

ONE 'KLEEN' CIGARETTE

By Kevin Spaise
Photography by Todd Taylor

When you see Tim Kowalski's 35' Cigarette Café Racer idle into view, you're taken with two things that are immediately and instantly self-evident.

First you're reminded that within the fifty year evolutionary flow of the world's brilliant muscleboat designs, a rare few have utterly neutralized that most powerful of all adversaries to man and machine—time itself.

The Café Racer, one of Don Aronow's revered Cigarette signature works of art, is part of a most rarified subset of powerboats, rumbling and thundering along in a vacuum of sorts, its styling and lines completely immune to passing fancy, trend, and time.

And second, if you know the man, you also flash on the mission that keeps Tim Kowalski and his ride criss-crossing the patchwork landscape of the United States, from Lake Havasu to Key West, from April through November, year after year. Kowalski is out to prove that boating and Bio-Kleen are at one in the midst of an aggressive environmental attack that will literally bake and bludgeon the value out of your boat if you choose to let them.

Bio-Kleen is hardly the by-the-barrel business it was nearly 25 years ago, when Kowalski trucked his first barrels of new environmentally friendly cleaning solvent from one machine shop to another around Lake Michigan, where he's boated since childhood (his first boat was a 13' Clipper-Craft).

The company now ships hundreds of thousands of gallons world-wide, and is active and growing in the marine, RV, snowmobile, household, janitorial, industrial, and commercial markets, with more than 200 products.

Kowalski was stirred to action after witnessing environmental insanity from ground level. His family owned a large machine

Tim Kowalski keyed on the importance of 'green boating' nearly 25 years ago, and his stunning 35' Café Racer is a compelling messenger



Dean Loucks' dramatic three-color pearl fusion exploits the classic simplicity of the Café Racer's lines and fills the lean expanse of the hull with brilliant pearls.



Bio-Kleen powered by a matched set of superbly reliable 572-inch dry sump single carbureted Sterling engines.

Tim makes a record-setting run at the Lake of the Ozarks shootout.



one 'kleen' cigarette



shop, and before every part was shipped, it had to be cleaned in a chemical so harsh and destructive that it cost \$3,000 per barrel to haul out and dispose of it after it was used—ten times what it cost to buy new.

That, Kowalski's chemistry background at the University of Michigan, and a lasting impression of a grape-farming grandfather who drilled into him the responsibility of proper environmental stewardship while tending his 55 acres, collided in the creation of Bio-Kleen.

It wasn't long before Kowalski's passion for boating and his business plan merged, and he made a passionate case for more environmentally savvy cleaning and maintenance procedures wherever he traveled—much of the time, by boat.

The Bio-Kleen message is simple. "We're using things that come out of the ground naturally—it's safer for humans, as well as the environment. I grew up around Lake Michigan, and I'm as passionate about the waterways as I am about boating."

Bio-Kleen products contain no Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) traditionally used in cleaning products, thinners, paints, and other environmentally destructive mixtures. VOCs have a high vapor pressure at ordinary room temperature, causing them to dissipate into their host environment, whether air or water.

Kowalski has chosen a pretty enviable way to champion his message, which he delivers at water level from the cockpit of his vintage '93 smoker, powered by a matched set of superbly reliable 572-inch dry sump single carbureted Sterling engines.

He bought the used Café Racer from one of his accounts in 2005. Previously he owned a 28' Velocity.

His dream of owning a Cigarette was ignited at a very young age. "Cigarette has always meant something to me, for as long as I can remember," he says. "Owning one is everything I thought it would be. There's more to it than just a boat. It's a conversation piece, but that's only part of it. The performance and the history together are pretty powerful."

Kowalski attended more than a dozen organized poker runs and events this year, and his itinerary reads like that of a second-tier rock band: Denver, Chicago,

Omaha, Lake Havasu, Lake Powell, Lake Pleasant, New Mexico, Grand Lakes, Lake of the Ozarks, Madison, Indiana, Detroit, St. Claire, Key West.

It's true the boat is a traveling billboard—it's difficult to imagine a more compelling branding image, traveling down the freeway of any given metropolitan area in rush hour traffic—but it's more than that. Kowalski is sincere in contending that ultimately, all of his boating fun benefits you and me in the end.

"We find that the water in various lakes and rivers and in different parts of the country reacts differently to Bio-Kleen products. Because we're subjecting the boat to every condition imaginable, from algae, lime, yellow oxidation and heavy lime scale, where the water is very hard, we're able to experience what our customers do. We document all of it and bring the results back to our research and development department. We're reactive in our products."

Speaking of Havasu, Mr. Kleen himself has some direct advice if you boat there:

"The lime scale can be very difficult to remove once heat and temperature bakes it in. Our hull cleaner does a great job of maintaining your boat there, and the polish and sealant makes the boat much easier to clean every time out," says Kowalski.

The striking *Bio-Kleen* ride dynos out at 730 horsepower per side, filtered through a set of Imco SCX drives and 28-inch, four-blade Bravos. Latham hydraulic steering tempers the ride, which is nipping at 90 miles an hour in primo conditions.

As the machine approaches 200 hours, the single-carb Sterlings have been a study in high performance consistency. Keith Holmes of CK Motorsports (Nunica, Michigan) maintains the boat and engines, drawing on expertise developed at the highest level of the sport.

On its haunches, trailered down the highway, or at rest dock side, the *Bio-Kleen* boat is a sight to behold. Dean Loucks, the resident genius at The Art of Design (TAOD) in Elkhart, Indiana (taod.org), is largely responsible: his dramatic three-color pearl fusion exploits the classic simplicity of the Café Racer's lines and fills the lean expanse of the hull with brilliant pearls that seem to go liquid in the sun. The orange-to-



Blake Bancroft travels to many of the destinations to sell Bio-Kleen products.



one 'kleen' cigarette



red strip has become a Bio-Kleen branding trigger, and beyond that, it's just a very cool looking affect that helps pull the attention just as hard as boats ten years newer.

Ostensibly, it isn't Loucks's wildest stroke, but it is no less brilliant than any of his signature fiberglass canvases.

Besides reaping the residual benefits of practical testing and pounding the flesh within a growing network of dealers and distributors, Kowalski has picked up a bit of practical experience along the way in all of his pin-balling across the map (he drives the tow rig, as well as the boat).

His advice:

On moving from a single to a twin: "I've had a lot of fun with it. Maneuvering the boat around the docks with the twins is the best part, using the current, and the engines against one another. You just have to factor double the expense and maintenance, and you'll be OK."

On taking that first step into Poker Running: "Get started. Go into it with an open mind, and just have fun. Relax—you're going to meet some great people, and they've all been there. Enjoy the scenery."

On the biggest mistake we boaters make when it comes to maintaining our boats: "It amazes me when I see lack of maintenance on one of these boats, given the size of investment. When you go to the beach and the sun is harsh, you wear sun screen, because the sun is not healthy for your unprotected skin. The same holds true with boats. If you don't put enough UV protection on the fiberglass and seats, the sun will degrade them. Take care of your investment. If you maintain the appearance, when you're ready to sell, you'll always bring a higher value because people want the boat that's been taken care of."

What's the Bio-Kleen starter kit? Bio-Kleen Polish & Sealant, Bio-Kleen Amazing Cleaner, and Bio-Kleen Amazing Armor.

"Start with the basics," Kowalski advises. "In addition to everything else it does our polish and sealant will give you an additional one to three miles an hour if you do the bottom of the boat as well. With the Amazing Cleaner and Amazing Armor to maintain your seating, you're pretty much set."

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