

Powerboat

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MEAN MACHINE

Vector's latest V280-R wows with its on-water performance and cool appearance.

ANIMATED IS NOT NORMALLY A WORD USED to describe either of the POWERBOAT Test Team drivers Bob Teague or John Tomlinson. Both are fairly nonchalant when it comes to the boats tested during the annual Performance Trials.

That's not to say Teague and Tomlinson don't have fun testing all the catamarans and V-bottoms—come on, who wouldn't? But they are often so focused on their responsibilities that excitement isn't an expression that pours from either of them.

Such was not the case as Teague and Tomlinson brought the V280-R from Vector Powerboats back to the docks at the BlueWater Resort & Casino in Parker, Ariz.

Teague thoroughly enjoyed the "Bat Boat"-inspired V-bottom, while Tomlinson was quite giddy about the unique boat. Suffice to say, they were sold on the V280-R.

PERFORMANCE

"I like this boat—it feels like you're driving a go-cart," Tomlinson said.

Teague added, "It's a fun little hot rod."

Based on the design of the B28 by Ocke Mannerfelt (commonly referred to as a "Bat

Boat"), Vector Powerboats utilized the same two-step hull design with a handful of strakes running along the bottom. As proven on race-courses across the globe, the design is efficient.

The test model the Canadian manufacturer delivered was a fine example of efficiency. The propulsion package on the narrow V-bottom consisted of a single Ilmor Marine MV-10 7-10 engine hooked up to a Teague Custom Marine Platinum XR drive on an IMCO Marine stand-off box. The builder selected a lab-finished 30"-pitch Mercury Bravo One propeller.

With those components working together, the boat tapped the 100-mph mark on the GPS speedometer during a morning photo shoot, but came up a bit short of the century mark during the test with a top speed on the Stalker radar gun of 98.4 mph at 5,700 rpm.

The 28-footer accelerated pretty fast and displayed excellent throttle response in all power ranges. The boat needed just 3.9 seconds to reach plane. Six seconds later the V280-R was at 60 mph, and 10 seconds after that it was running 91 mph.

In midrange acceleration drills, the boat ran from 30 to 50 mph in 4.1 seconds and from 40 to 70 mph in 6.1 seconds. Teague detected a small acceleration and deceleration reaction

while driving the boat, which is common for narrow, single-engine boats with as much torque as the Ilmor engine provided.

Handling characteristics were top-notch. The V-bottom received high marks in 30-, 40- and 50-mph slaloms, and it was smooth in turns at cruising and full speed. The boat also tracked perfectly at all speeds.

"You need to spend some time in this boat to learn its limitations," Tomlinson said. "It's very responsive on the steering, but being that it's so narrow, I feel you could turn it really hard and lean it on its side."

Teague noticed the same thing, but never felt unsafe in the boat as the "wings" kept the boat from leaning too far.

And while both drivers enjoyed driving the V280-R, the duo pointed out that the boat had limited practicality. Company principal Rex Jardine didn't disagree.

"This is not a high-volume boat," he said. "This is a boat we're building for special people who can appreciate what we do here."

WORKMANSHIP

One person who appreciated Vector's build quality was our lead inspector. He called the



TEST RESULTS: VECTOR POWERBOATS V280-R

TEST CONDITIONS

Temperature/humidity	75 degrees/36 percent
Wind speed/water conditions	1 to 3 mph/flat

HULL INFORMATION

Deadrise at transom	22 degrees
Centerline/beam	28'/10"
Hull weight	3,600 pounds

PRICING INFORMATION

Base retail with Ilmor Marine MV-10 550 engine	\$229,000
Price as tested	\$259,080

ENGINE & PROPELLER

Engine	Ilmor Marine MV-10 7-10
Cylinder type	V-10
Cubic-inch displacement/horsepower	505/700
Lower-unit gear ratio	1.50:1
Propeller	Lab-finished Mercury Bravo One 15 1/4" x 30"

OPTIONS ON TEST BOAT

Upgrade to Ilmor Marine 7-10 engine (\$20,000), switchable exhaust (\$3,200), twin swim steps with ladder (\$3,000), IMCO Marine stand-off box (\$3,000), IMCO Marine quad-ram transom assembly (\$460) and silver finish on upper drive (\$420).

ACCELERATION

5 seconds	39 mph
10 seconds	60 mph
15 seconds	80 mph
20 seconds	91 mph

MIDRANGE ACCELERATION

30-50 mph	4.1 seconds
40-60 mph	4.3 seconds
40-70 mph	6.1 seconds

RPM VS. MPH

1000	8 mph
1500	19 mph
2000	25 mph
2500	37 mph
3000	46 mph
3500	61 mph
4000	70 mph
4500	80 mph
5000	90 mph
5500	96 mph

TOP SPEED AT RPM

Radar	98.4 mph at 5,700
GPS	98 mph

PLANING

Time to plane	3.9 seconds
Minimum planing speed	17 mph

FUEL ECONOMY

At 30 mph	NA
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FUEL CAPACITY

	50 gallons
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TEST LOCATION (ELEVATION)

	Parker, Ariz. (450 feet)
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MANUFACTURER

Vector Powerboats, Dept. PB, 1810 Kyle Court., Westbank, British Columbia, V1Z 3Z4, 250-769-3518, www.vectorpowerboats.com.

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WHAT WE LOVED: The V-bottom's sporty appearance and handling characteristics, and its quality of construction.

WHAT WE'D LIKE TO SEE: Roomier space around the driver's seat, in particular a little more legroom.

boat's fit and finish "amazing." In fact, he gave the boat a perfect score of 10 when it came to quality of construction and attention to detail. Those scores aren't handed out all the time.

By far the most mesmerizing part of the boat was the flawless gelcoat. Cooler than most paint jobs we see, the builder opted to ghost candy-apple red flames into the all-black paint job along the hullsides and on the deck. The Vector logo also was ghosted in red ahead of the half-inch acrylic wraparound windshield that had an aluminum billet strip in the center with Vector spelled down the middle of it.

"It's obviously a very intense build because there is no rubrail," our inspector said, praising the boat and its custom finishing.

Vector utilized a wood-free, foam-core construction and the V-bottom was laid up with vinylester resins and knit fabrics.

Hardware on the boat was minimal, although the large billet swim steps mounted on the transom were quite nice—a nifty add-on from the debut V280-R at a previous Performance Trials. Access to the Ilmor 7-10 engine was decent through the manual engine hatches, and Vector did a fine job with the installation.

INTERIOR

Attention to detail didn't drop off in the interior either. Although simple, it was still well done. Chrome Livorsi Marine controls

were mounted in the center-console between the driver and observer bucket seats.

Instruments, including two Livorsi Monster gauges with carbon-fiber faces, were situated on a panel ahead of the throttle and shifter. The gauges were set in chrome bezels angled toward the driver. At the helm to starboard was an IMCO Marine tilt helm and accessories switches to the right of the steering wheel.

Seating consisted of four fiberglass-molded, deep bucket seats with finely crafted red upholstery. Individual snap-in carpet mats covered the nonskid sole in front of each bucket seat. Stainless-steel grab handles were easy to reach from every seat and all of the stereo speakers had billet covers.

The 28-footer came with a bare-bones cabin, which was basically a large sleeping area with stowage below the cushions. A cool feature was the billet piece ahead of the co-pilot's seat to port that could be raised and locked in place as a footrest, or lowered into the sole to enter the cabin.

OVERALL

If we rated boats on cool factor, Vector's V280-R would be at or near the top of the list. From its performance attributes to its outstanding craftsmanship, the V-bottom was impressive. Is it worth the \$259,000 price tag? That's up to the buyer. **P**

Clockwise from top left: The Ilmor Marine 7-10 engine was a great fit in the 28-footer. From the upholstery on the bucket seats to the gauge installation, Vector's attention to detail was tremendous. An acrylic wraparound windshield did a fine job keeping passengers comfortable. The builder put swim steps on each side of the drive.





Powerboat's lead inspector called the Vectors fit and finish "amazing." In fact, he gave the boat a perfect score of **10** when it came to **quality of construction and attention to detail.**



VECTOR
POWERBOATS