

REGAL

2860 Window Express

Ready to roam all season with
the ideal comfort and
space for boating.

By Richard Crowder

When I first laid eyes on Regal's new 2860 Window Express in St. Petersburg, Florida, I was immediately struck by its sleek profile. To me, its concept dates back to the days of wood-manufactured inboard-powered express cruisers built from the 1940s to the 1960s, which were functional, bright, and provided optimum onboard living space. The 2860 simply reflects these designs, with the addition of a mid-cabin, Regal's durable, fibreglass construction process, ultra-modern lines, and several luxurious appointments.

While stepping aboard the 2860 with Duffy Stenger, Regal's long-time vice-president of sales and marketing, he mentioned, "One thing you'll notice about this boat is there's a place for everything and everything is in its place." I made a point to examine the 2860 carefully on that basis.

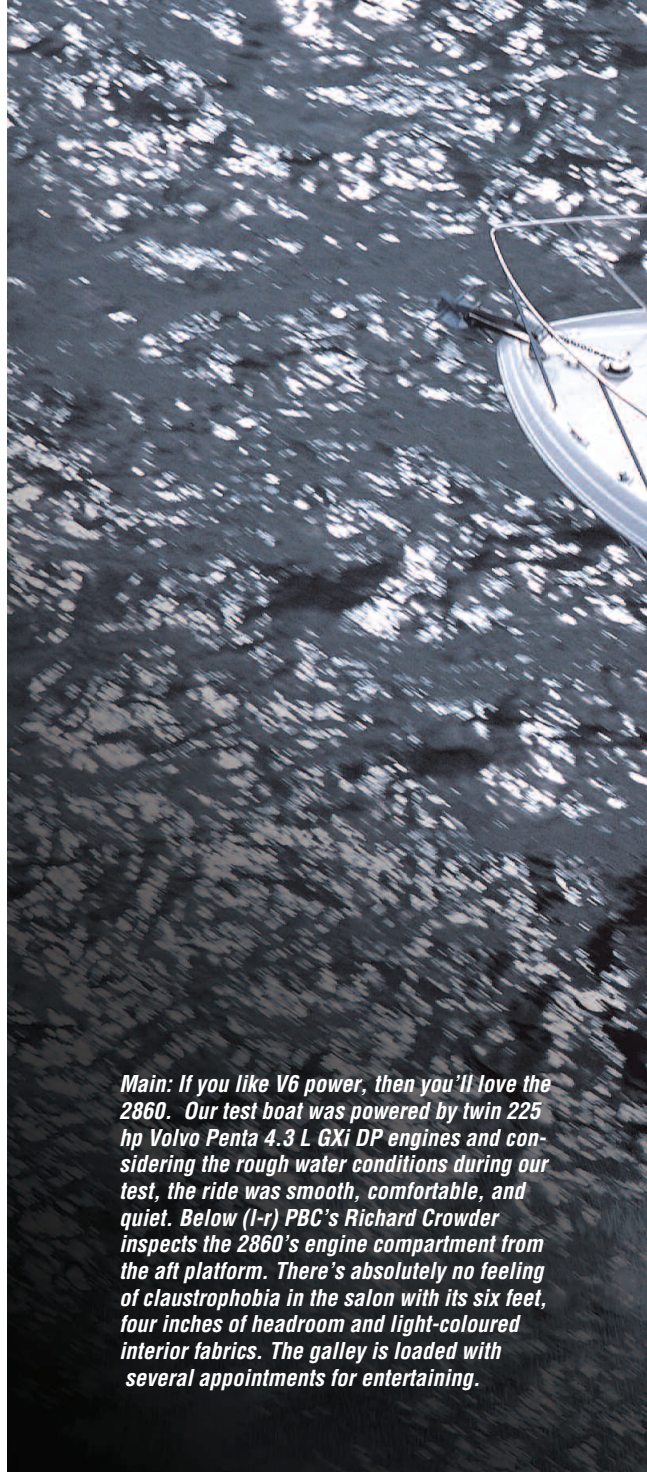
HULL AND DECK

The 2860 rides on Regal's newly designed OceanTrac Hull featuring a modified-Vee, 18-degree deadrise and nine-foot, six-inch beam. The stringer system incorporates fully bonded fibreglass for strength and the transom, like all Regal models, is constructed of composite materials. A vinyl ester resin (AME) barrier coat protects the hull bottom.

Two gelcoated boot stripe colours are standard, while all deck hardware is thru-bolted and stainless steel. At the bow is a polished, stainless steel guard plate to prevent the anchor chain from chafing the fibreglass. The bow rail is high, sturdy, and in traditional Regal fashion, there's a flat, recessed area at the bow offering a convenient and safe place to conduct anchor duties or tie-off lines.

The standard, extended fibreglass swim platform allows easy boarding and comes complete with a recessed, stainless steel, wide-step folding swim ladder to starboard. It's located under a fibreglass lid, which is attached by flush, stainless covered hinges that conceal the mounting screws to preventing tripping. Two pull up stainless steel cleats on the outer edges of the platform allow temporary stern mooring points so boarding from a dock doesn't involve the risky negotiation of mooring lines. These same cleats are also great for temporarily tying off lines or securing a dinghy.

Main: If you like V6 power, then you'll love the 2860. Our test boat was powered by twin 225 hp Volvo Penta 4.3 L GXi DP engines and considering the rough water conditions during our test, the ride was smooth, comfortable, and quiet. Below (l-r) PBC's Richard Crowder inspects the 2860's engine compartment from the aft platform. There's absolutely no feeling of claustrophobia in the salon with its six feet, four inches of headroom and light-coloured interior fabrics. The galley is loaded with several appointments for entertaining.







Ample space and a sporty, stylish profile are just a few of the highlights on the 2860. Below: PBC's Jo-Ann Searls with Duffy Stenger, Regal's vice-president of sales and marketing.

log readouts along with a digital depth sounder with alarm, and engine hour meters. Trim tabs are standard and Regal also offers a standard automatic bilge, along with fresh and waste, water level monitors. A Raymarine GPS/plotter is definitely an option to seriously consider.

CABIN

Located between the helm and portside lounge is a large, smoked acrylic door with a second screen door to provide ventilation and prevent black flies or
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The transom is just loaded with features. There's a large, draining locker for lines, fenders, hoses, brushes, or boat gear, and a second portside transom locker can stow shorepower cords with the specific cord hangers installed. A hot and cold transom washdown/shower is standard.

Access to the gelcoat-finished, engine compartment is easy since the transom and the cockpit sole lift electrically. The rubber gasket around the lip of the engine compartment is screwed into place to prevent it from loosening. The compartment is well organized, clean, bright, and all components and wiring harnesses are accessible.

COCKPIT

A stainless steel-bordered, acrylic door to starboard leads into the cockpit. You'll appreciate the three-person flip-down bench with a comfortably high backrest at the stern, along with the portside companion lounge located opposite the helm. When the backrest of this lounge is flipped forward, both seats combine to provide a large dinette area with the dinette table or sun lounge with the filler cushions. The cushions, table and legs have dedicated storage space below the portside lounge.

A portable 25-quart Igloo cooler safely tucks underneath the Corian counter-top of the standard refreshment centre. Other highlights here include a sink, stainless steel cup holders, grab rails and additional storage space. A refrigerator is available as an option. The standard, removable cockpit carpeting along with the hand-stitched vinyl throughout comes with a three-year warranty.



Overhead is a high, aluminum arch offering more than enough headroom when the standard Sunbrella Bimini top, camper, and complete enclosure are in place. The windshield has a bright, stainless steel header, and the center section is held open with a magnetic catch. Access to the foredeck is easy thanks to the moulded stairs located next to the helm.

HELM

The adjustable helm bucket seat with flip-up bolster swivels to conveniently face passengers sitting at the port or aft lounge. Visibility and ergonomics here are excellent. The standard or optional mahogany steering wheels tilt, and feature standard stereo remotes, while the switches and fog-free, water-resistant Faria gauges are housed on a burlwood panel. The instruments include twin ana-

SPECIFICATIONS

LOA:	29'5"/8.9 m
Beam:	9'6"/2.9 m
Draft: (Drives Down):	39"/1 m
Approx. Weight:	9,000 lbs/4,082 kg
Fuel Capacity:	100 gal/378 L
Water Capacity:	35 gal/132 L
Holding Tank:	18 gal/68 L
Maximum Horsepower:	Twin 225 hp Volvo 4.3 L GXi DP
Power as Tested:	Twin 225 hp Volvo 4.3 L GXi DP
Price as Tested:	\$147,745 w/twin 225 hp Volvo 4.3 L GXi DP

Price supplied by
Regal Marine Industries, Orlando, FL
(407) 851-4360
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mosquitoes from entering the cabin on those summer nights. Two, open-backed, polished wood steps with rubber inlays easily lead down to the salon, which appears enormously larger than it should for a boat of this size thanks to the forward windows. For privacy, these windows can be covered with a black screen. There's absolutely no feeling of claustrophobia down here with its six feet, three inches of headroom and light-coloured interior fabrics. Carpet protectors are

standard or opt for the available cherry and holly sole that was on our test boat. The hanging locker is cedar lined.

Designated storage space for the dinette table is found in the sole and the backrests of the lounge double as filler cushions for the convertible berth. Located forward of the cabin is a mirror flanked by a cherry laminate cabinet, along with two speakers found on each side. An optional 13-inch flat screen TV can be mounted in the cen-

ter. An opening deck hatch plus two side windows are also included and provide additional ventilation. Reverse cycle air conditioning/heating and a generator are optional.

More rich cherry wood laminate adds a touch of contrast and class to the galley located to starboard. A Corian countertop, deep polished stainless sink, electric stove, refrigerator, microwave, and ample storage are just some of the key highlights featured here.

The full fiberglass head compartment, located to port, is bright, has ample head and elbow room, and comes complete with a standard vacuum-flush head. Entry to the mid-cabin is probably one of the largest I have seen. It has a full queen-size berth with a foam mattress, custom comforter and even pillows. An inner-sprung mattress is available.

PERFORMANCE

If you like V6 power, then you'll love the 2860. Engine choices include twin 220 hp MerCruiser 4.3 L MPIs with Bravo III drives or twin 225 hp Volvo 4.3 L GXi DP. The latter engines powered our test boat. During our sea trials, there were three adults onboard, approximately one-third-tank of fuel, and water conditions consisted of choppy, two- to four-foot seas.

After pushing the throttles, I quickly found a comfortable cruising speed at 3,200 rpm, which produced 28 mph on the GPS and consumed approximately 16 gallons per hour (60 L per hour). The minimum planing speed, without tabs, was 15 mph at 2,500 rpm and 11 mph at 2,200 rpm with full tabs. Volvo Penta's test results for the 2860 revealed an optimum cruising speed of 32 mph at 3,500 rpm, consuming 17.6 (US) gallons per hour. Wide open throttle came at 4,980 rpm and produced 47.8 mph.

CONCLUSION

Considering the weather and water conditions, the ride was very smooth, comfortable, and quiet. There was some banging of the hull, but that was to be expected given the conditions. This Regal certainly lived up to what I have learned to expect from this company. If the Window Express design catches attention, as I believe it will, the 2860 should do extremely well for seasons to come. □

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