



MORE IS MORE

B&H continues to upgrade its already strong Water Rod 300 sport boat.

THE FIRST TIME WE TESTED A WATER ROD 300 several years ago, a few things stood out. First, the sport boat performed well—it was nimble, steady and produced strong numbers for the power. Second, it was decked out with features. Third, it was uncommonly spacious for a 30-footer.

We're pleased to report that hasn't changed for the 2008 version. But there have been a few upgrades. For example, the flip-down video screen in the midcabin has been replaced by a bulkhead-installed flat-screen. For its stereo systems, B&H switched to Kicker from Kenwood. Also for the new-model year, the builder went with a lighter-tinted acrylic windscreen that drivers and passengers can better see through.

One of the best things B&H has retained in the Water Rod 300 is competitive pricing. With a Volvo Penta 600 DPX engine and a few other goodies, the as-tested price for the boat was \$138,928.

PERFORMANCE

We know what you're thinking: Volvo Penta

discontinued production of the 600 DPX a few years ago. And you're right. But B&H had one in stock and decided to install it in the test boat they delivered to Parker, Ariz. For buyers who'd rather go with currently produced power, the company offers the model with engines from MerCruiser, Mercury Racing and Teague Custom Marine.

The 600-horsepower engine was paired with a 1.59:1 ratio DuoProp drive with an E2 propeller set. With the engine turning 5,600 rpm, the two-step, 6,200-pound boat hit a solid 79.5-mph top speed.

Time to plane with the Dana Marine 1000 trim tabs down was 4.8 seconds. In a 0-to-20-second acceleration test, the Water Rod 300 reached 68 mph. Decent in the midrange acceleration department, as well, the boat ran from 30 to 50 mph in 6.2 seconds and from 40 to 60 mph in 7.1 seconds.

For the most part, the Water Rod 300 handled well. It did tend to tail-slip slightly in aggressive slalom turns, but it also tracked exceptionally at all speeds. The relatively high idle speed of the engine (approximately

850 rpm) made the boat a bit jumpy at the docks when shifted into forward and reverse, but that characteristic wasn't too difficult to get used to.

Even in sloppy Colorado River conditions, the Water Rod 300 managed to produce a smooth ride. And the ride was quiet, as rattles, creaks and groans were minimal.

INTERIOR

Our inspectors appreciated the V-bottom's deep open bow, as well as the padding on the gunwales above the forward-facing lounges. Stainless-steel handrails provided security. For stowage, there were gunwale trays, a locker in the carpeted sole and an anchor locker under the shared forward center cushion for the lounges.

Thanks to great headroom, the midcabin didn't feel cramped. Features included the previously mentioned flat-screen television, a CD/DVD entertainment system, a flush-mounted Sharp microwave oven, twin ice chests and indirect blue LED lighting behind





TEST RESULTS: B&H WATER ROD 300

TEST CONDITIONS

Temperature/humidity	73 degrees/30 percent
Wind speed/water conditions	1 to 2 mph/flat

HULL INFORMATION

Deadrise at transom	22 degrees
Centerline/beam	29'8"/8'6"
Hull weight	6,200 pounds

PRICING INFORMATION

Base retail with MerCruiser 496 Mag engine	\$95,900
Price as tested	\$138,928

ENGINE & PROPELLER

Engine	Volvo Penta 600 DPX
Cylinder type	V-8
Cubic-inch displacement/horsepower	540/560
Lower-unit gear ratio	1.59:1
Propeller	Volvo Penta DuoProp E2

OPTIONS ON TEST BOAT

Upgrade to Volvo Penta 600 DPX engine (\$22,000), Competitive galvanized triple-axle trailer (\$4,800), AM/FM CD stereo with Kicker speakers, subwoofers and a 1,000-watt amplifier (\$3,500), gelcoat with pearls and extra colors (\$2,500), Dana Marine 1000 trim tabs with mechanical indicators (\$2,500), smoked plexiglass cabin and cockpit doors (\$2,200), Dana Marine hinges (\$1,500), four built-in ice chests (\$1,500), microwave and inverter (\$900), cockpit floor stowage (\$900), cockpit footrests (\$500) and electric pole light (\$228).

ACCELERATION

5 seconds	25 mph
10 seconds	44 mph
15 seconds	58 mph
20 seconds	68 mph

MIDRANGE ACCELERATION

30-50 mph	6.2 seconds
40-60 mph	7.1 seconds
40-70 mph	12.5 seconds

RPM VS. MPH

1000	7 mph
1500	13 mph
2000	24 mph
2500	34 mph
3000	44 mph
3500	50 mph
4000	56 mph
4500	62 mph
5000	74 mph

TOP SPEED AT RPM

Radar	79.5 mph at 5,600
GPS	79.4 mph

PLANING

Time to plane	4.8 seconds
Minimum planing speed	12 mph

FUEL ECONOMY

At 30 mph	NA
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FUEL CAPACITY

	90 gallons
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TEST CONDUCTED AT (ELEVATION)

Parker, Ariz. (450 feet)

MANUFACTURER

B&H Performance Boats, Dept. PB, 26005 E. 9th St., San Bernardino, CA 92410, 909-864-7722, www.waterrod.com.

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WHAT WE LOVED: The V-bottom's tracking at all speeds and the creature comforts B&H updated in the 30-footer.

WHAT WE'D LIKE TO SEE: More wiring support in the engine compartment and better low-speed maneuverability.

the facing lounges. For privacy, the builder provided a door at the end of the cabin.

Like the open bow, the carpeted cockpit was comfortably deep. The cockpit seating arrangement included dual bolsters with manual dropout-bottom cushions and angled footrests ahead of them, as well as a bench for additional passengers.

A grab handle and draining cooler/glove box with a lid was provided at the co-pilot's station to port.

At the helm, there was an assortment of Livorsi Marine gauges, as well as a Livorsi throttle and shifter. Not far from the controls was a cell phone holder with a 12-volt receptacle, as well as a cupholder.

So large were the trays in the gunwales aft of the bolsters that the builder was able to install one 2 1/4-gallon cooler in each tray, without either of those coolers intruding into the cockpit space. For helping people find things after dark, as well as dramatic effect at night, the builder also installed LED lighting in the gunwales.

WORKMANSHIP

B&H laid up the Water Rod 300 with vinyl ester resin and layers of 1708 and 1808 fiberglass. Also in the lamination mix were 2- and 4-ounce mat and 18- and 24-ounce woven roving. Balsa was used for coring and sprayed

foam helped secure the fuel tanks. Stringers for the boat ran full length.

In a display of some of the best fit and finish we've seen from B&H, the Water Rod 300 earned strong marks for its gelcoat graphics application and tooling. The boat's thick protective rubrail was installed with the same level of care and attention to detail.

To avoid detracting from the graphics with conventional cleats, the builder opted for four push-style line-and-fender holders. The manufacturer also supplied the boat with a power telescoping navigation light and a boarding ladder on the integrated swim platform.

Hydraulic hinges from Dana Marine raised the engine hatch. The Volvo Penta big-block was mounted on L-angles that were through-bolted to the stringers. Although the cushion clamps supporting the wiring and cables were not evenly distributed, they did provide adequate support. Powder-painted billet boxes housed the batteries.

OVERALL

B&H didn't reinvent the Water Rod 300 for 2008—the builder didn't have to. Instead, the company provided a few welcome refinements to an already well-finished model. It still remains a well-built, pleasant-to-drive family sport boat at a reasonable price. **P**

Clockwise from top left: Livorsi Marine gauges and rocker switches for the accessories were installed above the steering wheel. Hydraulic hinges from Dana Marine raised the engine hatch. Our inspectors appreciated the gunwale padding in the deep open bow. B&H was able to install a cooler in each of the wide gunwale trays.

