

BONADEO'S BAD BOY 34



When only quality counts.

by Matt Draper



Thirty-four feet of class.

Once again, this role I play has allowed me the opportunity to meet one of the coolest shipwrights around, and experience one of the... no, I take that back... probably the finest center console in its class in the world. I realize this is a strong statement, but no matter how closely I look, or how carefully I run my hands over her curves, I can't find room for improvement. Yes... still referring to the boat.

The man behind the architectural drawings and 400-grit sandpaper is Larry Bonadeo, the creator of Bonadeo Boatworks in Stuart, Florida. It all started when he was allowed to help build the 63' sport fish he ordered, and then ended up falling in love with the process - all the while, noticing numerous ways he could improve upon the vessel, if given full reign. After earning his 100-ton captain's license, he spent the next couple of years fishing the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans and brainstorming ways to build better, lighter vessels, through more advanced engineering and materials. Unable to resist his calling, Bonadeo Boatworks was soon formed.

TEAM BONADEO

I met Larry the night before we were to take his latest creation, the 34, out for a test ride. To say Larry is the strong silent type would be... well, it would be wrong. He's strong all right, from years of hard work and playing on the seas, but silent he's not. Instead, he's fun, rightfully proud and intensely meticulous - definitely a unique combination, and perfect for what he does. Within five minutes, we were cutting up and laughing like old friends.

The next morning we met at his shop, so I could check out the efforts that go into building a boat of this caliber and meet the rest of the crew responsible for turning it out. The street-front entrance was unexpectedly understated. His team, which includes his two sons, Tony and Dominic, and his wife, Denise, the bookkeeper, were already busy upon our arrival, but each took a moment to introduce themselves and point out their roles. This wasn't the assembly line I was used to seeing. The difference between producing "custom boats" and "production boats"

was blatantly obvious. Bonadeo's shop was just that, a shop - albeit, large enough for several vessels to be under construction at once - yet still modest and personable.

The latest 34-footer took up the center of one of the bays. It was just getting ready for its top and electronics, but Larry couldn't wait to show me its features. Even under construction, the boat was so beautiful I had



Captain Larry Bonadeo





The 34's little sister, the 31, blasts off.

to warm up to climbing around freely. Kinda like your first time in a China shop; hands behind the back, super careful. But, soon it is irresistible and you have to run your hands along the surfaces to further take in the flawless radiuses and sculpted, exotic hardwoods. Seriously, more work goes into the underside of a Bonadeo hatch, than a lot of other boats put into the top of their consoles. Even the bilges are faired and painted.

Next, we took a look at the material and machinery used in the building of the hulls. This is where Larry morphs out of the big, fun guy, and instantly becomes a chemical/naval engineer. As much as it would appear his interests lie in esthetics, his true passion is studying different space-age materials for designing and constructing the toughest, lightest hulls possible.

A massive, custom-built form, resembling a welded web of steel tubing, sat at the back of the room. After weeks of mulling over conceptual ideas with prospective owners and the naval engineer, this is where construction begins. The recipe which has made Bonadeo's boats so sturdy and sought after, involves the pro-

cess of cold-molded vacuum bagging and resin infusion, utilizing Epoxy resins, Kevlar, carbon fiber, biaxial fiberglass and composite cores. The result is a hard-as-stone hull, which is extremely resistant to both abrasion and penetration. And with the composite cross-linked structural foams available today, they're able to produce lighter, stronger vessels, with positive buoyancy - even in the 60-foot class.

Make no mistake; the Bonadeo's are yacht builders. Larry and Tony's skills make them that. But, their boats of late aren't yachts in size, only in their appointments and quality.

WET TEST

After lunch, we hauled his most recently completed 34 over to the water. This one had a little less brightwork, but a clean boot stripe and a pair of 300 hp Mercury Verados. You'd think we were backing Angelina Jolie into the water, by the amount of attention this boat drew at the landing. Once we made it to the inlet, Larry leaned into the throttles.

Now, I have to admit - and those of you who follow this magazine know where I'm going - it takes a lot for a

mono-hull to impress me. Even a big mono-hull bangs on a rough day. So, I was expecting a typical V-hull ride in a beautifully put together boat.

Not even close. It was as if Larry had constructed the hull out of polished iron. This boat takes on waves without the slightest shake or shutter. You don't even hear a thud... nothing. With the practically silent Verados purring behind you, all you hear is the water sheeting out to either side and spilling over itself. Larry attributes the clean release of water to the sharp entry and uninterrupted, su-





per-smooth, modified-bell/waveform hull design sucking onto the surface of the water. Much like the hull of a large sport fisher, but light and considerably faster.

Larry, determined to prove the 34 wasn't "all show and no go," put the boat through a series of high-speed turns. Again I was impressed as the boat dug and banked tightly into the turns - so tight, the first one nearly tossed me out. Eventually, I was given the controls and put the boat through more of a "real world" series of maneuvers - like slamming through the wakes of big sport fishers, just to witness once again how uneventful that can be. This is what a one-piece boat with no weaknesses feels like. It's undeniably solid, and I haven't felt it before. The way the boat cuts through the seas, only slightly effected by the

water's surface, gives you the feeling you are piloting a much heavier vessel, but its response to a nudge of the handles brings you back to the fact you're in a maneuverable center console.

Behind the helm, you really are in the lap of luxury. But even with yacht features, this boat wasn't designed to be a cruiser. This boat was designed to fish and all of the tools are there. From the huge, watertight electronics lid, oversized fish boxes and elaborate tackle station aft of the leaning post, to the sculpted cockpit scuppers. Larry likes fishing almost as much as he likes building custom boats.

WRAP UP

I learned a good lesson by choosing to write about the Bonadeo 34. I was solidly convinced you couldn't make a conventional hull in the under-40-foot class that could deliver the comfort of a cat hull. This was a real eye opener. Bonadeo has truly figured out the formula for building a boat with a ride like no other in its class. Safety, dependability, fishability, unquestionable quality and good looks - it's all there.

Here's another thing that opened my eyes. You'd expect a custom boat like this to set you back a pretty penny... right? Truth is, Larry's pricing is competitive with that of more familiar, higher-end boats of similar size. Since Bonadeo builds them by hand, one at a time, the sky is the limit on your options. Go all out, or keep it clean, but don't compromise on that hull! 

To learn more about Bonadeo Boatworks, visit www.bonadeoboatworks.com



SPECS - Bonadeo 34

Length	33' 11"
Beam	9' 11"
Draft	22"
Fuel	300-420 gallons
Horse Power	"Owner Specified"
Top Speed	50-60 mph
Water	40-60 gallons