

Nitro Z-8 (2014-)

Brief Summary

For an extra \$350 the Z-8 Nitro can be made in custom colors -- we suggest "Arrest Me Red" because with the standard 200-hp OptiMax the folks at Nitro tell us that she should push 70-mph. With the optional 250-hp OptiMax she will be well into the mid-70s. Speed is only part of the story. The other elements are features, comfort and price. Suffice it to say that she is loaded with the equipment pros expect to need in the top levels of tournament competition.

Price

Base Price \$35595.00

Prices, features, designs, and equipment are subject to change. Please see your local dealer or visit the builder's website for the latest information available on this boat model.

Key Features

- Rapid planing system transom
- 10" adjustable jack plate and rigging tube
- Fold-down reboarding ladder
- 2 aerated aft livewells with pump-out systems
- 3-across seating with storage, steps to aft deck and handholds
- Full easy-to-read instrumentation
- In-dash Lowrance Mark-5x Pro fishfinder
- Step to bow deck with insulated cooler and trash receptacle
- Bow deck with port and starboard rod lockers
- Custom-matched trailer

Specifications

Length Overall	20' 1" / 6.12 m
BEAM	96" 2.44 m
Dry Weight	1,900 lbs. 861.83 kg

Tested Weight	
Draft	14" 0.36 m
Draft Up	
Draft Down	
Air Draft	
Deadrise/Transom	16 deg.
Max Headroom	open
Bridge Clearance	N/A
Weight Capacity	
Person Capacity	
Fuel Capacity	68 gal. 257.41 L
Water Capacity	N/A
Length on Trailer	
Height on Trailer	
Trailer Weight	
Total Weight	
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	
0 to 20	
Ratio	
Props	
Load	
Climate	

Nitro Z-8
Image of Nitro Z-8 and or type unknown

A division of Tracker Marine builds trailers for Nitro boats. They are color-matched with the boat, have a special Galvashield treatment, powder coated and have step pads on the fenders and the tongue. They are standard with the boat.

The Mission of the Nitro Z-8

Overall the Nitro Z-8 is designed to be ready for top bass tournaments right out of the box. Her bottom is designed to be quick out of the hole and manageable at speeds in excess of 70 mph.

Nitro Z-8
Image of Nitro Z-8 and or type unknown

The standard Lowrance Mark 5x Pro fishfinder is flush-mounted in the instrument console. Several options are available. We like the most important instrument on the panel placed front and center and not stuck on the top of the dash looking like an after thought -- and one that cuts down visibility.

Nitro Z-8
Image of Nitro Z-8 and or type unknown

A bird's eye view of the Z-8 with all of the storage lids open. Bass boats are all about stowage, and the Z-8 has plenty. The bike seat forward and fishing seat aft are standard, but the removable port console is an option.

What's In the Box?

The big three items of standard equipment are the Mercury 200-hp OptiMax Pro XS, color-coordinated, tandem-axle trailer, and the 24V Minn Kota trolling motor.

Fishy Features.

She has two 20 gal. (75 L) each aerated livewells aft, with timers and pump-outs; controls are at the helm. Port and starboard are two bins that can hold Plano tackle trays. This is an ideal system for anglers who like to arrange their tackle at home and label the trays so the right lure can be quickly found. Two bins forward can hold a number of rods that do not exceed 8' in length.

The trolling motor has a 70-lb. thrust and a 42" (106 cm) shaft. There is a recessed foot control for comfort on the bow.

Helm.

Amidships there is 3-across seating. The port console is optional and can be easily removed and put in place. The steering is hydraulic, and she has full instrumentation including a Lowrance Mark-5X fishfinder which is integrated right into the helm console front and center.

Nitro Z-8
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On the way to the bow is an insulated cooler that is self draining and about equa-distant from the anglers bow and stern. A much-need trash container is at left. Forward of these two compartments is a huge storage compartment that is ideal for extra life jackets, USCG required equipment, and food among other things.

Nitro Z-8
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No bass boat would be complete without a recessed trolling motor foot pedal that makes balance better.

Nitro Z-8
found or type unknown

The Nitro Z-8 comes standard with two Interstate trolling batteries and one cranking battery.

Nitro Z-8
found or type unknown

A new wrinkle on the trailer tongue are these two tread steps.

How is She Built? Warranty?

Boat and Trailer.

The Z-8 has a hand-laid fiberglass hull which has a foam-filled 'glass stringer system and composite transom. These days this is pretty much standard industry construction practice. Nitro is confident enough to cover her structure – hull, stringers and transom – for the life of the boat. And it's transferable. The rest of the boat is covered by a limited one-year warranty; the trailer comes with three-year coverage for the galvanized tubing.

Mercury Engine.

The Mercury OptiMax 200-hp Pro XS and all models in this series carry a Mercury factory-backed limited 3-year warranty against defects of parts and labor and a 3-year warranty against corrosion. Both of these warranties are non-declining.

Nitro Z-8
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Some anglers want a second console, some think it gets in the way of easy movement. Nitro makes it optional so buyers can have it their way.

Nitro Z-8
found or type unknown

The removable portside console has a lockable glove box, grab handle and windscreen. Its \$900 cost includes factory-installed mounting hardware.

Nitro Z-8
found or type unknown

Three-across seating is standard, but we'd add the optional console to give the port-side seat some protection when running fast on a cool morning. Under-seat stowage is handy, too. Note the steps/armrests between the seats and the grab handles between the seats. While handholds are required by ABYC Standards we think Nitro has done a particularly good job with its design of them.

Is She Fast?

Bottom Shapes.

To attain maximum performance the Z-8 rides on what Nitro calls its "Rapid Planing System" hull. It incorporates a step near the transom which reduces wetted surface, possibly some drag, and effectively sets the prop further aft into what should be slightly less turbulent water.

On the aft one-third or so of the keel is a pad which is nearly flat, thus giving the boat lift. This is a tried-and-true design. Further there are four other lifting strakes on each side of the keel. Altogether this design gives the boat fast times to plane and makes her capable of speeds in excess of 70 mph with a 250-hp outboard, according to the builder.

Nitro Says.

Her builder says she'll do 66 – 68 mph (106.2 – 109.4 kph) with the standard 200-hp OptiMax, and 70 – 72 mph (112.7 – 115.9 kph) with the optional 225-hp, and 74 – 77 mph (119.1 – 123.9 kph) with the optional 250-hp, which confirms what we have heard elsewhere. This sounds plenty fast to us, given she's just 20'1" long and about 3,600 lbs. (1,633 kg.) loaded.

Nitro Z-8
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Power options include Mercury OptiMax Pro XS outboards from 200-hp to 250-hp. No matter which motor is chosen, it can mount on the standard 10" jack plate for maximum performance.

Nitro Z-8
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Dual 20-gal. (75.71 L) Guardian livewells come with aerators, timers, recirculators and pump-outs. Nitro says the livewell lips are anti-slosh.

Nitro Z-8
found or type unknown

Control the livewells with these rocker switches at the helm. And they look cool, too.

Major Features

?2 aerated Guardian livewells with timers, recirculators, and pump-out systems
?70-lb. thrust trolling motor

- ?Recessed foot pedal for trolling motor
- ?Two 20-gal. (76 L) livewells with baffles
- ?Rapid Planing System transom design
- ?1 bike seat with pedestal
- ?1 casting seat with pedestal
- ?Custom-matched tandem axle trailer
- ?Shallow draft (14")
- ?Optional, removable companion console
- ?10" jack plate

Nitro Z-8 find or type unknown

16-oz. carpet lines the forward storage bins for rods or any other gear. The port and starboard lockers have automatic lighting activated by the lid.

Optional Extras

Options Galore.

There isn't much really needed to add to the Z-8 to get the job done, but all anglers and boaters have different thresholds of what they think "should" and "needs" to be on their pride and joy. For that reason, Nitro has one of the longest lists of options we have ever seen for a 20' bass boat.

Sensible Options.

One thing that might be wanted by particularly keen anglers is a fishfinder on the bow that costs as little as \$205, but can go as high as \$4,755, for example. The standard Lowrance fishfinder in the dash can be changed out for far more sophisticated gear for a similar range of up-charges. Also, upgrading the trolling motor runs between \$345 and \$940. We'd want trim control on the steering wheel (\$70), the Hot Foot throttle (\$150) and maybe tilt steering (\$200).

All boats need covers, and here they are optional and some can be expensive. We have found that it is always best to buy from the builder to ensure the best fit and color match. And, of course, the trailer can be upgraded.

Nitro Z-8 find or type unknown

The 24v Minn Kota Maxxum trolling motor, standard, develops 70 lbs. of thrust and has a 42" shaft. More powerful options are available, up to a 36V, 109-lb. MotorGuide Digital Tour Series with a 50" shaft.

Pricing

MSRP for the Z-8 is \$35,595 with prep and freight and standard power. With the optional 225-hp OptiMax Pro XS delivered it is \$37,540. The 250-hp OptiMax Pro XS, including prep and delivery is \$40,340.

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Image of Nitro Z-8 and or type unknown

The transom of the Nitro Z-8 reveals a design as sophisticated as any on the bass boat market. (A) These arrows indicate where the step is in the transom. (B) Arrows point to the lifting strakes. (C) The flat pad. (D) The 10" jack plate.

Observations

Even speed-crazed anglers who can't live without the large engine and a load of the optional goodies can buy the Nitro Z-8 for under \$45,000; stick with standard power and equipment and she comes in for under \$36,000. This is a price hard to beat.

But these prices beg the question: Why are other bass boats from \$10,000 to nearly \$30,000 more expensive?

An Answer.

Most other bass boats in class are more expensive for a laundry list of reasons, none of which have to do with hull integrity (the hull has a lifetime warranty), speed, stability, comfort, or basic tournament-ready necessities. Some of the things that can cause boats to be more expensive are -- corporate overhead, corporate debt payments, corporate advertising and promotion including a large staff of expensive pro anglers, exotic materials, higher margins at corporate and dealer levels, more amenities, less-efficient production and lower sales volume, among other things.

Compared to Other Boats in Class.

When we compare other bass boats in class we discover that Z-8 ties two others for being the beamiest, is about the same weight as two and heavier than three others, has a greater livewell capacity than all boats but one, carries a greater fuel load than all and may be the shallowest draft of any other bass boat in class. We say "may be" because most other bass boat builders do not give the draft of their boats in the 20' class -- a sure sign that they feel it is not competitive.

Based on our research, we can come to no other conclusion than the Nitro Z-8 is a capable boat and a very good value.