

Rest & Recovery

Sanpan's new 2500 DC pontoon opens up a whole new world of rest, relaxation and rejuvenation.



Those who succeed in the business world sometimes push themselves at a pace that would make the average person collapse. In Japan, they even have a name for it: "karoshi," which literally means death by overwork. This increasingly common condition is caused by putting in 12-hour days, six or seven days a week, year after year, with little or no time set aside for recreational activities. And guess which nation is second only to Japan in lack of time off? That's right, the United States! So, if the average American executive takes a vacation as often as a new Supreme Court Justice gets sworn in, how important do you think it is for them to use what little time they allocate for recreation in the best possible fashion? But typically, those who work too hard during the week overcompensate on weekends by getting hori-

zontal on the sofa and watching golf on TV in a somnambulant state, not unlike a coma, and wonder why they are not refreshed come Monday. There is definitely a better way.

Just like petting a lapdog, pulling out onto Lake Lanier, not far from Atlanta, on a Sanpan 2500 Deluxe Cruiser starts the process of immediately lowering your heart rate. But it's even better because instead of vegetating at home, you are breathing the crisp autumn Georgia air, which has the same rejuvenating effect as a football player breathing oxygen from a mask on the sideline. And in this state of increased clarity, the mind starts shedding the clutter that accumulates during the week at the office, and only then does the relaxation process truly begin.

You figure out in a hurry what makes a Sanpan different when you slide into the sporty and plush helm

bucket seat and grab hold of the wood-grain steering wheel that tilts to fit your preference. All the Faria gauges are visible under the molded overhang and have gold bezels that give it a rich look. In addition to the usual instruments, you get extras like an hourmeter and digital depthfinder that, like the other gauges, take advantage of the NextWave system that uses automotive-style plug-and-play Deutsch connectors that are water-tight and corrosion resistant. The high-backed, adjustable captain's throne features flip-up arm rests (like you get on a conversion van) and has a reclining seatback, so the driver can relax when the 2500's not running. Although some might want a windshield, most will probably prefer the unobstructed vision. Besides, most of those "shorty" windscreens are as effective as the warning found on a pack of matches that advises you to close the cover before striking.

Until you see the tachometer needle move, starting the Honda BF130 outboard might have you wondering if it's running, since it registers a preternaturally quiet 58 decibels in part due to its being shrouded by the sunpad at the stern, which has a lip to help prevent the cry, "tanner overboard!" Honda makes a nicely ergonomic shift control, and as you engage it to ease the Sanpan away from the dock, it shifts smoothly. The first order of business is to crank up the standard Clarion Marine CD stereo and slip in a Count Basic smooth jazz CD for some soothing ambiance. Unlike

most stereo systems that aim the sound at your feet, the four speakers are positioned to maximize the amount of sound that reaches your ears. How elemental and smart is that?

Equipped with twin 25-inch logs, the Sanpan 2500 DC's forte is its moderate-speed cruising, and it's happiest with the Honda loping along at 4000 rpm, pushing it to almost 18 mph. A nice option to have is the T.A.P. Fin System, which consists of little wings welded to the logs at the waterline that literally harness the spray from the logs to provide more lift. And unlike fins that are set below the waterline, they don't increase drag. Looking over the side when running, you can see the spray from the logs being directed downward to also help insure a dry ride. With the system installed, top speed with Honda's 130-hp 4-stroke is 27 mph, which is fast enough for wakeboarding,

kneeboarding or cracking the whip while you tow the kids riding inflatables. Without T.A.P., the top speed would be in the low 20s. But whatever speed you choose, the Sanpan is effortless to drive. You can even crank it into hard corners without upsetting its balance. While the BF130 delivers good performance, the preferred engine would be Honda's new BF150, which should push the 2500 past 30 mph. Or for those who want to go slalom skiing or fast-forward cruising, upgrading to the triple log configuration and strapping on a 225-hp 4-stroke transforms the 2500 into a 'toon with a 'tude, with a top speed in the mid 40s.

Sanpans are known for their excellent seating, and the 2500 is no exception. Godfrey has made plush seating into a science, starting with top-of-the-line GX48 expanded vinyl, which resists tears and scuffs, protects it from UV

rays and is precision-cut by a state-of-the-art Gerber cutting machine. Under the vinyl is multi-density foam that is tailored to give you firm padding where you need it for support and is softer in other places for comfort. All of this goes onto Perma-Life seat bases that not only provide long life, but also have a water management system along with air vents to keep the storage beneath dry. A nice, convenient feature is that the storage compartments under all the couch seats use an easy-to-access forward hinge with a pull strap, unlike some other manufacturers' dry storage schemes that make you remove the

the verdict

The Sanpan 2500 DC is a classy pontoon with excellent fit and finish, great performance and some nice touches like pop-up cleats, ambiance cockpit lighting and industrial-strength boarding ladder and boarding rail. One particularly appealing feature is its excellent seating, which resists wear and tear and eases your comfort and support needs. While comfortable, the optional beige snap-in Berber carpet looks like it's dirty when passengers' feet ruffle the knap the wrong way.

SANPAN 2500 DC

LOA 25'
 Beam 8'6"
 Weight 2,375 lbs.
 Fuel 24 gal.
 Top Speed 27 mph
 (w/130-hp Honda BF)
 0-20 mph 5.2 seconds
 Decibels @ Idle 58 dB-A
 Decibels @ 20 mph 79 dB-A
 Decibels @ WOT 84 dB-A
 Base Price \$28,441
 (w/90-hp Honda BF)
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entire seat bottom to gain access.

At the very front, you get two reclining captain's seats that are just like the one at the helm and feature footrests on the front gunwale for real lounging pleasure. Just behind are the matching chaise lounges that have decadently angled backrests that are perfect. In the stern there is a U-lounge that also has a rearward-facing recliner so you can comfortably watch the kids screaming with delight while being towed on their ski toys. The cockpit table is steadily rooted in place because of its twin pillars, but it could use deeper cupholders to avoid jettisoning beverages when the captain decides to jam the throttle with no warning, which is called "gontering" by industry insiders.


The 2500 DC features clever optional innovations like the flip-up entertainment center that has a freshwater fixture and sink as well as a trash can, and it

neatly hides away when not in use inside the backrest of the starboard side chaise lounge. On the other side in the same location is a pop-up changing room that takes only seconds to set up. A simple, yet innovative solution that makes sure you have a place to rest your beverage wherever you need it is a portable, two-hole cupholder that is upholstered to match the seats. There are cupholders all around, including behind the captain in the optional slim-profile beverage center that has a recessed 25-quart Igloo cooler.

When loaded with options (like the test boat) and equipped with the Honda BF130, the suggested retail for the Sanpan 2500



DC is \$33,196, which is toward the upper end for 25-footers, but what you get is a premium pontoon whose beauty is more than skin deep. A StrataTech Chassis forms a boulder-steady base to secure the MarineDeck PTP deck that is bolted on and secured with nylon lock nuts and helps to make the 2500 feel like it's made out of one piece for a no-rattle ride.

For those who work too hard and need to unwind, it pays to have the best tool for the job. You could spend less money, but when it comes to making sure that you maximize your precious leisure time, it wouldn't be a good business decision. 

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