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ON TARGET

BY JOHN TIGER, JR.
PHOTOS BY MIKE FULLER

ALLISON HITS THE BULL'S-EYE
WITH ITS XB-21 BASSPORT PRO



To paraphrase a line from the famous 1977 Elvis Costello hit, “Oh All-i-sonnn... your aim is true.” It certainly doesn’t take long to realize the Allison XB-21 BasSport Pro hits the mark. This is an incredible package with a Mercury 225 Sport XS on the transom. Is it worth the \$68,000 price tag? You’ll have to be the judge, but here’s what we thought of it.

WORTH THE WAIT

The BasSport Pro’s race-bred hull has been around for a few years. We tested the original back in 2003, rigged with a smaller Merc Racing 2.5L 200XS. That rig hit 82 mph, and recorded fuel efficiency of almost 7.5 mpg at cruise speed!

Of course, Allison patriarch Darris Allison can’t ever leave well enough alone, so this BasSport Pro is not the same boat we tested five years ago. This boat is top notch in every way—fit, fin-

ish, features and benefits. And of course, it not only looks like an Allison, but it has that unmistakable Allison performance.

We launched the BasSport from its Boatmate dual-axle trailer into the cool waters of John’s Lake in Clermont, Florida, knowing full well the lake’s limited straightaways might hamper our quest for all-out top speed runs. Still, it was obvious that Allison dealer Lee Sanderson (Chester, Virginia) had this hummer set up right. With very little time behind the wheel, we set top speed marks of 89.3 mph on Stalker radar at 5850 rpm. We were able to repeat that radar result several times, so it’s no fluke; in fact, we were coming to the end of a run when we passed the 89 mph mark, so there’s no doubt in my mind that 90-plus is there.

Despite initial fears that the 3.0L Mercury would be too bulky and heavy, it’s right at home on the XB-21’s transom. Rigged with 8½ inches of total setback, the 225 pushed this Allison to 30 mph from a dead stop in 6.7 seconds. The Mercury’s grunt comes through in the midrange, though, as this rig cranks off 40-to-60 mph times of just 5 seconds.

Fuel economy is outstanding. This combo pulled down best cruise results of 6.2 mpg at 35 mph and 3000 rpm. More impressively, it held the 6-mpg figure through to almost 60 mph and 4000 rpm. Even at full gallop, we recorded just a tick less than 5 mpg. While the initial cost of this Allison



may seem steep, owners will surely smile when they pass the fuel pumps time and time again, watching others fill up. Even with a comparatively small 36-gallon tank, this rig will run nearly 200 miles at cruise speed with 10 percent of its fuel left in reserve.

LIKE BUTTAH

This hull handles with panache. As soon as the boat is on plane, the dropped pad and lifting strakes help it carve tight turns without mistake—in the hands of a capable pilot. Take care at high speeds, as the keel is very sharp

and pronounced, and can initiate very dramatic turns if the throttle is chopped too quickly when the wheel is cranked over hard.

In my experience, most ultra-performance Allisons require a good deal of care in setup, propping and engine height, plus plenty of driver input, to keep them on pad at high speeds—mainly due to the tail lift built into the aft end of the pad. This “lip,” as it’s commonly referred to, helps the Allison lift at high speeds with relatively little power—as little





Docking lights are standard with the BasSport Pro. They're recessed under the unique Allison hull, behind clear Lexan lenses. Optional driving lights are set behind the same set of lenses.

as 150 horses. Trouble is, who wants an Allison with just a 150? These hulls beg for top-rated power, but at higher speeds, the pronounced lip can become challenging. In response to this, Allison smoothed the edges on the lip of the new XB-21. As a result, our test XB handled like it was on rails at any speed, even with the centerline of the propeller shaft jacked to $\frac{5}{8}$ -inch above the bottom of the pad.

The patented aluminum Allison planing plate affixed to the bottom of the transom (dubbed the "Skid Planer") helps pop the long hull onto plane at low speeds. The rest of the setup on our test boat included a $5\frac{1}{2}$ -inch setback CMC hydraulic plate stacked with $2\frac{1}{2}$ -inch spacer plates, a set of 2-degree transom wedges, and a custom Propeller Dynamics-worked 27-inch Mercury Trophy prop. This setup keeps the big Ally on plane at 2500 rpm and 28 mph.

Trimming up and jacking the engine brought speeds up into the 40s. The familiar staccato Allison "pad pop" sounded as we pushed on the throttle and applied the "up" trim switch, bringing speeds into the 60s, and then the 70s. Here's where paying close attention (with judicious application of jackplate height and positive trim) easily coaxed near-90-mph performance. We note this is with a full load, two aboard, a full fuel tank, and just a stock 225 turning less than 6000 rpm.

While we didn't have much more

than wind chop or occasional boat wakes to test the 'Sport's ride quality, it rocketed over what we threw at it with little concern. The hull's deadrise is pretty steep (it's variable, but it averages about $22\frac{1}{2}$ degrees), which should be fine for rough-water performance.

A PLACE FOR EVERYTHING

This is definitely a high-performance hull, yet don't be fooled into thinking it's little more than a race boat posing as a fishing rig. Allison has engineered a ton of fisherman-friendly features into the BasSport Pro.

The bow casting deck is large enough, at 43 square feet, for two to fish without crowding. The nose

features the familiar Allison recess, grab handle and bow light, and just aft of that is a nifty scoop that holds the troller pedal. Cavernous rod storage boxes are near the gunwales, each fitted with a storage/retrieval system. There's room for more than 30 sticks in the array of rod storage areas.

Though the decks and storage are well done, the cockpit is simply *right*. Everything falls readily to hand and eye, like sitting in the cockpit of a high-end sports car. The dash layout presents all the gauges directly in the driver's sight line. The thick, cushion-grip Grant matte-black steering wheel is solid. Even the Teleflex SeaStar Pro steering has been "Allison-ized," as

Make no mistake, the BasSport Pro is definitely a fishing machine with plenty of storage for rods and gear under the expansive foredeck.





Darris Allison spec'd out the special performance cylinder, helm and hydraulic lines that make up what's now known as the Allison High Performance system.

The Plexiglas windscreens work as advertised. Darris is a staunch believer in making sure driver and passenger travel in comfort—with baseball cap in the bill-forward position. The standard T-H Marine Hot Foot throttle is mounted right where it should be, on its molded pad. It uses a top-load cable quadrant to keep the throttle feed off the floor and under the dash

is a plain 5-gallon paint bucket with plastic trash liners. This can also be used as a commode when the need arises. Laugh all you want, but I bet it gets used more often than some might care to admit.

BEYOND REPROACH

You won't find any wood in an Allison. Everything is composite and high-density foam-filled, including the stringer grid and transom. The transom is a welded aluminum grid with bosses for engine mounting bolts, all precision-aligned and positioned when



Sitting at the helm is like sitting in the driver's seat of a sports car, with everything right where it should be.

so it's out of the way. The seats adjust to accommodate anglers of all heights. Allison patents everything, including its race-style bucket seats with removable vinyl covers. They're comfortable, light and functional.

Want real bling? Standard docking lights are recessed into the hull under the Allison-trademark tri-point bow, behind clear Lexan lenses. For those who really need to see at night, optional driving lights are operated by a foot-controlled momentary switch, and angled any way you want with a nifty cable-operated control under the dash.

I've heard many snicker at the built-in trash receptacle positioned between the cockpit seats, with a carpeted fiberglass lid that doubles as a step up to the aft deck, but it does keep trash from cluttering the deck or other compartments. Inside the custom housing

the hull is laid up by hand.

Our test boat exhibited an obvious pride in workmanship; the gelcoat was crisp, clean and wave-free. The lines and gelcoat colors give the boat a sleek but substantial appearance. Like all Allisons, it features automotive-style under-dash rigging, complete with pre-wired fuse and breaker panels set neatly under a removable, hinged panel.

PRICE TAG

Sanderson notes that the street price of this rig would likely be in the low-to-mid \$60s. That's still a lot of coin for a bass boat. To be fair, however, many other top-shelf models hover around the mid-50s, and this is clearly at or near the top.

Would I own one? You bet! What a thrill to know your garage houses one of the most refined angling platforms on the market. **BWB**

Allison XB-21 BasSport Pro

Base Price (incl. trailer):	\$45,000
Price As Tested:	\$68,439
Top Speed:	89.3 mph
0-to-30 mph:	6.7 seconds
Construction:	Fiberglass composites
Console Type:	Dual side
Length:	21' 2"
Beam:	7' 9"
Hull Weight:	1450 lbs.
Rigged Weight:	2230 lbs.
Trailer Weight:	3330 lbs.
Fuel Capacity:	36 gals.
Livewell Capacity:	38 gals.
Maximum Horsepower:	225

Standard Equipment as Tested: Garmin fishfinders (bow and helm); Beede instruments; SmartCraft gauges; T-H Marine Hot Foot throttle; hydraulic steering

Engine Tested:	Mercury 225 Sport XS
Type:	V-6 2-stroke DFI
Displacement:	3.0L (185 cid)
Weight (per mfg.):	505 lbs.
Recommended WOT RPM:	5500-6000
Gear Ratio:	1.62:1 (1.75:1 optional)
Propeller:	27" Mercury Trophy 4-blade w/ custom work by Propeller Dynamics
Jackplate:	Allison/CMC electro-hydraulic
Setback:	8 1/2"

WEATHER CONDITIONS:

Air Temperature:	80F
Water Temperature:	68F
Wind:	Mild
Water Conditions:	Calm

TEST RESULTS

Engine (rpm)	Speed (mph)	Fuel (gph)	Range ¹ (mpg)	Range ¹ (miles)
1000	5.9	1.2	4.8	154
1500	6.8	2.7	2.5	80
2000	8.1	4.7	1.7	56
2500	27.9	4.9	5.7	184
3000²	34.9	5.6	6.2	200
3500	44.2	7.2	6.1	198
4000	57.7	9.6	6.0	195
4500	67.0	12.3	5.4	176
5000	76.8	15.6	4.9	159
5500	82.4	17.2	4.8	155
5850 (WOT)	89.3	18.1	4.9	159

¹Based on 90% fuel capacity

² Optimum cruise speed

Allison Boats

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