

TEST BENCH

Sea Ray SRV 197 Bowrider

Check out the numbers on this Sea Ray 19 footer and you'll see what's behind the popularity of these moderate-vee sport boats. In his first *Canadian Yachting Test Bench Report*, power contributor Andy Adams has a few reproving remarks but is, on the whole, impressed.



The 1977 Sea Ray SRV 197 Bowrider is a nice looking boat with the deep vee ocean racer type styling that seems so popular these days, a steeply raked windshield and a handsomely appointed interior. The boat used for our first Test Bench Report was supplied by Alf Mortimer of Port Sandfield Marine, the Sea Ray distributor for the Muskokas. It was powered by a 165 Mercruiser I/O. Judging by the number of Sea Rays one sees cruising about these days there must be something right about the boats.

The Sea Ray SRV 197, has an 18-ft. 6-in. centreline length, with a beam of 96-in. and it weighs approximately 2,900 lbs. That's wide and heavy for a boat under 19-ft. and it shows. The boat is nice and stable when moored, and there is all sorts of room inside to walk around. The wide beam means that a very wide aisle between the seats is possible and in the bowrider style, that's handy for people who want to walk up to the bow cockpit ahead of the windshield. The windshield itself is a skiff type, three section affair that swings open in the

centre to allow access to the forward cockpit. The centre section swings forward and clips to the passenger side of the windshield to secure.

The bow cockpit is nicely finished with pile carpet and thickly padded seats. As long as the weather is favourable, four or five people could be accommodated in this area and it seems to offer a good measure of utility without going to the square bow designs (I know that the square bow types offer the most space for the length but I just don't like their looks). Surprisingly though, while I feel that the bowrider Sea Ray is the best of both worlds, (lots of space and pretty lines), the buyers do not agree with me. The regular deck Sea Ray 195 model is the better seller by a good margin.

The reason that the decked model sells best could be that the bowrider has a drafty personality. Even with the tonneau cover over the forward cockpit and the windshield secured, little drafts find their way in on cold evenings and play about your feet. The deck-

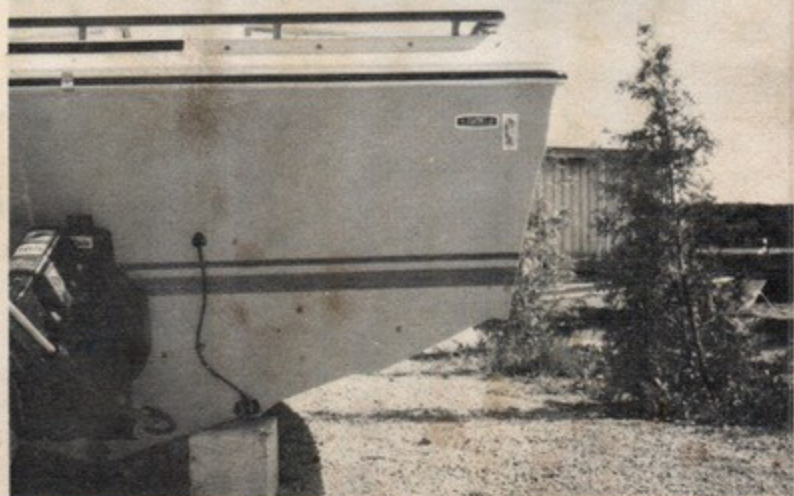


ed version seems to be much more cozy in foul weather and regrettably, we do get some of that in Canada.

The rest of the cockpit is very pleasant indeed. The captain has a wide selection of gauges to monitor the mechanical functions, and to impress the crew, and during our testing there was no trouble with any of them. Even the power trim gauge seemed to be in good working order and for some reason, that's almost never the

case. Most power trim gauges that I have ever run across have been somewhere between faulty and ridiculous, pointing straight up or being right off the dial at all times.

The seats are the fold down type that are found in most boats, but they are equipped with really heavy rails and even the unsupported ends will carry the weight of a full grown man. Many boats are deficient in this respect and the ends will bend or break if used in



Sea Ray's 20° deadrise is a good compromise between rough water handling and at-rest stability.