

35' Predator Express

by Egg Harbor

New Jersey builder
buys custom sportfish line

by Jeff Holland

First impressions are important, and my first glance at this new 35-foot open sportfisherman sitting there at the floating docks in Somers Point on the south Jersey shore called up the phrase, "Sleek and clean." This was hull #1, uncluttered by hardtop or tuna tower, dressed with just a touch of teak trimming the sheerline, all the way around that flat expanse of gleaming white foredeck.

Dr. Ira Trocki, the plastic surgeon who bought Egg Harbor Yachts out of receivership in 1999, recently bought Predator Custom Yachts of Sarasota, Florida, and added this express model to the Egg Harbor production line.

"Doc" Trocki was there on the pier, supervising the crew getting the boat ready for an upcoming boat show. "There's no boat that runs like this," he grinned, "and I've ridden lots and lots of boats."

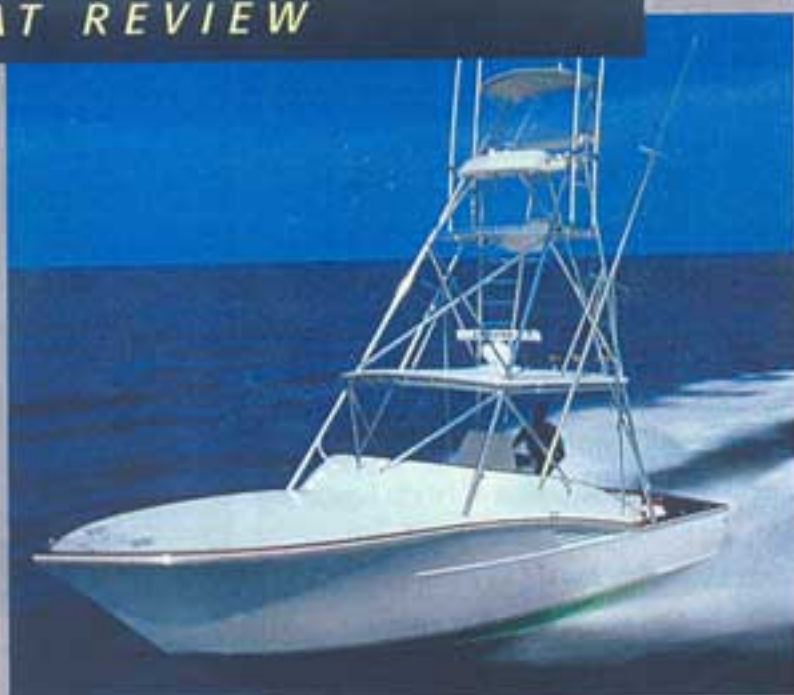
When he decided to add an open boat to the Egg Harbor line, he avoided the expensive and time-consuming process of inventing a new boat from scratch by searching for an existing boat they could buy the rights to reproduce. "We found this Predator, which was a custom-built boat that already had a similar sheer line, so it already looks like an Egg Harbor, but it's distinctive."

Once he got into negotiations, Dr. Trocki decided that he wanted to buy the whole company. "I asked for one thing," he recalled, "that's that Bob Weidhaas rides the boat and if he agrees it's everything it's supposed to be, I'll buy it that afternoon."

Bob had been working with the doctor as a professional captain—he has his US Coast Guard 100-ton master's license—since 1995.

"I like the handling, that's the biggest thing," Capt. Bob reported back. "There's not another boat that I've run that handles better. It's dry and soft riding. The visibility is excellent from the center helm pod. If you're out fishing, you just pivot and you're right in the cockpit, right in the middle of the action. The cockpit's plenty fishable, and with 100 square feet, there's lots of room, and a lot of refrigeration. Engine room's very accessible and well thought out. It's a user-friendly boat, generally."

But good as his first impressions were of the Predator, Capt. Bob had some ideas of how to build it better. The Egg Harbor production version has a slightly deeper V-hull, the propeller tunnels are a bit modified, and they've incorporat-



Egg Harbor's version of the new 35' Predator, seen here with optional hard top and tuna tower, has a soft, dry ride.

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Specifications:

Length:.....	35'	Displacement: approx.	16,500 lbs.
Beam:.....	12'	Base price:.....	\$354,928
Draft:.....	approx. 37"	Freshwater	
Fuel Capacity:.....	350 gals.	(with twin Yanmar 6LA-STE 440 hp diesels)	\$361,848
Capacity:.....	approx. 60 gals.	(with twin Caterpillar 31126 450 hp diesels)	

Egg Harbor Yachts

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ed an underwater exhaust. Also, the hull is finished in gel-coat, not painted, so it lasts longer and is easier to maintain. And the interior's completely redesigned to be lighter in weight for better speed.

The big, square cockpit features freezer units on either side, with a sink in the starboard module and storage underneath. There's a large fish box in the sole with gasketed hatches, and a livewell in the transom. The transom has a fish door, and bolsters pad the high gunwales.

A switch in the big locker underneath the port gunwale operates the hydraulic lift for the engine hatch. A good portion of the helm desk rises to reveal the twin Yanmar 440 hp diesels. There's plenty of room in the engine compartment to access the diesels from all directions, with the day hatch providing ready access to the battery switches and the fuel filters.

The helm pod is centered on the helm deck, and there are longitudinal bench seats on either side with loads of storage underneath. The dash flips up electronically from the top of the pod. The brushed aluminum control gauges are set behind glass, easy to keep clean. All the switches are safely behind a gasketed locker door under the wheel.

All the compartments are gasketed and water tight, so there's no rattling. All exterior hardware is solid stainless steel, even the latches.

Down below, there's a beautifully finished cabin, with a large V-berth in the bow, a galley station with a big counter, a single-burner flush top electric stove, a large round stainless sink with a cover, a small fridge under the counter and

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POWER BOAT REVIEW

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a microwave convection oven mounted in the cabinet above. There's plenty of storage above and below.

The settee curves around an attractive eye-shaped table. And cabinets line the entire cabin for plenty of storage.

The enclosed head has plenty of room, and with its clean, gelcoated bulkheads, doubles as a shower stall.

The ride was phenomenal. We headed out of the Big Egg Harbor inlet with Capt. Bob at the helm, running out into the wind and against the tide, with four-foot swells out in the open ocean. The flare of the bow kept the ride dry, but the most remarkable thing was the stability at rest—no wallowing whatsoever—thanks perhaps to the tunnel configuration, and the absolute solid performance of the hull.

Taking the wheel was a thrill. Running at about 32 knots at 2600 rpm, we were taking the waves without qualm. A couple of times, we went airborne and waited for the thump that never came — just a soft landing, all the while tracking straight and true even with no hands on the wheel. There was no thumping, banging, rattling, or other ominous sounds of compacting fiberglass. Top speed was an exhilarating 35.5 knots at 3400 rpm.

In addition to the open express model, the 35-foot hull is also available as a walk-around.

"As a plastic surgeon, I have an eye for beauty and lines," Doc Trocki says, "and when I say my boats are beautiful, you're getting it from an expert." ■



The helm pod lifts with the flick of a switch to provide ready access to the wide-open engine compartment below.

35' Predator Express By Egg Harbor Dealers

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