

“We design our boats around suspension seating.”



This Titan model features Shockwave's ICE3 five-person suspension console.



Shockwave's S5 Suspension Module and Corbin2 seat are the company's key recreational products.



PHOTO: JAY WALLACE (TOP LEFT)

Tame Your Ride

Shockwave makes seating-suspension systems for military, commercial and recreational vessels alike

By Joe Healy

High-horsepower engines such as the 7.6-liter, V-12 Mercury Verado outboard unveiled in February prove that technology is making boat speed more obtainable than ever. Imagine quad 600s on the transom of a 50-foot center console, delivering a full-tilt capacity of 60 knots or more.

It sounds cool — until you consider navigating heavy seas, much less a chop. The result, if you even choose to leave the dock, would surely be a bone-jarring (perhaps life-threatening) ride for passengers and crew.

Avoiding such a fate is why some of the fastest military RIBs use shock-mitigating seating. Supplying that type of seating is Shockwave's niche. The Canadian company manufactures marine-suspension seating and on-board suspension consoles to keep boaters in the game when seas are heavy, while also keeping them safer, less fatigued and more comfortable.

Real-World Product Testing

Shockwave is based in British Columbia, and its home waters can be some of the nastiest in the Pacific Northwest. This is an ideal setup for company founder and CEO David Smith, who cut his teeth in the 1960s and '70s on the asphalt racetrack as he built and tuned NASCAR auto chassis. Much of his experience involved understanding performance and the interaction of the vehicle's shocks, springs and sway bars — dealing with “weight and high-g-forces,” as he says. The training turned out to be the ideal foundation for creating suspension systems for boats.

In 2002, Smith cruised from Victoria, British Columbia, to Glacier Bay, Alaska, to demonstrate his shock-mitigating

talk about those motors, that's not a young man buying a recreational boat with twin 600 or quad 600 outboards on it.”

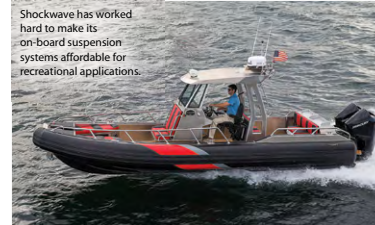
Gerrett's point is that shock mitigation is important to boaters of any age, but arguably is most beneficial to (and appreciated by) the older demographic buying these powerful and pricey engines. (A single 600-hp Verado will set you back about \$77,000.) For a number of years, he says, “people would see us at a marina and say, ‘Wow, those seats are great. I'd love to get them for my boat.’ And we told them the price, and it just was not obtainable. We worked hard to come up with a design with a price point that made sense in the recreational market.” Helm and crew seats such as the company's Corbin2, and the S5 module, make up Shockwave's current recreational product line. The S5 module employs a RockShox adjustable shock, and firmness and seat height are adjustable. (The company also uses Fox Defense suspension.) A Shockwave seat-and-module combo is about \$2,500. Accessories can include height adjust, pressure pump, risers, swivels and slide attachments.

Shockwave's S2, S3, S4 and specialty modules are designed for commercial or military applications. The seats can be configured to fit the mission, and in some cases folded up when deck space is tight, or removed and stowed.

The company's Integrated Control Environment console is a self-contained shock-mitigation system designed to accommodate a crew as large as six, with electronics mounted within the console and protected by suspension. The ICE console tilts in all-axis directions: “Front, aft, side to side, pitch, yaw, up, down,” Smith says. ICE consoles range from \$60,000 to \$100,000.

Partners in Shock Mitigation

On the commercial side, the Coast Guard and Navy, law



Shockwave has worked hard to make its on-board suspension systems affordable for recreational applications.

enforcement and border-patrol vessels, search-and-rescue boats, Special Forces and other military branches all employ Shockwave occupant safety and shock-mitigation seats and systems.

Through Shockwave aftermarket dealers, boaters can retrofit the systems on just about any hull design. Some dual-purpose commercial/recreational console come standard with Shockwave systems.

The seats are offered on KingFisher boats, which are heavy-gauge, welded-aluminum adventure boats built in British Columbia. “The Shockwave S5 helps our customers to be better protected from the shock of wave impact,” says Mark Delaney, director of sales and marketing at KingFisher. “The adjustability, versatility, simplicity and genuine comfort are improving the boating experience.”

Shockwave seats are also used by Life Proof Boats. “We use Shockwave products on all of our product lines — commercial, pleasure and yacht-class vessels,” says Micah Bowers, president and CEO. “It doesn't matter the use of the boats; great suspension seats help make the boating experience better. We design our boats around suspension seating. The fit and finish of the [Shockwave] Corbin2 seats are amazing, and with the ability to order them in different colors, we can color-match the seats to the boat.”

One North Pacific offshore-charter guide using a Shockwave S5 module under his cockpit pilot's seat for the first time said, back at the dock after a six-hour salmon charter, “It honestly feels like a different boat.” ■



SHOCKWAVE S6

As *Soundings Trade Only* was going to press, Shockwave revealed information about its new commercial S6 suspension module, which has fully integrated height adjust from 10 to 13 inches under the seat (it can be paired with a Corbin2 seat) and 5½ inches of vertical suspension travel.

system's real-world performance. He then motored down Canada's Pacific Coast in only 10 hours, setting a speed record and proving that it's possible to go very fast offshore if wave shock is reduced.

And he was far from done proving his point. More than a decade later, in 2016, Smith launched a Zodiac RIB in Newfoundland. He headed into the Arctic Circle and through the Northwest Passage. The Shockwave crew — setting speed records along the way — met up with British adventurer Bear Grylls, also in a boat equipped with Shockwave seats. (That is, when Grylls was not wakeboarding in the Passage's frigid waters.) The Shockwave crew then pushed on, piloting their RIB through the Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska. They ultimately cruised home to Vancouver Island. (See “Shockwave Northwest Passage” on YouTube.)

Serving Today's Needs

Today's high-horsepower outboards make Shockwave's products more relevant than ever, says sales manager Sean Gerrett. “If you don't have good shock-mitigating seats, you could have those 2,400-hp engines idling inside the boat, and you really can't go anywhere except for that small bay with protected water,” he says, adding that consumers with deep enough pockets for such boats tend to be older. “When you

The company's Integrated Control Environment, or ICE, console is a self-contained shock-mitigation system.

