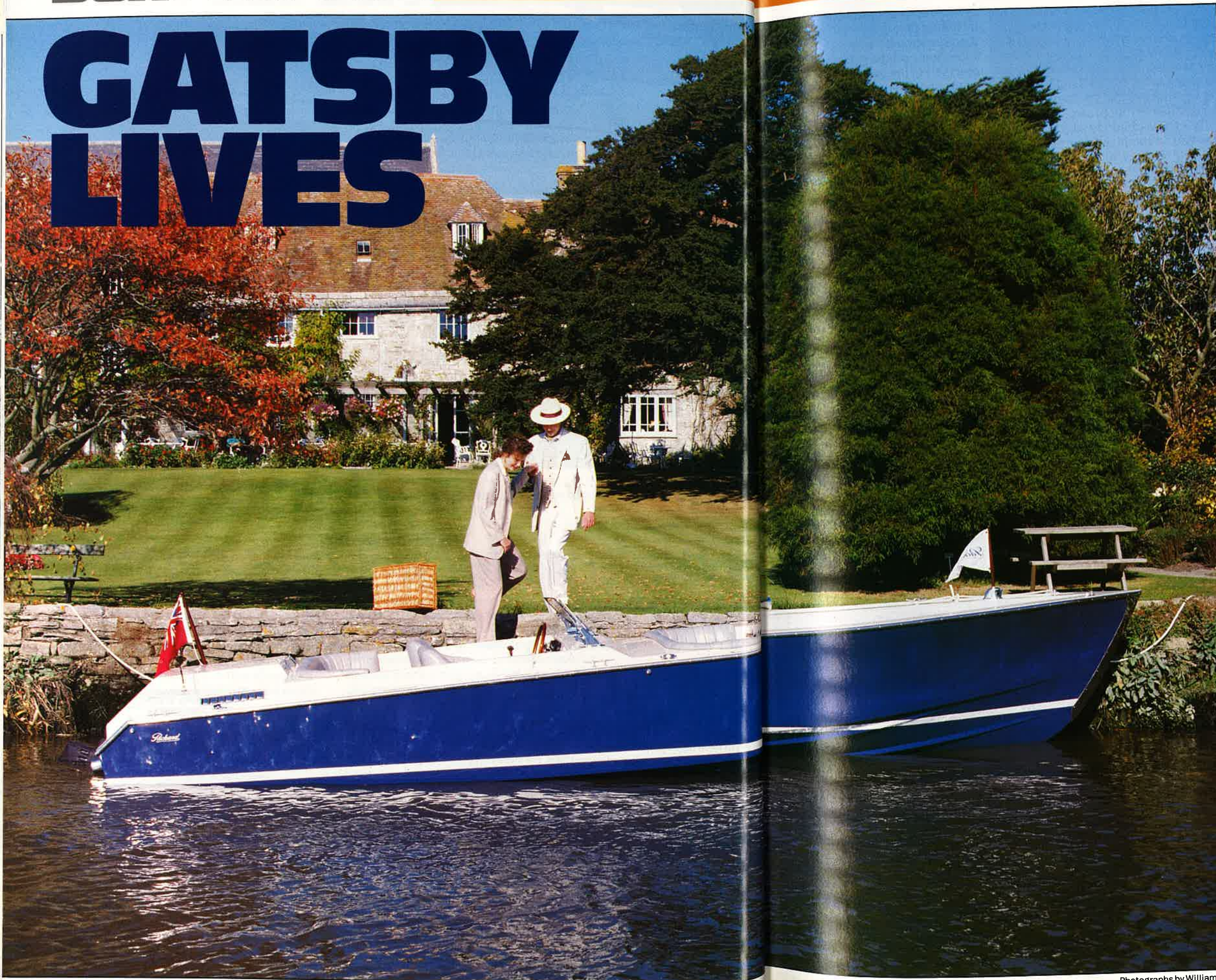


## BOAT REPORT

## PACKARD 2600

## GATSBY LIVES



Packard is a name that conjures images of the 1920s. The similarly-named 2600 is intended to do the same, as John Walker discovered during a lazy, hazy, daydreamy day in the summer of '89.

IT is early morning. The waters are dawn-calm, rolling in lazy swirls around the piles of the jetty by the boat house. There is a cloak of mist, flung carelessly over the shoulders of the morning, hanging ethereally between tide and sky and the booming call of a bittern breaks the still air.

From the mansion beyond the trees emerge a couple, their relationship unknown. He wears stylish white flannels and a pullover, she a bathing wrap, and they both carry towels as they approach the boat house on the waterside. He disappears within its dark interior while she languidly slips out of the robe and dives smoothly into the ocean in one fluid, silent ellipse of pale skin.

Later, she joins him and before the sun has had a chance to burn off the mist of the morning, they emerge, vole-like from the dark within, and set off across the tide in an open motor launch of cream over mid-blue, its grey trim redolent of quality, its near-vertical stem and stainless steel cutwater carving a path across the golden ebb.

As the launch swings away from us, its flared hull sides shield the young people from unwelcome spray, further helped by twin toughened glass wind-deflecting screens adjusted to minimise possible disarray to coiffure from the passage of the air. The burr walnut fascia shines darkly in the sunlight, highlighting the comprehensive instrumentation for the single high-performance gasoline motor.

The man reaches into a side stowage and produces a yachting cap, which he dons casually; clearly he means to make the long, sleek, flat



# BOAT REPORT

decker perform before breakfast. No sooner said than done, he guns the motor from the helm station to starboard, accelerating smoothly with the hand throttle while making rapid trim adjustments to the outdrive.

Effortlessly, the 1.25-ton, 26ft launch leaps forward onto the plane, its pilot jack and ensign flying bravely in the breeze as the man pushes his charge to its maximum 54mph. His passenger is clearly untroubled by the motion or the elements, merely resting her hand on one of the varnished grab handles that complement the mahogany wheel so well.

Here is a launch with a style and panache to match its owner, for we are describing Jay Gatsby as he returns Daisy to her home—a couple whose taste and quality is unmatched, reflected in their launch from the Packard Boat Works.

Jay first set eyes on it in Sarasota, Florida, the previous summer, and

when the proprietor Mr Bud Finkle demonstrated it to him and his six friends, the reclusive setter of styles was properly sold. That day they took four people in the for'ard cockpit, and another four aft and all remarked upon the smoothness and dry ride, even though they ran out to sea.

Jay's hosts in Florida said that their man had no complaints about cleaning the grey, all-weather Naugahyde trim. Also that the new glassfibre building material which Gatsby had admired so much was easy to keep polished, as were the stainless steel deck cleats, rub rails, bow chocks and lifting eyes. Everyone who drove it remarked upon how well the individual bucket seats held the driver in position during enthusiastic helming and cornering.

Returning home alone across the sound, Gatsby revelled in the rumble of the 270hp motor and its burbling open exhausts, remembering how difficult it had been to choose them

over the through water variants. But he always said to himself, if you have then you should flaunt it.

Dropping off the plane and running precisely to the dock, he tied off the warps and killed the motor, quickly checking the engine house with its gas-strutted aft hatch cover and noting how the fully gelled white bilges had remained in pristine condition. Later that morning, his captain would oversee the cleaning of the launch, the lifting of the water-proofed carpets for storage, the checking of the radio and the re-fitting of the individual tonneau covers. For this was the day that the man would drive off to New York in the Rolls, cruise to England on the White Star liner, leaving his gentleman's runabout behind him.

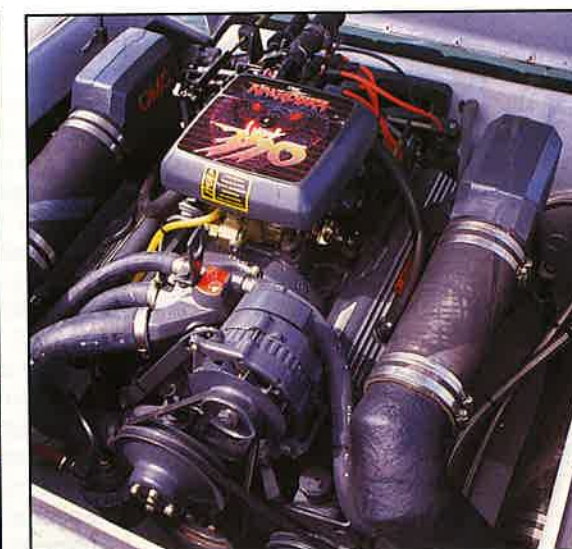
As he walked back to the house, he wondered idly if the Europeans had yet discovered the quality and resource of the Packard Boat Works' launch. It was almost too much of a risk to take.

# PACKARD 2600

Length Overall	26ft 10in (8.18m)
Beam Maximum	7ft 5in (2.26m)
Draft at Rest	2ft 3in (0.69m)
Fuel Capacity	44 gal (200 lt)
Displacement	3000 lb (1365kg)
Engine	OMC King Cobra 270hp sterndrive
Price (as tested)	£33,045 ex VAT

**Builder:**  
Packard Boat Works,  
2047 Princetown Street,  
Sarasota, FL 34 237, USA

**European Agent:**  
Dorset Yacht Co,  
Hamworthy,  
Poole, Dorset  
Tel: 0202 674531



Back to reality—the Packard 2600 represents the successful marriage of 1920s style and charm with 1990s construction and machinery.