

Review of Gravity Hyper Carve 2

Contributed by The Longboard Consortium
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There is no other reputable longboard company in SoCal that's more synonymous with Longboarding culture and flow than Gravity Skateboards. While much of the coverage on the 'fish has been of the support and stoke Gravity provides the sliding community, that's just a small aspect of Gravity's field of interests and lineup of skateboards. We thought it was time to revisit a taste of Gravity's roots in the SoCal flow, so we borrowed one of the classic Gravity decks, The 'Hyper-Carve 2.

Specs

Wood: 11 Ply Birch ‐ Flat
Length: 47.00"
Width: 8.75"
Nose: 3.60"
Tail: 5.25"
Wheel Base: 34.00"
Front Wheel Well Width: 4.5"
Rear Wheel Well Width: 5"

Trucks: Tracker 149mm Darts
Bearings: Gravity ABEC5
Risers: Gravity Angled Wedge Front / De-Wedge Back

Wheels

Duro: 78a Fu Manchus
Diameter: 76mm
Width: 45mm
Contact Patch: 27mm
Hub Width: 8mm
Hub Type: Jumbo
Weight: 166g

Retail: \$140
Website: <http://www.gravityboard.com>
Purchase: Buy the Gravity Hyper Carve 47"

Appearance: It's a flat deck, with slender gatherings at the front and rear trucks to serve as minimal wheel wells betwixt a rounded nose and a swept out, shovel tail. The gradual curves of the deck serve to smooth out its elongated shape and lets the wheels step out from the deck like it's lifted.

The visual on the belly of the deck is a classic sweeping ocean scene. Graphics like this aren't breaking any molds but, some might point out, may have made the mold. It's classic and not too clichéd by mall-board copycats, despite their best efforts. It's not the only choice we had, and the same goes for you: the Gravity website shows a number of options to choose from in regard to stain and graphic.

The deck stain on this item is a dark blue and, along with the ocean print graphic and scrawling ivy script on the deck, it all comes together--nothing out of place and keeping in line with the visual impact of the deck it flows. The topside of the deck has a split dual pinstripe stringer and a fat G logo. This particular board has one more thing happening on top: the aluminum faceplate of a fully functional speedometer. With a recessed LCD and two button controls, it gives an amusing level of tech to the otherwise very liquid look of the deck.

The Ride:

One of the more unusual things about this review (other than an absence of technical sliding photos) is that, when this deck hit the floor to get skated for reviews, two other HC 'decks appeared' in the quivers of our reviewing team. This gave us all a great overview on the differing setups the HC can be run with. Although this review focuses on the OEM setup, the other decks gave a good comparison to reach conclusions.

One of the first things that is highly apparent with the Hyper Carve 2 is the comfort of the push and the sublime naturalism of just cruising it. The sea walls of Avalon, on Catalina Island, were the first test base for the Hyper Carve. It ate up the cobblestones and bricked walkways with ease. The expansive board gives plenty of room for footing and, although the cutouts really narrow the board, we didn't get any footbite. The length of the big Gravity is belied by angled risers that impart significant agility to the board. Even at its size, slalom grannies and young mothers pushing prams was not a problem while smoking through the crowds on Avalon Pier.

The more advanced island riding of the Hyper Carve 2 was to come under a sweltering sun. Our skater chose a footpath that leads to the native botanical garden in the interior of Catalina. With the smell of Plumeria and Eucalyptus wafting through the breeze, visitors ascend toward the interior of the island and an equestrian center for tourists. When the airborne nectar is replaced by the scent of fertilizer and horse dung, you know you're nearing the top of the hill. Once you turn around, it's not a long or steep run but it's smooth pavement heading downhill to the blue Pacific and it provided our first tests of the HC underfoot at speed.

The road drops to the east, giving the skater a couple miles of palm lined road shared only with tour buses and golf carts. Our lucky reviewer was able to press rail and control speed with ease and then he noticed the MPH reading. It's actually pretty easy to read, and an effective, fun reference to look down at. The unit also provides average speed and an odometer, both pretty cool pieces of information. Our reviewer watched the speed reading climb past 28mph before closing down his long carves and sloughing off some speed with a few heelside drifts.

It was a fulfilling visit to Catalina with the Hyper Carve 2, but there weren't many opportunities to really push the deck to its limits, as we are often want to do. Our next stop was the legendary Pump Station road, for some speed testing and thrashage. With a push-in from the top, a Ninja Bomb Squad rider took the Gravity up to 38mph on its little speedo. Now, that's quite a feat in regular pads and open face helmet on a hill with a 45mph record by Chaput in a speedsuit! Suffice it to say, the hill is pretty fast, has a few turns and big, sharp curbs. Our skater reported the Hyper Carve 2 to feel locked-in and stable at speed, although we should note that this particular skater is comfortable on a lot of boards at those speeds. We should point out that the rider only found out his speed after he got down the hill. As we discovered in Catalina, there gets to be a point where watching the road is a better idea than watching the dashboard.

We also took the HC2 out for the midnight races in foothills of Rancho Bernardo, nicely sloped residential streets with perfect pavement and sleepy residents. There are several "courses" we skate, so the Gravity got handed off to different skaters for each course session (skate until a porch light goes on, then move to the next place). On the route known as "The Race", our reviewer took the hard turns of the classic, technical right, right, left, right and left-turned course. With one hand on the nose and the other outstretched, outrigger style, the reviewer charged the course, and reported the Hyper Carve 2 to have handled the railing turns in stride.

We found the big Fu Manchus to be smooth performers, albeit not the fastest wheels on the street. One skater commented that he couldn't feel the wheels releasing and hooking back up, the fu's preformed so smoothly. On "The Three Lane", a wide open, straight shot descent, the skater on the Gravity took a ramp up onto the sidewalk to make a pass using the sidewalk. He reported that, although the deck has a cushioning flex, it never responded erratically in any way. Rocks, manholes, errant housepets… all were rolled with little issue.

As a change of scenery, our final testing took place in a frigid garage on the high plains. With slush and ice coating the gaps and walls, our rider lashed out massive stand up slides, then layed the board out to really test it at its limits, not to mention his own. It's hard to read his notes, which we think might be due to all the shivering going on. Regardless, we know two things: the Hyper Carve 2 handled the parking garage well when it could be slid around frigid corners, and the speedometer's screen turns black when it's really cold.

Conclusion: the Hyper Carve 2 showed its strengths in a number of disciplines. We used the deck for styles it may not have been specifically intended for, if only to find the limits of its versatility. This board is an ample base for any board-walking, carving or cruising you may wish to do and it is well suited for these pursuits. The Fu's provided a great setup of wheels to be run on this deck and the wedged/dewedged Trackers are well paired with this board.

The speedometer was a sweet addition to the deck and was simple enough to figure out with the provided instructions. Although one of our testers seemed too dim to conquer the 2 button interface without reading the instructions we

discarded on principle, even he managed to get the information out of it he needed. The only downside to the speedo was that it turns on every time the wheel rotates the magnet past the sensor. This eats at battery life, but is easily solved as the batteries are readily available.

Our Hyper Carve 2 would have been greatly improved by a kicktail. One of our comparison boards from the reviewers's own quivers had a foam tail wedge on it, and this is an excellent upgrade that we think should be mandatory on all of them. Luckily, Gravity sells foam tails, so you can get one (do it).

When it comes down to it, the 47" Hyper Carve 2 is a no-nonsense longboard. It's a mainstay in the Gravity lineup for a very good reason: simplicity and flowing design--a tried and true shape with a solid setup. For a longboard at this price, it's hard to beat the Hyper Carve for what it is: a unique yet classic longboard with a lot of soul.