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BY BRETT BAYNE

19' Ranger

Mark Nye
Mississauga, Ontario,
Canada

Squirt is the name of Nye's 19-foot Ranger Mini jetboat, built in 1980 by General Marine Co. It sports a Berkeley JC12 A pump with Place Diverter and was originally equipped with a stock 454 Chevrolet that pushed the boat to 48 mph at 4,200 rpm. Nye repowered the boat with a military surplus Allison T63-A-700 gas turbine from an Air Force helicopter that burns kerosene or diesel and gasoline. Top speed with turbine engine is 70 mph on GPS (at 6,000 rpm). "I purchased the boat last year as a used wreck for \$250 (U.S.)," he says. "I replaced the carb, starter, alternator and steering cable and fabricated some through transom mufflers. I ran *Squirt* for the summer of 1998 in its stock form with the 454, and acceleration was okay, with a 48-mph top speed." Then Nye stripped out the old cast-iron 454 engine and wiring over the winter, fabricating the new turbine engine mounts and drive-shaft adapter using some of the skills he learned by reading *HOT BOAT*. The disk brake on the output flange allows him to stop the power turbine (jet pump) while the gas-producer turbine is



18' Allison

Mike Sufka
St. Cloud, Minnesota

The rig seen here is merely the latest rig of Sufka's to appear in the pages of *HOT BOAT*. It's a 1993 Allison Grand-sport Elite powered by a 1997 Mercury 2.5 EFI.

"I've wanted to own an Allison Grand-sport for years, but as a student, I didn't have the funds to purchase one," he says. Thus, his father's old Hydrostream Vasseret (powered by a Pro-V 150 Yamaha combo) had to do for many years. Immediately after graduating from school in 1999, Sufka found a great deal on an STV Euroski, which he purchased. "The boat was fast, but not exactly what I wanted," he says. "I wanted an Allison, plain and simple."

Then, after work one day in August 2001, Sufka logged onto the great screamandfly.com Web page and perused the "boats for sale" listings...and found a new post about an Allison for sale. He quickly called the number and chatted



with "Fast Eddie" Thompson, who e-mailed Sufka some photos of the boat. "I took a few seconds to look at them, and I called him back and purchased the boat on the phone," he says. "The entire process, from me reading the ad to buying the boat, took 15 minutes." A few

weeks later, Sufka planned a trip to visit a friend and commuted from his hometown of St. Cloud, Minnesota, to Peoria, Illinois. There he met Fast Eddie, who had the boat in tow. "It was in such good shape. I couldn't believe it," he says. "It looked brand new." Sufka was

still running—the power turbine is gas-coupled to the engine like a torque converter. With the brake off and the engine at idle, the pump turns about 1,750 rpm. Docking is smooth and easy, according to Nye. The yellow-green tank is for turbine oil. The fuel tanks are on each side under the gunnels (12 gallons each).

The instruments on the dash include EGT (exhaust gas temperature), maximum allowable 750° C, gas-producer turbine speed, output shaft torque, turbine speed, oil pressure, oil temperature, fuel boost pressure, fuel quantity. "The turbine spools up fairly quickly," Nye says. "It can go from idle to full power in less than five seconds. The engine is very responsive once it is up off idle. Acceleration is way better than with the 454 due to the increased power and reduced weight." The air intake is under the rear deck (right over the jet pump), and the exhaust points straight up. The finned and insulated exhaust stacks are actually Air Force countermeasures for heat-seeking missiles.

"I love driving *Squirt*," Nye says. "It's a real blast, it's easy to drive and attracts a lot of attention. It is very loud up close, but the noise drops off quickly with distance. People come from all around when I start the engine; some people look up to the sky because they think it's a helicopter landing."

initially nervous about driving so far to buy a boat he had never actually seen in person, but his trepidation melted away after seeing the mint-condition rig. "It was everything that Fast Eddie had said it was."

After getting the boat back home, Sufka had Randy Pierson of Gran Prix International rig the Allison, removing the 2.5EFI Mercury that was on his STV and re-clamping it on the back of the Allison. "Randy has done tons of work on high-performance rigs, from STVs to Hydrostreams and Allison's," Sufka says. Pierson set it up with eight inches of setback, moved the battery around to get the "balance" right and other work. The boat runs like a dream, according to its new owner. The engine spins a 14x28 Merc lab cleaver at 7,900 rpm; the Gaffrig liquid speedo reads 102 mph. "There is absolutely no better feeling than putting this big 'family' boat up on the pad and letting that Mercury scream," Sufka says. "As the saying goes, I like them loose!"

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