



PEOPLE PLEASER

IN FLAT WATER AT HIGH SPEED OR OFFSHORE IN THE ROUGH STUFF, DONZI'S 43 ZR OFFERS COMFORT FOR EVERYONE.

INCREASINGLY HIGH EXPECTATIONS ARE PART OF this job. Log some time in several big V-bottoms that can run 100 mph and beyond, for example, and you begin to expect nothing less. But the truth is, running that fast in a 40- to 50-foot boat with a full cabin is still remarkable. Considering that some of these creations can weigh upward of 8 tons and that water isn't exactly a low-friction medium, it's even a little mind-blowing.

Of course, that kind of speed is worthless if it comes at the expense of stability and comfort. That was hardly the case in the Donzi 43 ZR we tested in Sarasota, Fla. Screaming across Sarasota Bay at almost 115 mph, the stepped-hull 43-footer—powered by staggered Mercury Racing HP1075SCi engines—never made the test drivers or their co-pilots the least bit nervous.

And nothing less would have been acceptable. For every member of our Test Team, high expectations come with the job.

PERFORMANCE

Two forward-vented steps were incorporated in the bottom of the 43 ZR. Mercury Racing No. 6 dry-sump drives with 35"-pitch five-blade stainless-steel propellers put the 2,150 horsepower to the water.

Top speed on a humid day with sticky water was 114.9 mph, as recorded on both our Stalker radar gun and GPS unit. Better still was the boat's ability to cruise at 93 mph with its engines turning 4,500 rpm. After all, it's far more likely that operators will log more time cruising at 90 mph than they will trying to wring out that last mile per hour. Shoot for a cruise speed of 80 mph and you're looking at an engine- and fuel-preserving 4,000 rpm. Not too shabby.

At 12,500-pounds, the 43 ZR is not lightweight, but it came on plane with its trim tabs down in an acceptable 6.3 seconds and reached 78 mph in 20 seconds from a standing start.

Something of a hot rod in midrange acceleration blasts, it ran from 30 to 50 mph in 5.3 seconds, 40 to 60 mph in 6 seconds and 40 to 70 mph in 8.9 seconds.

The 2- to 4-footers we encountered offshore were no match as the boat crushed them from all angles. However, the boat did land a bit harder than we expected it to, especially when we tackled seas head-on.

More than making up for the sometimes-crisp landings were the cockpit seating accommodations. Per the breed, the boat had bolsters with power dropout bottoms. The three-person, bolster-style bench also had power dropouts, as well as easy-to-reach, jumbo grab handles. Donzi has been a leader in going the extra distance to create bolster- and bucket-style benches.

The 43-footer acquitted itself reasonably well in slalom turns given its overall length, but it really came alive in slalom and full circle turns at higher speeds. Give part of the credit

to the boat's positive feel at the helm to its Latham Marine hydraulic steering.

In terms of responsiveness and agility at speed, the 43 ZR felt like a smaller model. Yet it retained its solid big-boat tracking characteristics at all speeds.

INTERIOR

Every member of our team appreciated the seating layout in the 43 ZR's cockpit, which had black snap-in carpet covering its sole. Drivers Bob Teague and John Tomlinson also said they liked the starboard-side helm. Installed in carbon-fiber panels, none of the Livorsi Marine instruments were blocked from view by the steering wheel. For both drivers, the Livorsi throttles and shifters were in perfect position on an extension from the gunwale.

Other welcomed electronics at the helm included a Mercury SystemView monitor for the HP1075SCi engines and a Lowrance depth sounder. For two-man operation, the boat was set up with an additional steering-wheel hub and a VHF radio at the co-pilot's position to port. Steps molded into the port dash and a handrail made it easy to reach the deck.

The boat's acrylic cabin door with a stainless-steel frame slid smoothly on upper and

lower tracks. Two steps down and we were in the cabin, which had a suspended headliner that ran all the way past the long facing lounges to the end of the V-berth.

"Tastefully equipped"—that's how our inspector described the cabin of the 43 ZR. On the port side was the galley, which had an Isotherm refrigerator with an icemaker, a stainless-steel sink, bountiful counter space and molded cabinets. Above the galley was the boat's entertainment system that included a CD stereo receiver and a DVD player.

In the large compartment opposite the galley was a spacious head with a porcelain toilet, a shower and a sink. It even had a padded headliner on the ceiling.

WORKMANSHIP

Given the long hullsides and deck of the 43 ZR, the builder had ample opportunity to make tooling mistakes. But the Donzi crew ached it—the mold work was excellent. So, too, was the boat's in-house paint work, which incorporated a carbon-fiber motif. To prevent the hullsides from dings, the builder installed an extruded plastic rubrail with a stainless-steel insert, and went to the extra trouble of aligning the screw heads that held it in place.

Uncluttered with excessive deck hardware, the 43 ZR had six Accon Pull-Up cleats and a deck rail to make it easier to reach the anchor locker to the nose. Attractive molded bilge vents were fitted with stainless-steel mesh screens. For additional ventilation, the engine hatch had a pair of fiberglass scoops that enhanced the boat's high-performance aesthetics.

Raising the fiberglass engine hatch was a pair of screw jacks painted with the Donzi logo. To install the staggered engines, the builder used Mercury Racing mounts on L-angles fastened to the stringers with through-bolts.

Powder-painted, cast-aluminum boxes held the batteries, and stainless-steel cushion clamps secured the conduit-protected wiring. For easy cleanup, the builder polished the white gelcoat bilge to a smooth finish.

OVERALL

The speeds that big, feature-packed V-bottoms are capable of these days are truly amazing. Even more remarkable is that the best of them can achieve those speeds without being a handful to drive. The Donzi 43 ZR is one of those boats. It's an upstanding member of an outstanding breed. 🏆



TEST RESULTS: DONZI 43 ZR

TEST CONDITIONS

Temperature/humidity	89 degrees/47 percent
Wind speed/water conditions	5 to 7 mph/2' to 3' chop

HULL INFORMATION

Deadrise at transom	Variable
Centerline/beam	42'10"/8'10"
Hull weight	12,500 pounds

PRICING INFORMATION

Base retail with Mercury Racing HP525EFI engines	\$330,992
Price as tested	\$626,466

ENGINE & PROPELLER

Engine	(2) Mercury Racing HP1075SCi
Cylinder type	V-8
Cubic-inch displacement/horsepower	557/1075
Lower-unit gear ratio	1.5:1
Propeller	Hering five-blade 17" x 35"

OPTIONS ON TEST BOAT

Upgrade to staggered Mercury Racing HP1075SCi engines and No. 6 drives (\$256,053), custom-painted graphics (\$13,359), port helm setup (\$10,195), cockpit intercom system (\$7,385), Kenwood/MB Quart premium stereo upgrade (\$3,840), Livorsi color-matched component package (\$3,653), stand-up electric three-man bolster aft seat (\$2,564), electric head (\$1,764), stainless-steel rubrail (\$1,025) and 380S K-Planes (\$576).

ACCELERATION

5 seconds	21 mph
10 seconds	45 mph
15 seconds	63 mph
20 seconds	78 mph

MIDRANGE ACCELERATION

30-50 mph	5.3 seconds
40-60 mph	6 seconds
40-70 mph	8.9 seconds

RPM VS. MPH

1000	7 mph
1500	17 mph
2000	32 mph
2500	48 mph
3000	58 mph
3500	67 mph
4000	81 mph
4500	93 mph
5000	100 mph
5500	109 mph

TOP SPEED AT RPM

Radar	114.9 mph at 5,800
GPS	114.9 mph

PLANING

Time to plane	6.3 seconds
Minimum planing speed	20 mph

FUEL ECONOMY

At 30 mph	1 mpg
At 40 mph	1.2 mpg
At 50 mph	1.2 mpg
At 60 mph	1.1 mpg
At WOT	0.6 mpg

FUEL CAPACITY

261 gallons

TEST CONDUCTED AT (ELEVATION)

Sarasota, Fla. (Sea level)

MANUFACTURER

Donzi Marine, Dept. PB, 7110 21st St. E., Sarasota, FL 34270, 800-973-2628, www.donzimarine.com.

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WHAT WE LOVED: Top speed, cruise speed and a bolster bench you'd be happy to call home at any speed.

WHAT WE'D LIKE TO SEE: Softer landings would be nice—but seating makes up for any crisp touchdowns.



07 PERFORMANCE TRIALS PART II

Clockwise from top left: Donzi provided electric dropout bolsters at every cockpit seat. The boat reached nearly 115 mph with twin Mercury Racing HP1075SCi engines under the hatch. The helm featured Monster gauges in carbon-fiber panels. The tastefully equipped cabin had a galley with a refrigerator, an icemaker and a stainless sink.

