





# Malibu Boats

[Wakesetter 20 VTX]

Every year, the people at Malibu Boats challenge themselves to do something better. They're not content to leave well enough alone—we don't think they even know what that means. From enhancing and adding features to tweaking craftsmanship, they keep pushing. They're never satisfied.

That's why Malibu continues to dominate this awards category. This year, the company sent its Wakesetter 20 VTX to our Performance Trials and it blew everything else we tested right out of the water.

The evolution of the Wedge hydrofoil exemplifies Malibu's continual push toward refinement. When the builder first introduced the Wedge, you had to hop into the water to reach the pin that released it. To make it easier, the builder a few years later added a hatch in the swim platform, but even that wasn't good enough.

In the Wakesetter 20 VTX, all it took to lower and raise the Wedge was a push of a button at the dash. There even was a gauge to show the hydrofoil's position, and a safety function that won't let the device lower or lift when the boat is running more than 10 mph.

Of course, if one wake-boosting system is good, two must be better. The Wakesetter 20 VTX also included a water-ballast system with solid tanks rather than soft bladders. Used solo or in combination, the setups produced wakes that ran from inviting to intimidating, meaning that beginners and serious professionals could find heaven behind the boat.

The forward-swept, rack-equipped billet tower was


easy to reach, as was the rubber-surfaced fiberglass swim platform on the transom. Taking a cue from the yacht market, the builder installed underwater LED lights at the transom to make it easier to board after a nighttime swim.

Clearly, the Wakesetter 20 VTX was designed by people who spend time wakeboarding. But they also must log a lot of hours behind the wheel, because the Wakesetter 20 VTX was a joy at the helm as well. Perfectly responsive to steering wheel and throttle input, the boat felt like a high-end luxury automobile.

The boat topped out at 48.9 mph, which is at the upper end of the tow-boat range and got there from a standing start in a little more than 15 seconds. Relative to other boats in its class, the 20-footer delivered an uncommonly soft ride.

Offering enough seating for a substantial crowd, the compact Wakesetter 20 VTX had a lounge that ran from the starboard side of the cockpit aft of Malibu's typically plush driver's bucket seat all the way around to the observer's position, where it took a rearward turn. The bow playpen was completely padded, and the sole was covered in dedicated carpet.

Given some of the marginal workmanship we've seen in tow boats over the years, the Wakesetter 20 VTX was particularly impressive. Mold work was precise, up to the standards that a few custom boats would be lucky to meet, and the gelcoat was bright. From inside the engine compartment to behind the dash, the rigging was sanitary.

Topping itself every year has become standard for Malibu. This year, the Wakesetter 20 VTX met that standard. 

## TEST RESULTS

Centerline/beam  
20'/8"1"

Hull weight/fuel capacity  
3,200 pounds/45 gallons

Price as tested  
\$55,725

Engine  
Hammerhead 383

Cubic-inch displacement/hp  
383/400

Propeller  
Acme four-blade 13 1/2" x 19"

Zero to 15 seconds  
47 mph

20 to 40 mph  
6.2 seconds

Top speed at rpm  
48.9 mph at 5,200

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From left: Malibu installed the Pro Speed Control in the center of the dash. With room for at least 10 people, the cockpit was spacious. Malibu highlighted its 25th anniversary with a logo on the steering wheel hub. Rockford Fosgate speakers were mounted on the tower.

► For the Performance Report on the Malibu Wakesetter 20 VTX, see "Intelligent Design," February 2007, Page 120.

