

## MasterCraft 300: Breaks from Tradition with New Cruising 30-Footer - 02/11/2009



Tomorrow at the Miami International Boat Show MasterCraft will debut its new “300.” It will be a watershed boat for the Tennessee builder which has been known for 40 years for its up-market tournament ski and wakeboard boats. In MasterCraft’s announcement press release it said, “We’re no longer just a ski boat company.” With that one sentence and the boat pictured above, MasterCraft is venturing into the domain of Formula, Four Winns, Larson and other American builders who have heretofore defined the modern high-end 30’+ express cruiser. This is a strategic – and possibly brilliant – corporate move; one designed to give MasterCraft’s future a potential not realistically possible as long as it is mired in the hammer-and-tong ski/wakeboat competition. We could be wrong, but we detect the fine hand of Roger Penske behind this radical move.



***MasterCraft is taking aim at the 30’+ prestige cruising boat market with its exciting new pickle fork yacht with an 11’ beam.***

MasterCraft says that it is “...charging head first into the cruising world” because many of their customers’ children are moving on to college or careers and so Mom and Dad are ready to go cruising. A second reason is because MasterCraft has detected what they call a “comeback” audience of people who are down-sizing from cruising boats in the 45-foot range, but who have become used to the amenities and quality of larger boats.



***Sink and refer or ice maker go behind helm and companion seating. Note off-center thru-windshield bow access.***

The 300 is designed for “bigger” water than the lakes and rivers where ski/wakeboard boats are traditionally used. The company has designed this boat for large lakes, huge reservoirs, sounds and estuaries like the Chesapeake Bay and Long Island Sound.

## Pickle Fork Creates Room

MasterCraft has taken a radical step by building something outside of their core business and the innovation fostered by the highly competitive ski/wakeboard business will certainly be needed there as they go up against companies that have decades of experience and goodwill in the 30'+ category. Even more interesting is that MasterCraft is using its "Twin-Tip" pickle fork bow design to enter this cruising area. We can't think of another boat over 30' currently being built with this design concept. In the boat business, this sort of thing is considered a bold step.



***Note that the anchor placement which keeps the deck clean. This boat has a bow thruster.***

There are several advantages to the "Twin-Tip" design (which has the hard chines carried up to the port and starboard tongs of the pickle fork.) Some of the advantages are: 1) It creates a lot of room in the bow; so much so that the 300 has a 6'6" athwartship bunk forward, thereby picking up room further aft. 2) Naturally, this also creates more deck area on the bow, making anchor handling easier. 3) The 300's 11' beam is carried farther forward than otherwise it would have been. A company spokesman said that according to their measurements of cruising boats in the 33' to 35' foot range, their new boat has the room of a 34-footer in both the cabin and in the cockpit.

On the other side of the coin, people will naturally ask at what sea height and boat speed does the blunt bow begin to pound? me traditionalists might be slow to adapt to the new esthetics of the design until there are more of this design on the water and MasterCraft's stated market for this boat are baby boomers who are much more conservative than their kids.



*Looking forward the galley is to port and double athwartship bunk is forward of the round settee.*

### **Italian Design Idea**

Italian boat builder Angelo Molinari produced pickle fork tunnel hull raceboats in the 1960s. These boats had twin sponsons. They were widely copied and are used still today on the race circuit. A few years ago MasterCraft was the first builder to introduce the pickle fork concept in modern times, adapting it to a monohull. Soon Tigé came out with their own ski/wakeboard boat using the concept. Within months Four Winns and Regal brought out their own pickle fork designs in the runabout cruiser field 26' and under. It remains to be seen if more companies follow MasterCraft's design bread crumbs over 30'.

### **Accommodations**

MasterCraft also wanted 6'2" headroom below and has achieved that at the base of the companionway. Clearance in the head compartment is about 6.' Below, a round settee makes into the second double berth. To port the galley has a microwave, sink, refer/freezer and an optional single-burner stove top.



*The radar arch is standard, but the hardtop with tinted glass is optional.*

The high freeboard is put to good use below the cockpit sole where the company has placed a large equipment bay that is accessed by a hatch between the helm and companion seats. This is exactly where builders of express cruisers have been putting the “mid cabin” bunk for the last 30 years or so. But on the 300, the space is used for the Kohler 7.3kw gas (CO-Safe) generator, A/C compressors for cabin and cockpit, tankage and storage space.

The radar arch is standard and can be fitted with an optional “hard top” with 5 pieces of tempered tinted glass which the builder says filters out 90% of harmful UV. An Isinglass package is available as an option so the boat can be buttoned up for cruising or entertaining in colder climes or on rainy days. We like this option for the obvious utility that it adds to the boat.

### **Engines and Joystick**

Standard engines are twin MCX 350-hp Indmar driving through ZF V-drive transmissions. 6 liter gas engines are an option, as well as twin 350-hp CMD diesels. With the standard engines, the boat will have an MSRP of under \$300k.

You can order the 300 with ZF Joystick Control. This model has a bow thruster, and the joystick software coordinates the vectors among the three stationary props. While this arrangement is not as nimble as a joystick with pod drives, it is also not as expensive, heavy, or as cumbersome. For this size boat it may well be the best propulsion system.



*Twin 350-hp Indmar V-drives are easy to access from the helm area.*

We will be testing the new MasterCraft 300 in the near future so stand by for an in-depth look by one of our captains in both video and written report.

Basic Specifications--

|                           |             |
|---------------------------|-------------|
| LOA with swim platform    | 33'9"       |
| LOA without swim platform | 30'4"       |
| Beam                      | 11'         |
| Displacement              | 12,500 lbs. |
| Fuel Capacity             | 200 gal.    |

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**Request Test Drive**

[For more information, visit MasterCraft's website --](#)

[Read BoatTEST's 2007 article on Roger Penske buying MasterCraft --](#)

[See tests of MasterCraft boats --](#)

## MasterCraft - 300 (2009-)



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### Captain's Report



The tour is slated to kick off the week of August 10th and will be making the rounds all across the country. Be sure to check the MasterCraft 300 website regularly at [www.mastercraft.com/300](http://www.mastercraft.com/300) to see the schedule, specific locations and any updates about the MC 300 tour (as details are subject change). And if the MasterCraft 300 is coming to your area, please contact your local MasterCraft dealer to find out how you can test the MC 300 out for yourself.



The new MasterCraft 300 has been extensively sea-trialed and tested by the factory all spring long and is now ready for prime time.

**300 Tour Dates for 2009:**

- August 12-13 New York
- August 15-16 Lake Winnepesaukee
- August 18 Montreal
- August 21 Grand Haven
- August 23-24 Chicago
- August 27 Minneapolis
- August 30 Lake of the Ozarks
- September 3 Louisville
- September 17 Spokane
- September 19-20 Seattle
- September 22-23 San Francisco
- September 26-27 Los Angeles
- September 29-30 Lake Powell
- October 3-4 Dallas
- October 6 Austin
- October 8 Houston
- October 11 Charlotte
- October 15-20 Annapolis (Boat Show + Demos)
- October 23-24 Miami
- October 27-November 3 Ft. Lauderdale (Boat Show + Demos)
- November 5 Naples, FL
- November 7-8 Tampa, FL



We count at least five entertaining venues on the MasterCraft 300. Can you find them all? Maybe you can dream up more.

**About the MC 300**

The "twin-tip" MC 300 measures in at 33'9" from bow to stern (including the platform) and 11 feet from side to side. This 14,000 pound boat is powered by twin engines capable of delivering up to 800 horsepower to the props. A 200 gallon fuel tank and a 30 gallon freshwater tank ensure a day out on the water can stretch into the night and beyond.

While the sheer size of the MasterCraft 300 is commanding, it is the refined, yacht-like luxury that will ultimately cause deep and aspiring admiration among MasterCraft fans. Access to the bow is by means of the cleverly designed access steps through the unique windshield – or, walk around the windshield on integrated sidedecks with a custom handrail. This ensures that whether your crew are there to help dock the MC 300, use the windlass to anchor the boat in its own personal resort spot or to relax on the bow

lounger with tilt mechanism, they can do so safely and comfortably.



**Bathed in soft red lighting for night piloting the MasterCraft 300 conjures up all sorts of possibilities for nocturnal cruising adventure.**

Back down in the helm, the cockpit has some features only found in much larger boats. At the ergonomically designed helm, the driver is greeted by a technological utopia that includes a beautiful Raymarine C80 or optional E80 display – this lets the driver monitor all the boat's systems, including electronic charts, radar and a 3-D reading of the ocean floor. Luxurious touches, like the lined personal electronics drawer, the hardwood trim and programmable switches make piloting the MasterCraft 300 fun.

Add the optional Joystick Maneuvering System to the automatic trim tab system and no one will have a problem taking the MC 300 for a spin.

The area surrounding the helm continues the tradition of lavishness found on the MC 300. For starters, each side has a wet bar comprised of custom, high-gloss hardwood cabinets. The port wet bar is topped with a Karadon countertop, stainless steel sink and a 25 quart removable cooler. On the other side, the starboard wet bar also has a Karadon countertop with the option to add an electric grill, stainless steel refrigerator or icemaker and waterproof flat screen TV that lifts up from its hiding spot beneath the countertop.



**Plenty of room for sunbathing both on the stern and there are two more bunny pads on the bow.**

As guests move further back they will discover transom seating, wrapped in their choice of top-grade, well-appointed vinyl or exterior grade Ultra-Leather, that can be adjusted to three different positions for customizable comfort.

### Misty Glass Top

Revolutionary features abound directly above the cockpit as well. In addition to the standard sport arch, the MasterCraft 300 also offers a unique glass hardtop. The hardtop, magnificently framed in top-grade aluminum, has tinted glass to reduce the amount of UV light allowed into the cockpit yet does not limit the view of the sky and the feeling of being out in the open. The hardtop frame incorporates numerous task lights and a unique misting system designed to spray occupants with a fine, cooling mist.

### Below Deck

After taking a few steps down, guests enter a salon that is standard with customized hardwood cabinets, hardwood flooring and ultra-leather fabrics that can be ordered to taste. Immediately to port is the standard stand-up shower and head with full size entrance door. Next to this is the galley with Karadon quartz countertops, microwave, refrigerator/freezer and beautiful sink. Straight ahead toward the bow is an ornate sleeping area that is laden with yacht-grade fabrics and appointments and is as large as what is found on a 34 or 36 foot cruiser.



**Because of the "twin-tip" bow the MasterCraft 300 has the beam forward to but the double berth athwartship. This means that there is more room left in the salon/galley. We like it.**

Abaft the bed is the settee with fold out table where people can eat, or relax and watch the standard 26" HD LCD TV. And if that were not enough, the MC 300 comes standard with *Contour Zone*, a programmable 12V control system that allows anyone onboard to manage all the boat's electrical systems including lights, A/C, alarms and more from one device.



**There is a lot to like about this boat. And we find ourselves wondering where MasterCraft will be going from here.**