



PERFECT MATCH

TEAMED WITH MERCURY RACING'S NEW ENGINE PACKAGE, FORMULA'S 382 FAS³TECH DELIVERS A SUPERB RIDE.

EVERY YEAR NEW HIGH-PERFORMANCE products debut and we get to test them—it's a lucky job, we know, but someone has to do it. Often a new boat, a new engine or some cool accessory is the talk of the Performance Trials. At this year's Trials, the fresh face was the highly anticipated Mercury Racing HP700SCi and NXT¹ drive.

Finally, it was ours to run. And better yet, we got to test the engine and drive package in a boat we were completely familiar with—Formula's 382 FAS³Tech. Always a solid performer, the twin-engine V-bottom took the additional power and used it wisely.

PERFORMANCE

Our Test Team was extremely pleased with the increase of power in the 38-footer. Previously, the Mercury Racing HP600SCi was the largest engine Formula offered in the 382 FAS³Tech. The extra 200 horsepower and heftier drives brought a little more liveliness to the boat, especially in rough water.

In snotty conditions in the Gulf of Mexico, the twin-stepped V-bottom cut through the seas with ease. Our lead test driver commented that the larger NXT¹ drive took the offshore

abuse better than past experiences with a Bravo drive. The drives seemed to be set up just right as the boat rode nice and flat, and tracked precisely.

Turns were just as nice. At cruising speeds—50 mph at 3,000 rpm and 70 mph at 4,000 rpm—the boat carved superbly in Sarasota Bay. The boat ran through our slalom drills without a problem, as well.

Did we forget to mention the boat went fast? Try 94.4 mph at 5,400 rpm. At that speed, the boat was hung out and staying right on track.

With a pair of 34"-pitch Mercury Racing five-blade Cleaver propellers pushing the 10,450-pound boat, time to plane was 6.8 seconds with the 380S K-planes down. From a standing start, the boat reached 22 mph in 5 seconds and 54 mph in the 15 seconds.

Obviously, the additional power helped the boat in the midrange. The 38-footer ran from 30 to 50 mph in 6.5 seconds and took 7.5 seconds in the 40-to-60-mph drill.

Our Test Team was glad to learn that the new package shifted well, making maneuvering around the docks easy. Any bugs Mercury may have experienced with the combination was worked out by the time we got our hands on it.

WORKMANSHIP

The first thing we did was take a peek under the engine hatch. Neatly tucked into the engine compartment were two shiny red HP700SCi power plants. Yes, red. Mercury offers eight different color accents on the engines, allowing manufacturers to match the power plants to the paint job. The 700-hp engines were mounted on standard Mercury offshore race mounts with L-angles through-bolted to the stringer grid system.

The rigging was up to production standards, and all the wiring and hoses were loosely supported with stainless-steel clamps. An electric lift raised the engine hatch for easy access to the motors.

New for 2007, the Platinum Series "Blaze" graphics were applied to the hull in the gelcoat. The test boat was Formula's poker-run boat for most of the summer so it was stickered with partner logos and a large Mercury Racing 700SCi logo. The paint job was protected by a heavy-duty PVC rubrail with a stainless insert.

Hardware on the boat included four Bomar deck hatches, two handrails that ran the length of the bow, four grab rails around the padded engine hatch, eight large cleats with the



TEST RESULTS: FORMULA BOATS 382 FAS³TECH

TEST CONDITIONS

Temperature/humidity	93 degrees/47 percent
Wind speed/water conditions	3 to 5 mph/2' to 3' chop

HULL INFORMATION

Deadrise at transom	24 degrees
Centerline/beam	38'2"/8'3"
Hull weight	10,450 pounds

PRICING INFORMATION

Base retail with twin MerCruiser 496 Mag HO engines	\$325,800
Price as tested	\$550,560

ENGINE & PROPELLER

Engine	(2) Mercury Racing HP700SCi
Cylinder type	V-8
Cubic-inch displacement/horsepower	502/700
Lower-unit gear ratio	1.5:1
Propeller	Lab-finished Mercury Cleaver five-blade 17" x 34"

OPTIONS ON TEST BOAT

Upgrade to twin Mercury Racing HP700SCi engines and NXT¹ drives (\$161,880), off-shore trailer (\$20,720), four McLeod cockpit bolsters (\$17,060), Formula's Platinum Series graphics and interior package (\$14,780), air conditioner with digital climate control (\$4,940), vacuum head with holding tank and macerator discharge (\$2,880), Garmin color GPS navigation system (\$1,320) and VHF radio with antenna (\$1,180).

ACCELERATION

5 seconds	22 mph
10 seconds	38 mph
15 seconds	54 mph
20 seconds	67 mph

MIDRANGE ACCELERATION

30-50 mph	6.5 seconds
40-60 mph	7.5 seconds
40-70 mph	10.8 seconds

RPM VS. MPH

1000	8 mph
1500	10 mph
2000	NA
2500	30 mph
3000	50 mph
3500	59 mph
4000	70 mph
4500	81 mph
5000	89 mph

TOP SPEED AT RPM

Radar	94.4 mph at 5,400
GPS	95 mph

PLANING

Time to plane	6.8 seconds
Minimum planing speed	20 mph

FUEL ECONOMY

At 30 mph	1.6 mpg
At 40 mph	2.1 mpg
At 50 mph	2.1 mpg
At 60 mph	1.9 mpg
At WOT	1.5 mpg

FUEL CAPACITY195 gallons

TEST CONDUCTED AT (ELEVATION) Sarasota, Fla. (Sea level)

MANUFACTURER

Thunderbird Products/Formula Boats, Dept. PB, 2200 W. Monroe St., Decatur, IN 46733, 260-724-9111, www.formulaboats.com.

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WHAT WE LOVED: The additional 200 horsepower and the way the 382 FAS³Tech handled the increase.

WHAT WE'D LIKE TO SEE: Tidier wiring in the engine compartment and easier access to the foredeck.

Formula logo etched on them and a retracting ladder concealed in the center of the swim platform.

The Decatur, Ind., builder did a fine job installing the wraparound windshield. In fact, our lead inspector was impressed with much of the company's workmanship.

Inside the cabin, the headliner and the upholstery installation received the highest marks. Both featured Formula's new metallic silver Ultraleather.

INTERIOR

Starting with the cabin, the poker-run model had a lot to offer. Formula designed a large V-berth and finished it off elegantly at the upholstered bulkhead with clear acrylic pieces. Two small deck hatches provided ventilation up front and two larger hatches could be opened above the main area of the cabin.

A large U-shape lounge was immaculately upholstered in white and metallic silver Ultraleather with a red accent stripe. Aft of the lounge on each side were Corian countertops. To port, the builder included a stainless-steel sink and two cupholders. A Kenwood 10-disc CD changer was mounted above the sink.

Above the starboard-side countertop was a 15-inch Sharp flat-screen, a Blaupunkt DVD player and a compartment housing the cabin's accessory switches. Also included, on the way out of the cabin, was a head compartment and a Norcold refrigerator.

In the cockpit of the 382 FAS³Tech, Formula

squeezed in four McLeod electric-assist off-shore-style bolsters and a four-person rear bench. Each of the bolsters featured grab handles on the back and Formula also installed a grab rail from the back of the driver and co-pilot bolsters to the windshield.

For comfort, there were adjustable electric footrests for the driver and co-pilot. A large glove box was easy to access in front of the co-pilot, as was the deep stowage compartment to the left.

At the helm, all the controls and information were appropriately placed. Chrome race-style throttles and shifters from Livorsi Marine were mounted on an extension from the gunwale, and the drive and trim tabs were directly ahead. Above the tilt steering wheel was a Garmin GPS navigation system and a Mercury Racing SmartCraft SystemView monitor. All the gauges, which included two Monster-size tachometers on each side of the SystemView screen, were installed in chrome bezels on the red dash panel.

OVERALL

The 382 FAS³Tech from Formula is always a contender in its class, but with the new 700-hp engine package under the hatch, the boat's performance has been elevated. From top speed to rough-water handling, the improvements don't come for free. Of the \$550,000 sticker price, \$160,000 of that was an upgrade to the HP700SCi engines and NXT¹ drives. Is it worth it? We think so. **P**

Clockwise from top left: Formula installed a Garmin GPS screen and a SmartCraft SystemView monitor at the helm. Four McLeod bolsters with electric dropout cushions fit well in the cockpit. Twin Mercury Racing HP700SCi engines filled the FAS³Tech engine compartment. The plush cabin featured a 15-inch flat-screen, refrigerator and stainless sink.

