

Electric Kona 17 wave of future?

It is the first zero-emission speedboat ready for mass production.

The Kona 17, a throw-back two-seater sport boat, might look like many of its predecessors in the speed

boating world, but what powers the craft puts it in a class of its own.

Launched by Team Scarab, in conjunction

with Germany-based Torqeedo motors, the 17-foot "SportRIB" is touted as the first production-ready, zero-emission all-electric boat, and it will make its debut at the San Francisco Boat Show this weekend.

"Others have made one-off all-electric speed boats, but this is the first that will be available to the public at a price in line with electric cars," Team Scarab founder Larry Smith said.

The key to Kona 17's design is the integration of Torqeedo's 40-horsepower Deep Blue electric outboard system that powers the craft with its 13 kilowatt lithium ion battery to a top speed of 27 miles per hour. By taking the recent im-



PHOTOS COURTESY OF TORQEEEDO

The new Kona 17 SportRIB electric-powered speed boat was tested on the water at Long Beach Marine Stadium.

provements to electric power in the automotive world, boat builders have an opportunity to break out of the 5-mile-an-hour power restrictions that have historically limited electric boats as cocktail cruisers into the speed boat realm.

"Over the past 30 years, electric boats have been pretty similar to electric golf carts," Smith said.

But the improvements in electric engine components along with the change from wet cell batteries to the more powerful and efficient lithium ion versions allow for the torque and speed needed to quickly accelerate and get a boat to plane.

Smith has designed world-class powerboats for more than 40 years, developing the gut-rumbling go-fast boats made famous by their appearances on "Miami Vice."

The V-hulled Scarab boats were the signature of 1970s power boating, with Smith's designs taking home multiple world racing championships while piloted by the likes of Chuck Norris, Don Johnson and Michael Reagan.

"Those days are gone," said Smith, who lives in Santa Barbara.

"I've been building boats since 1966, and an electric speed boat has been on my

bucket list."

With a run time of 1-2 hours on one charge, the Kona 17 SportRIB cruises on-plane at 15 miles per hour, and can run for longer than 3 hours on one charge at no-wake speeds. A second battery can be added to the boat to give it a total cruising distance in the 50-mile range.

Smith is in talks with the organizers at the Los Angeles Boat Show to get the Kona 17 SportRIB on the showroom floor at the Los Angeles Convention Center on Feb. 6-9.

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Kona 17 SportRIB

Estimated starting price: \$50,000

Top speed: 27 mph

Cruising speed: 15 mph

Run time: 1 to 2 hours

- At top speed: 30 minutes

- At 5 mph: 3½ hours

Charging time: 4 hours

Motor: 16.2 kilowatt propulsive power, equivalent to a 40-horsepower gas outboard engine.

Equipment:

- Seating for two
- Touch screen information display
- On-board 110/220-volt battery charger



The Kona 17 is powered by Torqeedo's Deep Blue electric outboard 40 horsepower system.

ON THE WATER

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