

Tre's Martin's Performance Boat School

by Tom Conroy, Marine Director, Markel American Insurance



SPEAKING OF SAFETY

TRAINING DAY : Recently, I was invited to attend a "High-Performance Boating Insurance" meeting at the 2005 Miami Boat Show. Industry heavyweights gathered to discuss the current state of high performance boating, and the issue of insurance costs. These topics were of particular importance, as Markel American has the most tenure insuring the high performance segment and has a proven commitment to this market.

One of the presenters at the meeting included Tres Martin, a former world champion racer, expert rigger and an activist in the marine community. Tres' presentation focused on the importance of safety and expressed his desire to "protect the freedom of performance boaters" as they enjoy one of the last recreational sports that is not overly governed.

The presentation highlighted his initiative to train high performance boat operators on safety and handling. Everyone in the room agreed that the course was long overdue and we quickly acted to support this project. Following the presentation, Tres invited me to attend his course and experience firsthand his knowledge and expertise in high performance boating.

In July, I shipped out to Florida to take Tres up on his offer and enrich my knowledge of high performance boats. The two-day course started in the classroom where Tres covered complex performance boating topics. I always wanted to know the theories of how boats interact with the water at high speed— and Tres did not disappoint.

My classmates and I felt quite overloaded with information by the end of day one. With the previous day's groundwork percolating in our heads, day two found our class on the water with Tres as he reinforced the lessons we learned the day prior.

Highlights of Course: safety, do's and don'ts, design, settings, defensive driving, recovery, trailering, docking and the effects of alcohol and driving.

Safety Issues Addressed:

- Safety equipment is often overlooked, proper floatation devices and their usage is covered
- Proper turning techniques, safe following distances and defensive driving on a busy waterway
- Theories of Vee and Catamaran hulls: How the hulls where designed to work, what is going on under the hull at speed and what happens when you turn
- Engine configurations; how these affect hull design including weight distribution issues
- How stepped hulls work including weight sensitivity and proper settings for handling
- How catamaran hulls work, including tunnel design, bottom design, turning techniques
- Proper settings for conditions for both Cat and Vee hulls from idle to high speed, flat to rough water conditions, including setting up for turns
- Defensive driving - Students are put in dangerous positions and must demonstrate problem solving skills

The advancement in technology of high performance boats is quite remarkable. With those advancements comes responsibility. Now there is a way for owners to advance their personal abilities to match the horsepower and speed.

WHAT IS IN IT FOR YOU?

- **Knowledge** - You will understand the dynamics of why your boat reacts a certain way. Find out how to avoid having an accident, learn to recover, know first hand how to spot when you are in trouble
- **Safety** - For you, your family, your friends and the community. It does not always happen to the other guy!
- **Insurance** - If you are newer to the sport, it may be the difference of qualifying for insurance. You may qualify to receive a discount (up to 10%) from Markel American Insurance Company.

Our competitive nature drives us to be faster. This year, aim to be a better boater and take Tres' course. Don't learn to drive by accident! -TC

If you are interested taking Tres Martin's training, or if you want more information, contact Tres at:

Tres Martin's High Performance Boat School

www.PerformanceBoatSchool.com or call 352-620-TRES(8737) - Florida