

Fun on the Run

With Maxum's newest trailerable cruiser, the 2600 SE, the only limit to your boating world is your imagination.

By Alan Jones



Most of the time, it's great having a boatload full of enthusiastic passengers who share your love of boating. But every once in a while, it's nice to get away by yourself and enjoy a little solitude as you fly solo. And if you just happen to be cruising around Fort Lauderdale, you'll definitely not be bored. Known as the "Venice of America," this fabulous boating area has more than 300 miles of canals and several cuts leading to the Atlantic Ocean, not to mention great waterfront restaurants and more multimillion-dollar houses on the water than you'll see anywhere else.

JULY 2006 BOATING WORLD BOAT OF THE MONTH



LOA 27'
Beam 8'6"
Weight 6,868 lbs.
Fuel 85 gal.
Base Price \$67,049
 (w/250-hp, 5.7L MerCruiser)
Price As Tested \$79,563
 (w/300-hp MerCruiser 350 MAG MPI V8)
Hull Warranty 5-year limited
NMMA Certified? Yes

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 Knoxville, TN 37929
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Test Data

Performance data was gathered with a 300-hp MerCruiser 350 MAG MPI V8, one person on board, and 75 gallons of fuel.

Top Speed 40.7 mph
Time To Plane 6.4 seconds
0-30 mph 9.5 seconds
Decibels @ Idle 60 dB-A
Decibels @ 30 mph 84 dB-A
Decibels @ WOT 90 dB-A

Standard Features

Bimini top, courtesy lights, entertainment center wet bar, cockpit table, snap-in Berber carpet, transom shower, galley skylight, flip-up galley counter extension, horn, battery charger, CO monitor, dual battery switch, CD stereo, removable cabin table, refrigerator, single burner stove, marine head, hot shower, depthfinder, Danforth compass, remote oil drain, trim tabs, seven mooring cleats, and 6-gallon water heater.

Options

Active seating, port windshield wiper, entry door screen, windlass, stereo upgrade, remote spotlight, macerator, gelcoat upgrade, Navman electronics package, dual aft sunloungers, cockpit refrigerator, sport tower, air conditioning, VacuFlush head, entertainment pack w/flat screen TV/DVD and remote stereo controls.

Slipping the lines on the 2600 SE, Maxum's newest trailerable cruiser, you ease into forward and head into a rippling tide on the man-made Dania Cutoff Canal. The smoothness of the shift from the MerCruiser control to the 350 MAG MPI V8 engine, which puts out 300 hp, is immediately noticeable. In previous years, a MerCruiser shift could be best described as a "clunk" by the distinctive sound made when engaging a gear. Nowadays, thanks to vast improvements in clutch design, you can more accurately say, "I smoothed it into gear," thanks to the 1/3 reduction in shifting effort and an astounding 85 percent reduction in noise, vibration, and harshness.

The first exciting moment comes quickly as the channel squeezes down to a narrow opening at a rather low bridge, where the constricted water resembles a class two rapid. Fortunately, there's just enough clearance for the 2600 to limbo underneath it without having to use the Maxum's unique droppable radar arch. For safety, you've been advised to take this passage at no less than 2600 rpm for added control, and this helps you thread the needle with a sigh of relief.

When the channel reaches the Intracoastal Waterway, you want to see what kind of performance the 27-foot Maxum is capable of, but unfortunately the plethora of no-wake and slow zones prevents you. But thanks to a tip, you take a right and after a few minutes of idling, you find a short stretch that's OK to get on plane — apparently the manatees around here can read the signs. With the trim down, you jam the throttle, and the 2600 SE gets on plane in a little more than six seconds and reaches 30 mph in less than 10. Not bad, when you consider that the beefy Maxum weighs in at 7,000 pounds-plus when loaded with fuel. Although you won't mistake the handling for one of Maxum's more nimble bowriders, the 2600 SE corners well and tracks accu-

ately. A top-speed run will have to wait since this is only a 30-mph zone, so you backtrack and head toward the inlet near the Port of Fort Lauderdale, where you're allowed to run wide open.

After a half an hour of idling you see the entrance to Whiskey Creek, which has been recommended as a destination for you to check out. "Creek," you think to yourself. "Isn't that like a river, only with less water?" Entering the John U. Lloyd Beach state recreation area, where the creek is located, you go under a bridge and



see a beach that has a few boats nosed onto shore — all smaller than your boat. On the weekend, this place will be jam-packed with boating families, but on the weekdays it's pretty peaceful. You see the tide is running out and the sounding on the depth gauge is dropping fast, so you execute an about-face and head back out before finding out precisely how much water it takes to float the 2600 SE.

Soon you see the Port of Fort Lauderdale, a modern facility for shipping and cruise ships on your port. When you get to the inlet you hit the gas, and the Maxum accelerates to a



top speed of 40.7 mph. There is some porpoising as you trim it up to the max, but blipping the standard trim tabs down a bit takes care of the problem. As you head toward the Atlantic Ocean, the seas start to build and you back off to a more moderate cruise speed. With 17 degrees of deadrise at the stern, this boat is really not designed for ultra-rough water, but it handles the 2- to 3-footers in the inlet well enough to check out the aircraft carrier that's anchored offshore because the port is too shallow.

For better visibility, you flip up the bolster on the doublewide helm seat, which puts your head above the curved green-tinted windshield. After spending an hour at the helm, you find it to be a great blend of style and function. The white-faced Faria gauges are set high on the dash for good visibility, and the Dino sport wheel adds a touch of class. The dash is gray to help reduce reflection on the windshield, and there's room for two large screen electronic displays to be flush-mounted on either side of the wheel. All the accessory toggle switches are below, for easy access, as are the circuit breaker reset buttons.

With the sun blazing overhead, you're glad to have the ultra-large Bimini top, which covers the entire cockpit. When your guests want to work on their tans, it's not a problem to furl the rear section of the Bimini and to flip the stern bench seatback forward to form a sunpad. Additional sunning space is achieved by dropping the cockpit table and adding a filler cushion. Even when you're in full sunning mode, you can still freely walk about the cockpit. This innovative flexibility is called "active seating" by Maxum, which says that there are a total of 22 possible seating combinations. A unique feature is revealed when you flip the stern bench seatback all the way aft, and see that it forms a seat bottom for those who want to lounge on the stern or get ready to go skiing. Even the captain's helm seat gets into the action by pivoting 180 degrees rearward. Both the adjustable stern bench and the helm seat flip up to reveal dry



storage. On the port side is the rearward-facing chaise lounge, which could use a little more recline in the backrest to be the ultimate relaxing spot. If you choose, you can opt for a different seating configuration that gives you dual aft sunlounges (\$1,464) with a center walkthrough to the swim platform, which can be filled in to form a giant sunpad that is the width of the stern.

The cockpit is ready for entertainment with a starboard-side entertainment center that features a wet bar, beverage prep area with cupholders and a niche below



for a cooler, or an optional Norcold refrigerator (\$941) that the test model is equipped with. The 2600 SE is youngster-friendly with high gunwales and a rear entry gate, but for those with crawling toddlers who double as escape artists, they'll be able to break out unless parents cover the opening in the tubular transom door.

The search for a waterfront restaurant has an added degree of difficulty because the lack of deckhands requires a docking-friendly place, but the memory banks are jogged and a place adjacent to the well-trodden area around the annual Fort Lauderdale Boat Show is conjured up from the synapses:

Coconuts. The best way to solo-dock the Maxum is to tie the bow line to the Bimini support near the driver so you can lasso a cleat without leaving the helm station. After ordering a fat chunk of perfectly grilled mahi-mahi with black beans and rice to go, you dine al fresco on the cockpit table while listening to some rather strange music blaring from next door. When "Ride of the Valkeries" by Wagner comes on, you wait for a helicopter assault a la "Apocalypse Now" that doesn't happen. With your curiosity piqued, you head next door to the Swimming Hall of Fame and discover a synchronized swim meet in progress, which explains the strange tunes.

While tethered to the floating dock, you check out the cabin and are greeted by a surprisingly luxurious ambiance that uses cherry wood veneer to full effect. On the port side is a fully equipped galley that comes complete with an electric Ceran Top stove, microwave, dual-voltage Norcold refrigerator, stainless-steel sink with spigot, and food-prep area with swing-out counter extension and loads of storage space. The V-berth uses the side



bolsters and cockpit table to fill in the V-void to create a roomy sleeping area that's adequate for two normal-sized adults. The kids get an amidships berth that features a one-piece mattress, functional window, and overhead lighting. The stand-up head includes a shower fed by a 20-gallon tank, as well as a vanity and sink with storage below.

When maxed out with options like the filler cushions, remote spotlight, Navman electronics with VHF radio, electric head, cockpit refrigerator, windlass with anchor and rode, foldable sport tower, flat screen TV with DVD and CD, dual remote stereo controls, and 7,000 BTU air conditioning, you still fail to crack the \$90,000 barrier. What you get for the money is a floating entertainment palace that you can hook up to the family SUV and take on vacation with you, giving you waterfront accommodations wherever you choose to go. 