
**BOAT REVIEW:
MALIBU 2019 22LSV**

Making Waves

MALIBU'S 2019 22LSV IS A STATE OF THE ART WAKE BOAT THAT SHOWCASES THE VERY BEST OF AUSTRALIAN MANUFACTURING.

• **BY MICK FLETORIDIS**

The 22LSV making short work of a deserted Nepean River.



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FROM TOP: Surfgate in action creating a rideable left hand wave.

The 5.3L Monsoon direct injected V8 is an impressive performer.

Malibu's optional Sport Dash Rotary Control.

Malibu's 2019 model 22LSV is a state of the art wake boat manufactured in Australia.

Malibu Boats has a proud history in Australian boat building and if one current owner is anything to go by, that pride is reflected in the people buying its product. Self-employed Sydney carpenter Dean Hulbert is one such enthusiast. Nautilus Marine *The Magazine* was recently hosted by Hulbert on his new Malibu Wakesetter 22LSV on the Nepean River, 10 minutes from his home. Hulbert's striking blue and white wakeboat was delivered last December and purchased via longtime Malibu Boats dealer, GRE Marine at Prospect. The timely "Christmas present" as the owner describes it is his second of the brand and a follow up to the 21 VLX he owned for five years before deciding to update. After placing his order, Hulbert visited the Malibu Boats factory in Albury six weeks later and saw his shiny new 22LSV come together on the assembly line. He describes the factory tour as a great experience and one he recommends for any potential Malibu Boats customer.

After an impressively efficient launch at the ramp we were soon headed upstream on the picturesque, deserted Nepean – it was mid-week and not a reflection of the busy scene probably awaiting the waterway come the weekend.

As he manned the helm, Dean Hulbert told me about his experiences of the new boat thus far. While still feeling his way with the 22LSV, he says he's appreciating the extra room over his previous VLX, the "better surf wave" it produces – more on that later – and the optional new durable easy care flooring instead of his previous boat's carpet. He's clearly also liking the view he gets from the helm where the boat's state of the art control system is keeping him updated on the boat's running status via 12" and 7" touch screen colour monitors.

Board, surf or ski?

Malibu's 22LSV Wakesetter specs sheet lists the boat as having a capacity of up to 14 people. While skiing and boarding, the Hulbert family tend to hit the water with around eight on board (and the pet dog); even more if out on the water for a spot of socialising with friends. Notably, the boat is available in two different fibreglass hull configurations – Diamond or Wake Plus. According to GRE Marine's Dean Mason, who joined us on the day, the Diamond hull is a more versatile ski oriented hull that's proving a popular choice with skiers and families who like to tow kids on inflatable gear. The Diamond hull will also create a decent wake too, going by posts from owners on Malibu online chat boards.

As its name suggests the Wake Plus hull is more of a hard-core wake producer for those whose priorities lean more toward



wakeboarding and surfing. Dean Hulbert told *The Magazine* he opted for the Wake Plus as it best suited his family's activity preferences.

"I like to ski and surf, my daughter's a bit of a boarder and a skier and my son's a skier and surfer so we basically like doing a bit of everything," he explains.

Aiding in maximising the family's fun is a heap of sophisticated on-board technology that can help produce the perfect water for their needs.

Part of what Malibu calls the Integrated Surf Platform (ISP) are its proprietary on board innovations that work together to produce customisable wave/wake conditions for different riders. The first is Malibu's Quad Hard-Tank Ballast system that via a tap on the helm Command Center's screen, high flow pumps quickly fill midship and rear tanks (and optional

bow tank) with (up to) over 700kgs of ballast water for added displacement and wake – and ultimately a bigger, better ride.

Another player in the Malibu wake game is Power Wedge. Now in its third iteration, Power Wedge III is now, according to its maker, bigger and more versatile and includes a lift feature to help fully loaded boats to plane more quickly. In simple terms, the Power Wedge III is a large pivoting stainless steel plate that instantly pulls down the back of the boat to make the wake bigger for more advanced riders (adds up to 450kg of water displacement) and smaller for beginners. The system is operated by the Command Centre and in 2019 includes five more degrees of lift for more usable positions. Alternatively the wake rider can make adjustments on the fly via the Malibu Surf Band wrist remote.

Completing the wake/wave tech trifecta is Surf Gate. After being initiated Surf Gate adjusts vertically mounted hydraulic tabs to pivot left or right to produce a corresponding surfable wave in either direction. As well as operating these systems via the Command Center there's also an optional Sport Dash Rotary Control mounted to the left of the dash.

Cruising up river, Dean Hulbert demonstrated the effectiveness of Surf Gate which produced a left/right rideable wave in quick time. All that was left to do was leap off the rear swim platform and get amongst it. Next time, maybe...

Power play

The 2019 model 22LSV is powered by the new Malibu branded Monsoon 5.3L direct injected V8 engine. According to Dean Mason,

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the GM derived Malibu donk produces 350hp and 400ft/lbs of torque – impressive figures belied by such a quiet powerplant. At idle the Monsoon just burbles away, hardly interrupting the conversation. It’s a different story as the throttle is thrust forward and the engine finds its deep voice. While noticeably well muffled, especially in comparison to inboard V8s of old, the smooth running Monsoon still emits an exciting hearty growl. As you’d expect from a direct injected engine of its ilk, throttle response is instant and thrilling.

Dean Hulbert offered me a turn at his boat’s leather sports wheel and it was a fun experience. The Livorsi throttle is a fly-by-wire system so there’s no lag or cable associated slack. The combination of a punchy direct injected V8 and instant throttle response takes a little getting used to – slam the lever forward and the scenery flies by in no time!

Steering on the 22LSV was impressively light and accurate, courtesy of a precise rack and pinion system. Throwing the boat into turns with a bit of speed on is as easy as it gets. There’s no trim adjustment to worry about, just hit the gas and steer – and smile! The 22LSV hull felt surefooted and dealt with the small waves produced by my circle work with ease. Having been several years since I was last in a Malibu – coincidentally another Wakesetter on Sydney’s Middle Harbour – I was reminded how these craft are akin to on-water sports cars. Impressive.

Being short I thankfully found no issue with the driving position which is very comfortable thanks to the plush fully adjustable helm seat that provides good lumbar support. The steering wheel is tilt adjustable and the seat is even heated – “for the wife”, says the owner – and the view forward was excellent for a boat of its size. Completing the sports car similarity is the rearview mirror that provides a skipper’s view of the on-water action.

Boat with the lot

The 22LSV has a huge standard specs sheet which is worth checking out via the Malibu Boats website, so I’ll just touch on some of the features that caught my attention. For a boat of its capacity and size you’d expect the 22LSV to have plenty of on board storage and it does, with loads of space under the bow and aft seating as well as over the

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FROM TOP:
The Easytow trailer makes for stress free drive-ons.

Power Wedge III provides added wake and lift for easier planing when fully loaded with ballast.

Dean Hulbert at the helm of his 22LSV.




engine compartment where there's room for wet or dry gear, food, coolers, you name it. For carrying equipment for what the boat's designed for – surfing, boarding and skiing – there's overhead board/ski storage; standard is a pair of racks and an optional set can be fitted on top as per the Hulbert boat.

The internal layout of the boat is best described as comfortable. The aft section has a large U-shaped lounge and roomy cockpit. Moving forward to the bow section is done via the companionway and windscreen access door. The bow has an in-fill cushion to convert it to a sun bed and there's a bow walk-through wind blocker. As you'd expect there are plenty of drink holders situated around the boat, which also comes with an Igloo ice box.

I've already mentioned the space age looking touch screen dash that wouldn't look out of place on a fighter jet – Malibu calls it the Viper 11 Command Center. As well as all the aforementioned wave/wake technology this system also gives the skipper access to information about engine diagnostics, speed, GPS, water depth, cruise control, and much more. Watching Dean Hulbert quickly navigate

his way through the system highlighted how user-friendly it is.

Once the day's fun is over the Go Home feature prepares the boat for the trip home by way of emptying the ballasts and the like. A Night setting dulls the monitor and lighting brightness so as not to affect driving. Selecting the Docking Mode makes jetty or dock landings as easy as it gets. The system automatically reduces throttle settings to bring the boat in smoothly; the skipper just has to take care of the wheel. Media compatibility includes video/rear camera playback on the MFD and Bluetooth connectivity to smart devices and music play systems. On that front, the boat comes with Malibu's stereo system, featuring AM/FM broadcasting and a Wet Sounds six speaker system – four in the main cockpit and two in the bow lounge – and a four-channel amp that can be connected to all manner of devices. Lastly, the Hulbert Malibu gets to and from the water on a stylish Easytow tandem trailer fitted with Malibu branded 15" alloy wheels – a nice touch. There's more info on the boat's full equipment and options list at malibuboats.com.au. Thanks to Dean Hulbert and GRE Marine's Dean Mason for making this review possible. 

SPECIFICATIONS:

MALIBU WAKESSETTER 22LSV

Length: 6.68m (21'11")

Beam: 2.5m (98")

STD tow weight: 3000kg

Power: M5DI Monsoon 5.3L V8

Capacity: 14 people

Fuel: 182 litres

Draft: 0.69m (27")

Ballast STD: 422kg

Ballast MAX: 1909kg