



# SOMETHING MORE

For buyers who want something with a little attitude, the B & H 270 Water Rod could be the right choice.

**B**ETWEEN RUNABOUTS AND FULL-FLEDGED OFFSHORE boats are a slew of single-engine offerings known as sport boats. Offered with conventional or stepped-V hulls, these models often help buyers make the move from something like an open-bow runabout to a boat that's a little more performance-oriented.

They can be excellent performers in and of themselves, but generally speaking they're transitional objects.

The 270 Water Rod we tested from B & H Performance Boats is one of those "bridge" sport boats. If you're working your way up the performance ladder, it probably won't be the last boat you buy.

On the other hand, thanks to solid performance and versatility, you could enjoy it for a very long time.

## PERFORMANCE

In terms of top speed, the dividing line between runabouts and performance boats pretty much begins at 60 mph. Granted, a few runabouts top this mark, but most won't get much past the mid-50-mph range.

Well into the performance-boat realm, the Water Rod 270 ran 66.1 mph with its 420-hp Volvo Penta 8.1 GXi engine, putting the power to the water through a pair of F7 propellers on a DuoProp drive. The 4,500-pound, dual-step V-bottom also came on plane in a respectable 4 seconds, and reached 60 mph from a standing start in 15 seconds. Midrange acceleration was reasonable, since the boat ran from 30 to 50 mph in 5.8 seconds and from 40 to 60 mph in 9.6 seconds.

Like most stepped-hull models, the 270 Water Rod

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did its best turning work—and earned great scores—with slightly positive trim. Trimmed up for top-speed and running in a straight line, the boat rode fairly high on its keel and, as such, tended to be upset by cross-wakes and side winds. But at lower speeds with the drive not trimmed up to the max, tracking was solid. The 270 Water Rod also provided a nice ride in the light chop we encountered on Mission Bay.

The biggest concern with the boat's performance centered on its Livorsi throttle-and-shifter. The unit was a little sticky and required a good bit of effort to move. Several times when our lead test driver tried to shift from forward to neutral, he ended up in reverse. Likely a small adjustment is all it would take to solve the problem.

#### WORKMANSHIP

Though the 270 Water Rod's painted graph-

ics—over gelcoat—were not as crisp as we've seen from high-end West Coast custom builders, all the colors were bright and exhibited a healthy shine. The boat's tooling was strong, and its rubrail was competently installed.

Four full-length stringers made of marine-grade plywood, the same material used for the boat's sole, were used in the 27-footer. For lamination materials, the builder went with vinylester resin, 1708 and 1808 fiberglass, as well as 20-, 40- and 60-ounce woven fiberglass cloth. Balsa was used for coring.

Not short on hardware, the 270 Water Rod had production pieces such as four Accon Pull-Up cleats, as well as custom items, such as billet grab handles/bilge vents. Nearly all of the hardware was installed in color-matched, powder-coated bezels.

An electric screw jack opened and closed the engine hatch, which felt solid. Standard Volvo Penta mounts on through-bolted L-angles secured the big-block engine to the stringers.

The bilge was readily accessible and finished with white gelcoat.

Though there wasn't much going on in terms of engine compartment wiring in the 270 Water Rod, what was there could have used a bit more support. Loose tie-wraps supporting most wires didn't seem up to the level of the boat's otherwise strong construction. Wiring behind the dash was about the same—acceptable, but not up to par with the rest of B & H's workmanship.

#### INTERIOR

In terms of versatility, a midcabin sport boat makes a lot more sense than one with a closed deck and full cabin. The midcabin gives passengers a place to beat the heat or hide from the rain if necessary. The trick is creating a space large enough, without shrinking the bow playpen to the size of a kitchen sink, and something no one other than small children can use.





From left: Instrumentation on the 270 Water Rod was the Livorsi II series. The stereo was mounted conveniently to the left of the wheel. Headroom in the cabin was excellent for a sport boat. The buyer opted to install Plexiglas doors—a \$2,300 option—to close off the midcabin space. Power choice for the boat was a 420-horsepower model from Volvo Penta. The engine and hull combo was good for 66.1 mph on radar.

B & H pulled off that trick nicely in the 270 Water Rod. The builder made the deck fairly tall, though not ungainly, and in doing so created enough headroom for a 6-foot-tall man to sit on either of the facing lounges without combing his hair on the headliner. Cabin niceties included a microwave oven and interior lights. For privacy, acrylic doors were provided fore and aft.

The open bow also seemed uncommonly spacious. It had two lounges with stowage underneath the bottom cushions, as well as substantial gunwale trays. Though there was no anchor locker forward, a small anchor would fit under either lounge.

Dedicated carpet was installed throughout the boat. The installation was best in the cockpit, which also was outfitted with a four-person bench seat and bolsters with manual dropout-bottom cushions for the co-pilot and driver.

The builder kept things simple at the port-side co-pilot's position. A locking glove box was

built into the dash ahead of the bolster. An angled footrest was molded into the base of the console. Absent from the co-pilot's spot was any kind of grab handle.

An angled footrest also was provided on the driver's side. The helm station's Livorsi II instruments were arranged above the non-tilting steering wheel. Rocker switches in function-etched panels turned the accessories on and off, and the previously noted Livorsi shifter-and-throttle unit was installed on the starboard gunwale.

### OVERALL

The B & H 270 Water Rod probably won't be the last boat anyone bitten hard by the performance-boating bug will ever own, but it is a great place to start—especially if you're coming from the oh-so-docile production runabout world. It's a versatile and attractive, 60-plus-mph sport boat at a reasonable price. Ⓢ

### TEST RESULTS



#### TEST CONDITIONS

Temperature	79 degrees
Humidity	31 percent
Wind speed	4 mph
Sea conditions	6" chop
Elevation	Sea level

#### HULL INFORMATION

Deadrise at transom	22 degrees
Centerline	26'8"
Beam	8'6"
Hull weight	4,500 pounds

#### PRICING INFORMATION

Base retail	\$67,900
Price as tested	\$83,500

#### ENGINE & PROPELLER

Engine	Volvo Penta 8.1 GXi
Cylinder type	V-8
Cubic-inch displacement/horsepower	496/420
Lower-unit gear ratio	1.59:1
Propeller	Volvo F7 DuoProp

#### OPTIONS ON TEST BOAT

Upgrade to Volvo Penta 8.1 GXi engine (\$4,400), open bow (\$2,800), premium sound system (\$2,400), Plexiglas doors (\$2,300), additional custom graphics (\$2,000), flush-mounted microwave and inverter (\$700), cockpit floor stowage (\$500) and cockpit footrests (\$500).

#### ACCELERATION

3 seconds	25 mph
5 seconds	43 mph
10 seconds	54 mph
15 seconds	60 mph

#### MIDRANGE ACCELERATION

30-50 mph	5.8 seconds
40-60 mph	9.6 seconds

#### RPM VS. MPH

1000	8 mph
1500	12 mph
2000	24 mph
2500	33 mph
3000	40 mph
3500	48 mph
4000	55 mph
4500	60 mph

#### TOP SPEED AT RPM

Radar	66.1 mph at 4800
GPS	67.4 mph

#### PLANING

Time to plane	4 seconds
Minimum planing speed	18 mph

#### FUEL ECONOMY

At 25 mph	4.1 mpg
At 35 mph	3.5 mpg
At 45 mph	3 mpg
At 55 mph	2.9 mpg
At WOT	1.8 mpg

#### FUEL CAPACITY

80 gallons

#### TEST CONDUCTED AT

San Diego

#### MANUFACTURER

B & H Performance Boats, Dept. PB, 26005 E. 9th St., Highland, CA 92410, 909-864-7722, www.waterrod.com.

