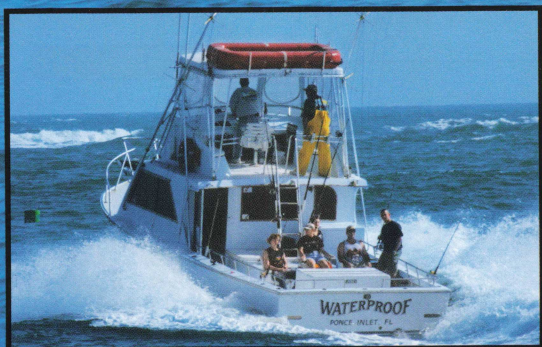


# Marine **PowerSource**

A Publication of John Deere Power Systems

Vol. 1, 2007

**Koehler Kraft puts  
speed and fun into  
recreational boating**



**The world's  
first PowerTech™  
6125SFM75  
makes its  
splash**

**Come Caribbean cruising  
on a Real Ships 68**

**The safe return of the  
world-traveling Okianos**

**Dashew's no-ordinary  
motoryacht**



## Horsepower and Torque

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## Cover Story

- 4 Koehler Kraft of San Diego, California, offers the *Custom Express* for fun-loving boaters who want to pack some power and speed in their excursions. A lightweight yet durable modified-V planing hull and a John Deere PowerTech™ 6068SFM50 pair up for some on-the-water action with speeds up to 30 knots. This vessel is ideal for recreational cruising or long days of hard-core fishing. Either way, you'll want to test the power and responsiveness of this engine. Go ahead and bury the throttle, but you'd better hold on!

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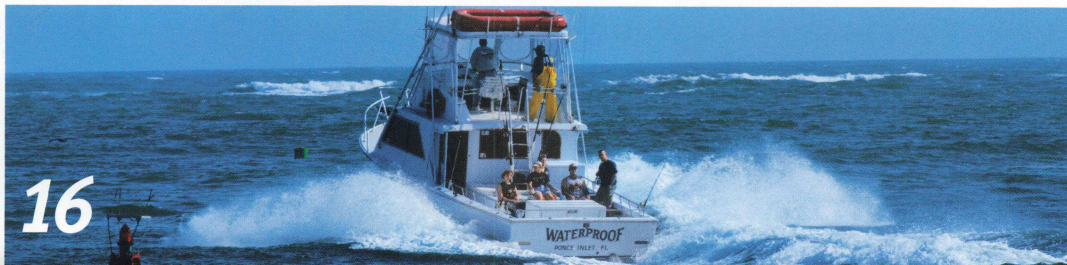
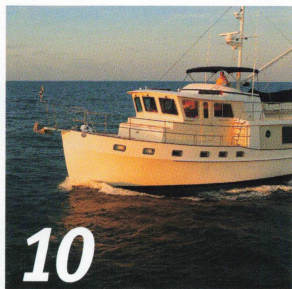
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John Deere Power Systems  
Attn: Marketing Communications Dept.  
P.O. Box 5100  
Waterloo, IA 50704-5100  
Phone: (800) 533-6446 in the U.S.  
E-mail: [jdpower@JohnDeere.com](mailto:jdpower@JohnDeere.com)

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**Editor: Christine McClintic**  
**European Contributing Editor:**  
**Hester Regoort**

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# Lightweight and Heavy Duty

*Koehler Kraft's Custom Express weighs less than comparable hulls, but don't underestimate its toughness*

Photo courtesy of Bob Grieser



The 8.5-meter (28 ft.) Koehler Kraft *Custom Express* is an ultra-maneuverable, surprisingly quick boat that is equally well suited for relaxing picnic cruises or long days of hard-core fishing.

When the owner of a large, full-service marina with a boat-building history dating back to 1938 couldn't find what he was looking for in an 8.5-meter (28 ft.), multipurpose boat, he did just what you would expect. He designed and built his own: the Koehler Kraft *Custom Express*.

The boat's modified-V planing hull is just a little different from the rest. "Almost everything on the market is a constant-dead rise, deep-V hull," says C.F. Koehler, owner of San Diego-based Koehler Kraft and designer of the *Custom Express*. "A modified-V offers the same advantages but with half the drag."

The hull's construction also sets it apart. "We cold-molded the hull with multiple layers of high-strength marine plywood, epoxy, and fiberglass," C.F. explains.

The technique yielded a composite hull shell weighing only a half of a metric ton (1,200 lbs). But don't let the weight fool you. "We pulled it off the mold and didn't have to add anything to increase strength," C.F. reports. "It's a very light but stiff hull."

**Tough.** Finished off with a deck, cabin, 224-kW (300 hp) aftercooled John Deere engine, and drive, the boat still weighs just around 3.6 metric tons (8,000 lbs.) with fuel and two people aboard. That's about half what most of the commercially available boats in this class tip the scales at. This light yet strong design makes the boat very quick and maneuverable. "I was going to get my slalom ski out and do a photo shoot with this boat since it's so responsive and handles so well," C.F. jokes.

C.F. attributes much of the quickness to the John Deere engine. "With a John Deere, you expect reliability. But you maybe don't expect responsiveness," he says. "When you bury the throttle, you better be holding on. There's not much turbo lag ... it's heavy enough that it goes right now. With lighter engines, you sometimes have to wait for the turbo to wind up.

"We could have gotten more horsepower in an engine that weighs this much, but this horsepower/hull combination is very efficient," continues C.F. "It idles at 6 knots and burns just a half gallon (less than two liters) of fuel per hour. Even at 30 knots, we're getting two nautical miles to the gallon (3.8 L)."

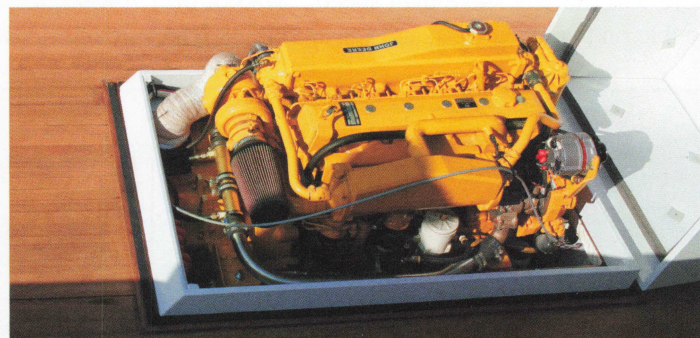
In addition to power and efficiency, John Deere marine engines are known for stealth – a feature Koehler enhanced with the exhaust routing on the *Custom Express*. "We ran a small 3-inch (7.6 cm.) exhaust line out the corner of the transom. At running speed, the boat exhausts under the water. It's very quiet," he states. "Until you see the spray behind the driver's station, you don't know you're moving at a good clip."

This first *Custom Express* hull is outfitted with a seamless teak deck, varnished wood transom, and cabin house. The interior is beautifully laid out with head, kitchen, and double berth. Koehler Kraft can customize the deck and cabin configurations to meet specific customer needs.

Regardless of the configuration of future 28s, bet on John Deere power in the engine compartment. "We don't think there's a lot of choice out there in engines. A lot of them are junk – a lot of plastic components," C.F. says. "John Deere still believes in steel."

**Engines:** John Deere PowerTech 6068SFM50 — a 224-kW (300 hp), 6-cylinder, 6.8L, seawater aftercooled marine diesel engine. **Distributor:** Western Power Products, Huntington Beach, California, (714) 841-9200, [www.westernpowerproducts.net](http://www.westernpowerproducts.net). **Boat builder:** [www.koehlerkraft.com](http://www.koehlerkraft.com).

Photo courtesy of Bob Grieser



The PowerTech 6068SFM50 turns a 20x21-inch (508x533 mm), three-blade prop, which pushes the single-screw vessel at 30 knots at 2600 rpm.