

## Top Vacation Cruisers



COURTESY CROWNLINE (3)

### > CROWNLINE 340 CR

By Robert Stephens

It took a few minutes to settle our mental bearings after boarding the new 340 CR. We would have been slightly less surprised if we were invited to a Corvette test only to find a luxury car waiting on the track. Crownline is so acclaimed for its deep roster of sports-minded boats that the competition uses them as Exhibit A when designing their own spiced-up models.

The 340 has the genes of those centerfold-worthy boats, including the high energy that pervades the entire Crownline company. The difference is this boat is nearly eight feet longer than Crownline's largest boat of a year ago.

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The exterior appeal carries to the cabin where the cabinetry and stainless appliances offer style.

And footage doesn't begin to describe the expansiveness of the 340.

Everything on our test boat is standard, much of it fresh. The hard top, for example, takes the place of the typical radar arch and gives the boat a look

all its own. Within it is a hatch, stereo speakers and four courtesy lights. Fussing with a canvas top is a non-issue. Passengers who want to catch some rays can retreat to the patio-size aft cockpit, or to the convertible loveseat that can face aft along the transom.

The unique tone continues belowdecks. The generous amount of teak flooring is easy to maintain since it's out of the sun, and is especially handy in areas like the entry to the shower. The galley practically glistens with a large stainless-steel refrigerator and a faux-stainless microwave, but more important is the sizable counter space and coffee station (more than a simple coffee maker).

Amidst all of this the engineers kept the focus on living space. We noticed the beam is pulled forward and the cabinetry slimmed down. The width allowed us to stretch out sideways in the forward berth, which also has slopes or "dished" sides that we used as head-

rests. The mid-cabin is large enough for a pit seating area where tall adults can sit without hunching over. It then converts to a queen-size berth.

Where a crew beds down depends on how much of the 193-gallon fuel tank is used. We found 28 to 30 mph

to be a nice cruising speed, burning 22 gallons per hour. For fun we wound it up to nearly 50 mph, just because it isn't the norm with a boat this size. But when you combine the marine equivalent of a Corvette with luxury living, a lot of things become possible.

### NOTABLE FEATURES

- A 23-inch flat-screen TV in the salon is visible for a cabin-load of guests, but it stays out of play when not in use.
- The middle of the windshield has a unique slider feature, so boaters can put it down for ventilation and easier access to the foredeck.
- The battery switch is triggered with a red button on the helm; it's easy to find and remember when you don't want to drain the four batteries.
- A generator is standard, as is heat and air conditioning.
- The fiberglass head includes a large top lid on the toilet, which allows easy changing.

### At a Glance

CROWNLINE 340 CR	VITAL STATS	TEST DRIVE	PROFILE
	<p>The 340 CR needs few options because so much comes standard; one option all buyers will want is a chart plotter for excursions of any distance.</p>	<p>■ LENGTH OVERALL: 36' ■ BEAM: 11'11" ■ DRY WEIGHT: 16,300 LB.                      ■ FUEL CAPACITY: 193 GAL. ■ MAX HP: 850 ■ NMMA CERTIFIED? YES                      ■ MSRP (W/ TWIN MERCURISER 5.0L MPI BRAVO III): \$268,317</p>	<p>■ TEST ENGINE: MERCURISER 496 MAG BRAVO III ■ TEST PROP: 23-INCH XR 7-BLADE ■ TEST LOAD: PEOPLE (705 LB.), FUEL (50 GAL.)                      ■ TOP SPEED: 49.4 MPH @ 4,950 RPM ■ TIME TO PLANE: 7.3 SEC.                      ■ TIME TO 20 MPH: 8.5 SEC.                      ■ MINIMUM PLANE: 24 MPH @ 3,000 RPM</p>

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