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April 2021



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Timeless deep- vee design

with all-weather comfort



By | **Andy Adams**

The classic deep-vee hull with lifting strakes rides high and dry through the chop.

It seems hard to believe, but Canadian Yachting magazine has never published a Limestone boat review until now. This heritage brand is being revitalized by The Limestone Boat Company's CEO Scott Hanson and Team, with assistance from Mark Ellis, the original Limestone designer.

Starting this spring, there will be both heritage models like the L-200R in this review and a newly expanded line-up of both larger and smaller Limestone models that are new for 2021. Because a new boat was not going to be available to us until spring 2021, we eagerly accepted the generous offer to photograph and review the Limestone 20 belonging to third-generation Georgian Bay cottager Doctor Chris Hawley and his family.

Another thing is that after so many years of doing the boat reviews for Canadian Yachting, I look back in amazement at how often our boat tests took place in lovely calm conditions.

Our day with the Limestone L-200R had sustained winds up to 60 kilometres

an hour from the West, big rolling chop and breaking waves even in the relatively sheltered channel. This is Limestone weather.

The winds had been howling for so long that it had blown a lot of water into the Honey Harbour area; so much that the channel marker we passed was almost totally submerged!

The rugged beauty of Georgian Bay is legendary and cottagers like Doctor Hawley would be reluctant to let the weather cost them even a day on their island. Families like this need at least one boat that will brave almost any weather and the Limestone L-200R is a great choice to transport his wife and family in safety and comfort almost regardless of the weather. The Boat Club in Honey Harbour is where many of these island families keep their boats before they head out to their island, or water access homes. The Limestone designs have been so successful that it seems like every other boat there is a Limestone.

Originally designed by Mark Ellis for

Fred Eaton Sr., of the famous Department store family, Limestone was a custom commission for his use. The boat was so successful that it went into production and Ellis' now-classic Limestone look became well-established.

DESIGN

The lines of the Limestone are timeless in their style and highly functional. With a length of 20-feet on a beam of 8-feet, the Limestone L-200R is a substantial boat. The deadrise is 21.1 degrees and the weight is 3,100 lbs. It can handle 8 people or 1,600 lbs and an internal 85-gallon tank gives a big range for Georgian Bay travel. A single 200 horsepower outboard is the standard power with a 250 optional – choose from either Yamaha or Mercury. Both will be excellent choices for this boat.

Our test boat was fitted with a 175 Yamaha and although it performed admirably, we will publish estimated speeds that better reflect the larger engines.

The deep-vee hull and hull lifting

strakes are noticeable from almost any angle as is the wide flared bow that so capably throws off the waves and spray. Buyers can personalize their Limestone by choosing from four different hull and stripe colours as well as five different colour options for the canvas and new interior upholstery choices too.

FEATURES AND EXTERIOR

In terms of the boat's personality, you would feel very much at home in it if you were accustomed to being in a luxury SUV. The Limestone has comfortable chair-height seating and everyone has a good view out.

The test boat was equipped with a convertible roof that allows easy movement and has an opening centre section for hot weather, or a better view out at night. Buyers could also choose just a mooring cover or a Bimini top option. The test boat had back-to-back seats that are large enough for two children – spacious for one adult. For summer 2021, the companion seat will be a convertible lounger while the helm seat will feature a flip-up bolster and flip-down armrests.

The skiff style windshield looks “salty” to me and suits the boat well, but it is also very efficient at keeping passengers out of the wind and weather while giving excellent outward vision. A helm side windshield wiper is standard, twin wipers are optional. The windshield has opening side vents for hot weather, or to de-mist the glass in the rain.

The windshield and dashboard are well forward, maximizing cockpit space for people, cargo, or fishing duties. Another feature we really like is that the Limestone has wide side decks making

it easier to get around the boat and to dock it. All these design attributes appeal to the very experienced boat owner, yet in my opinion, would make the Limestone easier and more comfortable for a novice boater as well.

A new feature is the boarding assist when stepping down into the boat from the dock. The L-200R is deep and it is a big step down, then once you are in, the boat has good freeboard for a very secure feeling.



The test boat had the seating on large bases with clever removable sliding storage bins inside. The new models will have a helm seat with armrests and more amenities.



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Cockpit coaming bolsters will be available. These are always nice to have and are especially appreciated by the fishermen who can lean against them. The cockpit floor is self-draining through large scuppers and all the surfaces you walk on are finished in diamond pattern non-skid fibre-glass; safe and easy to care for.

You can easily scrub and hose out the Limestone. Synthetic teak flooring or snap out Seagrass type carpet will be available, but the Limestone is so solidly built, you don't need carpet as sound deadening.



This shows the big cockpit space with the removable jump seats flanking the engine. Lot's of fishing space here!



Another great feature is the underfloor storage that can accommodate items like extra PFDs, boat hooks, paddles and skis or boards.

SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINES:

► Mercury Verado 200 HP V6, or Yamaha F200, 200 hp four-stroke outboard. Stainless steel propellor.

RPM	MPH	RPM	MPH
1,000	7	3,500	25
1,500	8	4,000	31
2,000	9		
2,500	13		
3,000	19		

Testing limited by weather. Top speed est. at 6,000 RPM 42 MPH

LENGTH OVERALL: 20'

BEAM: 8'

DRAFT: 14'

FUEL CAPACITY: 85 GAL

DISPLACEMENT (FULL LOAD): 3,100 LBS

MAXIMUM HP: 250 (Mercury or Yamaha)

PRICE: USD \$94,106 MSRP

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Generous chair-height seats and the expanse of flat cockpit floor accommodate both passengers and cargo. Notice the very wide side decks.

ACCOMMODATIONS

There is abundant storage in the boat, starting under the deck. This space is open for lifejackets, clothing, duffel bags and the like, plus there is a second lockable space under a centre hatch for security, or less frequently used items. The test boat had a lot more storage under the seat bases and was equipped with sliding removable trays to make the best use of the space.

More storage is in the side panels for longer items like fishing rods, paddles and fenders. Finally, there is insulated below deck storage and in the transom area under the aft jump seats. These seats place the passengers pretty close to the engine, but the new Mercury and Yamaha V6 engines are so quiet it's not an issue.

Another 2021 feature will be a full width aft bench seat.

A port side swim platform with telescoping boarding ladder will be appreciated by swimmers and tow sports fans alike. The underfloor storage locker is quite large and can accommodate skis, boards and other summer toys.

There is an available ski pylon and two gunwale-mounted rod / cup holders. An optional underwater lighting system could make for some magic moments!



Introducing us to his boat, we see Dr. Hawley at the helm. As a life-long Georgian Bay cottager with extensive local knowledge, a chart plotter is not needed, but new Limestone's will have that type of navigation equipment available.

HELM AND ELECTRONICS

The helm has been significantly improved this year with a mahogany steering wheel, helm pocket catch for small items, drink holders of course, and hydraulic tilt steering. The test boat had Yamaha instruments and a compass, but no other navigation equipment. For 2021, buyers can select a 7" Garmin chart-plotter, Garmin weather receiver, VHF radio, Fusion stereo and for Mercury-powered boats, the Vessel View Mobile system is available.

PERFORMANCE

The very windy and rough conditions for our test day were ideal to show off the Limestone's deep-vee seakeeping qualities. The bow never obscured the view forward at any speed and the boat could stay on the plane down to very low speeds as we bucked the big rolling chop. Acceleration from a standing start to plane with the Yamaha 175 and three men aboard and a third of a tank of fuel was 7 seconds. The boat was solidly planed off at 3,500 RPM doing 25 MPH. We weren't able to get past 4,500 RPM doing 33 MPH because of the weather, but we believe a new Limestone L-200R with the base 200 power should run low to mid-40's at least.

Handling at speed was confidence-inspiring and tight turns or sudden manoeuvres were no problem. This boat can carry a big load of people or gear through big water and bad weather and it also has the performance to delight the family or the wake sports fans on those glorious summer days.

The Limestone's heritage design and great features will make this boat one you will be proud to keep for a long time!



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