



WELLCRAFT P-29 SCARAB

AMERICA'S MOST WANTED

Wellcraft revives the 29 Scarab in a hot-rodder's dream, the 40th Anniversary P-29 and if you want one, you need to move fast.

WE'VE GOT GOOD NEWS AND BAD NEWS FOR OFFSHORE PERFORMANCE ENTHUSIASTS who don't have a ton of money burning a hole in their pockets. The good news is that Wellcraft Marine has come out with one of the sweetest-running, hottest-looking offshore boats less than 30' long we've ever seen. And the bad?

The Sarasota, Fla., manufacturer is only selling 29 of them.

Dubbed the 40th Anniversary P-29 Scarab, the brilliant red and yellow 29'5" Scarab with the 7'6" beam is an aquatic Shelby or Cobra with trick off-center stripe graphics. It'll run 75 mph on fuel-efficient small-blocks and look every bit the custom package you want to be seen in at a Poker Run.

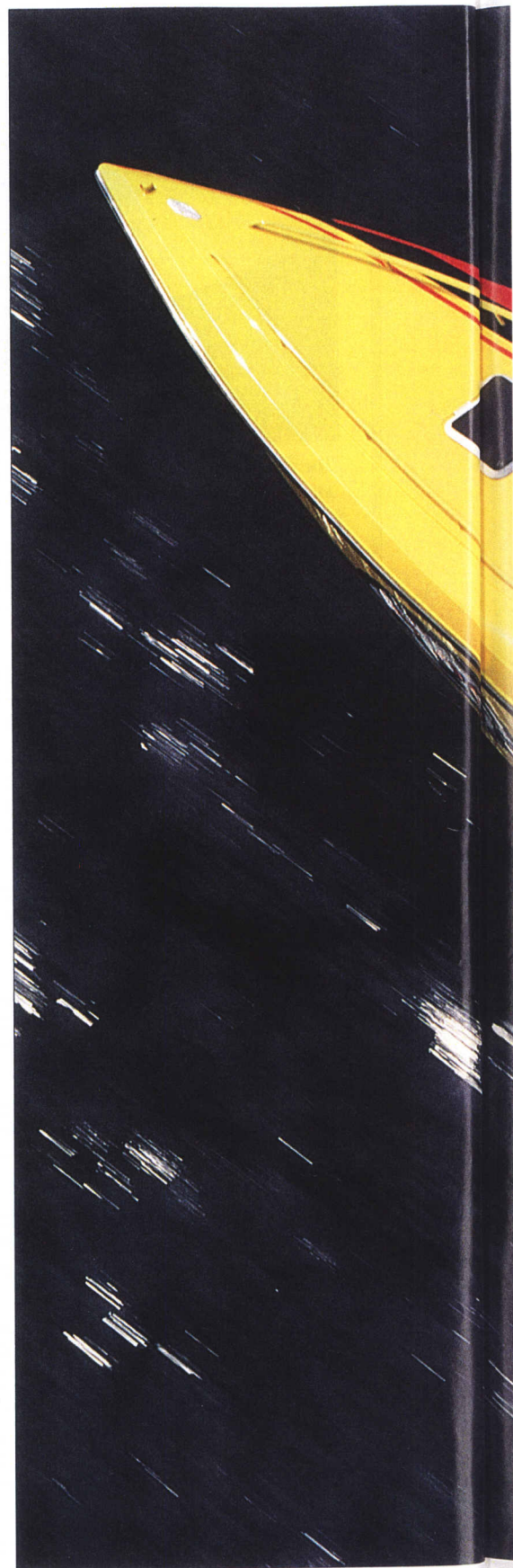
Making buyers' decisions easy, the boat comes only one way and for one price, \$98,240. In addition to the cool yellow and red paint job, replete with P-29 numbers, Wellcraft equipped the special-edition offshore performer with a bolster for back-seat riders, Gaffrig gauges and, in a bit of a surprise, twin MerCruiser 350 Magnum MPI Gen+ engines bolted to Blackhawk drives.

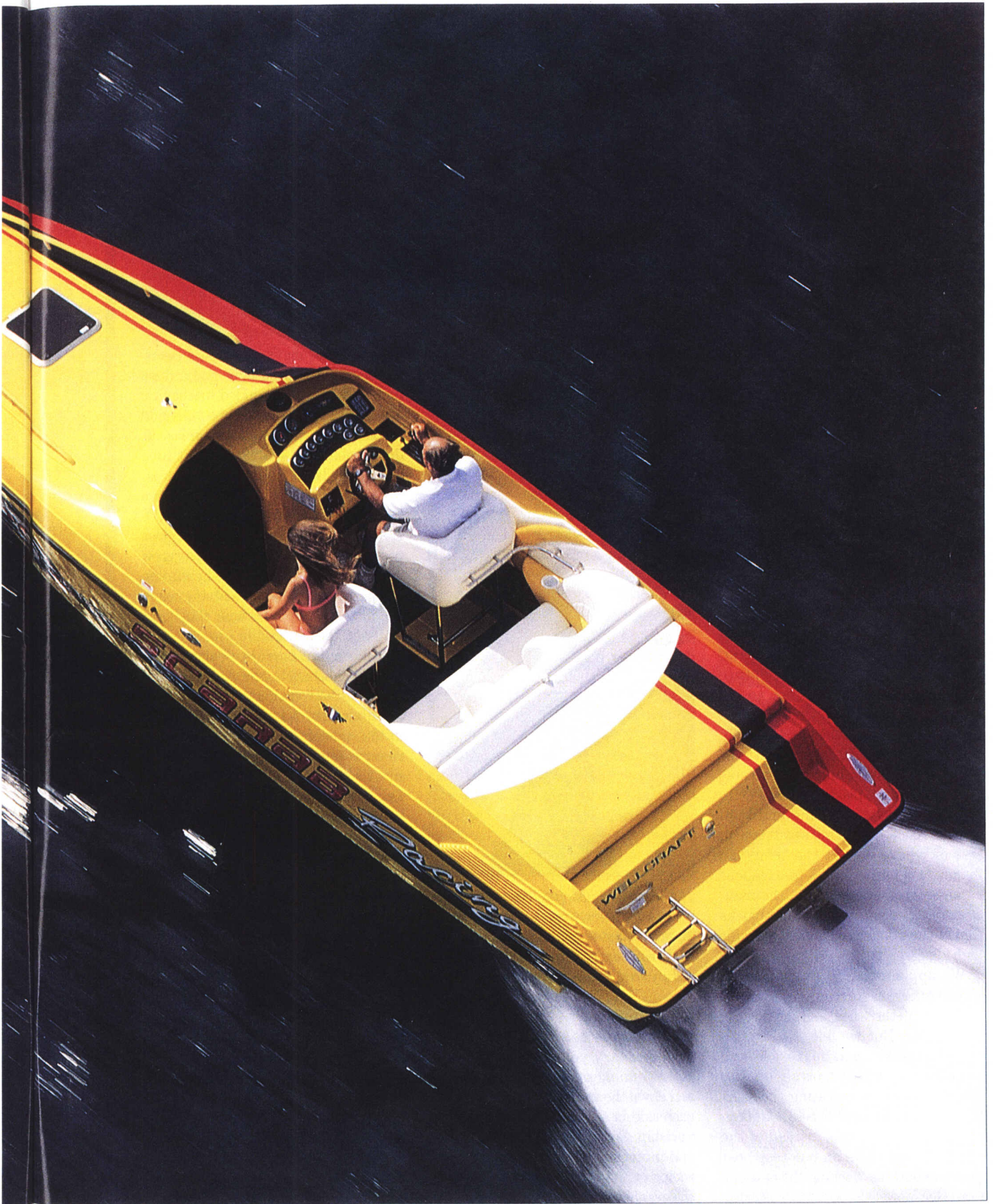
PERFORMANCE

According to the people at Wellcraft, the P-29 Scarab ran 75 mph out of the box with the Blackhawks and small blocks, not a bad starting point.

Because the boat was not light at 5,500 pounds, the counter-rotating twin-prop surface drives gave it some extra lift to complement the Larry Smith bottom. The proven design had a 6"-wide V-pad aft on the last 15' or so of the 23-degree bottom. Of the four strakes, the inner pair stopped approximately 10' forward of the transom, while the outside set and the flat chine extended the length of the

The skinny on the Scarab P-29? Get it while it's hot. Buyer number 30 is going to be awfully disappointed because Wellcraft is only releasing 29 of the 75-plus-mph boats.





boat. Between the outside strake and the chine, Wellcraft molded a slight reverse angle in the bottom to improve stability at higher speeds.

We have yet to find a boat that worked better with Blackhawks than the P-29 Scarab. Equipped with 1.65:1 gears, the drives spun twin three-blade stainless props with dimensions of 15 1/2 x 31 and 16 1/2 x 31. In the Gulf Of Mexico, we got the boat up to 76.7 mph on radar at 4900 rpm. After poking along at seven at 1000 rpm and 10 at 2000, our test model came alive, hitting 42 at 3000, 51 at 3500, 60 at 4000 and 69 at 4500.

The Blackhawks also added snap out of the hole. The boat planed in only 5.4 seconds with tabs, 6.8 without and in acceleration tests, hit 21 mph in five seconds, 43 in 10, 54 in 15 and 63 in 20.

And when it comes to fuel economy, you'd be hard-pressed to find an offshore boat that is kinder to your wallet. We saw numbers of 2.2 mpg at 40 mph, 2.1 at 50, 1.9 at 60, 1.7 at 70 and 1.6 at full throttle.

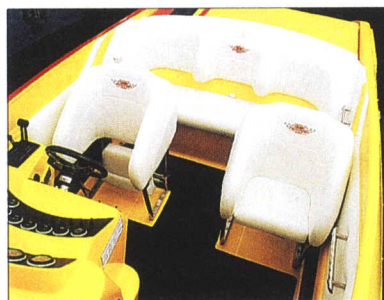
Beyond the stats, don't let the boat's length make you question its ocean-going ability. In quartering, following or head-on seas, it flew level and landed softly, never doing anything we didn't expect. When we took to the bay, the predictable manners continued in an agile performance. Slalom cuts at 30, 40 and 50 mph weren't the P-29's best moves, but that's acceptable with surface-piercing drives. Ditto for the circles at cruising and high speeds. Aside from a mild hop regardless of where we set the trim, the maneuvers earned good-to-excellent ratings. Around the docks, the management system on the small-blocks tamed the Blackhawks' penchant for high idling.

We applauded Wellcraft's use of IMCO external steering with Mach's CRT trim in the wheel and the throttle positioning. But we felt that experienced performance boaters would want the trim-tab controls set up with the right button operating the starboard trim tab and the left button working the port tab, instead of the pleasureboat style on our test boat with the buttons working the opposite tabs. Because of the shorter freeboard,

we felt more comfortable driving the boat from a seated position and appreciated the bolster padding.

WORKMANSHIP

Regardless of your personal preference, you'll be impressed by the graphics on the P-29 Scarab, which were inspired by the classic Shelby muscle-



Not-so-mellow racing yellow adorned the Scarab P-29's cockpit, contrasted nicely by white vinyl upholstery on the bolsters and rear bench. When you're ready to chill in style, stretch out belowdecks.

cars with the offset stripe running up the starboard side.

The canary yellow hull had a red band running up the starboard deck and down the transom with the P-29 on each side in a display of quality craftsmanship. Colors were applied in Imron and protected with a clear coat. Black racing stripes ran down the deck and the graphics included the deck rails.

Our test model's hull had a shine that wouldn't quit. A gelcoat applied 30 mils thick didn't hurt. Behind the 1 1/2-ounce skin coat, two layers of 2208 triaxial cloth and Knytex's kevlar-blend 1308 provided the beef. Three coats of stitched fabric with spray core in the hullsides kept them solid and putty filling stiffened the strakes.

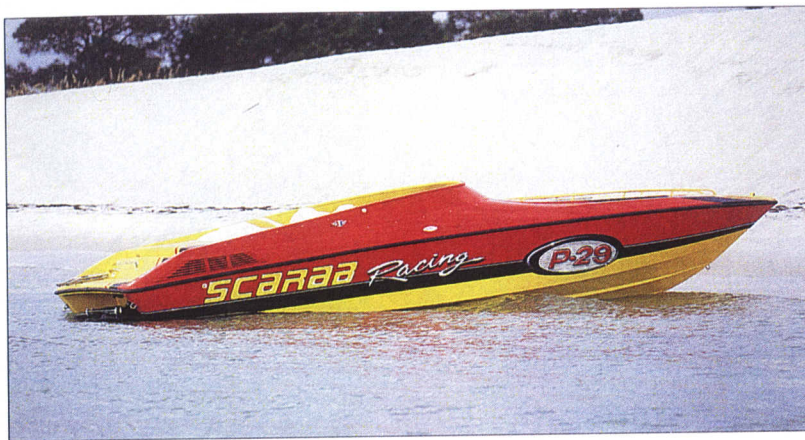
In place of the windshield, the boat had a race-style aluminum faring set into the deck mold. In the *coup de gras* for attention to detail, all the screw heads on the black offshore-style rub-rail were aligned.

Aside from the usual, pop-up cleats, a plastic navigation light and a flush fuel fill, hardware included mechanical trim indicator cables on the tabs and drives, which were mounted on heavy-duty transom assemblies, a pitot tube and Quicksilver's Q-guard exhaust tips.

On the inside of the transom, we spied the inboard ram in IMCO's steering system. A molded fiberglass power engine hatch opened on a screw jack, providing a look at the engine compartment. When closed, the hatch set into a scuppered well that kept water off the motors.

Reflected in mirrors on the underside of the hatch, the fuel-injected small-blocks were mounted with gusseted aluminum L-angles thru-bolted to the stringers. IMCO's remote fluid reservoir was held in place with screws on top of the steering pump. Drive-trim pumps were installed on a small platform between the outside stringer and the side of the boat, while brackets bolted to the firewall bulkhead held those for the tabs. Strapped-down plastic boxes housed the batteries on either side of the compartment. We found extensive use of cushion clamps to support the wiring, which was protected in plastic conduit.

The cockpit should be a breeze to clean. Pull up the snap-down carpet and hit the fiberglass sole—part of a liner that incorporated the back-seat base—with a hose. Stainless stanchions thru-bolted to a reinforced section of the the cockpit sole held the bolsters in place. At the dash, a removable panel provided limited access to the wiring and the helm. Belowdecks, the lounge and berth were built on the



With a special racing graphics package complementing classic Scarab lines, the P-29 looked every bit the raceboat. Befitting a special edition, gelcoat and paint were first-rate.

stringers and the upholstery and headliner were applied in flawless fashion.

I N T E R I O R

Too often, back-seat passengers are forgotten in an offshore boat. After occupying that position in more than our fair share of bluewater runners, we were impressed by what we saw in the P-29 Scarab. Three people can snuggle into individual bolsters and enjoy pounding the waves just like the front passengers. Grab handles that tied the front bolsters into the gunwales were in easy reach and there was even a place for bracing feet. Wellcraft contoured the bottom cushion so it will pull out underneath the armrests, revealing gelcoated stowage in the base with twin openings.

Large gunwale trays port and starboard offered additional stowage with more space alongside the co-pilot than to starboard because of the space required for the throttle and shifting cables. Wellcraft made a smart move by closing off the area instead of trying to leave it open and have the cables hanging down.

Finished in bright yellow, the dash included twin integrated steps to help crew members get out onto the bow. From his bolster, our test pilot could see all black-faced Gaffrig gauges by Livorsi Marine in one sweeping glance. Shadowed by the faring, the instruments were laid out in two tiers with the speedometer and twin tachometers up top. Beneath were all neces-

sary engine-monitoring gauges in a flat-black panel that also contained the rubber-booted toggle-style accessory switches. Above, on the flat section, the compass was easy to see.

Equipped with Mach Performance's CRT trim in the spokes, the wheel was comfortably placed, as were the Zero Effort shifts and throttles to the right. In case those in the wheel acted up, there were trim switches for the drives and the tabs forward of the throttles.

Between the front bolsters, the sliding smoked acrylic door slid out of the way easily, opening up the basic type of cabin you'd expect in a performance-oriented offering. To starboard, all the way aft, we discovered a hanging locker with plenty of space and directly across was an open locker with Clarion Marine's CD player just above.

Facing lounges, with no stowage in the bases, afforded space for a few friends. On the other hand, there was space beneath the V-berth cushion, accessible by a carpeted hatch, and a portable head under a smaller cushion. All the way forward in the V-berth, there was access to the bow lights behind a snap-down curtain.

O V E R A L L

Wellcraft, we're going to make one more plea. Don't limit the sales of this boat to 29. The 40th Anniversary Edition P-29 Scarab has so much to offer with its performance and looks, it would be a shame to deprive the public of this sweet machine.

PBM

WELLCRAFT P-29 SCARAB

HULL TYPE: Deep V

Deadrise at transom	23 degrees
Centerline	29'5"
Beam	7'6"
Weight as tested	5,500 pounds

BASE RETAIL: \$98,240

PRICE AS TESTED: \$98,240

STANDARD EQUIPMENT: Twin MerCruiser 350 Magnum MPI Gen+ engines with Blackhawk drives, power engine hatch, K-planes, full Gaffrig instrumentation, mechanical trim indicators, padded wheel with three-position trim control, hydraulic steering, Clarion CD stereo, compass, P-29 racing graphics, twin stand-up two-position bolsters, cockpit liner, vinyl upholstery, sliding plexi cabin door, portable head, hanging locker, indirect lighting, Sunbrella cockpit cover, nav lights, stainless hardware, integrated swim platform.

OPTIONS ON TEST BOAT: None

ENGINES

Model	MerCruiser 350 Magnum MPI Gen+
Cylinder type	V-8
Cubic inch displacement	350 c.i.
Lower unit gear ratio	1.65:1
Max prop horsepower @ rpm	300 at 5000

PROPELLERS: Blackhawk 16 1/2" x 31" and 15 1/2" x 31" three-blade stainless.

MANUFACTURER: Wellcraft Marine, 1651 Whitfield Ave., Sarasota, FL 34243, (813) 753-7811.

POWERBOAT TEST RESULTS

ACCELERATION

Zero to 5 seconds	21 mph
10 seconds	43 mph
15 seconds	54 mph
20 seconds	63 mph

TIME TO PLANE: 5.4 seconds

Min. planing speed	18 mph
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RPM VS. MPH

1000	7 mph
2000	10 mph
3000	42 mph
3500	51 mph
4000	60 mph
4500	69 mph

SOUND LEVEL: 82 dBA (open)

TOP SPEED AT RPM

Speedometer	76 mph at 4900
Radar	76.7 mph at 4900

FUEL ECONOMY:

At 40 mph	2.2 mpg
At 50 mph	2.1 mpg
At 60 mph	1.9 mpg

FUEL CAPACITY: 100 gallons

Test conducted at Panama City, Fla.