

Lake of the Ozarks Getaway

TRAILER BOATS

TRAILER **Boats**

JUNE 1996

AMERICA'S ONLY TRAILER BOATING MAGAZINE

PERFORMANCE PACKAGE: Stingray/Honda

Charge Your Batteries While You Tow

TESTED:

**Caravelle 23'
Sportboat**



Towing With The Vortec Chevy Pickup

U.S. \$3.95 / \$4.95 IN CANADA

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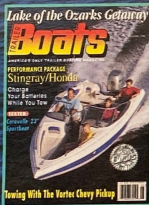
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CARAVELLE 232
7.4 GL/DP Volvo
TRIAL RUN

Good Lookin' & Cookin'



■ Caravelle's sleek *Interceptor 232* has near-mile-a-minute capability with a stock Volvo Penta 7.4 GL DuoProp.

Caravelle's *Interceptor 232* successfully combines style with performance

You want to go fast and look good doing it, but speed and style are expensive (sometimes, very expensive). Is that your problem, bunky? If so, you need to take a long, hard look at the Caravelle *Interceptor 232*. This 23-footer offers speeds approaching a mile a minute with the stock, 300-horse, Volvo 7.4 GL/DP. Its sleek look reminds you of a south Florida boat, but it hails from Americus, Georgia—and you can park it in your garage for \$29,900 (that includes Volvo's very efficient DuoProp drive). Not cheap, but not nearly as pricey as some in the class, either.

The 232 CS I tested was a cuddly model, but you can get the same hull as a bowrider if you need to shave a few bucks off the sticker. Either version boasts extra cockpit space, thanks to an 8-foot, 4-inch beam, but the boat cuts rough water like a sword, as long as you keep the bow tucked down. Even at full trim and top speed, the 20-degree deadrise removed most of the major wave impacts in the test run on a windy bay. (One slight annoyance, though—the plexiglass cabin doors squeaked like a horde of mice when the boat ran over a chop at speed.) The cabin is typical of the genre, where the low lines dictate minimal headroom.

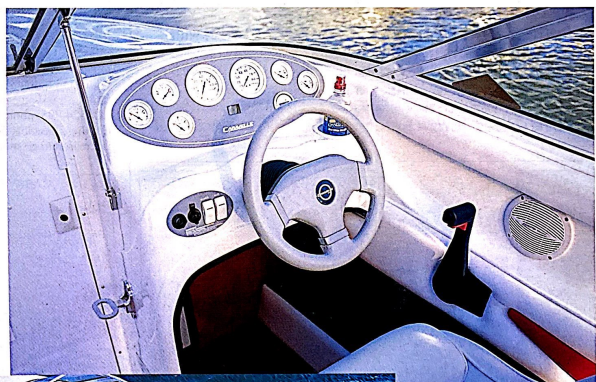
You can sit up on the facing settees by the cabin door if you lean forward—headroom there is 45 inches—but other than that, the cabin is strictly a hands-and-knees proposition. Of course, the cabins on these boats aren't intended for true overnights, so this isn't really a negative. There's plenty of room below to get out of the rain or to get to know your significant other really well. A Kenwood stereo/cassette provides speakers inside the cabin as well as in the cockpit. The Corsair electronic switchable exhaust delivered about 200 added rpm and one mph on the top end, as well as breaking all local noise ordinances with a 102-

dB reading at the transom—something the typical buyer of this boat will consider a definite plus. Keep the gate closed when the water cops have their dB meters on you, and the rig is actually quieter than the typical V-6 outboard, with just 65 dB recordable at the helm at 1000 rpm. The Caravelle peaked at 56.3 mph and 4700 rpm with the gate closed, 57.3 and 4900 with it open. (Note that's a bit above the recommended operating range of 4600 rpm for this engine, so you wouldn't want to wank it out for extended periods.) If you want some serious speed, you can move up to the 385-horse MPI MerCruiser, which reportedly delivers more than 65 mph while adding about seven grand to the bottom line. Fuel economy is reasonable for feeding 454 cubes, peaking at 3.0 mpg with the boat traveling 29.7 mph at 2500 rpm.

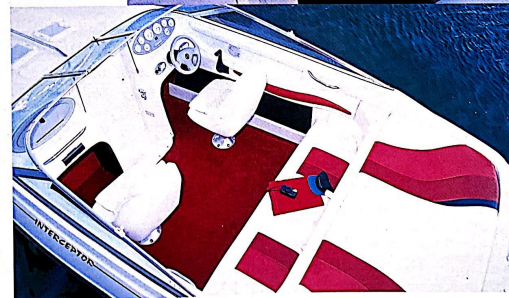
Just as important, the economy curve has a broad, flat top—you can run 3000 rpm at 37.9 mph and get 2.9 mpg; 3500 at 46.9 and get 2.8, and 4000 at a cheek-flapping 51.1 and still achieve 2.7 mpg. The *Interceptor* also delivers head-snapping acceleration from a standing start, with the holeshot a scant 2.8 seconds on average thanks largely to the D7 DuoProps grabbing the water like a four-wheel drive. At 3200 pounds dry, this is no lightweight boat, so the acceleration is truly noteworthy. It will put a pair of skiers on top with authority, and once they're up, they can enjoy a very flat wake. The counter-rotating props also proved a big advantage in carving up the bay with some 360s at 50 miles an hour. You have to try hard to get this drive to blow out, even in locked-over turns that generate a couple of g's. At the docks the lack

of paddlewheeling and the very positive reverse make the boat a breeze to slide into a berth. Power steering makes handling the wheel effortless at all speeds, and the wheel tilts for comfortable operation sitting or standing. The safety-glass windshield is solidly braced to act as a grabrail at speed, and it's tall enough to completely deflect wind-blast for seated passengers. The eight, all-white gauges are easy to see with both hands on the wheel, and a tiny-but-adequate digital depthfinder is also part of the layout. Construction is a cut above many. Check out the decks, for starters; they're solid 'glass, laid up with Quad 360, a quad-axial fiber that's a half-inch thick when cured out. The deck layup includes the aft bench seat—no cheap add-on-ply-

■ Caravelle's full array of stylish, easy-to-read instruments includes a digital depthfinder. A fold-away step makes access to the foredeck easier.



BOULDERHEAD PHOTOS



■ The roomy sport interior with twin adjustable buckets and a large sun lounge complements the sleek exterior.

BY FRANK SARGEANT

FUN • FAST • SAFE • COMFORT • Fun!



Introducing **SIDEWYNDER...**


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CIRCLE NO. 50 ON READER SERVICE CARD

wood boxes here. Seat-cushion backing is rotproof Pro-Board plastic. The hull is alternating layers and 1.5-ounce mat, with extra layers in the strakes to increase stiffness. The stringers are glass-encapsulated marine plywood, as is the engine cover/sundeck.

That sundeck doesn't have power-lift, but a pair of stout, hydraulic pistons make it easy to boost after you raise it the first few inches. The engine box is roomy, with plenty of storage on either side, plus there's easy access to the batteries and mechanicals. There's also a 78-inch-wide storage box under the aft couch and room to store skis and other gear in bins under the gunwales.

Company sales VP Craig Cummins says they can deliver a quality hull and still keep prices reasonable because they build in Americus, Georgia, where land and buildings are affordable, and because the company has virtually no debt since it moved from Conway, Arkansas, to its new location (and new ownership) in 1987.

If you like the sound of all this but need to cut the bottom line even more, consider dropping down in power. With a 5.7 MerCruiser, you can get into the 232 for just \$24,995, about the same price as a full-dress bassboat these days. That alone is a reason to go sportboating, mon! 

CARAVELLE 232

Base price	\$24,995
	w/5.7L MerCruiser
Price as tested	\$29,990
	w/7.4 GL/DP Volvo
Length overall.....	23'0"
Beam	8'4"
Weight	3200 lbs.
Engine as tested.....	7.4 GL/DP Volvo
Horsepower.....	300
Fuel capacity	50 gals.

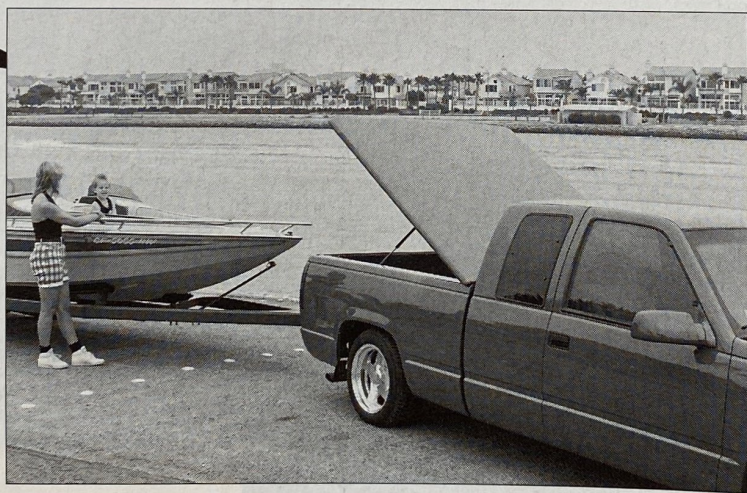
Manufacturer:

Caravelle Boats, Inc.
Dept. TBM
PO Box 1899
Americus, GA 31709
912/924-1185

TEST RESULTS

Engine (rpm)	Speed (mph)	Fuel (gph)	Fuel (mpg)	Range* (miles)
1000	7.2	2.43	3.0	135
1500	10.3	6.02	1.7	77
2000	22.5	7.93	2.8	126
2500**	29.7	10.02	3.0	135
3000	37.9	12.96	2.9	131
3500	46.9	16.69	2.8	126
4000	51.1	19.12	2.7	122
4500	55.1	23.87	2.3	104
4700	56.3	25.02	2.3	104
4900	57.3	26.22	2.2	99

*Range based on 90% capacity
**Optimum cruising speed



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