

Switch Blade

With the new Stiletto 37', Outerlimits introduces a winner that blends the experience of a lifetime in the industry with youthful enthusiasm. Photography by Mike Fuller and Rich Cox.

IF THE AVERAGE 25-YEAR-OLD BOATBUILDER ASKED you to consider plunking down no less than \$150,000 for a 37'2" offshore performance boat from his 1-year-old company, you probably wouldn't rush for your checkbook. But then Mike Fiore of Outerlimits Offshore Powerboats, Ltd., isn't your average 25-year-old. The son of renowned step-bottom pioneer Paul Fiore, founder of Hustler Boats, Mike has been in and around serious performance boats since he was a toddler. He's been involved in powerboat manufacturing and design since he was a teenager and has logged more offshore racing and

just plain cruising seat-time than many boatbuilders 10 years his senior.

So when he and partner Ken Tesler started Outerlimits last year, Fiore brought more than youthful exuberance to the offshore table—he came armed with firsthand knowledge, particularly in areas of step-bottoms, rugged construction and what works in the open ocean. And if the Stiletto 37', the company's first offering, we tested in Miami, Fla., is anything to go by, Fiore's background has paid off. Big time.

With a pair of MerCruiser 7.4L motors and Bravo One drives, the boat will ring the cash register at about



What got your attention first, the striking paint job or the smooth performance? Regardless of the answer, the Stiletto 37' is guaranteed to keep it with its smooth, solid handling, not to mention some of the most comfortable and supportive bolsters we've ever had the pleasure to lean into.

\$144,687. That's the low end—twin Merc 800 SCs with Number Six drives would push the price to \$323,773. Set up with two MerCruiser 502 Magnum EFI/MPs our test boat cost about \$178,000. Not cheap, to be sure, but given the quality we saw throughout the Stiletto 37 during our tests, it wasn't overpriced.

Outerlimits essentially builds the Stiletto 37 on a custom-order basis. The East Moriches, N.Y., company will load it with all amenities your imagination can conjure and your wallet can handle. Standard features include stand-up bolsters, Kiekhaefer throttles and shifts, full instrumentation, AM/FM cassette stereo with four speakers, a two-color graphics package, Kiekhaefer heavy-duty trim tabs and more. The key to Outerlimits' list of standard goodies, according to Fiore, is this: If it can't take an offshore beating, they don't include it. Period. The emphasis here is on beef.

Case in point was the Stiletto's 37's lamination schedule. It incorporated full-length stringers, nine transverse bulkheads and a Divinycell foam-coring in the deck and hull sides. Vinylester resin was used throughout the hull with 3408, 2408, 1708 and unidirectional fiberglass. The hull and deck were integrally glassed together and the white rubrail exhibited a flawless fit.

Knowing full well the kind of stock offshore enthusiasts place in glamour as well as muscle, Outerlimits didn't cut any corners when it came to gelcoat and mold work. The company has paint and graphic wizards Bob Capwell and John Ricchio under contract and the pair did a masterful job on our test boat, which had a white hull base accented with a pink and purple water graphic and a checkered-flag pattern. What else would you expect, given Fiore's background?

Under the twin hatches, Fiore installed the twin 502-cid blocks on offshore racing mounts thru-bolted to aluminum L-angles that were in turn bolted through the stringers, plus a heavy-duty transom mount. Cushion clamps secured the wires and braided stainless fuel and water lines in place and all the wire looms were protected in plastic conduit. Outerlimits put the pumps and reservoirs for the drives and trim tabs in easy reach. Ditto for the batteries.

Without question, the boat's construction impressed us. But as it turned out, the show was just beginning. Like the roll-top on a desk, a stainless door rolled up and into the foredeck to reveal a spartan yet functional cabin. True, there wasn't much in the way of amenities belowdecks—the galley consisted of just a sink and cooler, although both were protected by a latching cover. As previously mentioned, the boats are offered on a custom basis, so you can have Outerlimits stuff the cabin with as many electronic gadgets (VCR, microwave, CD player, etc.) as your budget can handle. When nature calls, you'll appreciate the Port-A-Potti 735 in a head that incorporated a heavy-duty zip-up vinyl "door". Like the roll-up stainless cabin door and lack of easily thrashable electronic do-dads, the

vinyl-curtain approach to head privacy reflected Outerlimits' "build it so it won't break" philosophy.

Whatever goodies you decide to add to the Stiletto 37 belowdecks, one thing you won't need to touch is the furniture. It's perfect—you simply won't find a better padded or upholstered (in ultra-leather) V-berth. The same goes for the facing three-person lounges. Stowage under the V-berth and lounges could only be described as voluminous.

That superior attention to padding and upholstery (marine-grade-vinyl for exterior furnishings) continued in the cockpit. It wasn't enough that you could melt into the snug driver's or co-pilot's bolsters, which had manual drop-out bottom cushions—the rear bench itself was a three-person bolster in which even the most anxious passengers could feel safe and secure. As for drivers, they'll love (we did) the layout of the white-faced Gaffrig gauges, which included all required engine monitors, and the Nordskog speedo in a blue panel, shaded by a 2" to 3" eyebrow. And the hydraulic helm and color-matched race-style Mayfair throttles and shifters were within easy, natural reach.

Given his background and family history, we'd have been downright disappointed if Fiore hadn't gone with a stepped hull for the Stiletto 37, and he didn't let us down. The boat's 24-degree hull featured a single step and four strakes, as well as sharp-V keel and a notched transom. Perhaps Fiore put it best when he said a lot of manufacturers make stepped hulls, but there are very few who can make them work.

Put Outerlimits in the latter category. Agile yet solid, the Stiletto 37 handled every sneaky twist and turn we threw at it without complaint. It cut through light chop without hesitation and when we

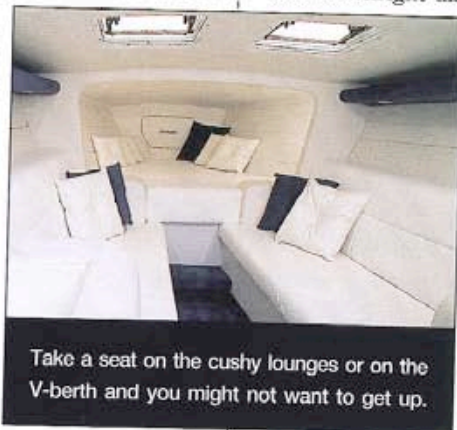
launched it off 2' to 4' waves, it landed without so much as a hint of a shudder.

As for the MerCruiser 502 EFI/MPs and Bravo One drives spinning Quicksilver Mirage 15 x 29 stainless solid-hub propellers through a 1.50:1 reduction, they pushed the Stiletto 37 to a solid 74 mph, captured on Stalker radar, at 4600 rpm. Along the way, the boat posted 46 mph at 3000 rpm, 55 at 3500 and 65 at 4000. In 10 seconds we reached 40 mph—not necessarily blazing acceleration, but acceptable. Switching to Hydromotive Intimidator 15 1/2 x 26 four-blade propellers didn't do much for the boat's acceleration, but it improved the top-end—76.6 mph on radar—as well as the already superior handling.

With experience and expertise beyond his years and the help of a dedicated partner and team, Fiore has launched a winner in Outerlimits' premier release. And larger offerings and even raceboats are "in the works." The Stiletto 37 does indeed come from a young company, but it's every bit the adult offshore performance boat.

For more information, contact Outerlimits Offshore Powerboats Ltd., Dept. PB, 188 Frowein Road, East Moriches, N.Y. 11940, (516) 874-2300.

PBM



Take a seat on the cushy lounges or on the V-berth and you might not want to get up.