



Speedboats Now! Faster, Sexier

**Decor: gaudy. Function: nil. Fuel consumption:
astronomical. Price: unbelievable**

Text by Brock Yates/Photographs by Allan Weitz

Ignore your analyst. He will never understand. If you tell him, he'll roll his eyes and make nervous little clucking sounds. How would he, a Ph.D. who thinks high adventure means getting his tennis racket restrung, comprehend the news that you've just plunked down enough money to buy a split-level ranch in Metuchen, New Jersey, on ten yards of waterborne dynamite?

Here you are, a man who has heretofore counterbalanced unpleasant recessions and expansions from midriff to hairline with modest playthings, and you're telling him you've shucked everything for a boat. No, not a boat for soothing hours of fishing nor a trim day sailer in which a tormented soul can tack and jibe itself into tranquillity nor even a white-water canoe for muscle-pumping excursions into euphoric states of hyperventilation, but rather a rakish, shark-bowed thunder boat with enough power to rupture your spleen and with roughly the same usefulness as a Pomeranian guard dog. Yes, you of the sagging hubris, you asked for it, and you got it. Eight-hundred horsepower's worth of seagoing sex. A fiber glass torpedo. A ride-around dildo that with one jiggle of its throttles can inflate the most vacuous ego to four times its natural size.

Consider, for example, the thirty-five-foot Cigarette *Mistress*. This is the creation of the guru of this genre of pleasure craft—call them sex boats, superboats, macho boats—and it is he who has raised them to a state of high art and commerce. His name is Don Aronow, a millionaire offshore powerboat racing champion with a brand of chutzpah that makes Don Rickles seem like Emily Dickinson. His *Mistress* might be called a common denominator in the superboat biz simply because it represents the ultimate expression of the man who created the whole weird deal.

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Imagine this thirty-five-foot open speedboat, with a pair of 370-horsepower Mercruiser V-8 engines stuffed in the stern. The spacious cockpit is trimmed in teak and sumptuously upholstered. Up forward is a low, narrow, cuddly cabin with a massive vee berth. The decor—which can be infinitely customized—is dark, rich, and decadent. (And if you plan to use this overtly sensuous compartment simply for sleeping, you might consider something in a flat-bottom houseboat.) With a base price of \$54,990 and an option list that will bump the out-the-door numbers into the neighborhood of \$75,000, the *Mistress* is a classic rich man's toy, that is, one of extravagant cost, outrageous lack of usefulness, and enough blatant, environment-raping, petroleum-swilling speed to send the Sierra Club into a catatonic seizure. It is a seagoing counterpart of the *gran turismo* sports cars that have electrified rich kids of all ages for decades.

And like those automobiles, the *Mistress* has a racing heritage. Its hull is identical with the ultrafast Cigarette competition boats that have dominated such rugged, open-ocean races as the Miami-Nassau and the Bahamas 500. The secret ingredient of these rapid boats (over ninety mph in race trim) is something called a deep-vee hull design. This simply means that the bottom of the boat is contoured from stem to stern in a sharply angled vee shape—as opposed to the more traditional flat, round, or modestly veed configurations. The deep vee acts as a knife blade in the open sea, permitting a powerful boat like the Cigarette *Mistress* to skim across nasty rollers at over sixty mph. The deep vee is to watercraft what independent four-wheel suspension is to sports cars—the ultimate, albeit expensive, system for high-speed handling.

"I don't know much about boats, and I don't really care," Aronow says. Don't believe him. He has been world champion several times and created the superboat market almost single-handedly. He started in the business with a small firm

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