly nontraditional, but completely compelling layout.

Sure, with an as-tested price of more than \$375,000, some \$89,000 of which was represented by a power upgrade to 625-horsepower Ilmor Marine MV-10 engines, the 30 Sport Deck was for high-end customers. But you get what you pay for as the saying goes, and the 30 Sport Deck displayed no weaknesses during our performance test or inspections.

PERFORMANCE

DCB has built about a half-dozen 30 Sport Decks since the model was introduced in 2007, according to a representative from the company. In our first encounter with the new model that year, the company sent us one with twin 900-hp engines and it topped 140 mph. Relative to that model, the 30 Sport Deck with a combined 1,250 hp was conservatively powered.

Still, with the engines turning 5,700 rpm, the catamaran reached 119.7 mph—not a speed any responsible driver would even consider approaching with a crowd up front. In the midrange acceleration department, the boat did consistently strong work running from

30 to 50 mph in 5.9 seconds, 40 to 60 mph in 6.7 seconds and 40 to 70 mph in 9.8 seconds.

Propped and set up for top speed with 33"-pitch Mercury Maximus five-blade propellers and 1.35:1 gear reductions in the IMCO Marine Xtreme Advantage SC drives, the boat's somewhat sluggish time to plane of 8.3 seconds was predictable. As was that cat's lackluster zero-to-20-second speed of 69 mph.

But the 30 Sport Deck's handling manners more than made up for its fair-to-middling holeshot. A center pod between the sponsons helped the catamaran lean into and carve through turns. As the boat speed increased, the turns became more precise, and yet the 30-footer never caught or grabbed. What's more,

it never felt as if it might. Far and away, it was the best-handling deck boat we tested during the 2009 Performance Trials.

Ride quality was top shelf. At one point during our tests, we passed through a washing-machine chum of wakeboard-boat slop around 100 mph, and the 30 Sport Deck didn't bobble, much less budge from its course.

"This boat tracks great all the time, and it goes over bumps really well," said our lead test driver.

INTERIOR

In a typical West Coast custom deck boat, there are twin forward-facing lounges in the open bow, and two bucket seats and a rear bench or L-shape lounge in the cockpit. Though relatively standard up front, the 30-footer boasted four high-back bucket seats in the cockpit. Most of the 30 Sport Deck models have been ordered with the bucket-seat setup, said Bryan Weerheim, sales manager for DCB.

"With a traditional cockpit, you might get seating for another passenger, but it wouldn't be nearly as comfortable, especially at higher speeds, than the four-bucket setup," said our lead inspector.

Twin acrylic quarter-canopies with minimal distortion kept wind off the driver and co-pilot. For cockpit stowage, there were lockers with hinged lids built into the gunwales, as well as



» VITALS: PRICE: \$379,655 TOP SPEED: 119.7 MPH





TEST RESULTS >>>

TEST CONDITIONS

Temperature/humidity	98 degrees/35 percent
Wind speed/water conditions	2 to 4 mph/flat

HULL INFORMATION

Deadrise at transom	14.5 degrees
Centerline/beam	30'/8"10"
Hull weight	7,000 pounds

PRICING INFORMATION

Base retail with twin MerCruiser 496 Mag HO engines	\$219,950
Price as tested	\$379,655

ENGINE & PROPELLER

Engine	(2) Ilmor Marine MV-10 625
Cylinder type	V-10
Cubic-inch displacement/horsepower	505/625
Lower-unit gear ratio	1.35:1
Propeller	Mercury Maximus 15 1/4" x 33"

OPTIONS ON TEST BOAT

Upgrade to twin Ilmor Marine MV-10 625 engines (\$89,750), standoff boxes (\$10,500), vacuum-bagged construction (\$9,000), custom half-cap with stainless-steel rubrail (\$7,900), gelcoat upgrade (\$6,995), IMCO Marine drives with drive showers (\$6,950), Penske composite board (\$3,750), snap-in carpet with DCB custom design (\$2,995), slip-in Gatlin mufflers (\$2,975), sea strainers with remote pickups (\$2,950), epoxy-coated hatch with painted graphics (\$2,950), custom painted blocks (\$2,795), polished manifolds (\$1,695), Bluewater trim indicators (\$1,675), fiberglass hardback seats (\$1,495), tilt helm (\$1,275), Fire Boy fire extinguisher (\$995), billet sand shower (\$895), billet LED navigation and interior lights (\$795), 40-amp charger (\$775) and Teague Custom Marine billet drive reservoirs (\$595).

ACCELERATION

5 seconds	17 mph
10 seconds	33 mph
15 seconds	52 mph
20 seconds	69 mph

MIDRANGE ACCELERATION

30-50 mph	5.9 seconds
40-60 mph	6.7 seconds
40-70 mph	9.8 seconds
60-100 mph	15.2 seconds

RPM VS. MPH

1000	10 mph	3500	77 mph
1500	24 mph	4000	86 mph
2000	33 mph	4500	99 mph
2500	50 mph	5000	111 mph
3000	64 mph	5500	116 mph

TOP SPEED AT RPM

Stalker Radar	119.7 mph at 5,700
Livorsi Marine GPS	119 mph

PLANING

Time to plane	8.3 seconds
Minimum planing speed	21 mph

FUEL ECONOMY

40 mph	NA
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FUEL CAPACITY

	130 gallons
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TEST LOCATION (ELEVATION)

	Parker, Ariz. (450 feet)
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MANUFACTURER

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a locker in the sole. Larger items would likely be stowed in the dash pod lockers.

Recessed angled footrests built into the dash pods were provided for the driver and co-pilot. The co-pilot's station to port was equipped with a locking glove box, a Livorsi Marine GPS speedometer and a CD stereo headset/control under a substantial billet lid. At the helm, the gauges were arranged in classic DCB fashion, meaning they wrapped around the cockpit, much like those in an aircraft. The boat's Latham Marine throttles were mounted in a gunwale recess.

WORKMANSHIP

Dave's Custom Boats built the completely vacuum-bagged boat with vinyl ester resin and Penske composites. For coring, the builder used balsa. Though the boat was capped at the bow and stern, DCB did install a protective stainless-steel strip to cover the hull-and-deck joint on the sides. Naturally, the screw heads for the stainless piece were aligned.

Hull and deck tooling were nothing short of immaculate. The deck boat's colors were bright and distinct from one another, and the builder didn't make a tooling error. And we looked. Hard. On the West Coast, DCB continues to set the standard for mold work excellence.

As it does with engine-compartment rigging, the builder installed the naturally aspirated V-10 engines—color-matched in silver to the graphics and carbon-fiber-pattern upholstery sections—on in-house-fabricated mounts through-bolted to the stringers.

Evenly spaced cushion clamps secured the wiring and hoses. For easy cleanup, the bilge was sanded and gelcoated to a glossy white finish. Billet boxes held the boat's trio of Odyssey PC1200 batteries.

Billet also was used for the boat's notable pieces of hardware, including its grab handles and the inserts for the swim platform, which had a retractable ladder on the underside. Pushpin-style fender holders helped preserve the catamaran's clean deck lines.

OVERALL

DCB's comfortable 30 Sport Deck delivered—and delivered big—in every category. It was built with the kind of attention to detail, pride and integrity that separates great boats from simply good ones. It handled brilliantly and, though soft out of the hole thanks to its speed-focused setup, was plenty fast. If a custom deck boat is in your plans and cost is no object, this one will be mighty hard to pass up. **P**

Clockwise from top left: The three oversized Livorsi Marine gauges included the DCB logo. Rigged to perfection, the 625-horsepower Ilmor Marine engines provided great punch in the 30 Sport Deck. Mounted in the dash pod ahead of the co-pilot were three Alpine amplifiers. The bow walk-through featured stowage compartments on each side of it.



WHAT WE LOVED: Everything about the 30 Sport Deck—but handling manners and build quality drew the most praise.
WHAT WE'D LIKE TO SEE: A little different setup that balances holeshot and standing-start acceleration with top speed.