



## [2003 PERFORMANCE REPORTS]

### CONVINCING EVIDENCE

**Hustler's 377 Talon can convert the most diehard V-bottom fans and make them cat owners.**

**Story by staff**

There is a rift in performance boating when it comes to what hull type you prefer. You have folks who can't own anything but a catamaran and people who would never shop for anything but a V-bottom. And there's usually no convincing either side to see things differently. But there is hope.

That hope comes in the form of Hustler's 377 Talon, a catamaran that looks like no other big cat on the market, and drives like a V-bottom.

"The thing about this boat, is to go for a ride in it," said Kenny Dean Jr. of Radical Rides Inc., a Hustler dealer in Charlotte, N.C., who brought the boat to our Trials. "I've ridden in V-bottoms, and I'm a V-bottom guy, until I started riding in this. There's a world of difference."



### PERFORMANCE

The 377 Talon's V-bottom-like handling comes courtesy of its hull with two sponsons, each with two steps, a strake and a notch, and a center pod, which also had two steps and a notch. Transom deadrise was 22 degrees.

During the morning photo shoot, we had to run about 20 miles from underneath some clouds to catch some sun. The Talon literally cruised at 100 mph. Once we found the sun, our photographer did his usual act of running us all over the Gulf of Mexico. That not only ensures that light hits the boat from different directions, but it also means you hit the seas at all angles.

Whether in quartering, head-on or following seas, the 377 Talon crushed everything it encountered, never getting upset or requiring any correction. Seas measured about 1 to 2 feet that day, but we have run this boat in the bigger stuff and we can say that the performance gets better, not worse, in rough water. It also performed slalom drills perfectly, earning the highest possible scores at 30, 40, 50 and 60 mph.

Speed drills produced some good numbers. From a standing start, the Talon hit 41 mph in 10 seconds and 80 mph in twice that. Midrange acceleration was varied. Going from 30 to 50 mph took 8 seconds, but going from 40 to 60 mph took less time at 6.32 seconds.

Its 4.41-second time to plane was impressive for a 37' boat, as was its minimum planing speed of 17 mph. But check out the speed-at-rpm numbers: 3,500 rpm netted 64 mph; 4,000 rpm equaled 79 mph and 4,500 rpm had you at 92 mph. Those are poker run speeds at cruise rpm.

Those speeds came courtesy of twin naturally aspirated 725-horse Cobra engines. Based on Dart tall-deck blocks with Dart heads, the engines featured Stellings headers, Holley Dominator carburetors atop Brodix intake manifolds. Each was installed on plate mounts on a supported L-angle that capped the stringer.

Hustler used Bmax drives mounted on IMCO standoff boxes and fitted with Bmax sport model gear cases, which spun Bravo One 15 1/4" x 36" propellers. IMCO full-hydraulic steering rams mounted outside the drives also were used.



**From left:** The tach, speedo, compass and trim indicator were mounted nice and high, and all peripheral gauges came in their own recesses. In the cockpit, Hustler installed form-fitting bolsters for safety and comfort. Under the hatch, there were two naturally aspirated 725-horsepower Cobra big-blocks.

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## WORKMANSHIP

Mold work on the 377 Talon was spot-on, exhibiting only a slight undulation on its lengthy hullsides-no small task. Custom metallic silver, orange, blue, purple and red graphics accented the school-bus-yellow gelcoat. Considering the high caliber of this boat, the manufacturer could have spent a bit more time and effort on installing the rubrail, which had a couple of waves and gaps in it.

According to the manufacturer-supplied lamination schedule, the boat was hand-built with vinylester resin, triaxial and biaxial roving with carbon fiber. Core cell of various thickness was used throughout the hull and deck, which also were vacuum-bagged. Transverse bulkheads were used to enhance strength, and the hull, deck and inner liner were fiberglassed together.

Under-dash wiring was done neatly and came out in evenly tied looms, but could have used more support. Under the hatch, wiring and plumbing was properly supported with stainless-steel cushion clamps with nylon tie wraps evenly spaced throughout the engine bay.

Access to the bilge was made easy thanks to twin engine hatches that opened outward to a near vertical position on electric screw jacks. The bilge itself was finished in yellow gelcoat. Notable hardware included Keith Eickert fuel filters, Teague Custom Marine sea strainers and battery boxes, and a KRC steering reservoir.

## INTERIOR

Recognizing that any cabin installed in this type of boat would be used mainly for stowage, Hustler kept things simple inside.

The 377 Talon's cabin was aft of the cockpit just forward of the engine compartment. The result was a cabin that offered enough headroom for three adults to sit facing one another in the lounges. Each lounge featured stowage behind the backrest and could be converted to one large berth.

In the cockpit, the rear bench accommodated three passengers. The outer occupants were treated to angled footrests on the front seat bases and grab rails on the gunwale-canted to the natural angle of your hand, of course.

Up front, the seats were first rate, with bolsters that held your thighs in place snugly. All the Gaffrig by Livorsi instrumentation was set in red bezels. The tach, speedo, compass and Bluewater trim indicator all were mounted nice and high. All peripheral gauges were mounted to the dash in molded-in recesses.

Ignition switches and lanyards came mounted in their own panel. However, the keys were mounted top to bottom, which made it hard to determine which key started which engine, if one had stalled. They'd be better with the keys on top left and top right, and the lanyards on the bottom. That way there would be no confusion.

### **OVERALL**

It's difficult to find a boat that people from both schools of thought-V-bottom or catamaran-will like. We think Hustler struck that chord with its 377 Talon.

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