HYDROSTREAM VIKING 18'

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If you've never before seen a HydroStream built hull you're undoubtedly going to want to take a long second look. While most outboard runabouts appear similar in style, HydroStream models more closely resemble some sort of futuristic aircraft conceived through extensive wind-tunnel testing rather than a conventional boat.

There's no question that the unusual and striking exterior design of the HydroStream is both a result of wanting to create a different and better looking hull plus using the available aerodynamic factors produced by higher speed to maximum advantage. No one can challenge HydroStream's enviable competition record. During recent years, it has proven to be one of the most dominant boats in the Outboard Performance Craft Division of the American Power Boat Association. But there's more to a HydroStream than just being a race boat.

Our test model Viking 18' was the classic hot outboard runabout, perfect for someone wanting exceptional performance without sacrificing all the comforts and utility of a more traditional design. This 17'9" hull has a wide 89 inch beam and is rated to accommodate up to 175 horsepower engines. The bottom configuration of the Viking 18' is so complex that it literally defies a word description. Looking at it carefully you can see a blend of vee-bottom, pad keel, reverse lifting strakes and a progressive rocker which somehow all work together to produce a remarkably efficient high speed ride attitude. It should also not be ignored that the frontal portion of the sides and bow are 'gull wing' in shape to capture the slip-streaming air giving lift to the nose. HydroStream calls these design innovations such things as a 'delta flare tail' and a 'pointed droop-snout bow'. Regardless of their given names they do work, making the Viking 18' an exciting craft to drive.

Fitted to the transom of this HydroStream was a 1750 Black Max Mercury outboard engine. On its business end was a stainless steel 3-blade chopper propeller which is a favorite performance wheel among bass boaters providing plenty of top speed bow lift. Also, a special piece of performance equipment was installed on this Viking 18', a Hydro-Electric Transom device from Land and Sea Per-

formance Center. This unique mechanism allows a driver to adjust the height of the engine on the transom while running. Obviously, there's an advantage to having the engine rest low on the transom for getting on-plane quicker and then lifting the entire engine up reducing the amount of lower unit drag for higher speeds. This handy one piece unit is rapidly becoming a popular extra for those who want the flexibility of owning both a ski boat and a race fast outboard runabout.

Without trying to trim the Black Max to the moon and leaving the engine height set at what was recommended as an all-round optimum position, the Viking 18' sent our calibrated speedometer needle to the 68 mile per hour mark. With a little more trimming finesse applied to both the engine and transom lift, breaking the 70 mph figure shouldn't be a problem with this stock set-up.

Now most outboard runabout hulls, even if they could attain this speed, would more than likely be a handful to drive and dangerously close to being out of control at near 70. Amazingly, the Viking 18', although certainly riding free, did not give the impression that it was about to make an unsafe maneuver. It should also be mentioned that this stable ride was not aided by the use of any external tabs or plates on the transom.

Cranking the steering wheel of the Viking 18' produced another pleasant surprise. Although it is a lightweight hull with a good deal of power on the stern, it responded to both the left and right without a hopping or sliding turn. Once the forward portion of vee-bottom made contact with the water, the HydroStream came around in a big hurry.

There's no reason why the Viking 18' can't double as a water ski tow boat as well. A simple change to a lower pitch prop and the installation of a center ski bar is all that's needed for a successful weekend with a group of skiing friends. A strong slalom skier can create a little transom movement and slowing of the boat, but not enough to be considered really objectionable.

On the inside the HydroStream Viking 18' is a rather austere boat. It comes standard with a pair of very attractive back to back seats. These seats are also a bit out of the ordinary in appearance since they have very high back cushions which act as headrests. They're quite comfortable but could use more padding. The floor area is carpeted and the side gunnels have upholstered panels. Throttle and steering wheel placement could be improved by moving the control box a little lower. As it exists now, at cruise speed the control lever handle and steering wheel nearly touch. Fuel tank installation was not good as bunge cord held it in place and no overboard vents were present. HydroStream's custom built hyperbolic windshield did a fine job of deflecting the air mass at high speed and was not a hindrance to vision. Storage volume is reasonably adequate with open side racks and some under bow space for stowing. There are, however, no locking compartments.

If you like modern one-of-a-kind styling and the performance capability to send a lot of inboards scurrying back to their docks in surrender, hook up with HydroStream's Viking 18'. •

HULL SPECIFICATIONS

Make/model	HydroStream Viking 18'
Hull configuration	Deep-vee
Length	17'9"
Beam	89"
Hull weight (without engine)	660 pounds
Construction process	Hand and chop lay-up
Passenger capacity	4 persons
Retail price as tested (not including trailer)	Not Available

STANDARD EQUIPMENT: Dual Ride-Guide steering, hyperbolic windshield.

OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT: Special blue-streak color package.

Address of hull manufacturer: HydroStream Div./ Pipkorn Industries 180 1st Street S.E. New Brighton, Minnesota 55112

ENGINE SPECIFICATIONS

Make/model	Mercury 1750 Black Max Outboard
Cylinder type	V-6
Cubic inch displacement	121.9
Maximum h.p. at rpm	175 at 5400
Type of fuel required	Regular leaded 50:1 mix
Special features	None

PROPULSION SYSTEM

Drive	Mercury Outboard
Propeller size/type	14 x 28 3-blade Mercury Chopper
Special features	Land and Sea Hydro-Electric Transom

TEST CONDITIONS

Water conditions	Flat
Air temperature	76°
Wind velocity	2 mph
Barometric pressure	30.8
Humidity	50%
Test driver	Bob Nordskog
Test observer	Dick DeBartolo
Ski driver	Bob Brown
Ski observer	Tim Beehan
Skier	Rick McCormick
Weight of skier	155 pounds
Length of ski rope	75 feet

MEASURED PERFORMANCE DATA

Indicated top speed - calibrated speedometer	68.0
Indicated top speed - stock speedometer	67.0
Recorded top speed - radar speed gun	67.2
Measured top speed - measured 1/8 mile	66.3
Maximum RPM - calibrated tachometer	5600
Maximum RPM - stock tachometer	5500
Time to reach plane	2.3 sec.
Minimum plane speed	19 mph
Distance to stop from 35 mph	155 feet
Time to stop from 35 mph	6.6 sec.
Decibel reading (35 mph at 50 feet)	75 dB(A)

FUEL CONSUMPTION DATA

25 mph consumes	5.5	gph =	4.54	miles per gallon
35 mph consumes	9.0	gph =	3.88	miles per gallon
45 mph consumes	12.5	gph =	3.60	miles per gallon
50 mph consumes	15.0	gph =	3.33	miles per gallon

CONSTRUCTION-QUALITY-WORKMANSHIP EVALUATION

Quality of fiberglass lay-up	Very good
Mold detail and finish	Very good
Gel coat/paint finish	Excellent
Placement and quality of deck hardware	Fair
Placement of instruments and controls	Fair
Steering system	Very good
Throttle controls	Very good
Installation and neatness of electrical wiring	Good
Overall engine installation	Good
Installation and location of fuel tanks	Poor
Upholstery (material quality - seat padding)	Good
Quality and installation of carpeting	Good
Storage volume	Good
Special comments	Distinctive exterior styling

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

LOW SPEED

Tracking	Very good
Throttle response	Very good
Shifting of passenger weight	Good
Docking maneuverability	Very good
Visibility	Excellent
Passenger comfort	Good
Ease of boarding and debarking	Fair
Noise level (in the cockpit)	Very good

CRUISE SPEED

Tracking	Very good
Throttle response	Excellent
Slalom course at 20 mph	Good
Slalom course at 30 mph	Very good
Slalom course at 40 mph	Very good
Right turn	Very good
Left turn	Very good
Wake jump	Very good
Visibility	Excellent
Ride comfort	Good
Noise level (in the cockpit)	Very good

HIGH SPEED

Tracking	Good
Throttle response	Very good
Right turn	Good
Left turn	Very good
Visibility	Excellent
Ride comfort	Good
Noise level (in the cockpit)	Good

WATER SKI EVALUATION

Low speed maneuverability	Very good
Take-off power	Very good
Tracking consistency of hull	Good
Throttle sensitivity	Very good
Visibility at idle	Excellent
Visibility coming on plane	Good
Visibility at speed	Excellent
Wake	Very good
Ease of boarding and debarking	Good