



# [HOT RIGS]

SUBMITTED BY MIKE WATHEN

## FULL METAL JACKET



**M**ike Wathen doesn't think the space shuttle has as much R&D invested as his boat. He also believes that fully customizing his 2007 Oquawka 1660 was worth every bit of the work.

It's been less than a year since the Indiana resident purchased his rig, which has a 60-inch flat bottom, a 7-foot, 5-inch beam, and all the bells and whistles he could ever need.

The 1660's width and construction were major factors for Wathen when he and Lynn Hassler of Lynn's West Side Marine got together to design the boat. "I needed a boat that could take commercial-type use," Wathen said. "The ribs in the other brands I have owned had welds that broke from normal use, and

weren't built nearly as heavily as the Oquawka." The ribs on these boats are set just 12 inches apart on center. You'll have a tough time finding a boat with as much welded in.

Custom features include a flat 4-foot, 3/16-inch tread plate deck and a flat pressurized tread plate floor. A small bracket welded on the stern houses the transducer bracket, while 24x28-inch storage boxes double as livewells, baitwells or a cooler. Custom-made waterproof welded compartments in the front hold trolling batteries to distribute the weight. "This makes a huge difference in boat performance, and I fail to understand why other boat companies don't do it," Wathen said.

Aside from a long list of custom

features, Wathen's Oquawka is wide enough and designed with welded brackets between the ribs on each side to attach bungee cords so he can transport his 4x4 ATV.

A Nissan 50 outboard pushes the 1660 to a top speed of 37 mph. It planes quickly and is very stable running. And, of course, the flat V-bow is ideal for any shallow water application. "I fish rivers, lakes and backwaters a lot," Wathen said, "and you can push pole into 3 inches of water in this boat."

As a result of the custom design process, Wathen feels very connected to his boat, as he well should. "When it all comes together, there's something about designing your own boat that is very satisfying," he said. **BWB**

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— Mike Wathen

### EQUIPMENT

**Boat:** 2007 Oquawka 1660 V-bow

**Engine:** 2007 Nissan 50 oil-injected two-stroke

**Accessories:** Hand-operated MotorGuide 82-pound-thrust digital trolling motor; Humminbird 141c depthfinder;

two DeKa Group 27 batteries for trolling motor and Group 24 for cranking motor

**Tow Vehicle:** 2004 Ford

F-150 4x4 XLT

**Trailer:** Oquawka custom-made powdercoated single axle without trailer brakes

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