SEATRIALS



Frost Bite

The new 2100 CC from Polar offers a pleasing taste of things to come. By BRAD KOVACH

Though hardly new on the boat-building scene, the name Polar may not strike a chord with some saltwater sportsmen. That's because this Midwest manufacturer cut its teeth on flat-bottom skiffs aimed at the lakes and rivers of America's heartland. But as its reputation for building affordable, aggressive fishing machines grew, so did the scope of its product line. First came a series of moderate-V bay boats. Now, Polar stands poised to make a bold move into the briny with the deep-V 2100 CC and, later this year, with new 23- and 26-footers.

"We're committed to creating a successful saltwater fishing line," said Bob Chew, a member of Polar's design team. "Our philosophy is to incorporate at least five innovations or features that are new to that particular class of boat, in each model."

Once aboard the 2100, the first distinction that I noticed was the hull shape. The bow rake is less severe than that of most deep-V center consoles, so water entry occurs farther forward. That means there's more wetted surface overall; it's a bigger hull for bigger water. When I drove it through boat wakes in Miami's Biscayne Bay, the Polar plowed ahead like a bobsled in the straightaway chute. Its bow flare deflected what little spray there was on that mild day, and its five-inch-wide reverse chines helped it hold sharp turns.

The 2100 also has a "bustled" transom with half-moon cutouts on each side to divert aft waves. I wasn't able to assess their efficiency during my calm afternoon aboard, but the boat did back down nicely without any water entering the cockpit or bilge. From a standing start, the 2100 planed in five seconds and hit 30 mph (4750 rpm) in eight. At that speed, according to Chew, it has a notable 270-mile range, using 90 percent of its fuel. Top end with the direct-injected, 200-hp Evinrude was 46 mph (6500 rpm).

The 2100's construction belies its modest price. The all-composite boat has a one-piece fiberglass stringer system and foam-filled cavities for extra rigidity and flotation. The fit and finish is impeccable. The console, for example, rests on a rim of deck molding, which creates a toerail all the way around. The look is ultra-clean, and courtesy lights hidden beneath add a touch of class after twilight. The coaming pads hit you right where they should at mid-thigh. The bowrails, nav lights, etc., are all recessed so as not to snag lines.

The 2100 comes well-stocked for a center console of its size. There's a transom door, a 48-gallon live well under its aft bench, near-standup headroom inside its console (a Porta Potti is optional), lockable tackle drawers and room for 21 rods. My test boat also had the add-on T-top and Premier Offshore package, which includes pull-up cleats, a dive ladder, choice of hull color and more.

Bottom line: If the Polar 2100 CC is any indication, the ice age has begun.

Specifications:

LOA ..... 21'4"
Beam ..... 8'6"
Draft (drive up) ..... 1'6"
Disp. (dry) ..... 3,210 lbs.
Bridge Clearance (to T-top) ..... 9'0"
Transom Deadrise ... 21 degrees
Fuel ..... 97 gals.
Base Price (w/test power): $33,389

Contact:
Polar Boats, 4500 Middlebury St., Elkhart, IN 46516. (800) 839-4182. Fax: (574) 522-5120. www.polarboats.com.

Test Power: (1) 200-hp Evinrude 200 outboard turning a 21"-pitch prop. Optional power includes single outboards up to 240 hp max.

Performance:

RPM	MPH	Knots	dB-A
Idle	2.4	2.1	62
1000	2.9	2.5	64
1500	5.1	4.4	67
2000	6.3	5.5	72
2500	7.7	6.7	76
3000	8.0	7.0	77
3500	8.7	7.6	80
4000	22.1	19.2	82
4500	27.5	23.9	84
5000	33.7	29.3	86
5500	38.6	33.6	88
6000	41.7	36.3	89
6500	46.0	40.0	90

Speeds recorded by GPS in Biscayne Bay off Miami, Fla., in calm conditions and 10-knot winds w/four people on board and a full fuel tank. Sound levels measured at the helm.

Standard Equipment (major items): Insulated fish box w/drain; console cooler w/drain; 48-gallon lighted live well; raw-water washdown; battery selector switch; hydraulic steering; twin swivel helm seats or rotocast leaning post.

Optional Equipment (major items): Trim tabs; electronics box; fishing seat; tilt wheel; bow cushion; depth/fishfinder; lockable rod storage; second live well; Porta Potti; removable aft backrest; T-top; Premier Offshore package.

Warranty: Five-year hull coverage; three-year vinyl and carpet; one-year on all other components.