ALLISON CRAFT GT-20

POWER: EVINRUDE 115

The day the V-6 outboard was introduced marked the start of a new era of equipment that could be recognized in a dockside debate on "hot" boats. Those involved with high performance boating know that the cheapest cost to speed ratio can be obtained using a V-6 outboard engine on the transom of a properly designed 16-20 footer. Dollar for dollar it's impossible to match the performance on any of the top rated outboards and one of the prime builders of this specialized style of machine is Allison Craft Boats of Louisville, Tennessee.

For the Powerboat Magazine Performance Trials, Allison Craft presented us with one of their successful race-proven GT-20 hulls. This particular model, the pinnacle of over 25 years of boat building excellence, has earned a most enviable record in competition showing speeds in excess of 90 mph when rigged for all-out battle. In keeping with these energy conscious times, however, Allison Craft threw us a curve ball when they decided to power the evaluation specimen not with an anticipated V-6 but with a less potent and more economical Evinrude V-4, 115 outboard.

In many instances hulls that run well under high speed racing conditions aren't really the proper machines for recreational boating demands because the performance of the craft is greatly hampered when necessary horsepower is removed. In evaluating the Allison, we quickly discovered that this finely engineered outboard marvel can do its performance thing quickly, efficiently and quietly no matter how much power you hang on the transom.

Spinning a 14 x 24 Mercury three bladed prop at 5100 rpm the uniquely designed Allison Craft rocketed past our radar gun at 54 mph without a bobble or hop. This type of mid-50 mph performance, using a 115, is remarkable but the stats get even more interesting when you examine the boat's fuel consumption figures. At the low end cruising speeds of approximately 25 mph the GT-20 is sipping at a 3.5 gph consumption rate with an increase to 5 gph at 35 and a mere 7 gph at nearly top speed. With this type of scrawny fuel diet you'll need a weekend to empty the 18 gallon fuel tank that is mounted behind a naugahyde covering in the back of the boat.

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Acceleration, an important characteristic in towing water skiers and even getting the "jump" on an

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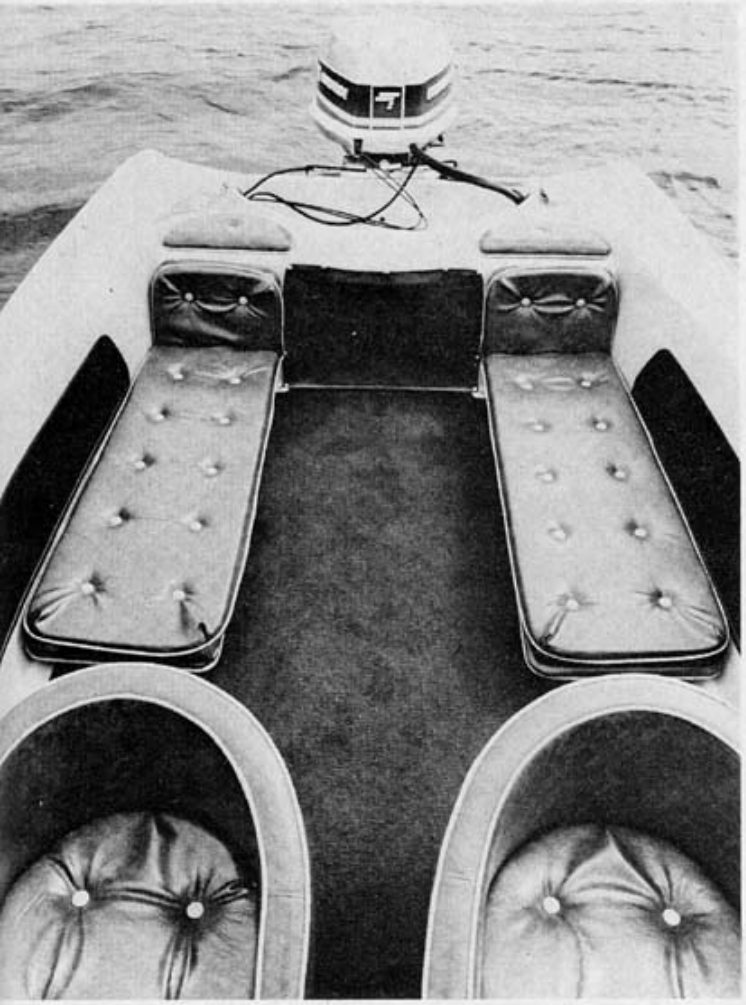


informal competitor if the need ever arises, was brisk. Pushing down hard on the Evinrude 115, the boat springs on plane in under three seconds. Surprisingly, the Allison will remain on plane with the engine properly adjusted at a notch below 11 mph. Tracking on the GT-20 was good and it was also noted during our slalom evaluations where turning is rated that the boat's cornering ability improved as the hammer went down and the speeds went up.

Using a stock flat transom mounted engine height of 23½ inches on the angle (22½ measured straight up) the Allison Craft would surely be susceptible to improved top-end performance via increased engine heights. It should also be mentioned that if the outboard engine is jacked higher than was used during our evaluations, low-end power and consequently skiing performance will be slightly sacrificed.

The reason the Allison Craft was such an excellent performer at all speed ranges has to be attributed to its extremely unique bottom design. Allison Craft, who claims to be the originator of the "pad" style vee-bottom some 20 years ago, has incorporated an amazingly wide 11¾" modified flat spot along the keel of the GT-20 to provide a stable

ALLISON CRAFT GT-20

running surface at high speed. Our test model had a rather deep and soft-riding 22 degree vee that features two sets of lifting strakes.

Over the years, Allison has done extensive research and development on the use of pads to improve performance and has ascertained that to obtain maximum efficiency the pad must be molded with varying degrees of very light vee. Along with the modified keel, the GT-20 is also the only boat in the Allison line to feature a step-back or offset transom.

Built with a 16 degree transom angle, the Allison Craft's bottom is cut out or notched for the last four inches to improve leverage and handling. In addition to the step-back transom, Allison Craft elected to shim the Evinrude 115 two more degrees, in order to aid low-end performance. Utilizing the perfect blend in the combination of prop, engine height, pad bottom and notch back transom the Allison Craft did everything we could ask of it.

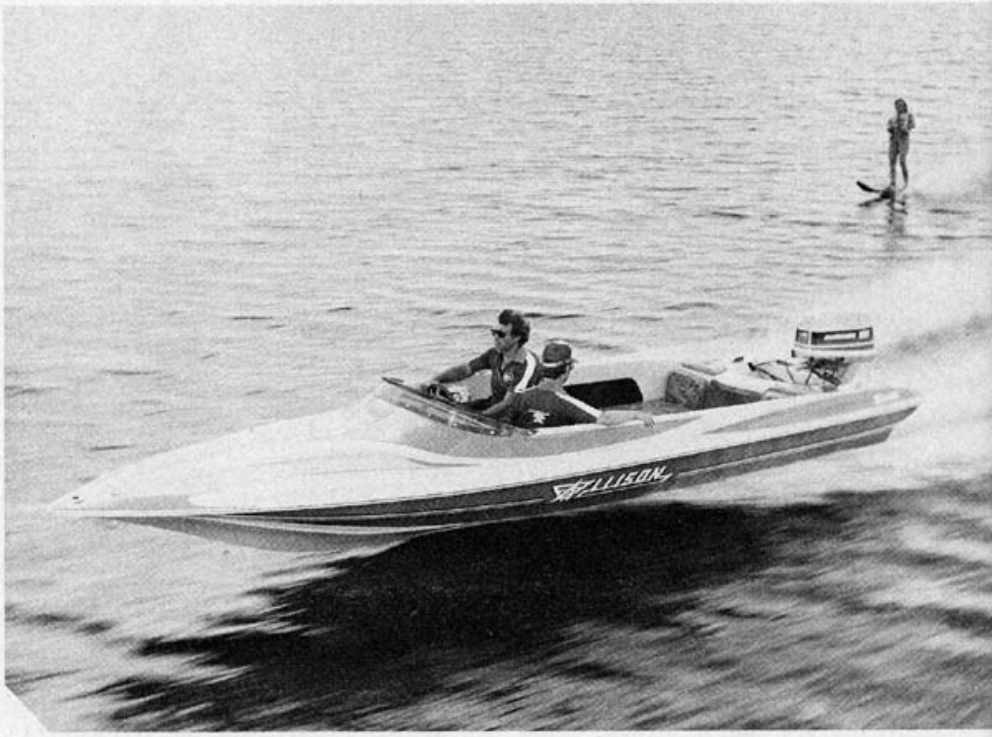
Although the boat is billed as being 20'5" in length the actual centerline measurement is 19'5" which is shorter because of the offset bottom and the fins that are a molded part of the hull at the back. Although it is not required, the boat does have level flotation.

The quality of workmanship on the Allison is excellent, particularly in light of it's under $10,000 price tag. The bottom of the GT-20, over an inch thick in the pad, has three stringers including one that runs down the center of the boat and another on each side of the keel line approximately fourteen inches up the chine. During our wake jump segment, the Allison got skyscraper high so we don't recommend this type of maneuver for beginners but we did notice the hull's solid construction as the boat landed firmly without flex.

The interior of the craft is just what you might expect from a high performance outboard builder. The front twin bucket seats are adjustable fore and aft for the driver and a full 360 degree swivel for the passenger. In addition, at the rear of the boat, Allison features twin 3'10" floor mounted loungers that will accommodate an additional set of passengers for a short trip. In our evaluations it was noted that the passenger's seat swiveling capabilities were appreciated, especially during the skiing portion. However, a permanent locked-in stop should be added for stability in rough water. While on the subject of less than perfect running conditions, Allison has thoughtfully attached a dashboard mounted chicken bar in front of the passenger's seat to aid in comfort when whitecaps appear.

Storage area on the Allison Craft was a bit spartan as the builder elected to utilize a very "wide-open" feel to their boat which the skiing segment will be particularly fond of. The GT-20 has ski racks which run along each gunnel but otherwise storage is severely limited.

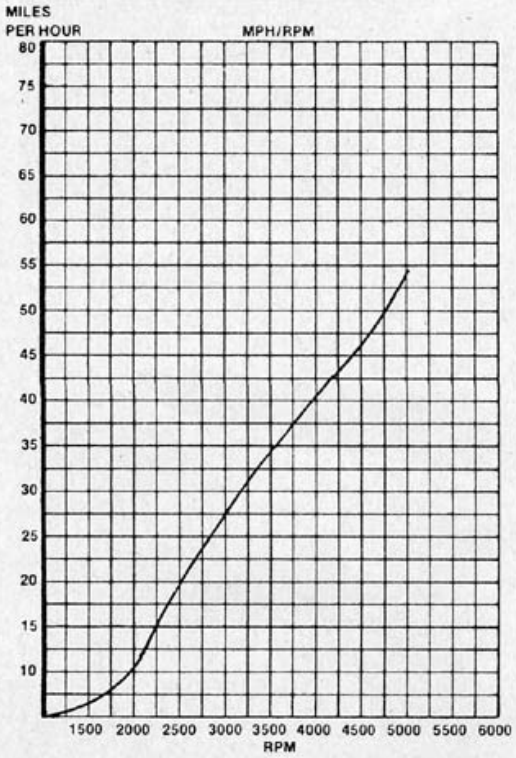
Allison Craft should take special pride in their superb placement of the battery. A special cavity underneath the engine well has been designed to provide excellent protection and increased durability for the battery. The quality of mold work and gel-coat craftsmanship on the GT-20 was without flaws. However, the boat's wiring could stand some improvement and the wood grain decal mounted on the dash will probably

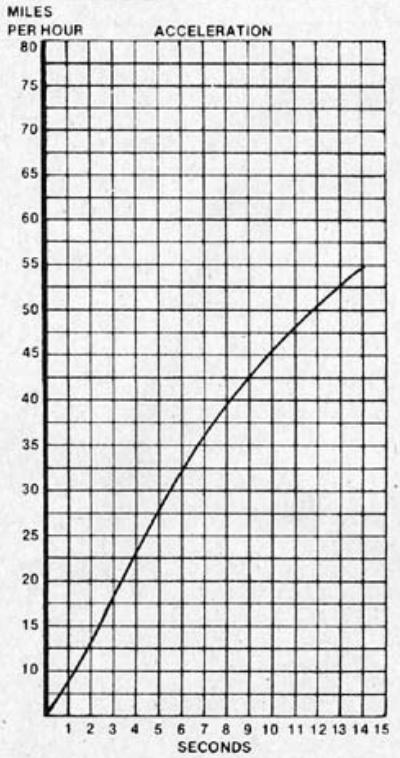


erode in hot midsummer usage.

The instrument panel on the Allison GT-20 included a 10-65 mph speedometer, 0-6000 rpm tachometer, trim indicator and a fuel gauge. Under various lighting conditions, the instruments were all visible and the hand throttle could be operated without interference. The engine was not equipped with vertical adjustment abilities but could be modified in and out. The boat was very susceptible to trim but even under full power it did not want to kite or teeter past the point a confident driver could handle.

After learning that Allison Craft was going to bring one of their top performing hulls to the Powerboat Trials, we wouldn't try and deny our disappointment that the boat wasn't outfitted with a potent V-6 outboard . . . that is, until we had a chance to drive it. The decrease in anticipated power still left us with a strong running package that was agile, easily controllable, very responsive, a superb skiing machine and most importantly, a miser in fuel consumption. Who could ask for anything more from a boat that will be in strong contention for our Outboard of the Year Award.





HULL SPECIFICATIONS

Make/Model	Allison Craft GT-20
Hull configuration	Pad vee-bottom
Length	20'5"
Beam	83"
Hull weight (without engine)	800 pounds
Construction process	Hand
Passenger capacity	1100 pounds
Retail price as tested (not including trailer)	$9,875

STANDARD EQUIPMENT: Two bucket seats, two lounge seats, adjustable driver seat, swivel passenger seat, carpeting, switch panel, glove box, dual steering, 18 gallon gas tank with fuel gauge.

OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT: Grab rail, windshield, tachometer, speedometer, bilge pump, 24 gallon gas tank.

OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT ON TEST BOAT: Grab rail, tachometer, speedometer, bilge pump, windshield.

COLOR OPTIONS: White, silver gray or ivory hull with blue, red, tangerine, saddle brown or dark gray trim. Interiors match trim.

ADDRESS OF HULL MANUFACTURER:
Allison Craft
Route 4, Box 1A
Louisville, Tennessee 37777

ENGINE AND PROPULSION SPECIFICATIONS

Make/Model	Evinrude 115
Cylinder type	V-4
Cubic inch displacement	99.6
Maximum H.P. at rpm	115 at 5000
Fuel	Regular or unleaded 50:1 oil mixture
Drive	Outboard
Prop	14 x 24 Mercury, 3 blades

TEST STAFF

Test driver	Bob Nordskog
Test observer	Dick DeBartolo
Ski driver	Wade Worley
Ski observer	Mark Spencer
Skier	Lisa Emry

MEASURED PERFORMANCE DATA

Indicated top speed - calibrated speedometer	54.0
Indicated top speed - stock speedometer	53.8
Recorded top speed - radar speed gun	54.0
Measured top speed - measured 1/8 mile	53.4
Maximum RPM - calibrated tachometer	5100
Maximum RPM - stock tachometer	5200
Time to reach plane	2.68 seconds
Minimum plane speed	11 mph
Distance to stop from 35 mph	185 feet
Time to stop from 35 mph	7.26 seconds
Decibel reading (35 mph at 50 feet)	82 dB(A)

FUEL CONSUMPTION DATA

25	mph	consumes	3.5	gph =	7.14 mpg
35	mph	consumes	5	gph =	7 mpg
45	mph	consumes	7	gph =	6.42 mpg
50	mph	consumes	7.5	gph =	6.66 mpg

CONSTRUCTION-QUALITY-WORKMANSHIP EVALUATION

Quality of fiberglass lay-up	9
Mold detail and finish	10
Gel coat/paint finish	10
Placement and quality of deck hardware	3
Placement of instruments and controls	6
Steering system	7
Throttle controls	8
Installation and neatness of electrical wiring	5
Overall engine installation	10
Installation of fuel tanks	9
Seat padding	4
Access to minor services	10

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

LOW SPEED

Tracking	8
Throttle response	6
Shifting of passenger weight	8
Docking maneuverability	9
Visibility	10
Ease of boarding and debarking	9
Noise level (in cockpit)	68 dB(A)

CRUISE SPEED

Tracking	7
Throttle response	7
Slalom course at 20 mph	7
Slalom course at 30 mph	7
Slalom course at 40 mph	8
Wake jump	4

HIGH SPEED

Tracking	7
Throttle response	8
Right turn	9
Left turn	9
Visibility	10
Noise level (in cockpit)	90 dB(A)

WATER SKI EVALUATION

Take-off power	9
Tracking consistency of hull	9
Throttle sensitivity	8
Visibility coming on plane	8
Visibility at speed	10
Wake	10
Ease of boarding and debarking	7