

Chaparral 23 Surf (2021-)

Brief Summary

The 23 Surf is one of four models from Chaparral designed and equipped for towing wake surfing and other sports. She's available with a forward-facing sterndrive from MerCruiser or Volvo Penta and comes with ballast and wake-shaping systems. Her interior layout is that of a luxury bowrider.

Price

Base Price

Key Features

- Forward-Facing sterndrive
- Multifunction display at the dash
- Move-able table for cockpit or bow
- Power-assisted steering
- Built-in cooler under rear seat

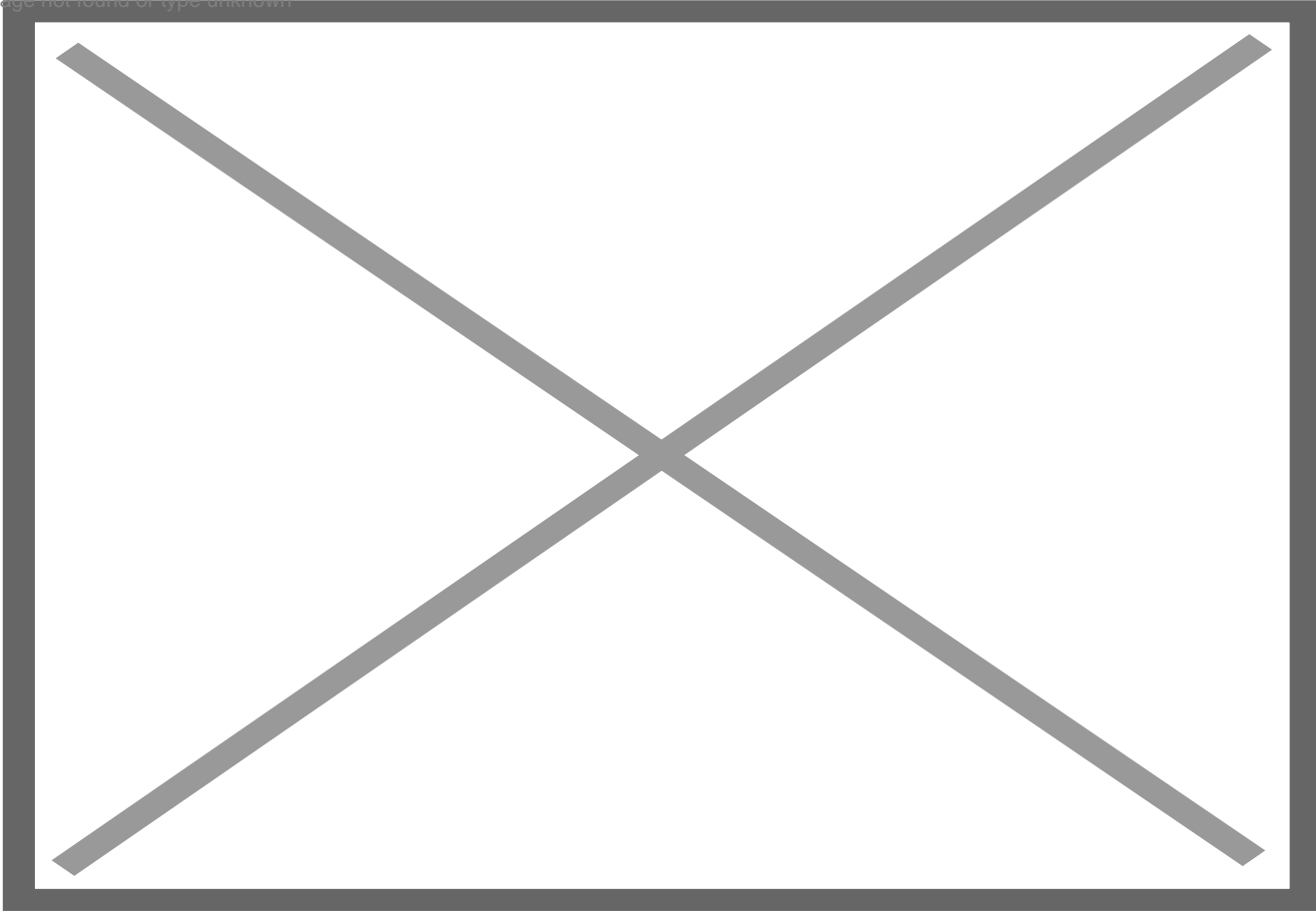
Test Results

RPM	MPH	Knots	GPH	MPG	NMPG	STAT. MILE	NM	dBa
600	3.3	2.9	1	3.2	2.8	130	113.4	68
1000	5.4	4.7	1.9	2.8	2.4	112	97.8	69.9
1500	7	6.1	3	2.3	2	93	81	74
2000	8.5	7.4	3.8	2.2	1.9	90	78.7	80
2500	11.8	10.3	6.7	1.7	1.5	71	61.6	84.6
3000	22.2	19.3	7	3.1	2.7	128	110.9	86.2

RPM	MPH	Knots	GPH	MPG	NMPG	STAT. MILE	NM	dBa
3500	28.8	25	9.4	3	2.7	123	107.4	86.1
4000	33.4	29	12.6	2.6	2.3	107	93.3	88
4500	37.8	32.9	18.4	2	1.8	83	72.2	88.8
4800	40.5	35.2	21.9	1.8	1.6	75	65.1	89.4
5150	44.7	38.8	21.8	2.1	1.8	83	72.2	89.3

[View the test results in metric units](#)

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Specifications

Length Overall	23' 7.01 m (w/ swim platform)
BEAM	8' 6" 2.59 m
Dry Weight	3,900 lbs. 1,769 kg (w/ engines)
Tested Weight	4,748 lbs. 2,153.65 kg
Draft	30" 76 cm
Draft Up	
Draft Down	
Air Draft	
Deadrise/Transom	20°
Max Headroom	
Bridge Clearance	7' 11" 2.41 m (w/ arch tower)
Weight Capacity	
Person Capacity	
Fuel Capacity	45 gallons 170 L
Water Capacity	
Length on Trailer	
Height on Trailer	

Trailer Weight	
Total Weight	4,748 lbs. 2,153.65 kg
Aft Deck	
Salon Inside Width	
Salon Fore & Aft	
Salon Height	
Salon Volume	
Galley Volume	
Master SR Width	
Master SR fore & Aft	
Master SR Overhead	
Master SR Volume	
Eng. Room Volume	

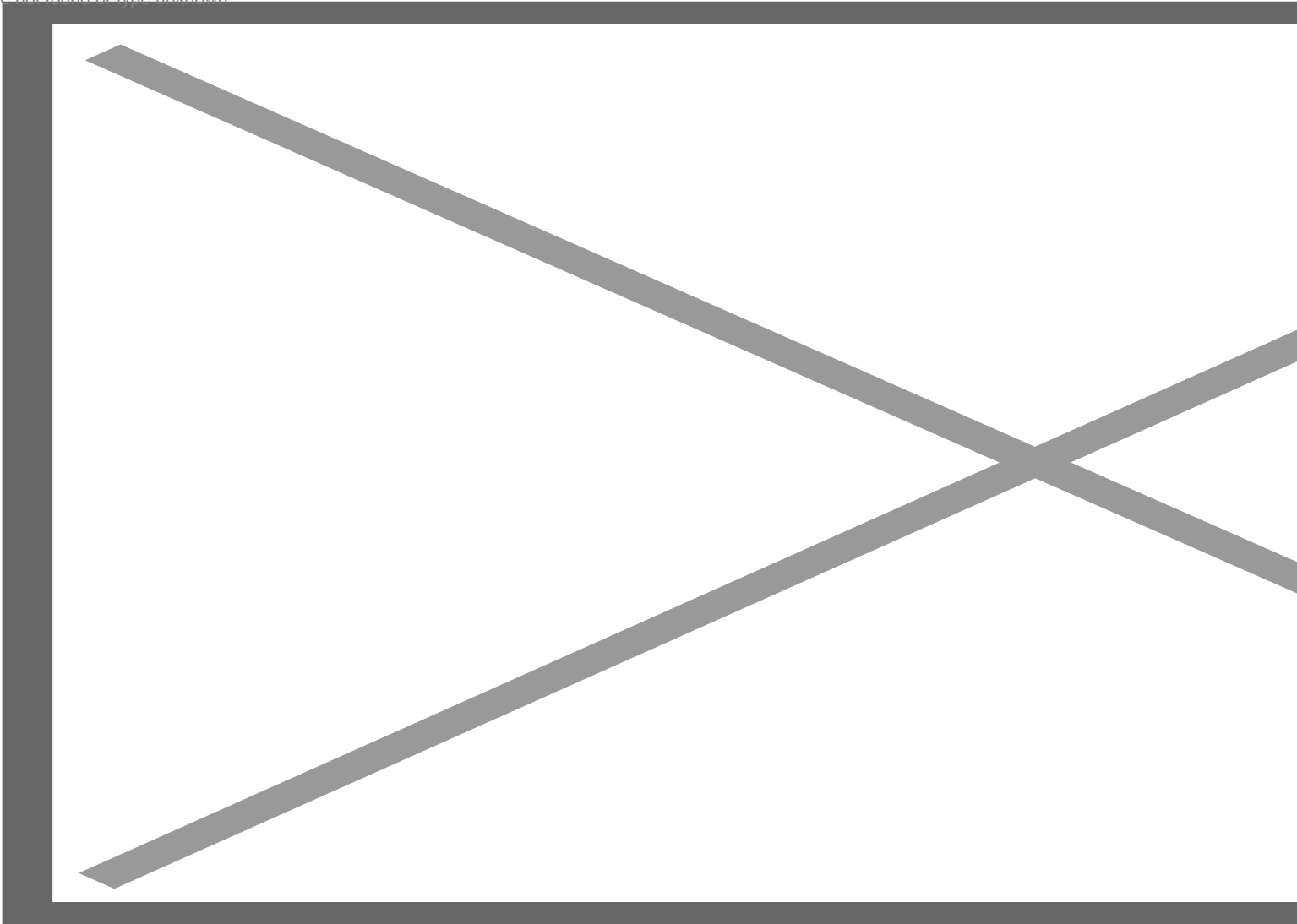
Acceleration Times & Conditions

Time to Plane	3.4 sec.
0 to 20	
Ratio	

Props	21.5p
Load	3 persons; 90% fuel; test gear
Climate	89 deg., 67 humid., wind: 5-10 mph, seas: calm

By Eric Colby

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The 23 Surf can be powered by forward-facing sterndrives from MerCruiser or Volvo Penta.

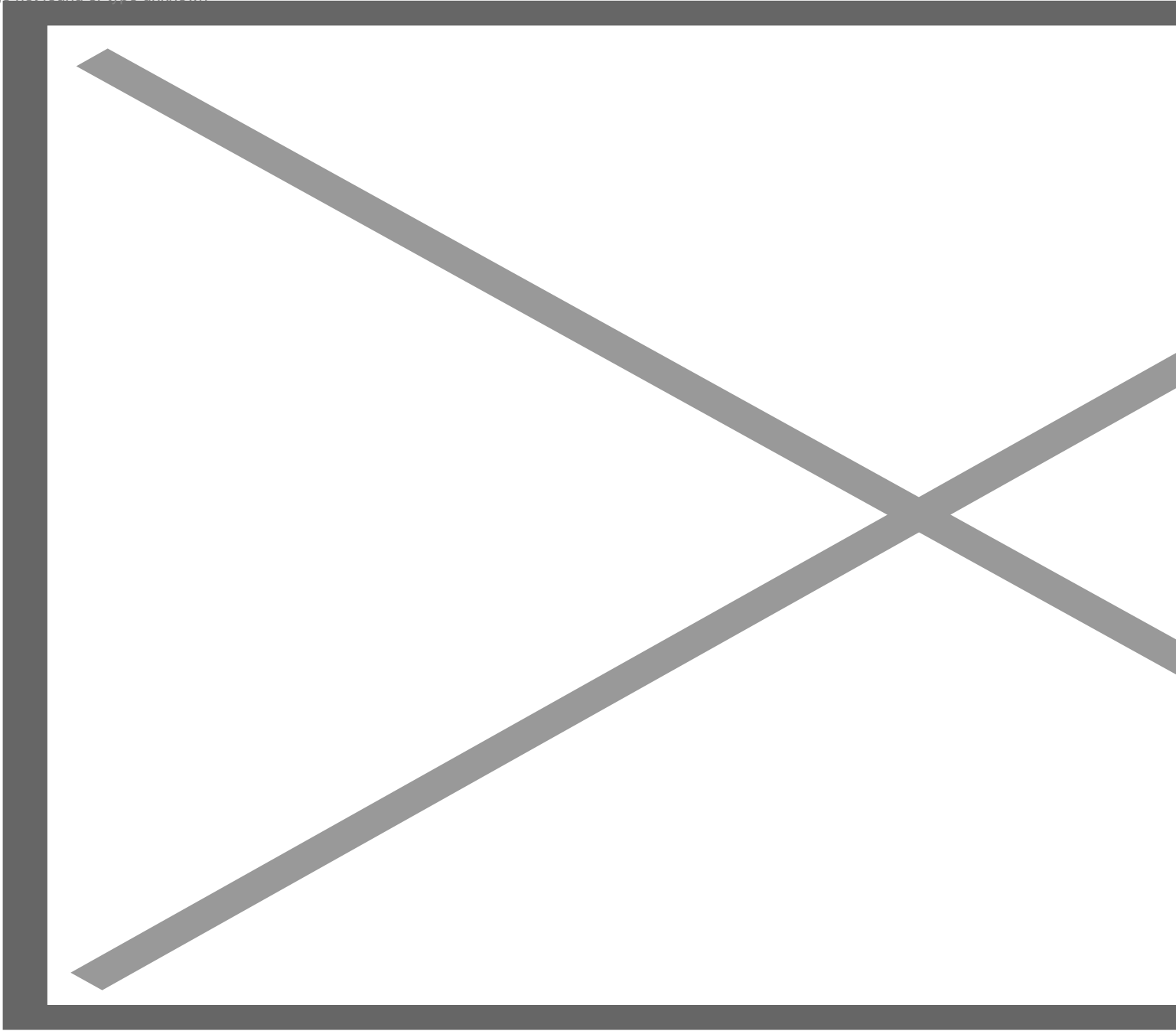
Mission Statement

The Chaparral 23 Surf is designed to combine the comfort and amenities of a high-end bowrider with a forward-facing sterndrive, ballast system and wake-shaping equipment to create a wakesurfing boat that will appeal to families. Unlike an inboard-powered boat, the trim-ability of the stern drive makes the boat easier to drive for a boater used to that type of propulsion system. Additionally, the 23 Surf retails for tens of thousands less.

Chaparral 23 Surf Major Features

- Forward-Facing Drive from MerCruiser or Volvo
- Ballast System
- Malibu Surf Gate
- Medallion Viper II or Smart Tow screen
- Fold-down tower
- Bucket seats for driver and companion

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Graphics and the watersports tower aside, the 23 Surf looks like a bowrider with lots of passenger space in the cockpit and bow.

Surfing. The Chaparral 23 Surf was used as a test platform for the new MerCruiser Bravo Four S forward-facing drive. The drive has the same upper gearcase and transom assembly as the Bravo Three, but the lower is all-new with forward-facing propellers, a four-blade in front and a three-blade aft. Mercury developed five new propeller sets for the Bravo Four S and the gear ratio on our test boat was 2.20:1.

The 23 Surf was made to be a family boat that seamlessly crosses over into watersports. Now we've heard that claim before and frankly, it takes more than adding some ballast Saks and calling it a day. And it's certainly not the approach Chaparral adopted either. Yes, there are ballast Saks but this design has gone even further to add the innovative Surf Gate package to the mix. These are large doors to both sides at the stern. Once the boat is ballasted, engage the Surf Gates from the touchscreen at the helm, program in the desired acceleration and top speed, hit engage and floor the throttle. The boat smoothly accelerates to the pre-programmed speed and the fun begins.

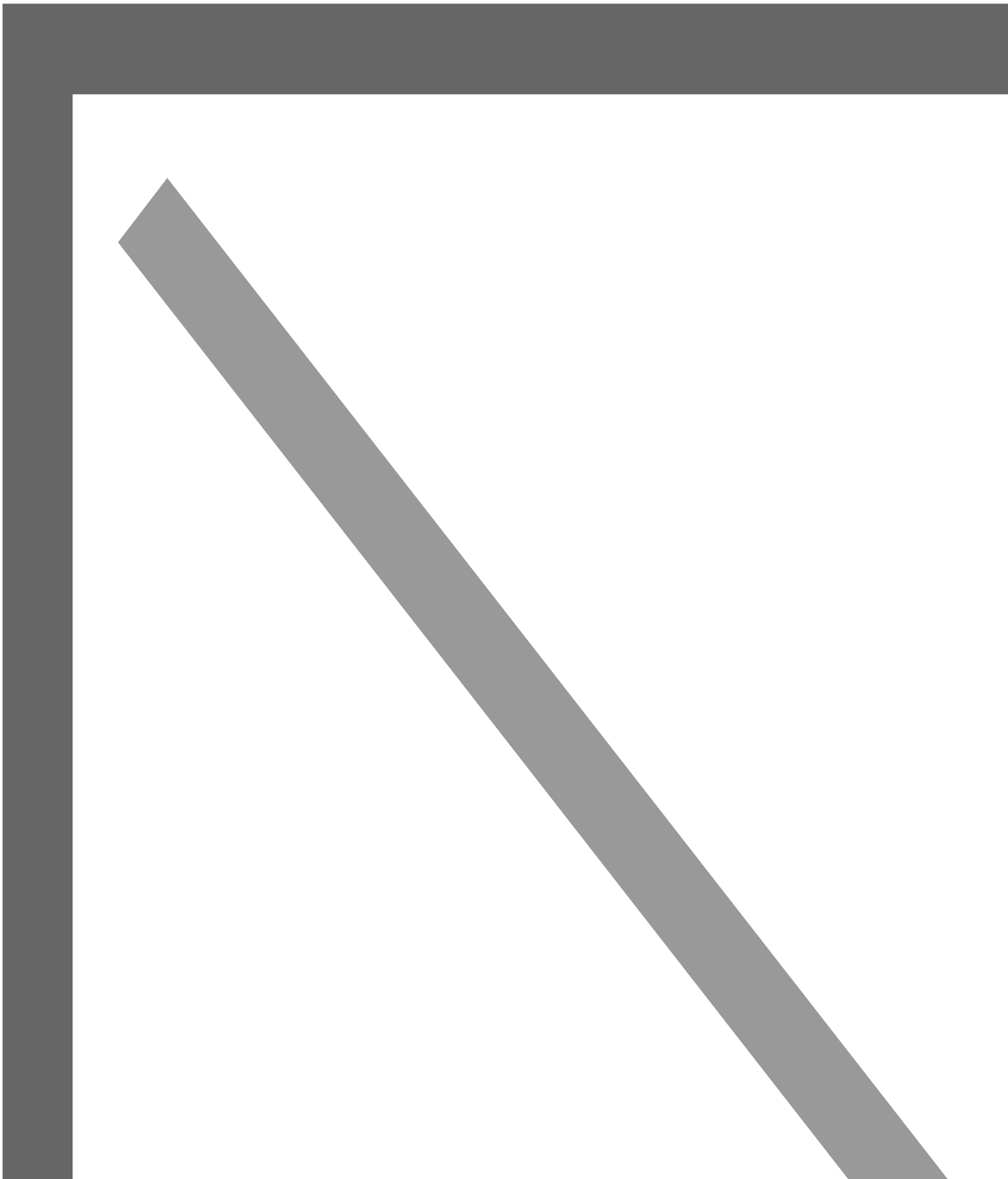
She creates an outstanding wake with well-sculpted face and just enough curl to let the tricks begin. We put an amateur wake surfer to the test and in no time he was doing stunts that were previously limited to expert level wake boats.... Up to and including spins, hanging 10, and our favorite... switching from side to side.

Something that is now possible thanks to the Surf Gate system being able to switch the usable wake from one side to the other at the push of a single button. Let's say that again... it switches sides with one button. One Surf Gate closes while the other opens, and just like that, the wake is on the opposing side. It's really spectacular to see, and when it gets so well utilized by a capable border, it's even more impressive.

Probably even more impressive is that the 23 Surf will accommodate riders up to the expert level and right on down to the beginners. That's right smack in the groove of the target audience for this boat... the families. Also, unlike dedicated wake boats, she still does all this while retaining the familiar family features and quality fit-and-finish that the brand is so well known for. In our opinion, this is how a crossover platform should be done, and it's done quite well.

The 23 Surf comes standard with a 425-lb. (192.78 kg) ballast system and wake-shaping Surf Gates that Chaparral licensed from Malibu Boats, which is one of the leading manufacturers of tow sports boats. They are appendages that mount on each side of the stern and are used to shape the wakes. The boat also comes standard with a Velocity Folding Arch Tower with a color-coordinated canvas. It provides a towing point 81" (205.74 cm) off the deck. When the tower is lowered, which happens easily, bridge clearance is reduced from 7'11" (2.41 m) to 5'5" (1.65 m) and the driver can still stand at the helm to run the boat.

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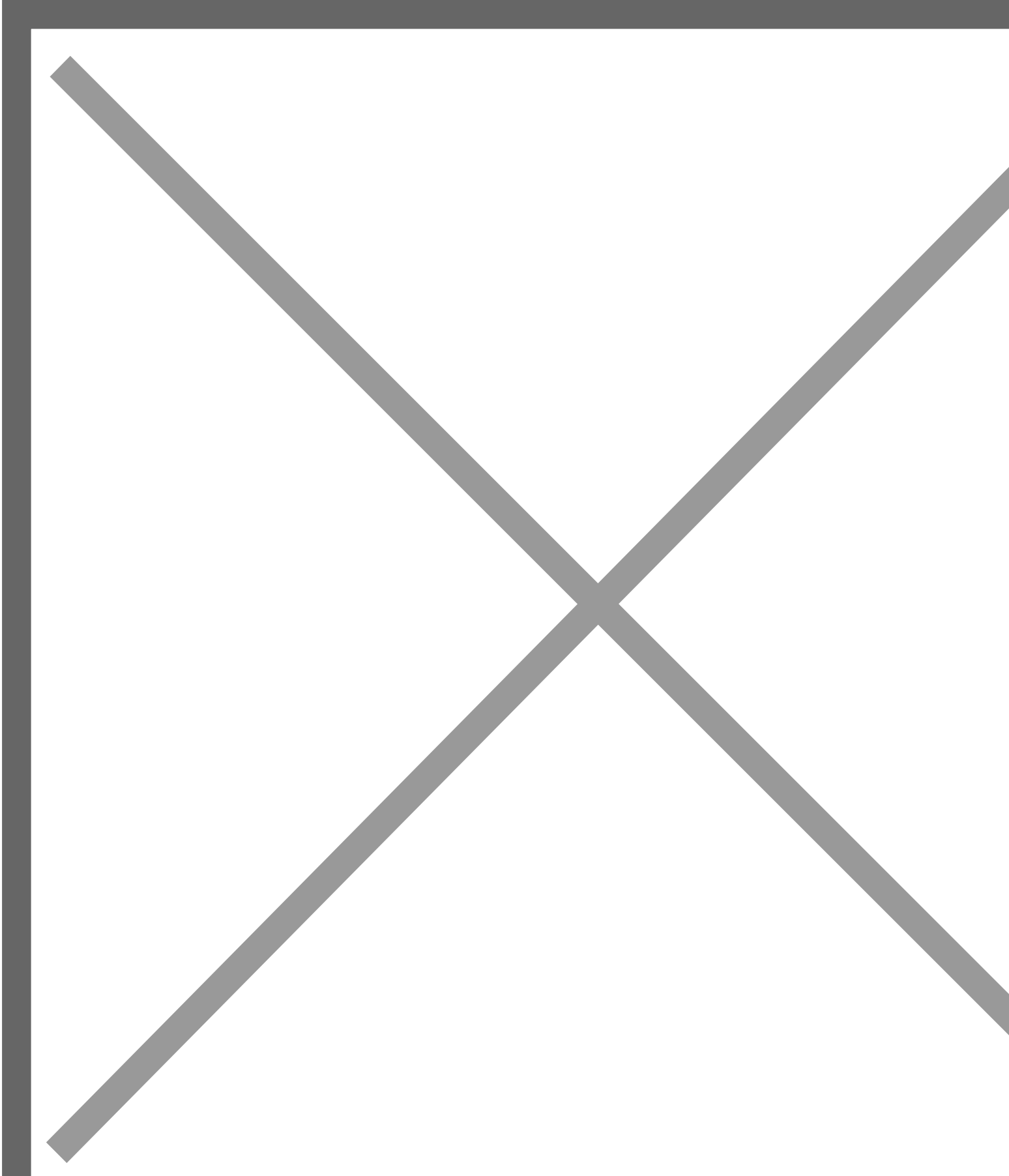
The new MerCruiser Bravo Four S positions the propellers forward under the boat, which keeps them away from swimmers and wake sports enthusiasts when they are in the water.

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Here we see the drive and position of the propellers beneath the boat.

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Soft ballast sacks like this one in the ski locker are used to add ballast to make larger wakes.

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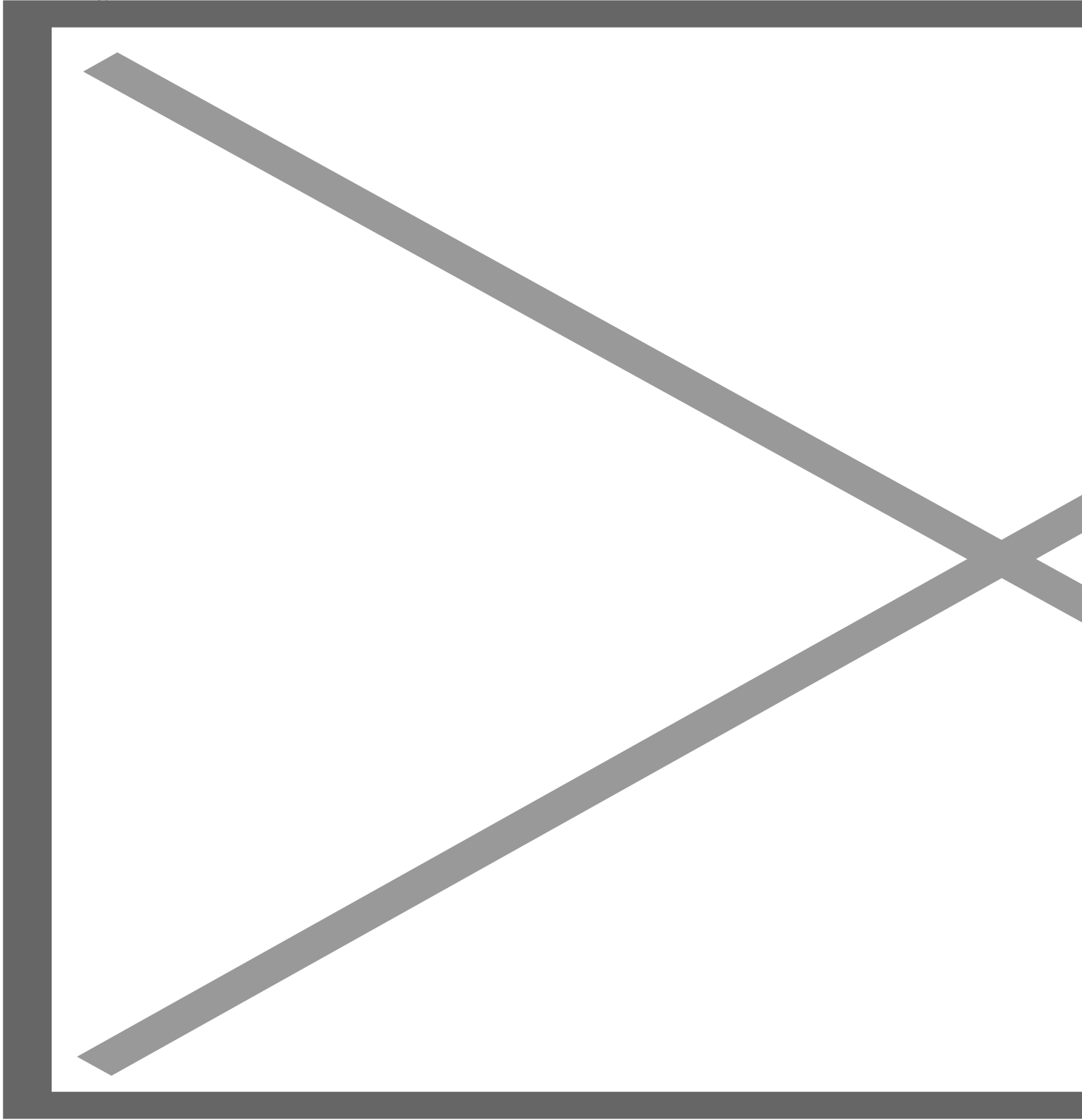


The tower is designed to be lowered while still having the driver in position to operate the boat.

The Helm. In the starboard console, the Medallion Viper II 7.0 color touchscreen display is centrally positioned ahead of the tilt Issotta Evoq steering wheel. Analog gauges are on each of the touchscreens and just below on each side are push-button style accessory switches that illuminate when activated.

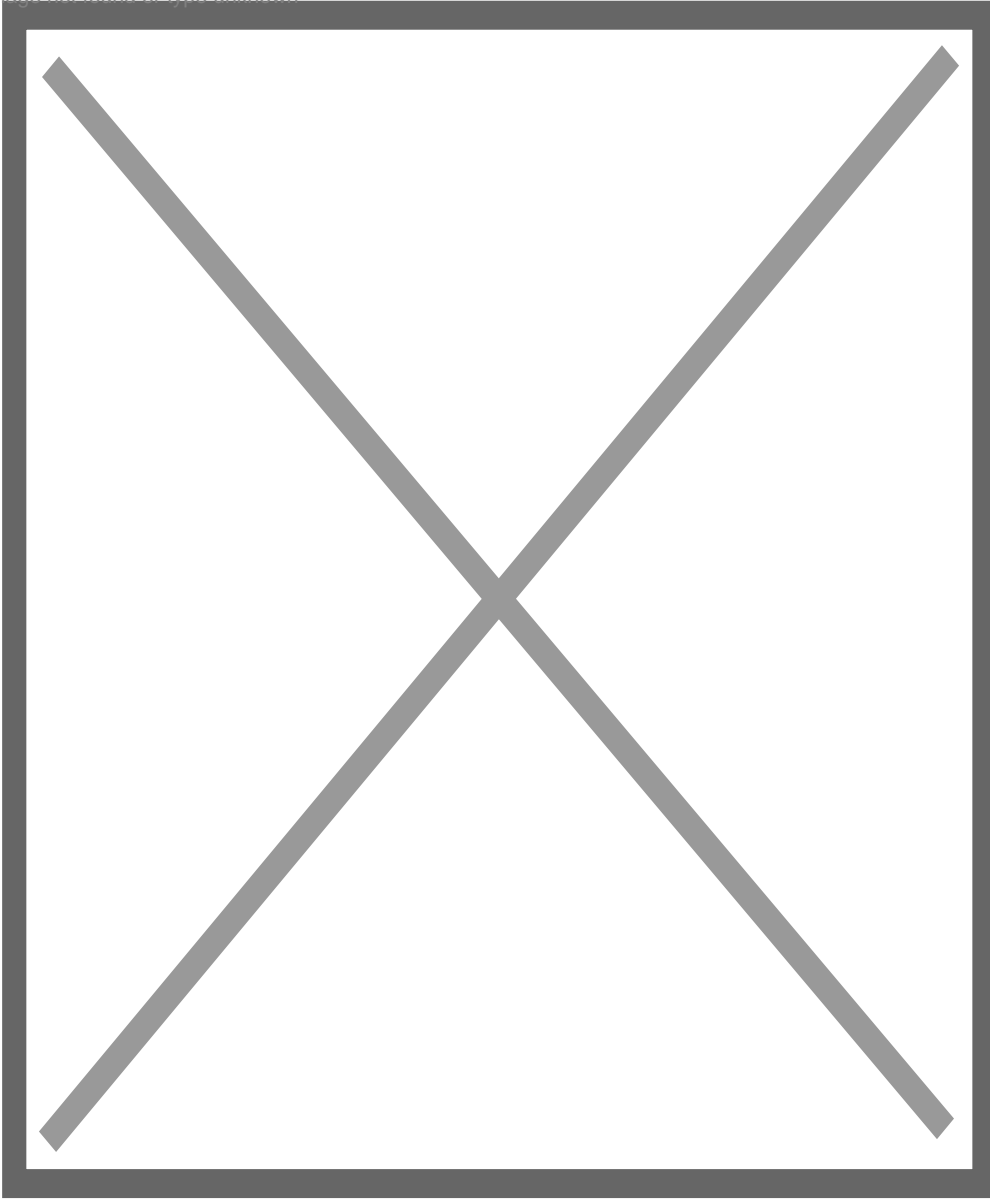
An eyebrow atop the panel is finished in soft black upholstery and the helm pod is finished in gray gelcoat to help reduce glare. To port, there's a locking glovebox and both consoles have storage that's accessed via hatches in the walkway to the bow. The captain and a companion travel in high-backed bucket seats that swivel and adjust fore and aft.

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The 23 Surf's dash has a clean look with analog gauges flanking the MFD.

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The 23 Surf has two bucket seats for the driver and a companion. Notice the armrest on the port gunwale.

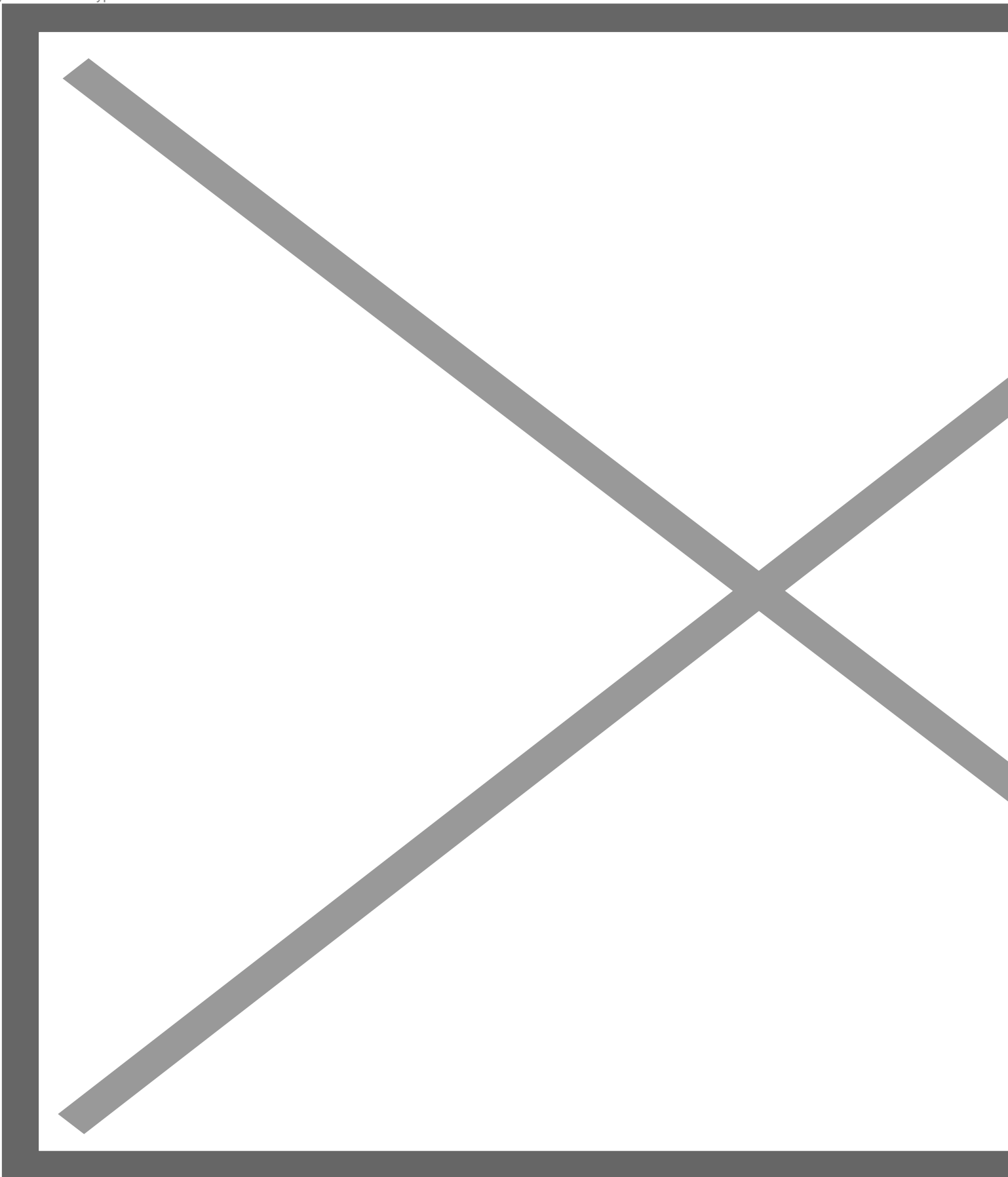
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With all the technology and fancy gear on boats, a good old-fashioned glove box is always appreciated. Inside are 12-volt and USB ports.

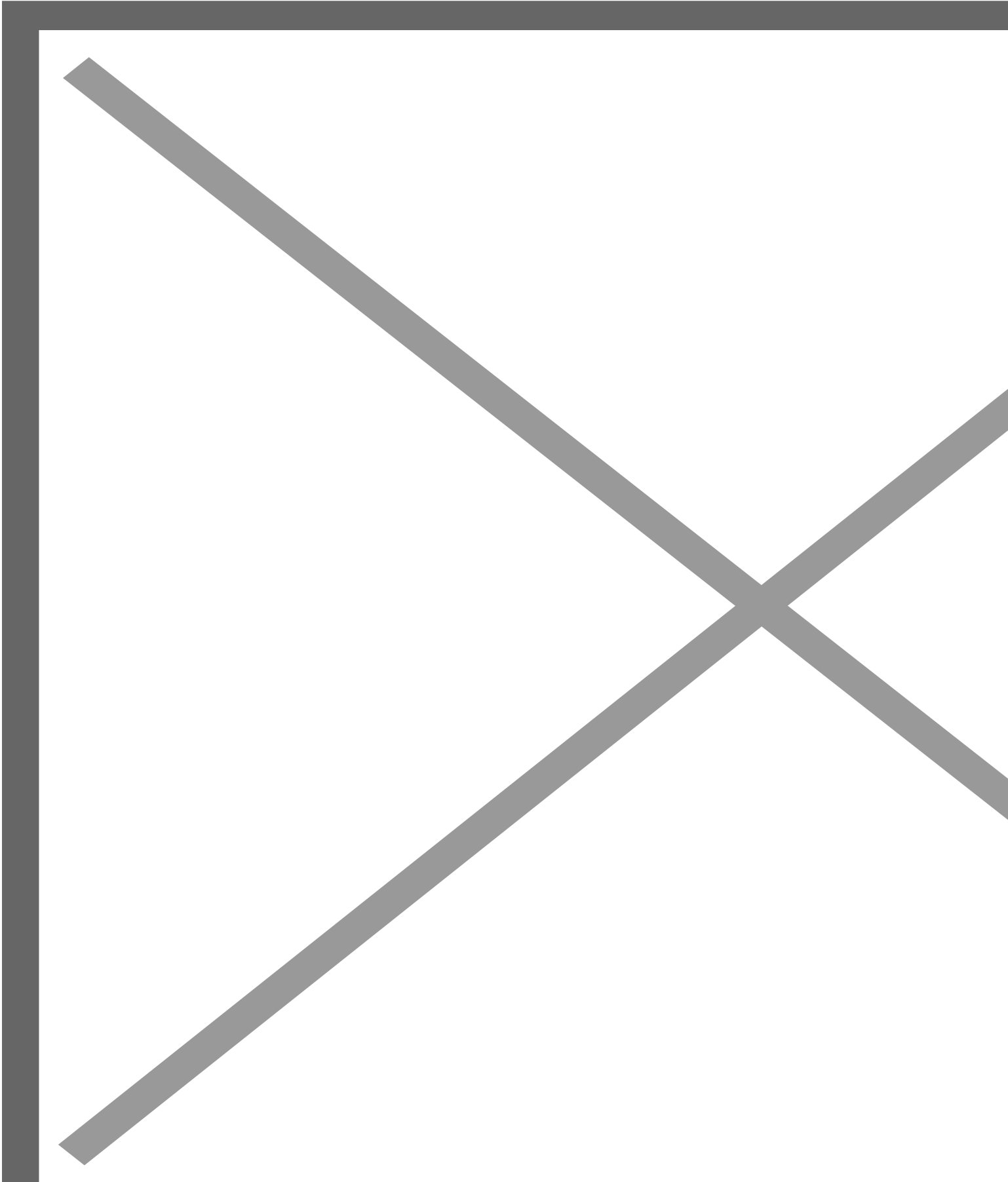
The Bow. Moving forward, the aluminum-framed tempered glass windshield has an opening center section and below is an optional folding air dam. In the port console, there's an expandable cargo net and hatches on each side of the walkway access storage. Up front, the bow lounges have angled backrests on the front of each console. A filler cushion is an available option and there's a bracket for an optional table. In the inwale on each side are speakers and beverage holders. There's a cooler under the forward cushion and in the foredeck is an anchor locker.

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After a chilly early morning surf ride, close the air dam to keep the breezes from entering the cockpit.

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Hatches in each console open to access large lockers. This could be a good area for storing a carry-on cooler or toolbox and the expandable netting just above will come in handy.

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Wraparound bolsters ring the bow so passengers can sit in a variety of positions and always have a padded backrest.

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A movable table can be added to the bow to make the area more useful.

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The bottom cushions are removable and provide access to storage on the sides and a draining cooler in the bow. Up in the foredeck is the anchor locker.

The Cockpit. Working our way back into the 23 Surf's cockpit, abaft each bucket seat are lounges that wrap around the entire area in a horseshoe. There are stereo speakers, grabrails and cupholders in the gunwales on each side and the same table that can secure in the bow can be clicked in place in the cockpit. Storage is beneath all the bottom cushions and there's an insulated 70-quart (66.24-L) cooler under the center aft cushion.

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Including the captain and a companion in the bucket seats, the cockpit can seat at least 10.

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Chaparral was one of the first builders to use a cockpit table that doesn't secure to the deck. It improves legroom and eliminates tripping hazards.

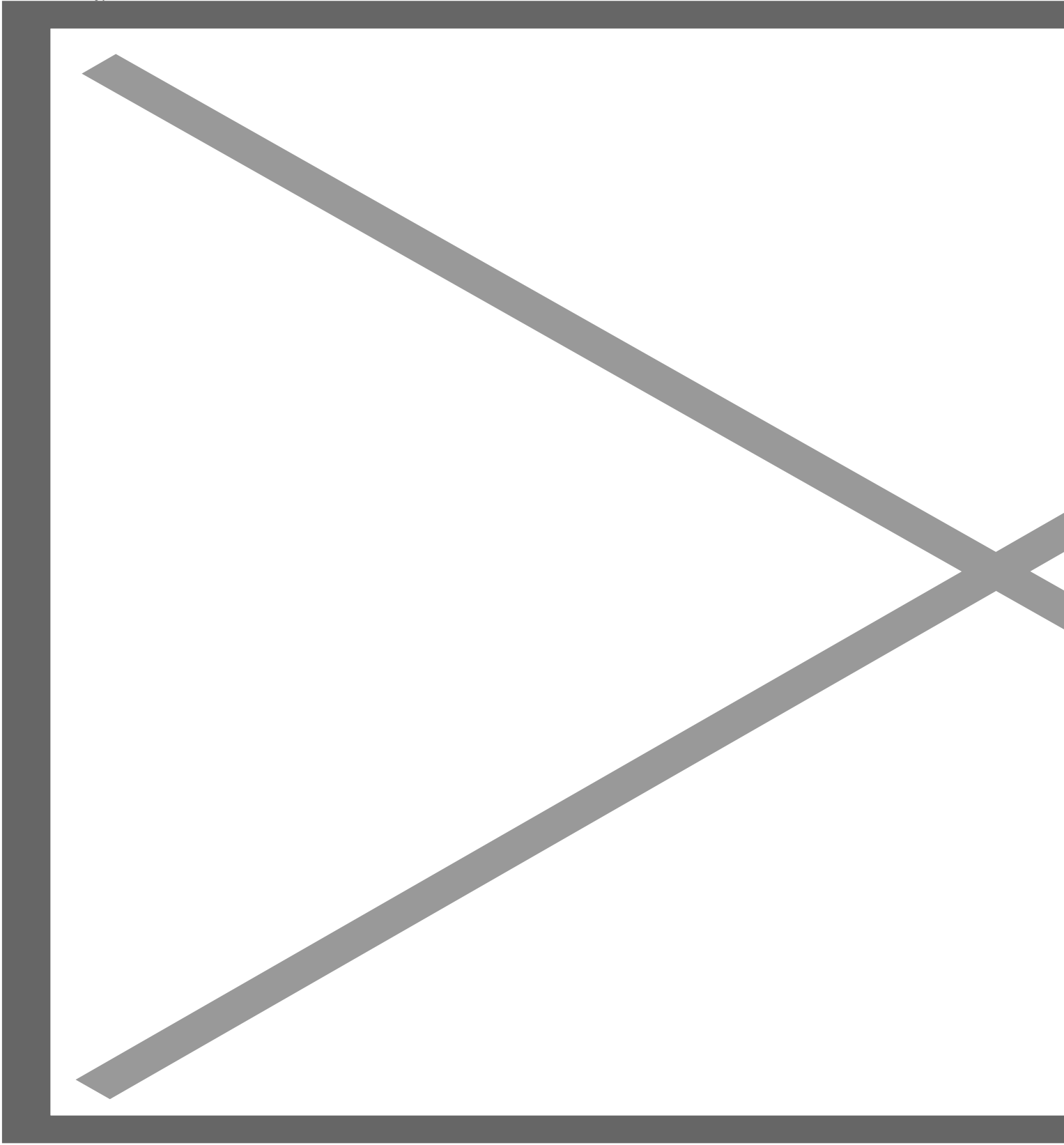
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As we saw in the bow, most of the seat-bottom cushions are removable. We'd rather see them hinged so they can't blow out.

The Stern. The hatch above the engine is a large sun lounge that could accommodate two people stretched out across. The forward section is hinged and can be raised to form a backrest for folks to take a seat and watch the goings-on when the boat is at rest. Each outboard section is also hinged so it can be raised to create an angled backrest ala a chaise lounge. Fold up the starboard side to reveal a nonskid walkway to the cockpit. Beneath the hatch in the walkway is access to mechanical gear and storage. Release a latch on the forward edge of the sun pad and the entire piece lifts up to provide access to the engine. Our test boat had the optional extended swim platform. On the transom to port is a stereo remote and to starboard is a grab handle. There's a ski tow in the center. Aft, the swim platform is covered in standard SeaDek soft foam mat. To starboard is a four-step ladder in its own dedicated compartment.

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The 23 Surf's aft sun lounge and swim platform provide a large launch space for a variety of activities.

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Fold up the forward half of the sun lounge and it creates a place to relax and hang out.

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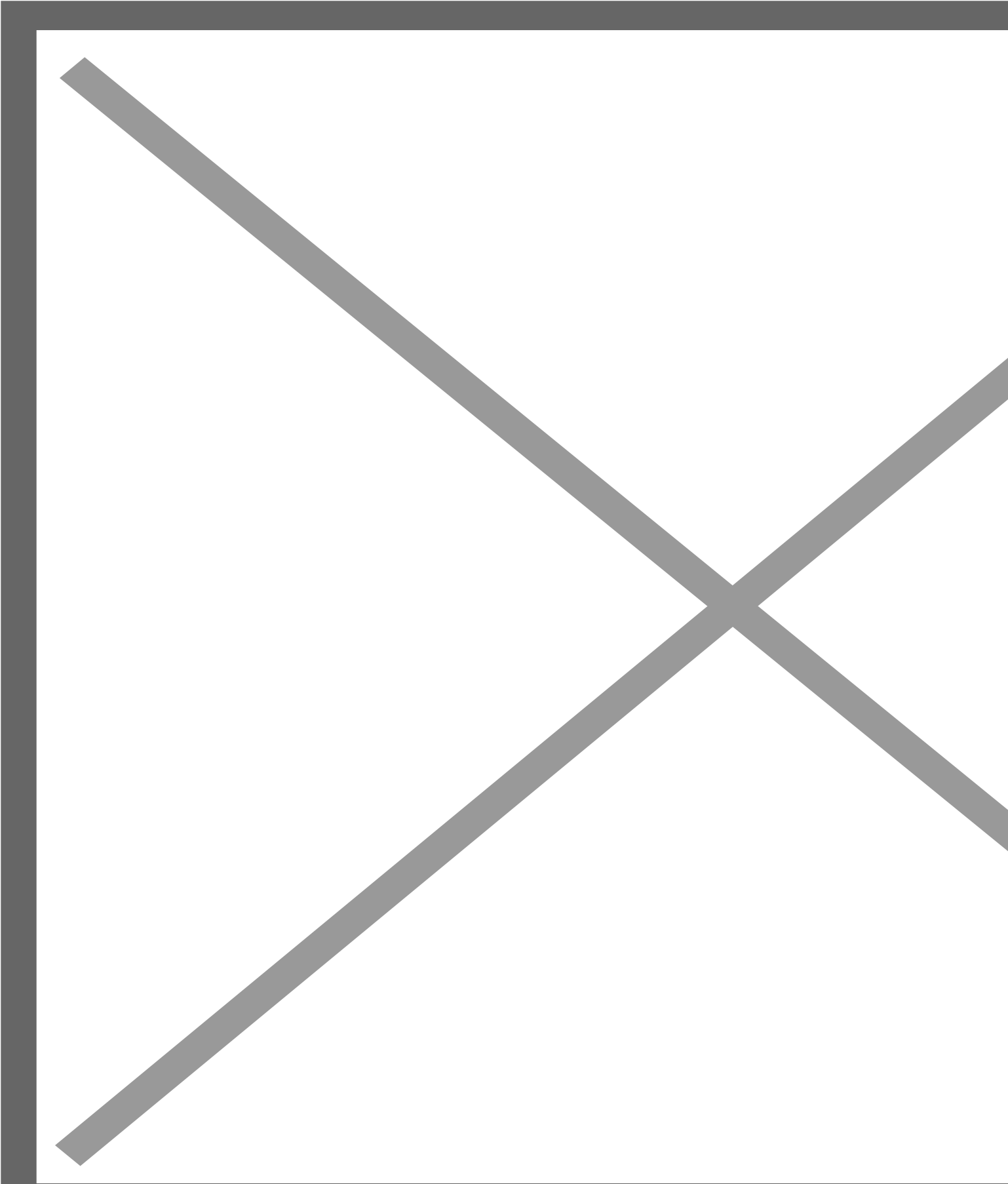
The port and starboard sections of the sun lounge are hinged and can be raised to create an angled backrest.

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Access to the engine is provided the old-fashioned way, by lifting the entire sun lounge.

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In compliance with American Boat & Yacht Council standards, the 23 Surf has a four-step boarding ladder.

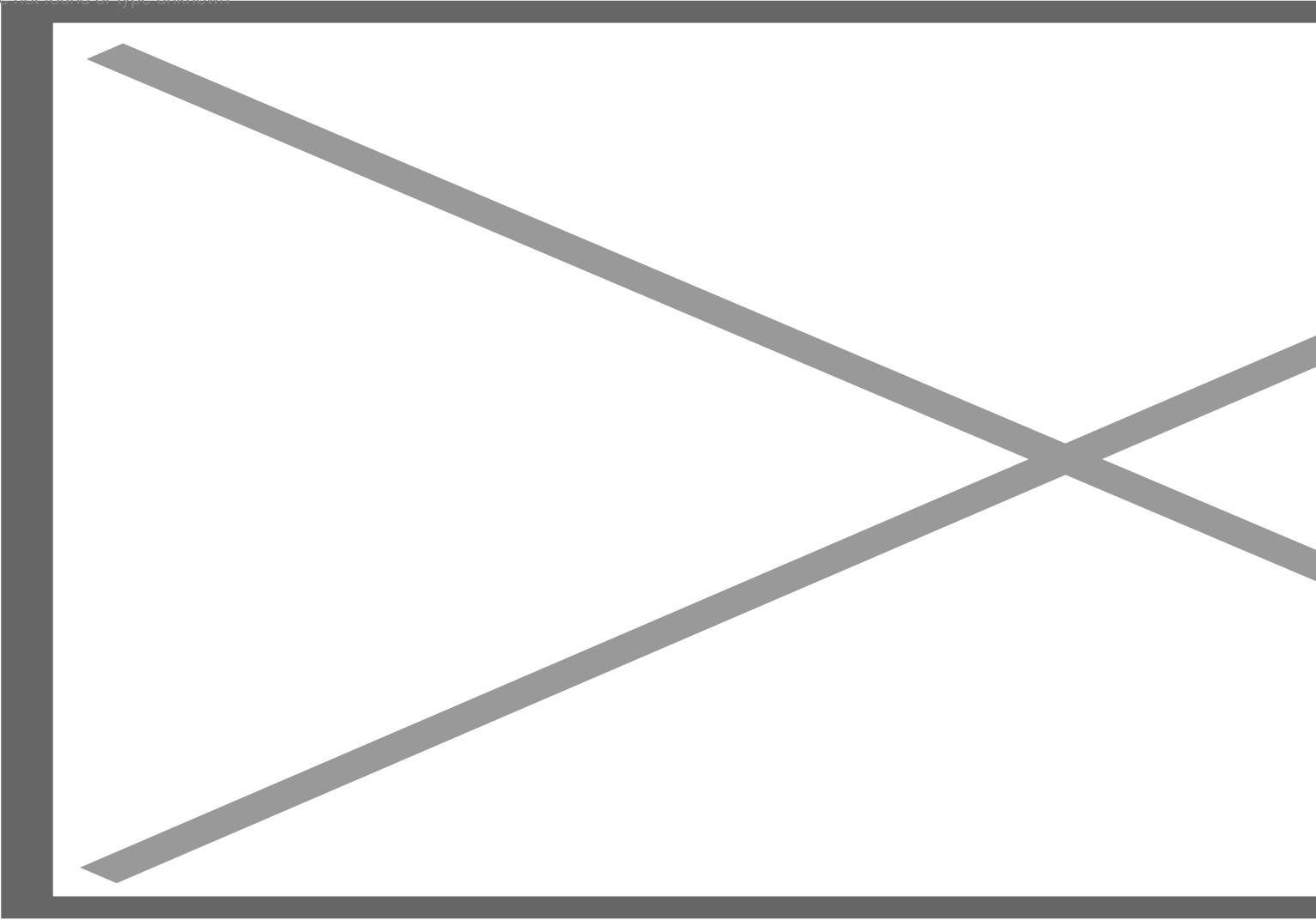
Performance

The Specs. The 23 Surf has an LOA of 23' (7.01 m), a beam of 8'6" (2.59 m) and a draft of 30" (76.20 cm). With three people on board, 90 percent fuel and test gear, we had an as-tested weight of 4,748 lbs. (2,154 kg).

With the 300-hp 6.2-liter MerCruiser engine turning the Bravo Four S at 5150 rpm, we reached a top speed of 44.7 mph. We recorded best cruise at 3000 rpm, where we ran 22.2 mph and burned 7 gph, which translated into 3.1 mpg and a range of 128 statute miles while holding back 10 percent of the boat's 45-gallon (170.34-L) fuel capacity.

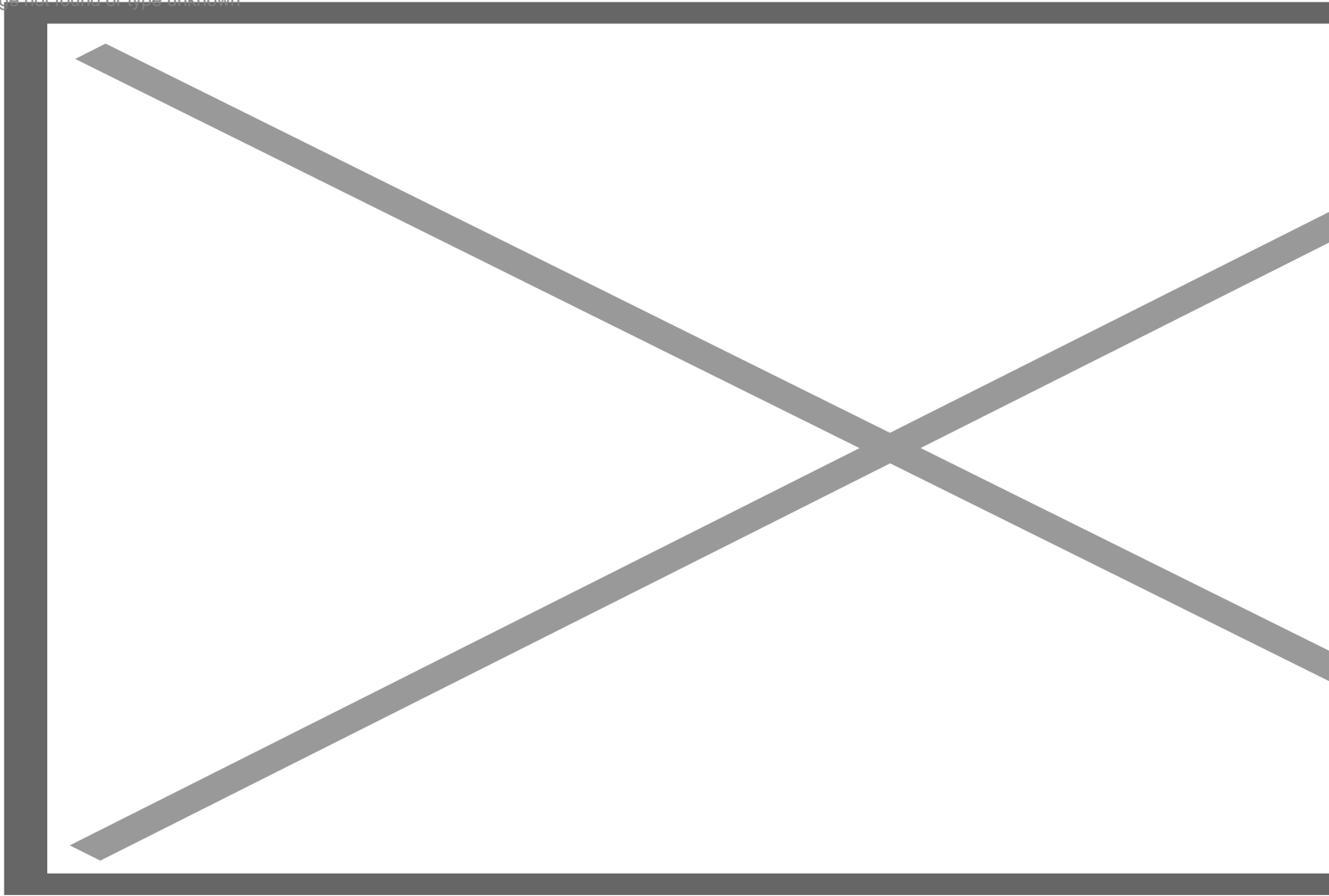
In acceleration tests, the 23 Surf planed in 3.4 seconds and ran through 20 mph in 6 seconds and through 30 in 9.4. When we eased back on the throttle, she stayed on plane at 12.2 mph.

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Just off plane at around 10 mph, the 23 Surf throws a wake that should please a variety of surfers.

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Here we see the 23 Surf running with the Bravo Four S trimmed in and the water breaking far forward.

Handling.

Having the props on the front of the drive gives them maximum bite in clean, dense water. This means that the 23 Surf will carve tighter turns than a similarly sized bowrider with a conventional sterndrive. It's neither a pro nor con, just something a driver should be aware of. Around the docks, she feels like a conventional sterndrive, which gives the 23 Surf an advantage over inboard-powered boats.

Options To Consider (not mentioned in the article)

- Cockpit and Bow Cover
- EFX II Electric Folding Arch Tower in Black or White
- Seakeeper 6 gyroscopic stabilizer

- JL Audio Sound System Upgrade
- 2 Tower Speakers
- Transom Stereo Remote
- Beach Weave Snap-In Flooring
- 12-volt Air Pump
- Docking Lights
- Surf Gate Wrist Band Control
- Spare tire kit for trailer

Observations

The 23 Surf isn't going to be the official towboat for wakesurfing competitions, but she puts out a good wave for surfers up to the intermediate level with a clean face and good crest. It's good enough for some trick moves if the surfer is creative. The Malibu Surf Gate package allows for switching sides on the fly and there's little lean from the gate being deployed. The 23 Surf is a fun family boat that has expanded its capabilities with the addition of being able to create wakes for surfing without losing the utility of being a 23' (7.01 m) bowrider.