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PARADISE LIVING ARTICLE / MARCH 2018

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The Best Outboards You Never Knew About.

As a follow up to last month's article "The Best Boats You Never Knew About," I have decided to write an article on the new Suzuki 350 Outboards. Shortly after penning last month's article, I received a call from Jeff Lichterman, President of Albury Brothers Boats, to discuss putting a new Albury 33 in the January Naples Boat Show. I jumped at the chance. I traveled to Riviera Beach, Florida to sea-trial a 33' Albury. The 33 we sea trialed was a charter boat with twin Yamaha 300's. The wind was blowing 25 knots and the seas offshore resembled a herd of angry elephants. Heading out the Palm Beach Inlet, Jeff pushed the throttles to the stops and I, not wanting to squeal like a ten-year-old girl presented with a fat slimy frog, kept my mouth shut and braced for impact. When the impact did not come, I willed myself to open my eyes. Having owned two Alburys, a 20 and 23, I knew they were incredible sea boats, but still, the waves were well over the top of the T-top. The 33 performed remarkably and was able to tame the elephants with ease.

Now back to the story. After the sea-trial, I jumped in the Albury dually diesel pickup with a brand new 33 Albury attached. The boat was well received at the boat show and, after, we were able to launch it and spend a few days running around Naples with it. This 33 had a pair of the new Suzuki 350 Dual Props (twin in-line counter rotating propellers). During the show many people asked how the new Suzuki 350s ran and all I could tell them was "I'm told they run great with more lift and better acceleration." The first thing I noticed is that the 350 Suzuki engines are considerably smaller than the Yamaha 350s due to them being V-6 engines rather than V-8's. They are also, as you may expect, lighter. The engines have a different sound than the Yamahas (deeper rumble but the noise levels, at least to my ears, seem about the same. Putting the throttles down is where the difference really became apparent. Alburys generally have very little bow rise and, with the Suzuki 350's, there was even less. With four propellers instead of two, the 33 jumped on plane noticeably faster than the same boat with the Yamahas. We were able to spend a few days running around the Gulf in everything from flat calm to straight up and down 4-foot chop and, again, the 33 performed flawlessly. According to the performance report, the Suzuki 350's are more fuel-efficient (499 mile range at 3500 R.P.M.), quicker to plane (I can verify!) and have less bow rise (again I can confirm!).

My guess is that Yamaha and Mercury are going to have to follow suit and come out with their own dual prop outboards. So far, Suzuki has jumped ahead in the lightweight, small package, high acceleration and super fuel-efficient categories. My last three boats have been powered with Yamahas but running the 33 Albury with the twin 350 Suzuki Outboards and discussing reliability with the our local Outboard guru, Kit Sawyer (Owner of Sawyer's Outboards), I believe that Suzuki Outboards are in my future!

Chris Burkard – President, Burkard Yacht Sales. If you want to discuss hull designs further, I'd love to hear from you. Call or stop by.