

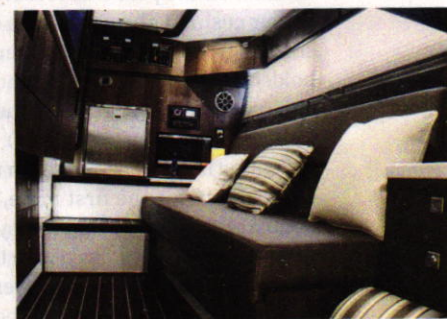
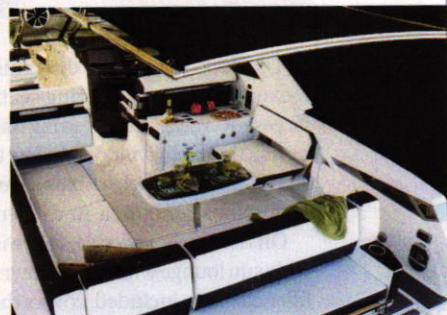
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BOATING
CERTIFIED
TEST

MONTEREY 385SE

The outboard revolution continues as this new day cruiser enters the market with triple Yamahas.



PHOTOS: COURTESY MONTEREY BOATS

The connection to the water was sports-car crisp thanks to the Optimus 360 power steering and Yamaha electronic throttle and shift. As we accelerated, we thumbed the trim switch, raising the drives to lift the vessel higher, freer from the drag of the sea. At full throttle, the chines astern were nearly clear of the spray and the 385 felt like it was about to lift off. Yet it stayed hooked up, and even accepted some authoritative steering input and responded to it without complaint.

In port, the Optimus 360 Joystick steering gives confidence to

dock this boat like a runabout: Nudge the stick in the direction of travel and the boat crabs sideways, or twist it and the boat pivots steadily. I can't imagine owning a boat in this class without this popular electronic control system.

BMW is credited with the term "sport sedan," and it changed the way car builders market their wheels. The 385 makes its mark on the vessels called sport cruisers and will likely force competitive brands to step up their game.