PONTOON IMPROVEMENT



THE REDESIGNED SWEETWATER 2386 RE SPORT FEATURES MORE ROOM, MORE PERFORMANCE AND MORE FUN

PERFORMANCE TESTED

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By Go Boating Test Team

This year marks big changes for Godfrey Marine's top-selling Sweetwater line of pontoon boats, and the 2006 2386 RE Sport is a perfect example. Engineers and designers entirely rethought the craft in terms of interior space and functionality. The result is a triple-tube performance pontoon with an innovative layout that we won't be surprised to see others copying in the future.

Below the deck are three aluminum tubes — the outer tubes are 23 inches in diameter and the center tube is 25 inches in diameter (all the tubes have lifting strakes). The larger center tube basically acts as the main "hull" for the boat by providing more buoyancy and lift than either of the outer tubes, which allows the outer tubes to act somewhat like stabilizing sponsons. This setup gives the 2386 RE Sport even more performance and better handling than you would expect with three 23-inch-diameter tubes.

Another important element of the 2386 RE Sport in terms of performance is the aluminum underbelly skin, which is used on the rear 12 feet of the boat where most of the water flow is. This skin quiets the ride, reduces drag for better performance and enhances fuel economy.

Unlike the majority of the other pontoons we test, the 2386 RE Sport features a 24-gallon rotomolded fuel tank built into the aluminum motor pod, which gives you two advantages: It puts the weight of the fuel along the center of the boat for optimum load balance and it frees up room topside for more storage (the motor-pod fuel tank is part of the optional

ABOUT THE BOAT:

SWEETWATER 2386 RE SPORT







The helm of the Sweetwater 2386 RE Sport is a one-piece rotationally molded console with Burlwood accents, a windscreen and full instrumentation. A Jensen AM/FM CD stereo with MP3 input (and two speakers) comes standard, as does Godfrey's Next-Wave electrical system, which includes plug 'n' play automotive-style Deutsch connections.

Facing the helm is a deluxe swivel chair with a built-in cupholder, and vented back and slide adjustment. On the forward end of the helm a hatch opens to reveal a dedicated trash receptacle, which is always a smart thing to have aboard. The helm also includes stainless steel cell phone and CD holders, a dry storage tube for registration papers and other small items and Teleflex extreme shift cables.

One optional feature we found particularly innovative is the movable chaise. This back/side-rest locks into grooves molded into the seat bases and can be positioned up and down the length of the lounges. This is another area where Godfrey has taken advantage of what can be done with rotational molding.

Other optional features include a pop-up changing room, a Porta Potti, a ski tow bar and a livewell. Convenience and Premium packages are also available, which include additional options.

SPECIFICATIONS

Length	23 ft.
Beam	8 ft., 6 in.
Capacity	13 people
Dry weight	2,017 lbs.
Fuel capacity	24 gals.
Maximum power	150 hp
Tubes/diameter	3/23-in. (outer), 25-in. (center)

PERFORMANCE & PRICING

SWEETWATER 2386 RE SPORT

PERFORMANCE

	MPH	RPM	MPG	RANGE	$/MILE*	DBA
PEAK	46.3	6,000	2.86	62	.96	91
CRUISE	35.4	4,500	3.93	85	.70	86
0-30 MPH ACCELERATION						7.9 seconds

Fuel consumption measured with Floscan digital fuel-flow meter; range based on 90% of total fuel capacity.
**Assuming a fuel price of $2.75 gallon*

POWER

TEST	Yamaha F150
HP	150
PROP	19-inch 3-blade stainless steel
WOT RANGE	5,000-6,000 rpm
STANDARD	Yamaha F90
HP	90
PROP	3-blade aluminum
WOT RANGE	5,000-6,000 rpm

Craft available with outboards ranging from 50 hp to 150 hp from most outboard manufacturers

LOAD

	PEOPLE	FUEL (GALS./LBS.)	MISC.
TEST	3	16/100	15 lbs.
TYPICAL	7-10	24/150	140 lbs.

BASE PRICE

WITH TEST POWER	$29,600*
WITH STANDARD POWER	$25,800*

**Price can vary depending on options and location — price does not include trailer*

FINANCING

$248/month for 15 years*
**Assuming a final price of $32,000 with a 15% down payment and a fixed interest rate of 7.2% — does not include sales tax*

FIVE NOTABLE OPTIONS

Convenience Package (includes docking lights, fuel tank, fixed-mount ladder and cupholders) ($642), in-dash Lowrance M68C GPS/depth finder ($675), changing room w/curtain ($195), ski tow bar ($292), Porta Potti ($110)

FIVE NOTABLE STANDARDS

Tilt hydraulic steering, lifting strakes, stern underdeck skin, 23-inch-diameter outboard pontoons and 25-inch-diameter center pontoon, deluxe captain's chair w/cupholder

BUILDER

Manufactured by Godfrey Marine, P.O. Box 1158, Elkhart, IN 46515; (888) GODFREY; www.godfreymarine.com

*Circle **36** on reader service card, page 81*

Convenience Package, which includes docking lights, a fixed ladder and two cupholders).

Storage is a chief concern for any pontoon, and we have to give Sweetwater engineers full marks for developing one of the best storage concepts we've ever seen on a 'toon. It starts with taking rotationally molded seat bases to a high art. The seat bases provide volumes of storage while also being designed to work better. Even areas for the recessed nuts that hold the hinges fast are molded in, which means a cleaner finish. Another molded-in feature is a channel that makes up what Sweetwater calls its Water Management System, which keeps water out of the storage areas.



Other creative rotomolded areas include a cooler with a drain under the rear cockpit lounge (which can be converted to a livewell), storage for a pair of fenders incorporated into the optional pop-up changing room and dedicated storage for the table under the port sunpad hatch. The table itself has a deep ice bucket in the center with a lid and drain as well as four cupholders — this has become one of the most popular standard features from Sweetwater.

In terms of space we noticed something different going on in the rear of the 2386 RE Sport. Sweetwater has really opened up the rear starboard quarter by shortening the starboard end of the cockpit lounge. The area opens up to the rear-entry gate, making one of the best watersports staging areas we've seen on a rear-entry pontoon.

All the furniture features ergonomically engineered layers of multi-density foam wrapped in Sweetwater's exclusive soft and durable GX48 expanded vinyl. Above you'll appreciate the standard Bimini with boot.

PERFORMANCE

Our test of the 2386 RE Sport took place on Indiana's Lake Wawasee. We had three people aboard and two-thirds of a tank of fuel (about 16 gallons or 100 pounds). For power we had a 150 hp Yamaha F150 four-stroke outboard swinging a 19-inch three-blade stainless steel prop.

Our 0-to-30-mph acceleration was 7.9 seconds and our top speed was 46.3 mph at 6,000 rpm — very impressive for a 150 hp motor. We dialed it back to 4,500 rpm for a cruising speed of 35.4 mph, which will yield a cruising range of about 85 miles.

Performance-wise the 2386 RE Sport handled nicely. The smaller outer tubes gave the craft a slight lean in the corners similar to that of a fiberglass monohull boat, and the standard tilt hydraulic steering was appreciated in hard-over turns.

We did have a chance to hook up a tube for a pull, and there was plenty of power on hand to unseat our most determined tube rider — and we all appreciated the extra room in the cockpit when it came time to haul the tube back aboard.

OVERALL

The Sweetwater 2386 RE Sport is a popular model thanks to its proven performance and innovative interior — not to mention the fact that Godfrey and Sweetwater carry a certain amount of weight and respect in pontoon circles.

The base price for this boat equipped with our four-stroke 150 hp Yamaha test motor is $29,600, which is a sweet deal. You can drop down to a 90 hp Yamaha four-stroke and spend about $4,000 less, but we would recommend going no lower than 115 hp if you plan on spending much time enjoying watersports.

Sweetwater is serious about raising the bar for 2006, and that's exactly what it did with the 2386 RE Sport — and the best part is you can have it all for a very decent price. **GO**