



[Survival of the Fastest]

IN THE ZONE

The 377 Talon from Hustler is an ace on all fronts.

Story by Matt Trulio

"Now this is a nice boat," hollered Bob Teague, Powerboat's lead test driver, as he piloted the Hustler 377 Talon on Miami's Biscayne Bay. "Really nice." It wasn't what he said, but when he said it—running along at 105 mph in 1- to 2-foot wind chop—that made the comment so noteworthy. Teague rarely utters more than a grunt at serious speed. And 105 mph—on the way to a top end of 108.6 mph at 5,300 rpm—is serious speed.

In fact, the 37'-long, 10'4"-wide catamaran was serious in every aspect of performance, thanks to a pair of 550-hp Mercury Racing HP575SCi engines and 1.5 ratio Bravo XR drives. Stellings stand-off boxes and lab-finished Bravo One 15 1/4" x 34" props helped the catamaran hop on plane in 3.8 seconds. From a standing start, the cat reached 81 mph in 20 seconds.

The combination of the 377 Talon's twin-sponson bottom, which included a center pod, and the fuel-injected big-block motors also proved potent in midrange acceleration drills. The catamaran shot from 30 to 50 mph in 4.7 seconds, 40 to 60 mph in 5 seconds and 40 to 70 in 8.5 seconds.

Buyers who need more speed can opt for bigger power, and the 377 Talon could certainly accommodate it thanks to the catamaran's impeccable handling manners. The cat aced our slalom and circle-turn tests at all speeds. In fact, we've tested V-bottoms that displayed less inward lean. Tracking was precise, so precise that even at more than 100 mph, the steering wheel could be held with a light grip. (Credit, at least in part, the boat's fully hydraulic steering system.)

Hustler's reputation for outstanding construction quality was built on its line of high-performance V-bottoms. The people at the Calverton, N.Y., company had no trouble translating that superior level of workmanship to a catamaran. (The company purchased the molds for the 37-footer from Talon.)



Mold work, gelcoat and graphics for the 377 Talon were dazzling and devoid of flaws. The catamaran was handlaid with a variety of materials including carbon fiber, biaxial and triaxial fiberglass fabrics, which were cored with composite materials, vacuum-bagged and then bonded together at the deck line. Hardware, though minimal, was appropriately chosen.

Engine compartment rigging was impeccable. The motors were secured on racing mounts and L-angles through-bolted to the stringers. All wires, cables and hoses were neatly routed and primarily supported with cushion clamps.

Though not exactly roomy, the 377 Talon's "aft-cabin," between the cockpit and the engine compartment, presented an innovative and effective use of space. The cockpit layout included plush bolsters for the driver and co-pilot, and a four-person bolster-style bench. All grab handles were well placed. At the helm station, all the Gaffrig gauges were in clear view.

Another plus we discovered at speed in the cockpit? The wind faring actually deflected wind. Given the 377 Talon's speed capabilities, that should come in handy.

TEST RESULTS	
Centerline	37'
Beam	10'4"
Weight as tested	3,500 pounds
Base Price	\$281,021
Price as tested	\$329,346
Engine	(2) Mercury Racing HP575SCi
Top Speed at RPM	108.6 at 5,300
Time to Plane	3.8 seconds
Acceleration 0 to 15 seconds	68 mph
Midrange acceleration 40 to 60 mph	5 seconds
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