

A river racer reaches through time with a renovated Sixties Glasspar G-3 to blow the transoms off the young bucks

TOP

TEXTY & PHOTOS BY KARL & CHRIS BEISEL

In the early Sixties I ran the rivers in and around southeastern Virginia and can quite proudly say that I was then the area's "Top Dog." This essentially means that my boat was the fastest that routinely ran the river. Maybe not exactly *the fastest*, but there are other aspects to being Top Dog. Looking fast was often more important than being

fast. Sounds complicated, but it's all part of the Top Dog game.

For the next 20 years, I did no boating and, naturally, my Top Dog status went by the wayside. Eventually, however, nostalgic



■ The 1961 model boat was originally purchased in disastrous condition.



DOG

memories got the upper hand and I decided to go boating again. I loved my old boat, a Glasspar G-3, so although the model was now more than 30 years old, I bought another one.

During the Sixties, all that was needed was a 13-foot speedster and a 75hp Evinrude. Times have changed. Now I needed a custom prop, jack plate, and an upgrade to a 135hp outboard just to be granted mere freshman status in today's high-speed river racing club. It was disheartening to have been reduced to such marginal membership when I once reigned supreme. There were bigger engines than my old 75hp Evinrude (the 100hp Merc debuted in 1962), and there were faster boats. But none quite captured the G-3's combination of style, speed, and that macho look of a wide, low-slung, short-shaft engine floating deep in the water.

Thinking through my new-found humdrum status, I began to ponder how I could once again claim the Top Dog crown. This was probably a wild and potentially dangerous thought. My Sixties-style boat,

stylish as it was, had a narrow beam and carried a rating of only 60 hp. Upping the ante to a 135 more than doubled the recommended horsepower rating. Would I dare go beyond? The

brute power of my modern-day competitors' V-6 outboards were more than I could ever hope to overcome. Even though today's boats are longer and heavier, weight is not the factor it once was with a high-power outboard. Quite obviously I would have to join them to beat them. But merely beating them would not be enough. I wanted to do it while still using the 13-foot 7-inch design of yesteryear—a boat that would reach through a time tunnel, ripping away the Top Dog title. It could be done. But some modifications were in order. The project had the potential to permanently plaster a few surprised looks on some unsuspecting faces. And I was just the one to do it. I smiled enthusiastically at the thought.

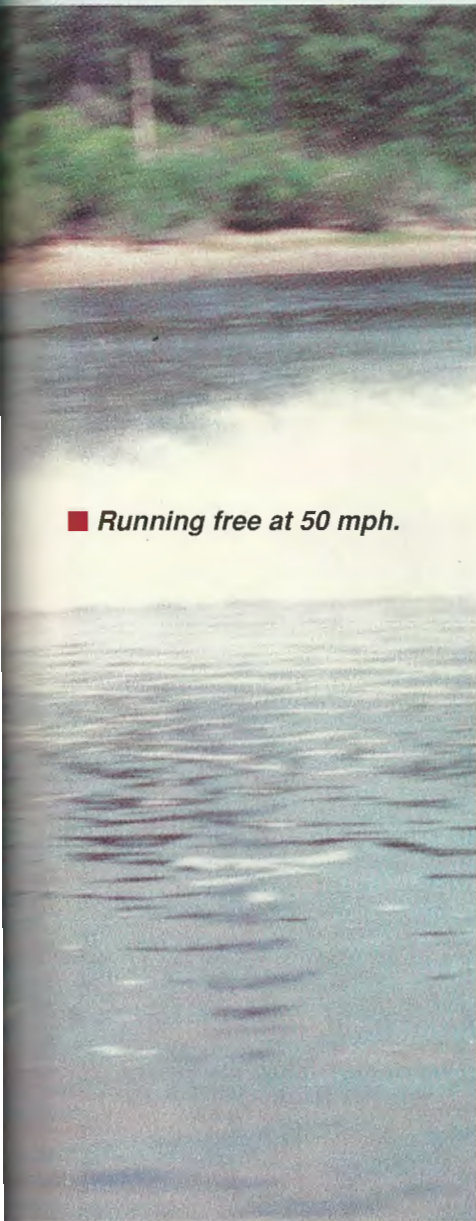
The first step was to locate a suitable engine. A Mercury V-6 would do nicely, but weight would be a problem. The transom could be raised (neat and pleasingly, of course; no make-shift modifications, please). An extended rear deck could replace the engine well and extensions behind the transom would add a measure of flotation. My mind raced with ideas faster than I could put them on paper. I would also add a pad to the keel, lowering the bottom as a variation to raising the deck (this can be confusing), thus providing more freeboard.

I completely renovated my 1961 Glasspar G-3. The boat now incorporates all-new longitudinal hull beams and a 3.5-inch-thick transom measuring a full 24 inches in height. Mounting the V-6 would be easy. My worry was floating it.

With the engine bolted to the boat, I stood back to assess the completed rig. It was quite a machine to behold. But as I discussed the project with race-knowledgeable friends, I was barraged with safety-first warnings. Dual-cable steering, hot-foot, and wheel-mounted trim control were the watch words. I was coached about the problems of blow-out and blow-over. Complexity began to mushroom. But I was determined. Soon my '61 G-3 was retrofitted with high-speed safety equipment. I covered the items mentioned, plus added rigid engine mounts and a Roddy Walsh custom lower unit (Merc inline six-cylinder 150hp racing unit modified for the V-6). I was ready.

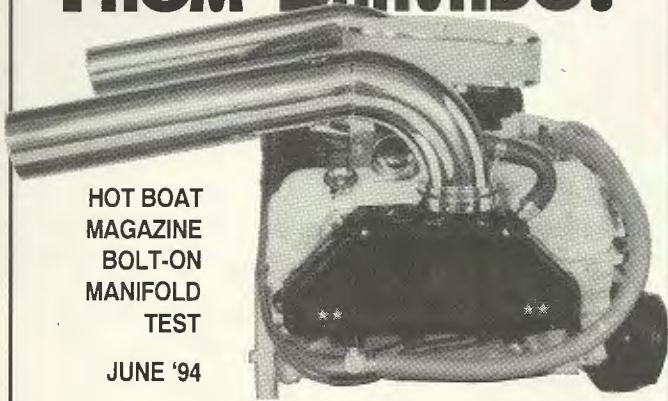
A short time later I was on the water. The engine roared to life, its six cylinders ripping with the sounds of a high-compression performance engine. A small crowd gathered on the shore. Admittedly, it is not often one sees a V-6 outboard on a 13-foot boat. Performance was yet unknown, but I sure looked fast!

I tested and tuned the rig over a period of time. Comfortably on the water again, I positioned myself in an area where I frequently saw "The Red Hydrostream." It was the boat known as the fastest in the area. In conversations on the beach and at the ramp, it was referred to by all as "The Red Hydrostream." It was a boat of mystical powers that, whenever required, conjured up demons of speed. I waited patiently, not knowing whether I would encounter the boat that day. I passed the time slowly motoring in circles and watching the shore. At last, I heard the distinctive sound of a highly trimmed Merc. Surely it was The Red Hydrostream. Before he rounded the point, I could see the thrashing signature of a performance outboard. Spray was visible through the marsh grass. The noise was intimidating. The



■ Running free at 50 mph.

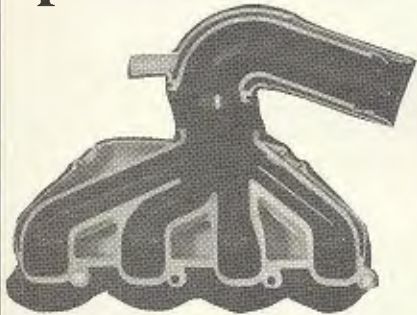
We SEPARATED FACT FROM BRAVADO!



HOT BOAT
MAGAZINE
BOLT-ON
MANIFOLD
TEST

JUNE '94

**“6.5 mph top end
increase and 300 rpm
over its earlier stock
performance!”**

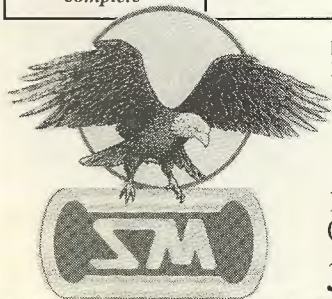


“THE INCREASE
IN SPEED WAS
A TRIBUTE TO
THE SYSTEM'S
ABILITY TO
CHANNEL EXHAUST
IN A PRODUCTIVE
MANNER

It's no longer what we claim but what
“HOT BOAT'S” manifold test proves! No
prop changes – no fine tuning – just a
simple bolt on procedure using hand tools!

Our Manifolds Produce Results

<p>SMALL BLOCK CHEVY \$1395 complete</p>	<p>EXCLUSIVE THREE YEAR WARRANTY</p>	<p>BIG BLOCK CHEVY \$1695 complete</p>
--	--	--



For A Free Color Brochure Or A Hot
Boat Test Reprint:

**STAINLESS
MARINE**

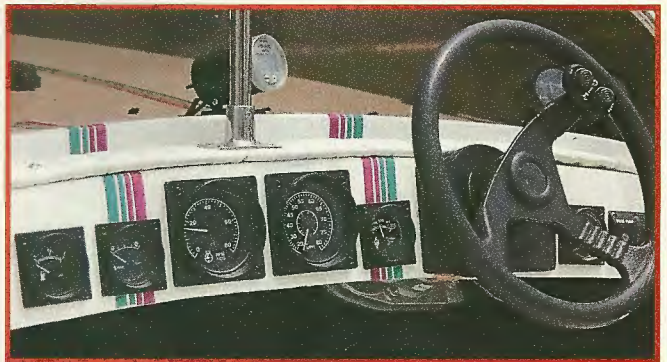
13800 NW 19th Ave., #2
Opa-Locka, Florida

305-681-7893



■ **Flotation was added by adding pods behind the transom. This effectively updated the boat to a more modern look.**

adrenaline started to flow. Was I the predator waiting in ambush or the naive prey awaiting doom? Both were possibilities. I had no time to ponder the thought. He rounded the point riding high on the water and slipping sideways. I came to a plane and turned in his direction. My G-3 began to porpoise as I trimmed the engine and stabilized with speed. The Hydrostream recognized the challenge. My blood pressure ratcheted upward as I approached 60 mph. He was overtaking me as I pressured the throttle. At 75 mph his progress slowed and he took notice that this was a serious challenge. At 80 he was still gaining. At 83 we were in a dead heat. Water thrashed everywhere. The unsynchronized engines beat against each other. There was no discernable difference in speed. I trimmed again slightly and unmistakably began to pull ahead. My opponent trimmed as well, but the effort slowed him and he pulled the throttle back.



■ **The G-3's helm contains the equipment necessary to keep the pulse of this pocket-rocket river racer.**

The battle was short and ended quickly. We floated quietly...a quarter-mile between us. The driver of the red Hydrostream watched me for a time, wondering of events that had brought his defeat. A blast from the past had reached out and snatched his title. He paused...and watched...then waved a salute to the new Top Dog!

All good stories are told and retold. Just days after the event, I was once again at a dealership. A group of young men were huddled in muffled conversation. I heard the sounds as varying mumbles until a recognizable phrase: “The White G-3,” pitched my ear. Already retold, the event had made a mark. I reigned supreme. I was Top Dog once again!


■ *The Glasspar G-3 has become a classic collector's item that has acquired its own following of aficionados.*

Glasspar G-3 Owner's Association

The Glasspar G-3 has become recognized as a classic boat and may well be the most popular restorable fiberglass model to date. An owner's association evolved out of the author's interest in this popular early-Sixties fiberglass boat. It is the first-known, special-interest group for an early production-line, all-fiberglass model. Initially, informational exchanges were between a small core of enthusiasts, but membership has grown to a computerized list of about 200 scattered across the nation (including Bill Tritt, the boat's designer and former owner of the Glasspar Company).

Information has been gleaned from the collective memories and research of many. That data is compiled in a free eight-page pamphlet detailing the history of the boat. It instructs how to identify the model year, provides techniques on restoration, and includes the addresses of 200 interested enthusiasts, buyers, or sellers.

For some time there have been interest groups for classic wooden boats. But pursuing early wooden versions (often finished like fine furniture) is still relatively expensive. These G-3 models are distinctly designed, memorable, and quite recognizable. They are inexpensive and perform well with smaller outboards. But most do need restoration in varying degrees, and this can become an extensive project. In the end, there is a unique and subtle pleasure in owning a classic boat. It's not uncommon to pull up to the ramp and have someone glance your way, smile, and glowingly announce, "My gosh, that's a Glasspar G-3!"

For more information, write to G-3 Owner's Association, Dept. TBM, 1965 Fountainbrook Ct., Woodbridge, VA 22192. 



HITCH UP AND SAVE!

Purchase any Draw-Tite hitch or accessory and get 1/2 off a Good Sam RV Owners Club Membership.

That's a \$19 value for just \$9.50. Check the Yellow Pages for your nearest Draw-Tite dealer and stop by before August 1, 1994 to get 1/2 off your new or renewed Good Sam Membership.

Draw-Tite...We're Pulling For You!



DRAW-TITE