

# Rockin in the Rockit!



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**SHELLEY Jory is one of the UK's leading powerboat racers and the top female in her sport. Last year she became the face of Honda Powerboat Racing. Each month Shelley gives All At Sea readers an insight into her amazing life.**

A RECENT trip to Key West had a different flare for me. The American "world" powerboat championships was taking place and all the usual suspects were present, but I managed to drag myself away from the race pits and I caught up with the poker run boys - now they have some very fast boats!

The Florida Powerboat Club's 16th annual Key West poker run brought over 150 poker run boats from Miami to Key West for this week long boating festival. The 170 mile scenic ride through the Florida Keys is perhaps one of the most breathtaking cruises through protected bay waters and winding mangrove waterways.

With as many as four helicopters in hot pursuit, the scene rivalled the filming of a James Bond movie chase scene as the boats arrived in Key West.

As I wondered through

the marina, jaw open, gazing at these wonderful machines I bumped into an old friend, John Cunningham - vice president of Hustler Powerboats and when he offered me the chance to test drive the new Rockit Hustler boat I was running down the pontoon jumping straight into the driver's seat.

The new 39 Rockit has a performance that exceeds any boat that Hustler has built, which is saying a lot since they build some of the fastest boats in the world.

There is much talk about this boat all over the boating industry. Hustler's goal when engineering the boat was to build one capable of 120 mph plus, safely, with a comfortable ride.

The truth of the matter - the Rockit's handling over the 100 mph mark was no different than when the boat was running at 75 to 80 mph.

A surprisingly stable and

comfortable ride at those high speeds in an open cockpit, pleasure boat.

I say pleasure boat but these boats are rigged like race boats with great supportive bolster seats and state of the art electronics and navigational systems.

The 39-foot Rockit comes standard with nothing less than Mercury Racing Engines. Oh, and I must tell you, unlike the powerboats that I race, this boat had a luxurious cabin and still went well over 100mph with no effort. I just wished I had been able to join in all the fun and start the journey with the poker run guys and girls in Miami a few days ago.

What is a poker run I hear you say? Drivers Dry Berthing Boat yard in Southampton run them in the UK, on a slightly smaller scale, but with just as much fun.

The poker run theme in the USA provides a competitive but fun atmosphere where teams from all over the United States and beyond, cruised from Miami to Key West, often at high speed, stopping at exotic locations along the keys to collect playing cards in a game of chance.

The participants played out their hands at the big bash on the Saturday night, attended by more than 700 guests. A variety of awards, none of which had anything to do with speed or the price tag of the toys, include Best Catamaran, Best V-Bottom, Best Paint and Graphics, and one of the most coveted of awards, the Sexiest Crew.

All the top leading brands of American boat builders were represented in the colorful poker run fleet including Cigarette, Donzi Fountain, Nor-Tech, MTI, Outerlimits and Sunation,



Racing Rockit

to name just a few.

They even have a poker elaborate displays featuring the latest performance boats, engines and fancy

aftermarket accessories.

This is big business in the states with larger than life clients with big wallets - the credit crunch was no where to be seen!

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