

Stryker 215 Stealth

Stryker Boat Company began life as a builder of bass boats back in 1973. Since introducing its first performance boat in 1986, Stryker's line of four low-slung stern-drive models has become a very substantial part of its sales. The 2150 Stealth in fact its original entry into the performance market-is now the company's best-selling boat, comprising about half of Stryker's annual 150-boat output.

The Package

Weighing in at a little less than 3,000 pounds fully rigged, the Stryker is a deep-V boat designed to deliver a good, versatile ride under variable water conditions. The bottom sports a deep-V entry (21-degree deadrise) and runs two sets of three narrow lifting strakes that sandwich a narrow delta riding pad. It's an interesting amalgamation, and we found later that it worked well.

The stock package comes with a decent amount of amenities and features, including stainless prop, 52-gallon tank, lockable glove box, stereo and hour meter. The hardware quality was acceptable, as was the basic quality of the exterior rigging (trim, windshield, etc.). Stryker seems to fall short on the detail work when measured against custom houses that produce similarly sized boats in this price range. One didn't have to look far to find an excess of silicone around the trim installation, and that set the tone for a frustrating series of flaws that hampered what could have been a very impressive overall test. Stryker's design and ideas are sound, but the execution repeatedly fell short of the custom mark-a point they'll have to hit if they hope to compete on a national level with the other deep-V sport rods in today's market.

The interior, for example, offered more support than the industry standard, striking the right balance of firmness and comfort. The front seats swivel and slide, but they were a bit loose a factor that didn't bother us until the speedometer clicked over 70 mph. They're okay for smooth lake-boating at 65 mph and under, but not suit-able for high-performance, rough-water rough-housing which definitely should be in the realm of what a low-profile sport boat with 390 horses is all about.

There were noticeable gaps between the side panels and rear seats, as well as between the rear seats and gunwales. The headliner beneath the deck (which had good storage room but was very difficult to get to) seemed hurriedly installed, and stray glue was evident on the fabric. Once there, a large, comfortable pad was a nice touch.

The gunwale support stiffener was not resin-coated, and it's been a while since we've seen so much loose, unkempt wiring in an installation of this price point.

Though most of the design ideas were sound, something's got to be done with the rope locker door, which snagged with the wiring when opening. Part of the problem was that it would open only inward, a curious tic that made it very difficult to close when the locker was actually used for storage.

We highly recommend that Stryker change over to large washers on the engine mounting bolts, and that they clean up the wiring that hangs down into the bilge.

The bowrailing is a two-piece assembly, rather than the one-piece used by many of today's sport-boat leaders. Aluminum through-bolts are used, rather than stainless steel mounting hardware.

There's plenty of storage built into the cockpit, with expansive side panel areas and a cavernous space below the rear seat holding lots of necessities.

The gelcoat work was simple and satisfactory, with one color accented by four colors of Imron paint. Stryker includes three Imron color accents in its base price, something a lot of builders charge outrageous sums for.

Driver ergonomics were generally very good, with all gauges legible and the throttle and shifter handily placed. Stryker's innovative dash panel was one of the best we've seen.

The hull and deck construction were very solid, and Stryker covers all the basics when it comes to sound, fundamental boat-building. Plenty of reinforcement, top-grade laminates and four full-length stringers are used to insure rigidity.

Overall, the Stryker is a good boat. It's not shoddy workmanship that's responsible for the problems we encountered just a

lapse of the kind of detail work that separates the custom thoroughbred sports-boat contingent from production fare. Unless Stryker tends to some of the rough edges on this boat, it won't pose a serious threat to the custom, sport-boat posse that presently leads the open-water performance pack.

Performance

If you could bypass the lack of detailing on this boat and head right into its performance capabilities, you'd have a very impressive package. The 502 was a handful in this design, but not too much for the sport boater seeking a little excitement in his family aquaride. Once on plane and out of the hole, the Stryker displayed nothing short of thoroughbred acceleration tendencies and was equally impressive on the top end.

Planing was nothing to brag about, with the 14½ x 23 Mirage three-blade pushing the package on top in 5.15 seconds. It began to respond nicely to driver command at about 25 mph and hit 30 mph from a dead stop in an okay 7.41 seconds. But it took less than a half-second (8.10) to get another 10 mph, and the Stryker's 0-60 performance (12.33) was one of the meet's most impressive passes. We found its top end at 73 mph.

Handling throughout its power curve was excellent, and we couldn't get the Stealth to slide in hard cornering maneuvers. The ride through rough water was rigid, solid, unwavering and very predictable—all attributes family boaters covet. In two- to three-foot chop, we found its ride at or near the top of its class. This bottom, though used since 1986, is one of the better designs we've seen in this class.

We'd also recommend a set of tabs when the 502 is selected over MerCruiser's 330- or 365-hp Bravo models. At about 71 mph, we began to experience some chine walking that could have been tuned out with a set of Bennetts. This is especially true considering the amount of confidence that's naturally bred in this boat's rough-water capabilities, which entice one to flex its muscle in very choppy conditions. Tabs are in order here.

Our taller drivers (over 6' 1") also complained at the amount of wind buffet at high speed, a result of the windscreen angle.

The Bottom Line

This is no bargain boat, and therefore there is no reason to expect the kind of basic flaws that we uncovered in its workmanship. At \$34,516 with the 502, Stryker delivers a sound performance design with good acceleration through the mid- and upper-rpm range. It's well-built, and the quality of the structural workmanship is right there.

But the experienced boater looking for a boat of this type, who bothers to compare its detail work with some of the other hot boats in this price range, will come up disappointed. That's the sentiment our test team shared in knowing that a few correctable detailing flaws tainted the overall impression of a boat that more than held its own once the throttle was down.

Specifications

Length 21' 8"

Beam 93"

Bottom configuration Deep-V

Weight as tested 2,975 lbs.

Base retail price \$32,021

Price as tested \$34,516

Standard Equipment

Hour meter, fiberglass swim platform, stainless thru-hull exhaust, stainless Mirage prop, 52-gallon tank, lighted rocker switches, cigarette lighter, AM/FM cassette sport wheel.

Options on Test Boat

None.

Power/Drive

MerCruiser 502 Magnum (390 hp)

Performance

Top speed. radar 73 mph

Planing time 5.15 seconds

0-30 7.41 seconds

0-40 8.10 seconds

0-60 12.33 seconds

0-TS 18.89 seconds

Speed at 2,000 rpm 28 mph

Speed at 2,500 rpm 40 mph

Speed at 3,000 rpm 50 mph

Speed at 4,000 rpm 67 mph

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