



Off the Trailer

Class warfare

The epitome of style, Regal's 2300 bowrider has the performance to match the looks.



American marque Regal is one of few family-owned US brands to have been passed down through several generations. The Kuck family has been building Regals in Orlando, Florida, for more than 40 years and that hard-won, honed and intricate design and engineering knowledge is evident in the company's 23 models.

There are nine bowriders in the Regal fleet and the 2300 on test here sits in the middle of that range. With an overall length of 24ft (7.3m) it's perhaps the most popular size for a sports boat these days.

However, while Orlando lies in the middle of Florida and close to a number of lakes, the Regal

2300 is not a lake boat as so many US brands tend to favour.

RIDING ON AIR

The deep-vee bow, 20° deadrise, big reverse chines and composite stringers definitely make this boat an open-water runner. The big feature is what Regal calls FasTrac. It's a step in the hull just aft of mid-ships that allows the boat to ride on a pocket of air.

Swedish naval architect Ocke Mannifelt first introduced the idea in the early '80s. He developed a series of hulls for offshore racing boats with multiple steps; it was so successful that

By Kevan Wolfe

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his designs took out 16 world offshore powerboat racing titles.

I rode with Ocke in the prototype over 30 years ago but I still vividly remember that phenomenal ride.

Regal has taken this step design and modified it to suit its hulls, achieving similar results. It has certainly given Regal's products an advantage over boats of a similar size and range. Regal claims the FasTrac hull increases fuel efficiency by 30 per cent and raises the cruise speed over that of conventional hulls by 26 per cent.

Even with the Volvo Penta duo-prop leg trimmed in, the boat will rise onto the plane and sit on that pocket of air. Give it a touch of trim out and it's off with finger-tip steering control. With the 5.7lt, 300hp, Volvo Penta V8 inboard happily turning over at 3500rpm and the boat running in its sweet spot at 30 knots (55.6km/h), the driver can take his or her hands off the steering wheel and the boat will track straight and true. It's very much like flying a well-trimmed aircraft – and an experience I can't ever recall having in a similar boat.

Throw the boat into a turn at this speed and still riding on its air pocket it will sit in nicely without the slightest hint of cavitation. There was no way this baby was going to come unstuck and in general the boat was free of vices and felt very safe. On full song the V8 was spinning at 5000rpm,



Main pic: The step in the hull midships is plainly evident, but the magic of the FasTrac design lies under the water.

Inset: The walkthrough screen affords easy access to the sumptuous bowrider area.



It's very much like flying a well-trimmed aircraft

pushing the boat along with ease to 48 knots (88.9km/h).

POWER TOWER

Another Regal feature is the optional carbonfibre Power Tower with a small tow pole on top to suit

Above: The classy helm places everything at a skipper's fingertips.



Above: The sleek lines are backed up by spirited performance on the water.

Right: The comfortable, quality seating also hides masses of underseat storage.



wakeboarders; there's also a conventional tow eye at the back of the sun lounge over the engine hatch for more conventional skiers and there's enough room for a six-footer to stand up under the biminis attached to the front and rear of the tower. At the touch of a button the tower will fold forward to windscreen height to allow the boat to be parked in most garages or under a carport.

Like most bowriders there is plenty of room but this one has a little more than others. As well as the conventional side-by-side helm and passenger seats and walkthrough rear lounge an 'arena' configuration is available, which gives even more room. The bow seats are contoured and come with fold-up armrests.

Someone has given some thought to the bolster on the helm seat. On most, the driver sits on top of the bolster without any support. The bolster on the Regal helm seat is designed so that when it is in the 'up' position the driver has good back support and still has a good view over the windscreen.

The steering is hydraulic with up and down adjustment. The hydraulic system is probably a case of overkill – as previously mentioned, with just a little trim the steering becomes extremely light, but not so light as to make the driver feel unsafe.

MAJOR STORAGE

The boat has unbelievable underfloor storage capacity, along with generous underseat storage – even the glovebox opens up to reveal a decent

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amount of space. Lift up the starboard bow lounge seat and the huge storage area runs back into the helm console. All hatches are finished on both sides and open on gas struts, with the hinges bolted rather than screwed.

There is not a trace of bare fiberglass showing anywhere; the whole cockpit has been done in what Regal terms as a 'titanium look' finish, with hand-stitched upholstery covering the combing panels for a warm, soft feel. The upholstery on the dash has received the same treatment.

The Regal 2300 was a whole lot of fun to drive – it's no wonder so many customers stick with this brand, coming back to upgrade to

another Regal. It's not often I make a statement like this, but if I was in the market for a bowrider I'd find it hard to go past the Regal 2300. 

SPECIFICATIONS: REGAL 2300

LOA:	7.3m
Beam:	2.6m
Weight:	1805kg (dry)
Power:	5.7lt Volvo Penta, 300hp
Performance at planing speed:	12-15 knots (22.2-27.8km/h)
Performance at WOT:	48 knots (88.9km/h) at 5000rpm
Fuel capacity:	204lt
Berths/capacity:	12
Price from:	\$82,573
Price as tested:	\$95,900

For more information, contact Game & Leisure Boats (Qld), tel: (07) 5577 5811 or Premier Boats (NSW), tel: (02) 9328 0999.



PREMIUM *xtra*

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Above: The optional Power Tower folds forward for easier storage.

Left: The sunpad lifts for access to the Volvo Penta.