



Past, Meet Present



Bill Clinton was president, gas was \$1.09 a gallon, and *The Lion King* ruled the box office. The year was 1994, and Hinckley had just launched the innovative new 36-foot picnic boat named *Dasher*.

For years I've read about *Dasher* in marine magazines. It seems every couple years I come across a piece that talks about its use of jet drives, a technology that, when it debuted, was only found aboard smaller performance boats. I'd read about how Hinckley used Kevlar in the hull and a revolutionary new SCRIMP process to infuse its hulls. Time and again magazine writers would tip their hat to the JetStick, the first joystick of its kind. These breakthroughs, driven by then company CEO Shep McKenney, helped launch the brand into unprecedented popularity. It was that same drive for innovation that drove McKenney to create a system you may have heard of: the Seakeeper.

I've always wanted to test a boat like the 36 picnic boat, a game changer that would be talked about for years. I guess it's like the nerdy boating journalist equivalent of playing in the World Series.

When I saw the *Dasher* 2.0 debut at the Newport boat show this past fall, I thought I may just get the chance. A triple-threat of technological advancement designed by Michael Peters, it features a carbon-fiber hull, 3D printed hardware, and fully electric propulsion courtesy of twin 80-horsepower Torqeedo engines.

Pushing off the dock at Hinckley's yard in Stuart along with Managing Editor Simon Murray and Creative Director Erin Ken-

ney, the first thing we noticed, or rather didn't notice, was noise. This boat is quiet as a church mouse. There was no whine, no pitch—nothing. Just the sound of water flowing along the hull.

From there we enjoyed what can only be described as a perfect day out on the water. Simon dives into the details about our time on the boat and the technology behind the new *Dasher* in *Seeing Is Believing* on page 46.

Hinckley isn't the only builder pushing our industry forward. The Adler Suprema incorporates a hybrid diesel/electric propulsion system that seamlessly shifts power sources depending on your need. European Editor Alan Harper put that boat through its paces on the Bay of Cannes and reports back in *Sound of Silence* on page 70.

We delve further into the future of 3D printing in Jeff Moser's Power & Technology column this month on page 24.

Even MJM, builder of Down East yachts, is looking to the future with its new outboard-powered 35z (see *The Game Changer* on page 52), complete with Mercury's joystick piloting system, in the hopes of attracting younger buyers.

As we get ready to put this issue to press, I've been thinking about those older stories about the first picnic boat, and the headwinds it must have faced.

"We didn't know if it was going to be successful," Scott Bryant, Hinckley's director of new product planning, admits of the original picnic boat. "It was a gamble."

He easily could have been talking about the electric version resting across the dock from where we were standing.

I don't know if the electric-powered *Dasher* will become as widely accepted as its namesake was. I don't know if future marine journalists will refer to it with the same reverence that the original receives. I don't know if people will dig through the archives of *Power & Motoryacht* to see how we covered such a radical boat. I will. I'll look back on our coverage and know if it really was a spark that ignited a trend or if it fizzled out; a cool boat that was just ahead of its time, perhaps.

Either way, *Dasher* was my first shot at testing a truly innovative boat. Looking around the industry and the rapid rate in which boatbuilding and onboard features are evolving, I have a feeling it won't be my last. □

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