



GEM QUALITY

THE LATEST FX-28 FROM DAVE'S CUSTOM BOATS IS AN EXCELLENT EXAMPLE OF A HIGH-END SPORT BOAT.

WITH ALL THE STUNNING SPORT catamarans that come out of Dave's Custom Boats in El Cajon, Calif., it's easy to forget that the high-quality builder also offers V-bottom models. And for buyers in the market for a white-hot, single-engine sport boat, that memory lapse would be a big mistake because the closed-deck 28-footer dubbed the FX-28 simply rocks.

That's our take, at least based on the model we tested in Long Beach, Calif. Impeccably constructed, the stepped-V-bottom proved strong and stable enough to handle an 800-horsepower supercharged engine, which in many 28-foot sport boats would be overkill. Of course, the boat is offered with less powerful engines. But it sure was a kick in the pants with the power DCB chose.

PERFORMANCE

The Teague Custom Marine 800 EFI power plant was matched to a TCM Platinum XR drive with a 1.5:1 gear reduction and an IMCO Marine lower unit. The builder chose a 30"-pitch Bravo One four-blade stainless-steel propeller to put the engine's horsepower and torque to good use.

Under-promise and over-deliver is a good policy, and that's exactly what DCB did when it came to the FX-28's top speed. The builder promised the boat would top out at 85 mph. We got it to 90.5 mph with the engine turning 5,750 rpm. Thanks to the effective quarter-canopies, we could hardly feel the onrushing breeze.

But getting there was at least half—and probably more—of the fun. Its time to plane of 4.5 seconds was decent though hardly blistering,

but once the boat came over it took off like a jet. In a 0-to-20-second acceleration run, the FX-28 reached 82 mph. Best of all was the 28-footer's midrange juice. It launched from 30 to 50 mph in 4 seconds, 40 to 60 mph in 4.3 seconds and 40 to 70 mph in 8.6 seconds.

Thanks to a strong onshore afternoon breeze and various commercial workboats moving in and out of Long Beach Harbor, the water conditions were pretty rough for a boat likely to see most of its action on the Colorado River. To its credit, the FX-28 rode smoothly through the rough stuff.

"On a decent day, you'd have no trouble getting this boat to Catalina," said lead test driver Bob Teague, referring to the Pacific Ocean island 26 miles beyond the Long Beach breakwater. "It can handle bad chop, and it's definitely built to take it. You don't hear any



rattles, and we hit some pretty big wakes.”

To counter various sea conditions, the boat was equipped with Eddie Marine trim tabs. A bit of negative tab input at the high end of the sport boat’s operating range actually produced a little more top-end.

In agility drills, the FX-28 earned top marks. As always, the full hydraulic steering system from Latham Marine played a positive role in that department. We looked hard to find smooth water, and we finally discovered some behind one of the man-made islands in the harbor. There we cranked one severe turn after the next, increasing the speed in each series. The FX-28 never slipped or grabbed. Even in rougher water, the boat felt hooked up in hard corners.

In high-speed sweeping turns, the boat displayed the same sure-footed precision.





TEST RESULTS: DAVE'S CUSTOM BOATS FX-28

TEST CONDITIONS

Temperature/humidity	63 degrees/NA
Wind speed/water conditions	4 mph/1' to 2' chop

HULL INFORMATION

Deadrise at transom	22 degrees
Centerline/beam	28'/8"5"
Hull weight	5,000 pounds

PRICING INFORMATION

Base retail with MerCruiser 496 Mag HO engine	\$121,950
Price as tested	\$205,665

ENGINE & PROPELLER

Engine	Teague Custom Marine 800 EFI
Cylinder type	V-8
Cubic-inch displacement/horsepower	509/800
Lower-unit gear ratio	1.5:1
Propeller	Mercury Bravo One 15 1/4" x 30"

OPTIONS ON TEST BOAT

Upgrade to Teague Custom Marine 800 EFI engine (\$55,000), dual ram hydraulic steering (\$4,900), corner cap with stainless-steel rubrail (\$4,900), gelcoat upgrade (\$4,000), hydraulic tabs (\$3,850), TCM Platinum XR drive (\$3,475), epoxy hatch with painted graphics (\$2,600), low water pump with sea strainer (\$1,525), hidden bimini (\$1,295), stainless tilt helm (\$1,275) and billet LED navigation lights (\$895).

ACCELERATION

5 seconds	32 mph
10 seconds	62 mph
15 seconds	75 mph
20 seconds	82 mph

MIDRANGE ACCELERATION

30-50 mph	4 seconds
40-60 mph	4.3 seconds
40-70 mph	8.6 seconds

RPM VS. MPH

1000	7 mph
1500	10 mph
2000	15 mph
2500	21 mph
3000	39 mph
3500	51 mph
4000	59 mph
4500	70 mph
5000	80 mph
5500	86 mph

TOP SPEED AT RPM

Radar	90.1 mph at 5,750
GPS	90.5 mph

PLANING

Time to plane	4.5 seconds
Minimum planing speed	20 mph

FUEL ECONOMY

At 30 mph	NA
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FUEL CAPACITY

	80 gallons
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TEST CONDUCTED AT (ELEVATION)

	Long Beach, Calif. (Sea level)
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MANUFACTURER

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WHAT WE LOVED: Impressive top speed for the power, cracking-good acceleration and great handling manners.

WHAT WE'D LIKE TO SEE: A rear bench with built-in buckets, which DCB has already proven it can do.

WORKMANSHIP

Though the FX-28 is available in vacuum-bagged composite form, our test model had a conventional layout. (Of course there is a significant up-charge, as there is with almost all builders, for composite construction.) The boat was built with vinylester resin and multidirectional fiberglass. Balsa was used for coring.

The boat's gelcoat graphics and mold work were immaculate. So, too, was the installation of the uncommonly clear quarter-canopies and the stainless-steel rubrail on the hullsides—the boat was capped on its bow and stern.

For hardware, DCB kept things sleek and unobtrusive. For cleats, the builder opted for the pushpin variety that incorporated a line and fender. The LED navigation lights in billet housings fit the boat perfectly.

As always, at least in our experience, DCB did a stellar job with the FX-28's engine-compartment rigging. Custom-fabricated mounts through-bolted to the stringers kept the super-charged big-block from budging. To make sure the parallel runs of wire and cable, as well as wire looms, didn't go anywhere, the builder used stainless-steel cushion clamps.

INTERIOR

DCB builds its own high-back bucket seats, and their structure incorporates carbon fiber.

You can see it on the seatbacks, and the material is as eye-catching as it is sturdy. Two of those buckets, as well as a conventional straight-back three-person bench, were provided in the cockpit of the FX-28.

Snap-in carpet covered the cockpit sole. Stowage options included lockers under the bench cushions, gunwale compartments with their own hinged lids and a locking glove box at the co-pilot's dash. Always welcome in rough water, padding went up to the gunwale tops. Grab handles were appropriately placed.

Livorsi Marine Monster gauges were above the tilt steering wheel. Also from Livorsi, the shifter and throttle were mounted in a recess in the starboard gunwale. Protected by rubber boots, the accessory switches were installed in function-etched panels.

Though not overly spacious, the cabin in the FX-28 was usable. The builder wisely left the space open to the cockpit. Inside, there were facing love seats, two coolers in padded retainers and courtesy lights.

OVERALL

The DCB FX-28 is, without a doubt, an upper-tier sport boat. It has all the build quality of the company's sport catamarans, and few models in the boat's class can touch its performance. Those who think only of sport cats when they think of DCB need to think again. **P**

Clockwise from top left: An 800-horsepower engine from Teague Custom Marine supplied power to the 28-footer. The tilt helm was part of an effective full hydraulic steering system from Latham Marine. The FX-28 cockpit featured high-back buckets seats and a three-person rear bench. Grab handles were custom fabricated with the DCB logo.

