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TESTS

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- ▶ SEA-DOO 210 CHALLENGER SE
- ▶ RINKER 190 MTX
- ▶ RANGER Z518 COMANCHE
- ▶ BACK COVE 37 SALON EXPRESS

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➔ Tests (#2554)

Monterey M5

EXTENDED BOWRIDER, OR TRIMMED-DOWN deck boat? Monterey's new M5 blurs such distinctions and ultimately renders them meaningless. This model delivers in both categories, with a double helping of performance and spaciousness, plus an extra measure of original styling.

RATHER THAN GET TANGLED UP IN THE DETAILS OF THE design, just think miniature aircraft carrier. At the waterline, it presents a single, fine-entry bow, but when seen from above, the forward profile is broad and blunt. The outboard bow sponsons ride well above the waterline, and the stern section maintains 20 degrees of wave-softening deadrise but also provides plenty of lift. The result: a boat that can slice the chop with deep-V precision, while also carrying a full crew and an arsenal of accessories.

In profile, the M5's swooping rub rails mimic a broken sheer line to create a sense of traditional streamlining. Turn 90 degrees to bow or stern, however, and angles overcome curves to add a touch of machine modern. More important than looks, however, is function. And in this department, the designers certainly hit the long ball. The broad bow area creates entertainment options. Depending on how you configure the filler cushions and removable table, it can become a conversation pit, partial or full sun pad, twin observers' seats or a forward dining area. There are storage compartments in all the expected places — and many are large. Prime examples are the fully finished locker forward of the helm and the upscale treatment of the changing room/head in the port console, which is amply sized for adults and can be plumbed with a full VacuFlush toilet and holding tank.

The central cockpit is commodious and comfortable, the



■ NOTEWORTHY

Though stocked with luxury touches, the M5 is also tough and versatile. With carpet removed, the seamless fiberglass interior cleans easily after active pursuits such as skiing, snorkeling or fishing.

swim platform broad and functional. There's storage for a host of wet and dry goods, a pair of removable coolers and a dedicated transom locker for wake toys.

ENTERTAINING IS DEFINITELY ONE OF THIS BOAT'S strong points, and not just in the bow. There's walk-through access from bow to stern, and the interior divides neatly into three distinct social areas, as the transom-mounted seats and center sun pad turn the swim platform into a waterfront

A convertible fore- and aft-facing lounge along the transom increases cockpit versatility by doubling as a sun pad when extended.

→ Monterey M5

lounge. For those who are serious about on-water tailgating, Monterey offers an optional wet-bar module in place of the compact starboard-side observer's seat. This upgrade can also include an electric grill and a 2,500-watt Xantrex inverter to power 110-volt accessories.

The M5 comes standard with dual batteries, allowing one to be dedicated to accessories without compromising starting power. Both batteries are located centerline and just forward of the engine. Access to the well-organized engine compartment is superb, as the entire box/sun-deck assembly rises on an electronic ram. Dead batteries or malfunctioning lift parts won't spoil your day, as there are jumper contacts on the gunwale, plus access to the ram's release pin through the transom gear locker.

Similarly thorough touches are found throughout the boat. Monterey prides itself on delivering a premium



Carrying the beam forward (above the waterline) produces gains in seating and storage forward of the windshield.

similar to the M5, the model that warrants the most direct comparison is Regal's 2520. Both offer similar interior layouts and near-equivalent performance with a given power choice. Both can also support a big-block option and offer strong performance potential and premium build quality. The 2520 retails in the low \$70,000 range.

The M5 incorporates some additional luxury touches and has a longer range, thanks to an 80-gallon fuel capacity.

With room, range and good rough-water performance, the M5 might be considered the on-water equivalent of an SUV. As with its on-road counterpart, the price is a bit higher than generic transportation, but the investment pays off in the form of a high-quality vessel that will support a wide range of activities, and maintain a sense of style in the process. — *Pierce Hoover*

product, which means unseen undersides are finished out, wiring is chafe-protected and hardware is attached with that extra degree of attention that results in both mechanical and aesthetic success.

OUR TEST BOAT WAS powered by the midrange 5.7 GXi powerplant, but with a single aluminum prop instead of Volvo's Duoprop. This combination delivered respectable acceleration and a 46 mph top end. At midrange speeds, wakes were clean for tubing and

wakeboarding, and the hull stayed on plane predictably at moderate speeds and during turns. With 320 hp, the GX option provides ample power and all the performance most boaters would ever need for cruising. Those more serious about towed water sports might consider spending the extra \$2,900 to upgrade to the Duoprop, just to get a bit more hole shot and total control at sub-20 mph towing speeds.

Though there are several boats in the mid-20-foot range that share hull shapes

TEST POWER:
STERN-DRIVE



High Points

- ▶ Throttle and armrest placement combine with well-designed helm seat to provide superior driver ergonomics.
- ▶ Versatile interior layout allows the party to move forward or stay amidships.
- ▶ Changing room/bathroom console is roomy and well-finished for a boat of this size.

Low Points

- ▶ The top frame of the windshield will be at eye level for some taller drivers.
- ▶ The bow anchor locker also includes a built-in telescoping ladder. Convenient for beaching, but it makes deploying the anchor more difficult.

▶ LOA: 25'10" ▶ Beam: 8'6" ▶ Draft: 20"/36" ▶ Dry Weight: 5,200 lb. ▶ Transom Deadrise: 20 degrees ▶ Fuel Capacity (gal.): 80 ▶ Max. Horsepower: 425 ▶ Available Power: Single MerCruiser and Volvo Penta stern-drives to 425 hp

▶ Price: \$73,356 (base); \$81,414 (as tested)

▼ BOATING Certified Test Results

rpm	SPEED			EFFICIENCY				OPERATION	
	knots	mph	gph	naut. mpg	stat. mpg	n. mi. range	s. mi. range	run angle	sound level
1000	6.30	7.25	1.40	4.50	5.18	405	466	1	70
1500	6.43	7.40	2.30	2.80	3.22	252	290	2	72
2000	7.39	8.50	4.00	1.85	2.13	166	191	5	74
2500	9.86	11.35	7.30	1.35	1.55	122	140	6	76
3000	20.77	23.90	8.90	2.33	2.69	210	242	2	79
3500	27.42	31.55	11.20	2.45	2.82	220	254	2	81
4000	31.89	36.70	14.20	2.25	2.58	202	233	1	85
4500	36.45	41.95	19.70	1.85	2.13	167	192	1	88
4950	40.19	46.25	23.40	1.72	1.98	155	178	1	91

MOST ECONOMICAL CRUISING SPEED

TIME TO PLANE: 4.7 sec. TIME TO 30 MPH: 9.4 sec.

HOW WE TESTED

ENGINE: Volvo 5.7 GXi 320 hp DRIVE/PROP: SX 14" x 19" aluminum
GEAR RATIO: 1.51:1 FUEL LOAD: 60 gal. WATER ON BOARD: 10 gal.
PASSENGER WEIGHT: 400 lb.

Monterey Boats Williston, Florida, 352-529-2628; montereyboats.com

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