



INTO THE GREAT WIDE OPEN

NEW FOR 2009, THE M-35 WIDEBODY SPORT CATAMARAN FROM DAVE'S CUSTOM BOATS BREAKS 160 MPH AND HANDLES LIKE A DREAM.

The best high-performance boatbuilders—and Dave Hemmingson of Dave's Custom Boats is certainly among them—never stop thinking about what's next. Business can be booming with production scheduled for the next year or so, and they're still thinking about new models. For Hemmingson, that meant thinking big or, more accurately, wide.

"For years, I've wanted to do a cat with a 10-foot beam—our F-Series cats have 9-foot beams—so I could put in a fourth rear seat and a full wrap windshield," Hemmingson said during the Parker, Ariz., leg of our 100-mph Roundup. "I guess we've been working on it, since I really got it in my head, for the past three years."

Tagged the M-35 WideBody—an M-31 WideBody is due out by the end of the year—the catamaran flat-out wowed test drivers Bob Teague and John Tomlinson. Both described the boat as a rocket with impeccable handling manners, particularly at high speeds.

"At top speed, this thing is just on rails," Tomlinson said. "I turned it pretty hard at 150 mph and I felt like I could turn it even harder. I didn't do it, of course."

"Handling at the upper speeds is really good," Teague added. "And it went over wakeboard-boat wakes at 150 mph like they weren't even there. It tracks perfectly."

For its debut M-35 WideBody, DCB went big with the power, opting for a pair of 5.0-liter Whipple-supercharged Teague Custom Marine 1200 EFI engines. With those powerhouses connected to Mercury Racing 1.29:1-gear-ratio No. 6 dry-sump drives spinning 40"-pitch Hering propellers, the cat reached 161 mph. That tied it with the 48 Cat from Outerlimits—heady company to be sure—as the second-fastest boat in this roundup.

Amazingly efficient, the boat ran 116 mph with the engines turning 4,500 rpm—almost loafing for the all-black TCM 1200s—and 128 mph at 5,000 rpm. About the only area

of performance in which the catamaran was lackluster was in standing-start acceleration. It had to be coaxed on plane and reached just 76 mph from a standing start in 20 seconds. The boat was set up for top-end—this is a speed roundup, after all—so a less-aggressive, more-recreational setup would surely cure that.

Hemmingson said the boat shares "the same hull technology" as the company's F-Series catamarans. However, to create the wider beam, the builder expanded the tunnel, which has a center pod, and widened each sponson 1 1/2 inches.

As promised, Hemmingson included a four-person, bucket-style bench, as well as high-back bucket seats for the driver and co-pilot. He also delivered a wraparound windshield—designed by DCB and built by Acrylifab Plastics—that boasted zero distortion and protected all seats from the onrushing breeze, which could be considerable given the top speed of the M-35 WideBody with its monstrous 2,400-horsepower. The builder even managed to fit in a usable cabin with facing lounges and hatch that provided access to the bow.

The 35-footer's padded dash featured Livorsi Marine gauges below the glare-eliminating eyebrow, and throttles and shifters from Latham Marine were between the buckets seats. Other notable amenities included a headset intercom system and a Northstar 6100i GPS unit.

Our test model was the first M-35 WideBody out of the molds, but we'd have never known it if we hadn't been told. Tooling was immaculate, as was the combination of silver gelcoat and black paint. The engines were installed on rails and custom mounts, and all of the wiring was organized and supported neatly and thoroughly.

The M-35 WideBody from Dave's Custom Boats was, right out of the gate, a stellar offering. We're not sure what Hemmingson will think of next, but we're fairly certain he's already thinking of something.—MT

From left: From the step plates to the grab handles next to the rear bucket seats, most of the hardware in the M-35 WideBody was built in-house. Everything in the 35-footer's cockpit was silver and black to match the graphics. Below the see-through engine hatches was a pair of supercharged 1,200-horsepower engines.





SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE

(2) Teague Custom Marine 1200 EFI

PROPELLER

Hering five-blade 16 1/2" x 40"

TOP SPEED

161 mph at 6,000 rpm

PRICE AS TESTED

\$656,000

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ADDITIONAL TEST RESULTS ON PAGE 64.