

**The Donzi 18 Outboard**

**Courtesy of**

**POWERBOAT MAGAZINE**

**The World's Leading Performance Boating**

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**September 1975**

**Hull 390 sold to OMC unrigged and unpowered**

**From the Donzi factory In March of 1971**

18-390

y/w/w/y

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Std: 3-1-71

in'd 3-15-71

#1712 OMC

SEPTEMBER 1975 / ONE DOLLAR

# **powerboat**

**THE WORLD'S LEADING PERFORMANCE BOATING MAGAZINE**

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**BIG BOAT SPECIAL  
JOHNSON 200 TEST  
UNLIMITED RACE COVERAGE**

# JOHNSON 200

by Bob Brown

When the first press release crossed my desk in mid-June concerning the 1976 Johnson outboards, an immediate misprint caught my attention. Some poor soul in the PR department was fantasizing in print about an all new V-6 200 horsepower engine. Since I had not received a telegram retracting the obvious error, I quickly dialed Waukegan, Illinois, desiring to speak with Ron Pedderson, Public Relations Manager of Johnson. After a few moments of conversation with Ron, I was assured that the men of Johnson were not perpetrating a June "April Fool" or hallucinating. The 200 horsepower V-6 was genuine.

My next question was easy to anticipate, "How soon can I get one and give it a test?" This was a bit of a stumper since the number of actual V-6's produced at that time were very scarce. The answer was forthcoming just a few short days later. If I were willing to catch a plane to Florida, Johnson would make a V-6 available for my inspection and use at their sunshine test facility in Stuart. Knowing that all you readers want first-hand information, (not to mention my lifelong dream of having 200 responsive outboard horsepower at my command) I couldn't resist the offer.

Looking the Johnson V-6 square in the carburetors, it's not as physically large or mammoth as most would think. In fact if it didn't say 200 on the cover, the extra five or six inches in shroud height goes practically unnoticed.

My test boat was a vee bottom 18 foot Donzi runabout. I was expecting a pronounced stern sag when it was launched. To my surprise, none occurred as the 371 pound engine caused no freeboard problem. A turn of the key and the engine started, or at least I

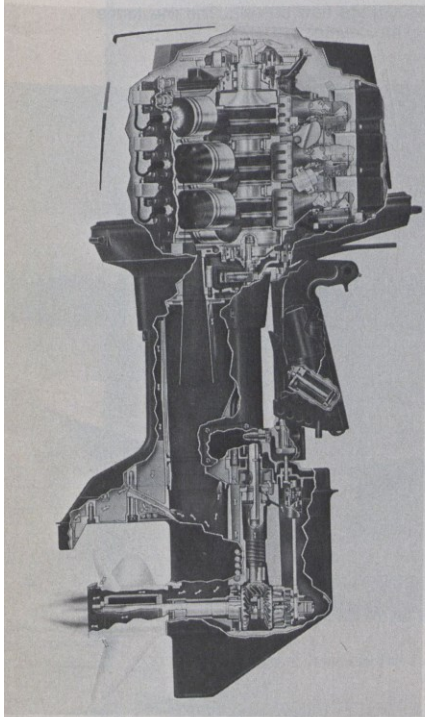
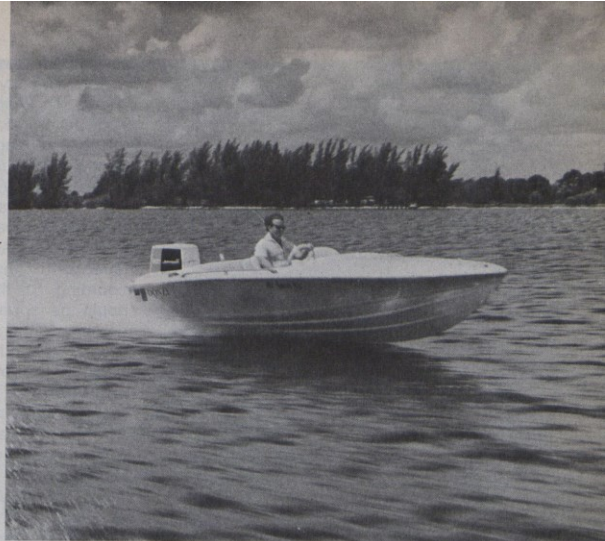
thought it was started. The 200 was so quiet that I had to check the tachometer to make sure it was running. At a docile 700 RPM, the V-6 was clicking off a steady and almost silent beat.

Before allowing you to become excited by the performance description of this big two cycle, I'm going to make you wait a few agonizing moments longer while giving you a brief explanation of the whys and hows of the 200.

Who in the boating industry (besides myself) would possibly want a 149.4 cubic inch outboard engine? The answer to that is simple; the growing number of boating enthusiasts that prefer hulls of the 19 to 30 foot gander and desire the advantages of outboard power. Large families that water ski, small cabin cruisers used for fishing, houseboats of all sizes and a sporty crowd that explore offshore waters all need a bigger horsepower outboard engine. This fact, coupled with a long absent prestige motivation of being the "most powerful" in the outboard world undoubtedly prompted OMC (both Johnson and Evinrude have the 200) to take the forward step.

With such continual emphasis on safe boating someone is bound to ask, "Are there hulls now rated to handle a 200 h.p. outboard?" Probably surprising to many boaters, there are presently over thirty outboard models which will accommodate a 200. Something which should be pointed out here is the means by which hulls are rated for horsepower. In spite of what a large number of people believe, the U.S. Coast Guard only certifies passenger capacity, not horsepower. This chore is left strictly up to the hull manufacturers. You can be sure that a lot more 200 horsepower hulls will be manufactured in the very near future.





This cutaway drawing of the 200 shows what and how it all happens. Johnson engineers have done a remarkable job in fitting all that horsepower under the engine cover.

And for those that claim racing is an unnecessary exercise of power boating, they should take another look at the origin of the V-6. Similar powerplants have been tested in competition for the past several seasons before being released to the general public in its present form. Problems which are undetectable under controlled factory test conditions show themselves quickly during speed and endurance contests. Be assured that a majority of the refinements of the 200 were long resolved out on the racing course.

Pulling off the engine cover proved Johnson wasn't kidding; six cylinders—six spark plugs in 90 degree V formation. Many of the basics are tried and true 135 h.p. parts rearranged a bit to take care of the V-6 needs. However some important changes have taken place which should be noted. To feed the two additional cylinders, another two barrel carburetor with fixed jets now makes it a threesome. Handling this extra demand is dual fuel pumps and twin MagFlash ignition systems. Each breakerless capacitor discharge ignition works on an independent cylinder bank, however should one fail, the other will compensate and still get you back to shore. Greatly reducing engine vibration is a new mount system called Progressive Isolation rubber. It is a material that stays relatively soft at idle but firms up under thrust and torque for decreased noise at higher speeds. A major advancement in the 1976 200 model is that of the standard T'N'T power trim unit. Everything from the hydraulic cylinders, electrical system to the mounts have been beefed-up. This achieves much greater trimming control. The likelihood of a failure in this

unit is practically non-existent.

It isn't really fair to torture you any longer so I'll summarize my driving impression of the Johnson 200 with these words; "it's a muscular well behaved engine, both smoother and far more responsive than any V-4 that has preceded it." To give you a general performance benchmark to go from, consider the following. The 18 foot Donzi hull achieved a top speed of 51 mph at 5600 RPM (recommended operating range is 4750 to 5750) in under five seconds from a standing start with two people aboard. This was swinging a standard aluminum three blade prop which was by no means factory fresh. Acceleration capabilities were so strong in fact that a quicker plane was achieved when less than full throttle was applied to prevent breaking the prop completely loose. Putting the power to the 200 at all settings did not produce a cough, sputter or hesitation. In simple terms, it was smooth, vibrationless and super quiet; superior to the former 135 h.p. kingpin.

After a short photo session, we headed back to the test facility for a prop change. Unfortunately none of the soon to be released selection of SST 200 props were available, but a wicked stainless steel cleaver three blade was installed just for comparison sake. Naturally the acceleration was not quite as snappy but the top end possibilities of the V-6 really began to show. At 5700 RPM the speedometer bobbed between 57 and 58 mph. At about that same speed the Donzi 18 began to run out of bottom, meaning that this was as fast as the boat had reasonable right to go. It is safe to expect that a good 18 or 19 foot outboard ski boat with a 200



Johnson and proper SST wheel should have no difficulty in reaching this 55 to 60 mph range still having ample punch to pull several skiers out of deep water. Making a conservative estimate, this is about a 5 to 7 mph improvement over the best of the V-4's.

Undoubtedly at this point every performance outboard enthusiast is burning with interest to make a personal inspection of the V-6. If all things go according to the OMC plan, 200's should be appearing in local dealers sometime during September. However before you hand that salesman a blank check, a few more things should be considered.

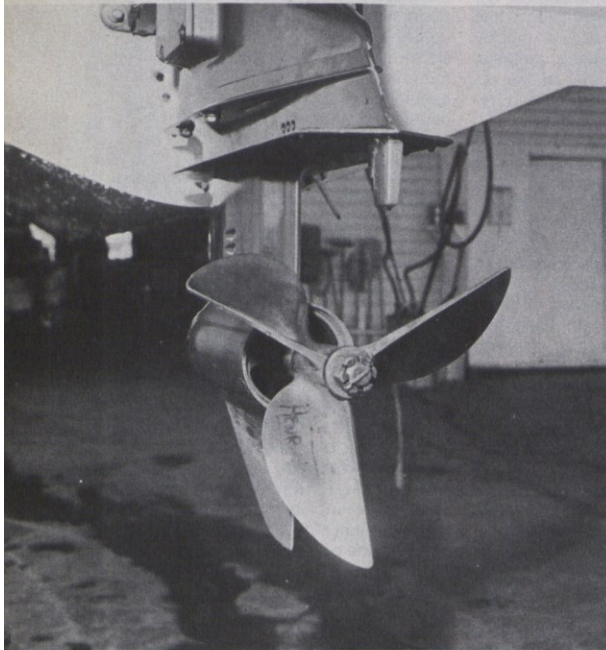
Fuel consumption of a 200 is bound to be greater than the 135 h.p. No one knows exactly how much more fuel will be used but a safe guess would be about 10 to 15 percent. This fuel figure will not be as large as some people will anticipate because seldom will full throttle be needed by the V-6. It may be nearly as economical to cruise a 200 at 3200 RPM as it would be to work a 135 at 3800 RPM and be going the exact same speed. Often times the engine load factor is of more importance to fuel consumption than cubic inches. However at full throttle operation, the 200 clearly has the bigger appetite. One nice thing about the V-6

in regard to gasoline is that it is designed to run on regular or unleaded fuel. No premium pump feeding for this engine.

Certainly not to be considered least is a new selection in shaft length for 1976. The 200 will be available in either long (20") or super long (25") shafts allowing for flexibility in transom height requirements. This is a boon to the big boat market.

As you might have guessed it, we saved the cruncher for last. The price tag on the Johnson V-6 is formidable but not overwhelming. For only \$2,950 plus some \$69 for controls, a 200 horsepower outboard will be neatly bolted to your transom. Once the initial shock has subsided, that price may be the biggest bargain of all time in the outboard industry.

The cost difference between a 135 and 200 engine will probably be just over \$350. For this amount you receive an additional (and conservative) 65 more horsepower. In other words, you're paying less than \$5.40 per extra one horsepower. Any one acquainted with performance knows that this is inexpensive when buying power whether it be inboard or outboard. Think it over; the more for your dollar 200's are now on sale. The line forms at the counter.



This clever three blade prop will not be a standard on the 200, however it did produce a significant speed increase over the aluminum wheel. When full production is achieved this fall, a wide selection of OMC SST props will be your best choice for all around performance.



