

How to Choose the Best Battery for Your Boat p28

BOATING

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WORLD'S LARGEST POWERBOAT MAGAZINE



**CERTIFIED
BOAT
TESTS**

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PREMIER GRAND
ENTERTAINER 290
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219
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2051
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REGAL MARINE INDUSTRIES INC
2300 JETPORT DR
ORLANDO FL 32809-7895

Tests

(# 2712)

Regal 28 Express

TWO BOATING TERMS THAT TYPICALLY DON'T go hand in hand are *cruiser* and *trailerable*. That's because putting a livable cabin on board usually means adding weight and extending the beam beyond what are acceptable parameters for towing behind a pickup truck or SUV. But builders have long tried. A generation of "pocket cruisers" came and went, pushed aside a few years ago by the desire for bigger, better and roomier. But now, with people looking to scale down, the trailerable cruiser is making a comeback. And, as the Regal 28 Express illustrates, builders are doing it better than ever.

The 28 Express actually has a waterline length closer to 26 feet — the 28-foot-10-inch length overall comes from the extended swim platform — and possesses the 8-foot-6-inch beam required to trailer boats in most states without a special permit. As stated, getting a livable cabin into those dimensions is a tall order. Regal engineers met the challenge first by shedding weight. They started by redesigning the cored stringer grid, making it leaner and lighter while fortifying it in areas where the boat endures the most structural stress. They also designed lighter cabinets and storage spaces and used resin transfer molding on hatches, which reduces the amount of heavy resin and improves the strength-to-weight ratio. The result is a boat tipping the scale at an estimated 7,585 pounds. That's still a bit on the heavy side compared with the listed dry weights of other trailerable cruisers, most of which are a

NOTEWORTHY

To save weight, Regal builds its ultralight cabin headliner airplane-style, using metal rods and stretching vinyl across them, like a track system.

bit smaller.
For example, Four

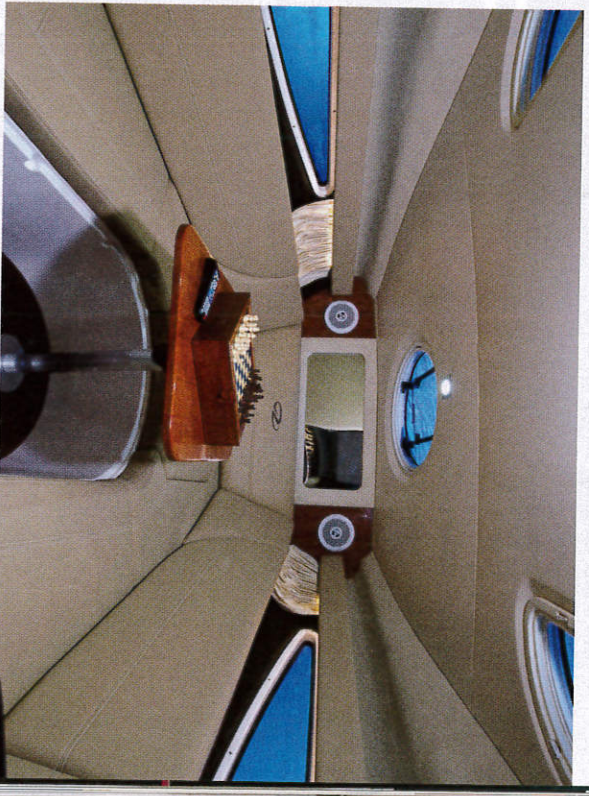
Winns builds the V265 (\$98,362 with a 300 hp Volvo GiCDP), which tapes a 26-foot length overall, an 8-foot-6-inch beam and a 6,270-pound dry weight. And Chaparral has the 270 Signature Cruiser (\$95,952 with the 300 hp Volvo GiCDP), listing at 6,900 pounds dry. The 270 has a 27-foot length overall with its swim platform.

What the Regal does have over its competition is a brighter interior, thanks to a window design that

A glare-proof helm, luxe galley and forward dinette round out the amenities that give the Regal 28 Express a big-boat feel.

PHOTOS (FROM TOP): BILL DOSTER, COURTESY REGAL BOATS (3)





➔ Regal 28 Express

allows a better flow of natural light. While other builders rely on the traditional oval ports, Regal uses larger, more stylish triangle-shape windows in its hull sides. Those, in combination with the three deck hatches overhead, really help illuminate the space belowdecks. Even the midcabin berth has two circle-shape ports to bring natural light inside. On a small cruiser, this greatly improves the livability below. The ports are all screened, and when open, there is excellent cross-ventilation, a good thing since cranning a 110-volt genset into the engine compartment is an \$11,685 option and the air-conditioning unit adds \$3,100.

There's a standard forward V-berth that doubles as a dinette, but the owners will want to leave that for the kids or guests and bunk in the midcabin berth, which sports a full queen mattress. The cabin sole is covered by lightweight yet durable bamboo. The galley to starboard has a fiddled Corian counter with a single electric burner, and the sink has a Corian hatch cover.

The head employs the full 6 feet of cabin headroom and also features a Corian countertop. I liked the electric toilet and really liked that Regal installed a separate shower head on the bulkhead. It's more like a real shower than a spritz with one of those nozzles you find in a kitchen.

Stepping outside, the cockpit is well done too. The best place to start is at the helm, which features an adjustable double-wide captain's bench that truly has room for two. Grabbing the reins at the helm, I noted that the 28 Express climbed onto plane respectably and easily settled into its optimum cruising speed. Top end was not blistering, but it did exceed 40 mph, fast enough for an express cruiser.

To port of the helm, passengers can sit side-to and face the captain or kick back on the rear-facing recliner and watch the wake. Or keep an eye on the activity aft. Aft of the port lounge there's a molded-in entertainment center with the obligatory freshwater sink and removable cooler underneath. My favorite part of the cockpit is what Regal calls the

Ultra Lounge, a plush sun pad on the transom that has a four-position backrest, so it serves double duty as either a full tanning bed or additional seating. On a small cruiser, such versatility is a major plus. The optional Power Tower (\$7,692) adds sportiness; it's an arch that can be raised or lowered forward with the push of a button, which helps with bridge clearance, rack storage or highway towing.

Arch or no, one problem recurrent in all pocket cruisers is that their short length and tall height make them susceptible to wind around the dock or the launch ramp. The counterrotating-propeller Duoprop system found in the Volvo Penta sterndrive offset this, and I felt comfortable in tight handling situations. But if you're not, Regal offers a \$3,000 bow thruster option. It will help make docking this boat — or loading it on a trailer — as easy as pie. This type of option shows you can buy a small express cruiser and take it anywhere, be it by land or sea. — *Pete McDonald*



GET THE ACCOMMODATION PLAN FOR THE
REGAL 28 EXPRESS BY SCANNING THIS
TAG, OR VISIT BOATINGMAG.COM/2712.



AVAILABLE POWER:
STERNDRIVE



High Points

- ▶ Molded nonskid on the gunwale topsides makes it easy to board the boat no matter how it's docked.
- ▶ The bow spotlight — a cruising must — is deck-mounted rather than rail-mounted, which reduces the shakes.
- ▶ The anchor locker hatch has an interior light to make hook-handling easier at night.

Low Points

- ▶ It's tough to see in front of the boat from the lower side-facing passenger seat at the port console, especially when climbing onto plane.
- ▶ A grab rail is needed on the portside cockpit seating; there's no place to grab on the bench.

- ▶ LOA: 28'10" ▶ Beam: 8'6" ▶ Draft: 30" ▶ Displacement (approx): 7,585 lb. ▶ Tension Deadrise: 1.8 degrees ▶ Bridge Clearance: 9'9" ▶ Max Cabin Headroom: 6'0" ▶ Fuel Capacity: 72 gal. ▶ Water Capacity: 20 gal. ▶ Max Horsepower: 300 ▶ Available Power: Mercury or Volvo gasoline sterndrive to 300 hp
- ▶ Price: \$99,570 (with test power)

▶ BOATING Certified Test Results

rpm	SPEED			EFFICIENCY				OPERATION		
	knots	mph	gph	naut. mpg	n. mi. range	s. mi. range	angle	sound level		
1000	4.78	5.50	1.70	2.81	3.24	182	210	1	70	
1500	6.78	7.80	2.85	2.38	2.74	154	177	2	68	
2000	7.73	8.90	4.31	1.79	2.05	116	134	3	71	
2500	10.08	11.60	7.35	1.37	1.58	89	102	5	80	
3000	13.30	15.30	9.34	1.42	1.64	92	106	5	79	
3500	20.42	23.50	11.30	1.81	2.08	117	135	3	80	
4000	26.42	30.40	14.75	1.79	2.05	116	134	2	82	
4500	30.24	34.80	17.60	1.72	1.98	111	128	2	83	
5000	34.41	39.60	22.00	1.56	1.80	101	117	2	87	
5100	35.98	41.40	23.70	1.52	1.75	98	113	2	87	

MOST ECONOMICAL CRUISING SPEED

HOW WE TESTED

ENGINE: Single 300 hp Volvo Penta 5.7 GPO Catalyst DRIVER/PROP: DP with F4 stainless-steel propset GEAR RATIO: 1.95:1 FUEL LOAD: 36 gal. CREW WEIGHT: 350 lb.

Regal Boats Orlando, Florida; 800-877-3425; regalboats.com

PHOTO: COURTESY REGAL BOATS