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ISSUE //LESS MAINTENANCE, MORE FUN

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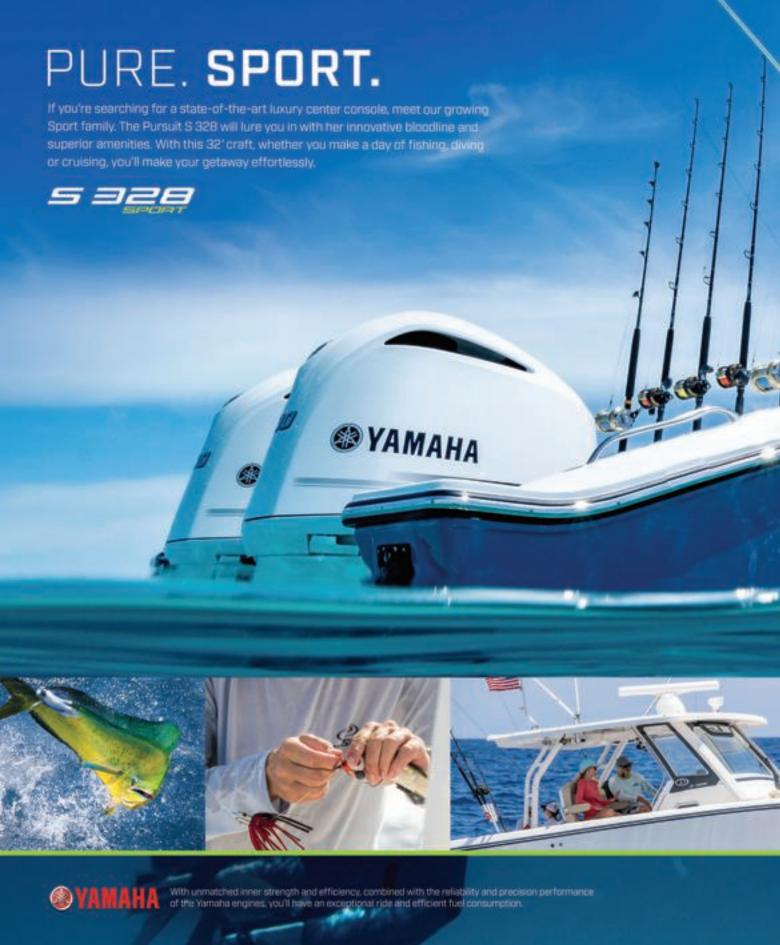


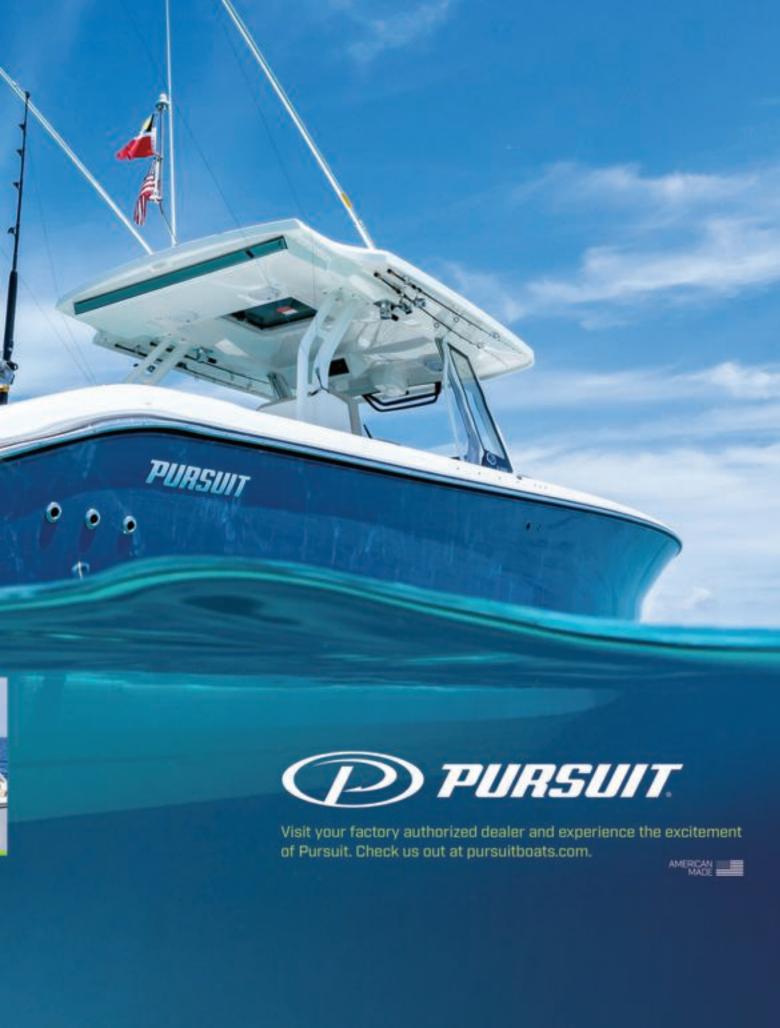
CONTENDER



ALWAYS IN THE GAME









Yamaha's XTO Offshore: Powerful, Advanced, Elegant

LOTS OF POWER, LESS HASSLE, INTEGRATED DESIGN. ONE MOTOR FEWER IN MANY APPLICATIONS

It's a powerful outboard, the new Yamaha XTO Offshore®, and it's brought big change—to sport-fishers, center-console lovers and even to water taxis.

Built from skeg to cowl to team-power yacht-class offshore boats, this 425 hp, 5.6L V-8 has won fans in single and twin applications on smaller craft with big offshore ideas too.

WHAT'S NEW?

Yamaha calls its newcomer an "integrated power system," and backs the claim with many innovations and industry firsts.

The XTO Offshore's electric steering system eliminates cables and hydraulics. Internally housed electrical motors directly move the outboard, resulting in instant response, simpler rigging and fewer components.

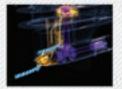
In the XTO Offshore—boating's first direct-injection four-stroke—two fuel pumps spray atomized fuel directly into combustion chambers at up to 2,900 psi, maximizing combustion and efficiency.

The XTO exhausts above the cavitation plate until





Chain-driven dual overhead cams are oil-bathed for long life.



Above-water exhaust keeps props in undisturbed water to increase reverse power by 300 percent.



Placed low forward, cooling water pickups keep strong flow to dual impeller pumps.

the motor reaches about 2.500 rpm, after which exhaust passes through the propeller hub. This thrust-enhancing exhaust routing provides maximum power and control in reverse instead of asking props to bite into already frothy water. The reverse thrust increase—about 300 percent more than with the F350—helps plenty when maneuvering dockside or backing down on a big fish. Exhaust pressure controls the flow: there's no mechanism to fail.

Plasma-fused sleeveless cylinders—another Yamaha Outboard innovation—are lighter, more compact and 60 percent harder than steel, making it possible to produce bigger-bore power within the same-size powerhead, all while reducing friction and weight. Cam shafts and lifters boast new technology too.

A high-output alternator cranks out 90 amps gross and up to 72 amps net charging at around 1,500 rpm.

Power tilt lifts the motor clear off the water on most boats, making for less maintenance, especially on





boats in salt water. There's less worry trailering too.

Come maintenance time, no need to haul out the boat to change the gearcase lube either. Your technician withdraws the old oil with a vacuum line at the power head, and pumps fresh back in.

A WINNING NUMBERS GAME

Yamaha envisioned the XTO Offshore as a team player on big, multiengine boats (50-footers and up.) Boaters have found that with this big-displacement powerhouse, they can opt for fewer outboards—three outboards instead of four,





for example, or two instead three.

One triple-powered Contender® 39, with its center motor off and fully trimmed-up still hit nearly 65 mph. Boaters to whom speed is important might still want three XTOs, but those for whom a mile-a-minute is plenty will be happy with a two-pack.

The XTO Offshore has surprised many folks by emerging as a great single solution for 25- and 26-foot boats.

FISH ON!

When the biggest fish is on the line, captains must sometimes concede to the rampager and back down to shorten the distance between fish and angler. When that happens, the reverse-thrust increase provided by the thrust-ex-

haust-exchange feature of the XTO is a decided advantage, in both power and steerageway.

"Trim up a little in reverse, and it actually lifts the transom out of the water instead of pulling it down," said legendary Florida captain Rick Murphy. "You can make the boat actually dance in reverse!"

The exhaust system pays off in a different way too, believes Capt. Murphy, producing smoother water in which to offer baits and lures. Trolling, you're not sending exhaust bubbling through the prop hub, so you're giving fish a better look at your offerings.

With Yamaha's new design, he says, "white water is 50 to 60 percent less. I can see it; I've been shooting underwater video for 30 years."

Murphy, by the way, is having a new 35-foot fishing boat built, with twins instead of triples—twin Yamaha XTOs.

"TAXI!"

The Charleston Water Taxi provides Charleston's residents and visitors a novel way to view historic sights and attractions, salute aircraft carrier *USS* *Yorktown*, or simply view pelicans and dolphins.

Its twin-outboard 40-foot Corinthian catamarans run all day, every day, and for more than 10 years, those outboards have been Yamahas—a surprisingly low number of Yamahas!

The original taxi is on its third set of F150s, having upgraded them, proactively, at 6,800 and 8,700 hours* of service. A third pair is nearing 4,000 hours*.

The second taxi has its original pair of F200s, five years in.

A backup boat, a 27-foot Carolina Skiff, is powered by one of those first 150s, nudging a cumulative 10,000 hours*. (Yamaha bought back the other original motor.)

When the company commissioned its new 50-footer, it spec'd it with Yamaha XTO Offshores. They'll provide the ferry service with Yamaha power, durability and dependability, along with the new, easy maintenance of its in-water gear lube-change feature along with the docking and traffic-handling agility provided by its full reverse thrust.

*Results are based on commercial use, and may vary for traditional retail consumer use.

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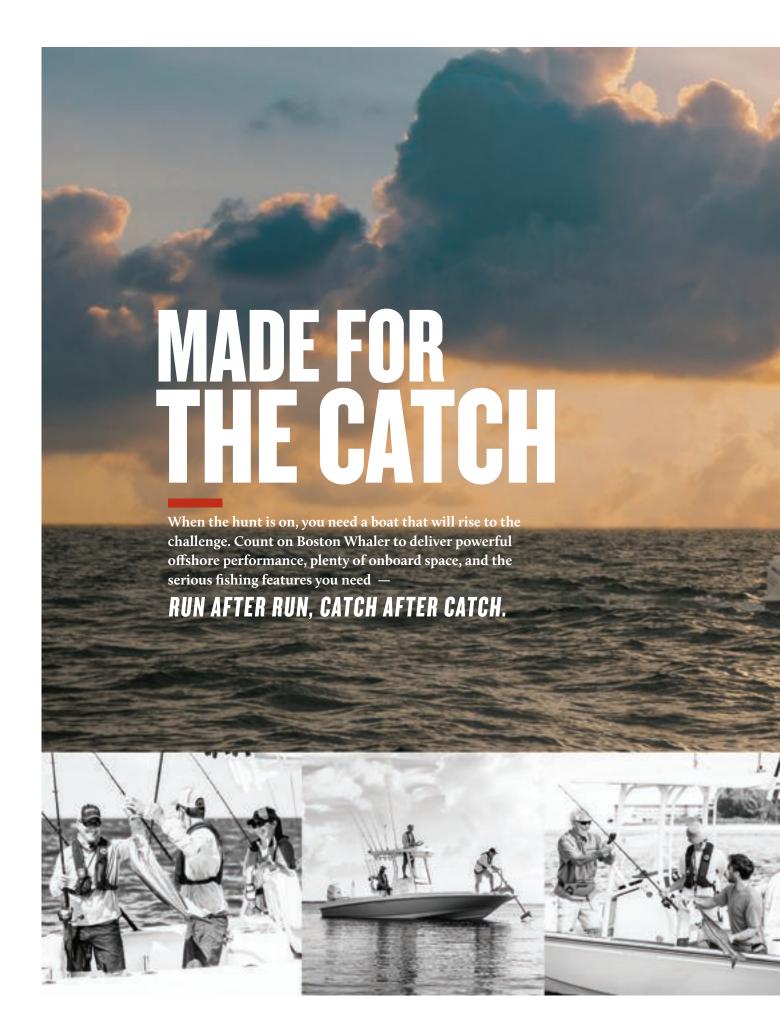
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Seven-Year Itch



his is the seventh year of our Fishing Boat Buyers Guide. For six years, we tweaked the survey to sharpen our insight into your perception of fishing boats to get a clear idea of what would hook you on your next boat. This year, we flipped the theme and asked you not what you thought of boats on the marketplace, but what you thought of your boat. You're loyal to itmost have owned their boat 10 or more years, but still look wistfully at the new models built with new technologies and new style. So, the central theme of this benchmark survey is: Based on what you know and love-and maybe hateabout your current boat, what demands will you make of your new one?

Not every revelation was a surprise, but some were. In spite of editorial infatuation with horsepower, 150 to 200 horsepower satisfies most of you. Dazzling glass cockpit displays with dual or triple touchscreen interfaces? Most of you want one combo rig in the dash or on a gimbal. And while those who want three livewells for live-bait

fishing won't buy a boat with just two, one or two satisfies more players than we expected.

So, if you're looking for a new boat, start here. It's the compilation of over 3,000 anglers' personal bibles on fishing in boats. This is the place to scratch your itch.

GYRO MAGIC

As a kid, you must've played with a gyroscope, a top spinning in a frame that resisted everything you did to try and tilt or turn it. A few years ago, Seakeeper gyrostabilization burst onto the recreational boat market, promising to stop the nauseating roll of boats in waves.

With units designed for boats from 27 to over 40 feet—a category over half of our survey respondents were considering—and in spite of prices ranging from \$19,900 to over \$200,000, 200 boatbuilders added them to their factory-installed option list. As we see it, for 10 to 15 percent more on the purchase price, boaters can add 100 percent more fun to their boating. Start the Seakeeper. Stop the barfing. That has ring to it.



BY RANDY VANCE

Editor-at-Large, Marine and Fishing randy.vance@bonniercorp.com



On the Way to Tropic Star

Just for giving us your best advice on how to buy a boat, you were entered to win a fabulous fishing trip at Tropic Star Lodge in Piñas Bay, Panama (tropicstar.com). You'll be hosted for four nights' lodging (airfare, transfers, meals, alcohol and gratuities excluded) in luxury, and treated to three days of the best pelagic fishing in the world. Second place gets a Patriot cooler, and the third-place prize is a Patriot tumbler. It's all great payback just to talk shop about boats.

WINNING BOAT-BUYING ADVICE—FIRST PLACE

Take a long time to decide where you want to fish and how frequently. Buying an offshore boat for the Gulf of Mexico can limit your opportunities to fish due to sea and weather conditions. Be sure you understand that you may not be able to go offshore as often as you wish. A bay boat for inshore and nearshore will give you much more fishing time.

SECOND PLACE

Think realistically about how you will use the boat and what capabilities you need, then find the best option in your budget.

THIRD PLACE

Max out the horsepower rating for the boat.





No Perfect Boat?

WE LOVE OUR BOATS BUT STILL SEE THEIR FLAWS

By Chris Woodward

Illustrations by John W. Tomac

B oats display elegant shear lines and innovative designs. We love to show them off and spin tales of high-hook days. But boats also have tight spaces, flawed systems and quirky layouts. Boats have

trade-offs. As one of our survey respondents put it: "It's easy to find the perfect boat to do one thing. As soon as you want to do two things, you're compromising."

Our survey asked boaters to list favorite features, biggest disappointments, and what their current boat has taught them to look for in a future new boat. More than 1,800 of you provided answers.

FAVORITE FEATURES

Many of our bay-boat owners seemed to be frustrated offshore fishermen. They sang the praises of their vessels as it pertained to ease of trailering, launching and loading, as well as features and versatility, but still lamented how often rough seas kept them from bluewater fishing.

Here are their comments and some of our editorial asides:

Fishing is a way I escape with my wife for a few days. (Carolina Skiff) [Note, he typed "with."]

Kind of a Swiss Army knife of a boat, does a lot well. (Robalo Cayman)

I can use it like an old pickup. (Winner bay boat) [Is he carrying crab traps or hay?]

Bass-boat style fore and aft, with pontoon boat features in the middle. (Lowe Bay 20)

The power and speed to outrun a storm ranked high on the list of favorite features for one of our survey respondents. Safety first, of course!

The smooth ride, even in 4- to 6-foot seas. (Hell's Bay) [4 to 6 feet? The heck you say?]

Dual-console owners liked the creature comforts, space and stability of their rides.

It fishes well, and the ladies like the front chaise longues. (Boston Whaler Vantage)

It starts and goes. It fits the needs of my wife and dog. Keep It Simple Stupid. (Aquasport dual-console)

Wide, with enough space to fish, and places to sleep overnight for up to eight friends, with kitchenette and toilet.

(42-foot dual-console)

Those with flats skiffs liked the shallow-water capabilities, of course. Since most small skinny-water boats lack a lot of storage and comfort amenities, their comments centered on backwater fishability, practicality and sheer enjoyment.

My favorite feature of my boat is the history and the memories that come with it. (Sea Nymph) [The last one was made 22 years ago—you should be thinking upgrade!]

I am older, and this is easy to board. Seating is at butt level, so I don't have to try to get up and out. Easy to see where you are going...easy to fish from. (Carolina Skiff) [Another nod to this indestructible workhorse.]

On bigger inboard sport-fishers, owners laud the open layout, creature comforts, and ride in rough seas.

Great to live on. Great to fish on. (Riviera) [Well, it's a yacht—it better be!]

Built like a tank. (Rampage) [Have you seen the movie *Fury*?]

Excellent trolling boat, stable in rough water, and rides like a Cadillac. (Bertram) [Well, duh. It's why they call them classics.]

Still can push her 30 knots at full rack. I love my boat. I give her all my money!

Offshore center-console owners waffled between speed, 360-degree fishability, ride and fuel efficiency in their list of favorite features.

It has plenty of power to outrun a storm and pretty comfortable to fish on. (Sea Pro)

Perfect combination of seaworthy, comfortable, good-looking and economical! (Sea Hunt) [Is this a boat or the description of a frugal spouse?]

As I grow older, the windlass is my favorite feature. Will never buy another boat without one. (Sea Fox) [Judging from the average age of an offshore angler, there should be plenty of windlasses on the water.]

I love having a raw-water washdown. Comes in handy when bloody fish



are caught. And plenty of rocket launchers for storage of rods. Portable cutting boards with gimbal mounts that can be moved around the boat. I really like the Taco outriggers for separation of lines. As much storage space as possible for stowing equipment. Plenty of icebox/fish-box space, and a nice 40-gallon baitwell is a must. (Sailfish Boats) [Nice list! Well-thought-out. All the judges give this a 10!]

Walkaround owners liked their spacious cockpits and the ability to overnight comfortably aboard their boats.

I have a 30 WA with an 11-foot beam, which makes for a pretty spacious cockpit. Having a lot of uncluttered room to work is one of my favorite features. (Pro-Line Boats) [Bigger is almost always better!]

The walkaround cuddly [sic] cabin covers all bases and all activities well, as well as family activities and all Some boats can do many things, but none can do all things. Trade-offs and compromises are inevitable. Buyers should make lists of their top needs and wants.

fishing scenarios. It is an overnighter or a dayboat. It can be an offshore troller or inshore explorer. (Grady-White) [Man, we like that cuddly part!]

My wife loves cruising on it while I fish. She does not fish. (Boston Whaler Conquest) [Sounds like he has found the perfect boat for a trouble-free marriage, but how does she settle for a 6-knot cruising speed?]

My boat is an absolute jack-of-all-trades when it comes to versatility and capability. It has strength, speed, comfort, range, and can handle seas like a larger vessel due to its wide beam and weight. It's no wonder I've owned two of them. (Grady-White) [With over 60 contiguous years of boatbuilding, it's no wonder Grady-White gets so many comments.]

NO REGRETS

BIGGEST DISAPPOINTMENTS

We're quite pleased to report that the single-most-common answer to the question of what disappoints you about your current boat's build was... nothing, none, nada.

Of course, we did hear about issues, chief among them: "I need a bigger boat." But many answers also reflected the age of the boat, and in many cases, problems with older hulls have been remedied in new designs for the same model.

Here are a few of the disappointments, listed by boat type:

BAY BOATS

Needs different dry storage, but hell, this is a fishing boat. (Skeeter) [Have you looked at them lately?]

Has good baitwell...livewell...but no fish box for icing down catch! Always have to take a cooler, which takes up space! [They build in coolers now, buddy!]

It leaks. [Uh-oh. Have you heard of Flexi-Seal?]

Not enough freeboard/low gunwales.

(Bayboats) [Several similar remarks reveal a few owners should've looked at the new hybrid boats, such as Regulator XO26.]

No windlass. [If wishes were fishes. In a bay boat?]

DUAL-CONSOLES

Not very much unfavorable about this boat. If anything, it's that it has a single motor. [See page 72.]

The soft top gets in the way at times. [Go topless.]

FLATS SKIFFS

It doesn't wash itself. You don't make your crew wash it? Seriously?]

If it were 2 feet longer, it would be perfect. [If it were 2 feet longer, it would be a bay boat. Start reading on page 42 to find your perfect bay boat.]

Can't go offshore...but I knew that.

[You need two boats-37 percent of our respondents have more than one!

INBOARD SPORT-FISHERS Rocks and rolls on the drift if there's any kind of sea on. You sound like a candidate for a Seakeeper.]



Cruises at 18 to 20 knots. Would like it faster. Repeat after us: Must buy a Yamaha 425 XTO Offshore outboard!]

Small enough; however, large enough. [Can you say "oxymoron"?]

I am 6-foot-3 and need a little more headroom, and like most boats this size, the captain's bed is never long enough for my wife and me.

OFFSHORE CENTER-CONSOLES A herd of cats got in my boat and destroyed every piece of my new marine deck. (Mako) We've heard that cats had started traveling in herds.]

Not enough space between seatback and transom baitwell. Tough to walk through, especially while fighting a fish.

Height of console (hard to see over for **short people).** [Ahem, I feel your pain.]

Some buyers would like a bigger boat, a bigger berth, more freeboard, and bigger, better dry storage; others simply covet a smaller console.

Old and outdated. Newer boats seem to have much-better-thought-out features.

WALKAROUNDS

Can be challenging to get to the bow due to my feet, which are bigger than the walkaround.

Difficult to fish off the front. We've heard that about walkarounds.]

Needs more fishing room. I would rather have a center-console, but my wife wanted privacy when use of the port-a-potty is needed. Also, I'd like to have a second control station on the hardtop for sight-casting red drum and cobia. [We know. It's all about compromise.]



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NO REGRETS

LESSONS LEARNED

We like it when boaters help boaters. Many of you answered the question about what you have learned from your current boat that you'd apply when shopping your next boat with some useful advice for other boating anglers.

Here are some of your words of wisdom for the future (grouped by boat type):

BAY BOATS

Look for build quality and builder reputation.

A solid platform and motor that's well-maintained will be a workhorse for a long time.

Quality of construction and ease of access to common maintenance items (pumps, seacocks, batteries, filters, etc.).

Buy the best boat you can afford. [It's almost always cheaper to buy the boat you want than to compromise and try to trade up two years later. That extra \$50 a month the smaller boat saved will cost you an extra \$200 a month in two years.]

Organization and placements of wiring can make or break things.

Want a 40-foot bay boat. [Has he looked at pontoons? Or floating docks?]

DUAL-CONSOLES Spend the money and get what you want the first time around.

Next time I'll opt for wider beam and more storage. [We hear this again and again. We repeat: Buy the boat you want if you can; skimping now costs more later.]

Complete a full inspection of all systems to assess boat value before making a purchase.

FLATS SKIFFS It's taught me that I can't get everything I need in one boat. [Our kind of boater—buy two!]

Rod holders out of the way under gunwales. Self-bailing, if possible. Emergency wheels under the hull when you run aground. [Oh, how tricky would that be?]

Spend more time on test ride in rough conditions.



INBOARD SPORT-FISHERS Variable deadrise to moderate roll on the drift.

A lot of space and plenty of storage is a must for my next purchase.

Look for an easy-to-maintain engine room with easy access to all areas that require timely maintenance.

OFFSHORE CENTER-CONSOLES Craftsmanship in the builder, baitwell pumps that are adequate, and comfortable layout.

Determine the primary use of the boat. If offshore is primary, get as much boat as is practical.

Look for comfort so your family and friends can get out of weather. Also, always check for electrical wiring done well, because as boats age, wiring can become expensive and time-consuming to repair.

Quality construction and design becomes glaringly apparent in rough conditions.

Maintenance ease and a solid build rank high on our boaters' list of lessons learned from previous boats. Many reminded us: Spend the money and get what you want.

WALKAROUNDS

My wife and family are adamant about a walkaround, so I look for function over form as far as actually using the walkaround feature safely in the ocean conditions in which I fish, and we boat as a family. [Sounds like you like to actually walk around your walkaround. Refreshing!]

Comfortable riding is extremely important. The fatigue at the end of the day is greatly reduced by a good ride.

Easy-to-access and well-documented systems. Better preventative-maintenance schedule and logs. A reliable support system and parts availability.

I look at the wiring leads to see if they are neat and if they are labeled.

I need only a bathroom, livewell and cooler. [I'm trying to picture it...or maybe not.]







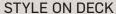
Your time on the water is precious. You return, season after season to make unforgettable memories, fight a few fish, reconnect with friends and re-center yourself. If you count on having this time, you need an outboard you can count on to power it. **That's why boaters choose Yamaha for the long run. For life. Because reliability starts here.**



Gear Up for the Water

YOU DON'T NEED IT UNTIL YOU NEED IT, THE OLD SAYING GOES, GRANTED, SOME OF THESE PROD-UCTS MIGHT OCCUPY THAT GRAY AREA BETWEEN WHAT YOU NEED AND WHAT YOU WANT, BUT ALL WILL SERVE IN VARIOUS WAYS BOATERS WHO FISH.

By Doug Olander and Alex Suescun



Xtratuf women's 15-inch Legacy boot now comes in black, with Groovy Grayling pattern by FisheWear, an Alaska-based maker of fish-inspired apparel and gear for women. Also available in brown with seven other cuff accents from sizes 6 to 11, the Legacy boot incorporates slip-resistant, nonmarking outsoles for superb traction on deck and wet surfaces; triple-dipped shells for durability and watertight protection: and hand-layered construction, adding flex and strength to critical stress points. \$135; xtratuf.com



MONSOON WEAR

The Grundéns Buoy X Gore-Tex jacket is designed for functionality and comfort, and made to withstand the rigors of extreme weather. Utilizing Gore-Tex three-layer laminate, the 150-denier face fabric is treated with C6 DWR for maximum water beading, and prevents wet-out caused by oil, blood or fishslime contamination. The Buoy X jacket includes neoprene-shingled cuffs, dual-zippered storage pockets. kill-switch anchor, and more. Available in three colors and in sizes small to 3XL. \$479.99-\$499.99; grundens.com



EASY ON THE EYES

Few anglers are foolish enough to venture offshore without a good pair of polarized sunglasses. Costa's new Sampans offer both style and function for any boater. They're available with 580G (lightwave glass) or 580P (polycarbonate) lenses in seven colors, with the blue mirror particularly popular among offshore enthusiasts for the lenses' performance in open, reflective water. Starting at \$269; costadelmar.com



KEEPING IT REEL

From jigging and live-baiting to high-speed trolling for big-game pelagics, Penn Reels' new Torque lever-drag two-speeds have it covered. The TRQ15LD2S holds more than 400 yards of 30-pound braid for live-baiting and medium jigging duties. It offers 20 pounds of max drag, and gear ratios of 2.8-to-1 and 6-to-1. For billfish and wahoo, the TRQ60LD2S holds nearly 400 yards of 50-pound mono or 860 yards of 80-pound braid. Max drag is 40 pounds, and its gear ratios are 2.5to-1 and 5.1-to-1. \$549.95-\$599.95; pennfishing.com



MAGNETICALLY SEALED

With its HydroShield technology, featuring a strip of ultrastrong magnets along the top, Yeti's Hopper M30 is a handy accessory for use anywhere on any boat. It can hold 28 pounds of ice or twenty 12-ounce beverage cans, or some combination thereof. The Hopper's Coldcell closed-cell-foam insulation keeps beer cold all day. Its Dryhide shell is made to stand up to a ridiculous level of abuse. \$299.99; yeti.com



DEEP DIVE

The range of offshore and reef-loving gamefish that Yo-Zuri's 3D Magnum sinking deep-diving lures appeals to makes having them in one's arsenal almost requisite. Think wahoo on both coasts, as well as tunas, kingfish, groupers, amberjack and yellowtail, and more. The heavy-duty through-wired Magnums with 3x trebles come in 51/2- and 7-inch sizes, and eight color patterns (with Yo-Zuri's Color Change technology), and can dive to more than 20 feet. \$16.99 (51/2-inch) and \$18.99 (7-inch): vo-zuri.com

BELT ON BOARD

A fighting belt is one of those things you might not need—until you need it. Keep a good belt on board without spending a fortune: Check out the Calcutta 15-inch fighting belt. It's constructed of a specially formulated impact-resistant polymer shell. Foam-padded backing keeps it from slipping. The belt features an adjustable heavy-duty mesh belt with quick-release buckle and a stainless-steel cross (gimbal) pin.

\$49.99; calcuttaoutdoors.com



LOCKING BATTERY-SELECTOR **SWITCH**

The Perko locking battery-selector switch prevents a thief from stealing your boat; the switch prevents him from starting the motor. Leave your boat with the switch in the "off" position, and remove the key. With this system in place, even a hot-wire job won't allow for ignition. The Perko locking battery-selector switch retails for \$49.44; perko.com



ORGANIZED AND HANDY

Keep essential fishing tools secured and handy with the Two Knife, Plier and Boga Grip holder from Boat Outfitters. Compact, constructed of durable King Starboard, and designed to hold a pair of fillet knives, fishing pliers, and a Boga Grip release tool, the holder is available in white, arctic white, and seafoam, in both permanent-mounting and removable (with suction cups) versions. \$32.84; boatoutfitters.com



PORTABLE PROTECTION

Keep your phone, credit cards and other valuables handy but safe from the elements and drops with a Pelican Personal Utility Go case. Crushproof and watertight (submersible to 1 meter for 30 minutes). Pelican Go cases feature a divider tray with credit-card pockets, integrated latch, cushioned EVA liner, and easy-carry handle. Available in six colors and two sizes.

\$29.95-\$39.95; pelican.com



ANY WAY YOU SLICE IT

AFTCO recently added some impressive blades to its tackle inventory. The 8-, 10- and 12inch fishing fillet knives feature distinctive gold Böker 4115 German stainless-steel blades with full-tang construction and 56 to 58 Rockwell hardness to ensure that blades stay sharp and keep their edge. The textured polypropylene/TPR grip provides a firm grip even when slippery. \$69.00-\$89.00; aftco.com



SAVE IT FOR A **RAINY DAY**

When storm clouds loom in your path, having reliable foulweather gear is paramount. Salt Life's new Thunder jacket fits that bill with a zip front, hood, and waterproof polyester fabric construction. The jacket is fully lined with underarm vents for breathability, and features pouch pockets in front, plus pockets in the chest and sleeves. The single color is ebony, and sizes run from small to 2XL (men's). \$176; saltlife.com



WI-FI IN THE **FAST LANE**

Put an end to unreliable Wi-Fi with the Shakespeare Stream marine cellphone signal booster. Place a phone, tablet or mobile hotspot near the antenna, and your connection improves. The weatherproof exterior antenna is ideal for open boats. The plug-and-play Stream is compatible with most cellular devices and major service providers in the United States and Canada. \$799; shakespeare-ce.com



STORAGE POCKETS

TackleWebs-weatherproof mesh pockets designed to provide storage in otherwise unusable spacesattach via bungee cords to leaning posts, T-tops, casting platforms and other accessories, or with adhesive hook-and-loop strips or suction cups to coolers, bulkheads and other flat surfaces. Available in a range of sizes and configurations, with marine-grade hook-and-loop strips, bungee, and stainless grommets. \$14.99-\$49.99; tacklewebs.com



PORTABLE SHOWER

A freshwater washdown system lets you keep the deck and tackle clean and the crew cool during long, hot days on the water, but it's not always an option on flats and bay boats. Big Kahuna portable showers offer an affordable solution. They are durable, easy-to-carry, self-contained units that plug into any 12-volt outlet. A sprayer with a coiled hose that extends to 8 feet comes included. \$134-\$174; bigkahunashowers.com



STAY LEGAL

SeaDek fish rulers make it easy to comply with gamefish size limits, offering an attractive, long-lasting alternative to decals and tape measures. Available in four colors, SeaDek fish rulers are 4 inches wide by 36 inches long, and come in a 3 mm thickness with a brushed texture, laser-etched numbers that won't fade, and peel-and-stick adhesive for easy installation on any bulkhead, deck or gunwale. \$25.95; seadek.com



SPRAY AND WIPE OFF

Formulated to penetrate the toughest crud, Star brite's Ultimate Xtreme Clean contains special agents that attack road grime, bug and bird deposits, grease and more, breaking their surface bond so they can be easily wiped away. Sold in 22and 32-ounce spray bottles, this all-surface cleaner/degreaser doesn't damage your finish. It is safe for use on fiberglass, plastic, rubber, leather, chrome and all metals. Starting at \$12.99; starbrite.com



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JUMP-STARTER PLUS

Don't let a dead battery leave you stranded. The portable, four-inone Weego 66.1 jump-starts your boat or tow vehicle, and charges cellphones, tablets, laptops and other mobile devices via 5-volt, 19-volt and USB outputs; it also powers 12-volt accessories such as air compressors, and includes a built-in, 600-lumen dual LED flashlight, complete with SOS functions and emergency strobe. \$159.90; myweego.com



QUIET POWER

MotorGuide's Xi5 wireless saltwater series trolling motors include handheld remote, composite shafts up to 72 inches, and up to 105 pounds of thrust. They feature Responsive Electric Steer for faster maneuvering and greater control, Digital Power Management for longer battery life, and navigation options such as Jog, Route Playback and GPS Anchor. \$1,809.99-\$2,169.99; motorguide.com



RIG AND FILLET

If your boat lacks a bait-prep station, the bait and fillet table by Ocean South is a great alternative, featuring an easy-to-clean, one-piece, molded polypropylene top, with a rigid and stable rib-core design. Available with rail mount, lock-fast mount or rod-holder mount that fits into any rod holder, and incorporates an adjustable knuckle to set the proper angle. \$35.99-\$39.99; oceansouth.us



BOOT CAMP

XtraTuf's 100-percent-waterproof leather ankle deck boot with breathable membrane is designed specifically for sport fishermen. It offers a molded EVA insole, and comes in half sizes, from 7 to 14 (men's) and 5 to 11 (women's). The single color for men's boots is brown; for women, it's olive. \$125, xtratuf.com



SCOOP AND STOW

A landing net is an important tool, but many are cumbersome and hard to stash on board, so anglers often leave them behind. Frabill's Power Stow nets are the answer. They are tough enough to subdue big, powerful fish, and collapsible to conveniently stow out of the way until needed. Available in five configurations with extendable handles to match the target species. \$49.99-\$179.99; frabill.com





SeaDek and similar EVA foam floorings have gained immense popularity among boaters, however, cleaning them is not an easy task. That's why SeaDek created Dek Magic, a cleaner specifically designed to keep your SeaDek and similar materials clean and looking like new. Safe for the environment, and great for fighting tough stains such as blood, grease, oil, wine and more, Dek Magic is sold only in 32-ounce spray bottles. \$24.99; seadek.com



JACK IT UP

Available in six models with 4- to 14-inch setback, Atlas hydraulic jack plates raise the outboards (up to 625 pounds) vertically several inches for shallowwater navigation or improved performance and speed. Built by T-H Marine with USA-made hydraulic actuator, each Atlas features a transport-plate design, super-fast (eight seconds) lifting, pre-drilling for shallowwater anchor, and a safety cable. \$1,473.67-\$1,789.46; thmarinesupplies.com



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GEAR



SE 300 SPORT **HYDROFOIL**

Sport Marine Technologies' SE 300 Sport hydrofoil minimizes cavitation and prop blowout, improving hole shot and cutting planing time, which is particularly important in shallow water. It also stops porpoising, increases stability, and improves tracking. Installation is easy, and with the optional SE Sport clip, it does not require drilling into the outboard's cavitation plate. \$69.99; sesport.com

CUTTING-EDGE TACKLE SOLUTION

Not enough storage for your lures and terminal gear? The best solution to date: Plano's new Edge tackle boxes. Their Dri-Loc seal keeps salt water out and lures dry, and their proprietary Rustrictor coating further ensures that. An ingenious system of recessed, precisionmolded dividers maintains gear separation, preserving the angler's system of organization. \$19.99-\$49.99; planomolding.com



TAKE A SEAT

Anglers looking to upgrade their seating in large center-consoles will want to consider Nautical Design's Premier helm unit, with high-end seating, tackle storage, rod and cup holders, and a host of other amenities. The unit includes bench-style seating, dual and triple flip-up bolster seats with outside folding arms, a tackle-storage system with drawers and hanging-lure racks, a drop-down rigging table, and more. \$6,500; nauticaldesigninc.com

CENTER CONSOLES 180 | 190 | 210 | 230 | 260 | 280

CABIN CRUISERS 215 | 235 | 255 | 285





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THE CONNECTED BOAT

Siren offers an easy-to-use app, global 3G connectivity, and the choice of wired and wireless sensors, allowing you to track your position via GPS and set geofences to know where your boat is at all times. The MTC also allows you to monitor bilge levels and engine functions, and control your lights, air conditioner and other systems from anywhere. \$599.99, services starting at \$17.97 monthly; sirenmarine.com



JIG MANAGEMENT

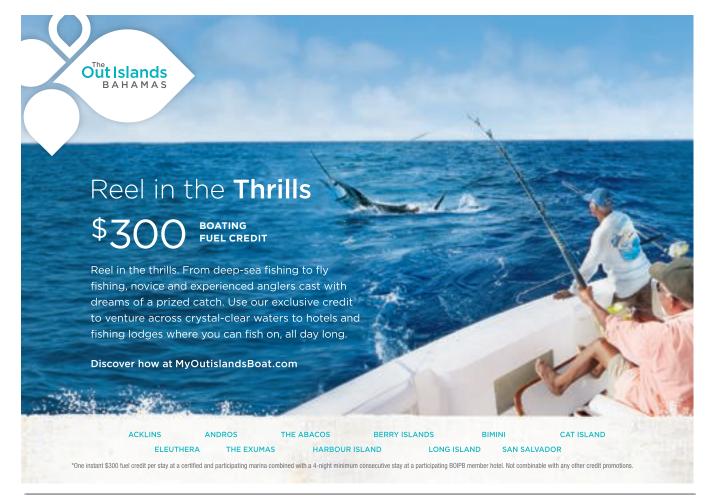
Long metal jigs don't always fit into standard tackle boxes. Keep yours organized with Mustad's waterproof jig pouch. The large pouch holds 35 jigs—five slots for jigs up to 11 inches, 18 slots for jigs to 7½ inches, and 12 slots for jigs to 6 inches. The pouch also offers various pockets for assist hooks, leader material and more. The 500-denier waterproof material includes a carry handle and quick-lock strap closure. \$61.99; mustad-fishing.com



LOADOUT GOBOX 30

Keep your gear protected, organized and accessible with Yeti's LoadOut GoBox 30. Available in charcoal, white and desert tan, it's just the ticket. Waterproof and nearly indestructible, the LoadOut GoBox provides 30 quarts of storage, and is built to endure years of exposure to the sun, extreme temperatures, and the abuse of lugging it in and out of the boat. Accessories included: divider, caddy and pack attic.

\$249.99; yeti.com





Offshore vs. Inshore

By Chris Woodward

When it comes to electronics, many anglers prefer simplicity—one unit that displays charts and sonar. In truth, that could be considered the main electronics necessity for offshore fishing, save a properly set up VHF radio.

In some regions, radar also is necessary because of weather impediments. In our survey, 69 percent of inboard sport-fish owners had or planned to buy radar, as did 53 percent of center-console owners.

For inshore fishermen, electronics might seem superfluous. But just because you can see land, that should not lull you into false security. You too need at least GPS and communications.

OFFSHORE ESSENTIALS

For sonar to provide detailed returns in depths of more than 500 feet requires

at least a 500-watt chirp system, if not 1 kW, suggests Raymarine/FLIR marketing manager Jim McGowan. More-powerful units mark bottom at greater depths and support a wider array of transducers.

"The way technology has changed, a standard 50/200 kHz transducer has almost become an antiquated tool," says Tom Zambetoglou, regional sales manager for Navico, which owns the Simrad and Lowrance brands. "Wide-beam technology has given the fisherman a broader view under the boat."

Zambetoglou recommends a 1 kW Airmar B175HW high-wide transducer, which pairs with Simrad's Go Series and evo3 multifunction displays—all feature internal 1 kW sounders. "The reason the B175HW is popular is it does a fantastic job inside 300 feet, fishing wrecks and trolling, and when you're offshore, it does a fabulous job in the upper water column, distinguishing bait [from] tuna."

For Garmin, the GPSMap series of multifunction displays best addresses offshore-fishing needs, says David Dunn, director of sales and marketing. Those Many anglers prefer a single, large display, particularly since they can split the screen to show a variety of windows.

units have up to 1 kW built-in chirp sonar, which covers most bases, he says. The 8600 series, in particular, can split its main window into six separate screens.

Dunn says his preference is to mount two MFDs side by side, and dial in one to sonar and the other to his charts with radar overlay. However, he says the trend is for anglers to purchase one large display.

UNDERWATER ROAD MAPS

Zambetoglou stresses good cartography because current charts have become so user-definable. "You can target areas, and do color shading and contouring, and really define where you're fishing," he says about Navico's C-Map products.

In addition, live-mapping apps such as Raymarine's RealBathy or Navionics' SonarChart Live let you build your own contours, McGowan says.

Garmin GPSMap units come pre-loaded with the company's new g3 cartography. A recent upgrade to g3 Vision cards provides

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The Sea Chaser HFC CC Bluewater Series is a bold, versatile bay and offshore vessel designed for family comfort and fish-ability. Cushioned bow seating, aft fold away seating, and adjustable helm seating keeps everyone at ease with comfort. Large bait-wells, in floor fish-box with macerator pump, rod holders, and roomy open deck spacing to keep everyone excited about fishing. Loaded with more standard features than most boats in its class, and delivering the greatest value for families who enjoy every aspect of the boating lifestyle.













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- Molded-In Anchor Locker
- Starboard and Port Rod Storage
- LED Lighting Package

SEA CHASER HFC CC BLUEWATER SERIES SIZES:

	MODEL	LOA	BEAM	MAX. HP	FUEL CAP.
	27 CC	27' 3"	114"	600	237 Gallon
•	30 CC	30'	114"	700	237 Gallon
•	35 CC	35' 8"	128"	900	255 Gallon

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high-resolution Relief Shading, which shows remarkable details in reefs, wrecks and other bottom structure offshore, and in a few nearshore zones.

Navionics has introduced SonarChart Shading, and C-Map now offers Reveal. While coverage remains select, this data from NOAA multibeam sonar surveys can truly change a captain's perspective and show new fish-holding features.

EVEN INSHORE, WHEN YOU CAN STILL SEE LAND, YOU NEED VHF COMMUNICATIONS AND GPS.

SAFETY SOLUTIONS

"In my humble opinion, nobody should go offshore without a fully functioning and set up VHF radio," McGowan says. "I'm also shocked at how many boaters never activate the digital selective-calling feature on their VHF."

Offshore, the VHF is the only device other than an emergency beacon that can reliably summon help, and it is directly connected to those personnel equipped to assist boaters in emergencies.

All VHFs must be DSC-enabled; many also come with built-in GPS and AIS receivers. In many cases, a fixed-mount VHF can network with the boat's multifunction display for full control on one screen.

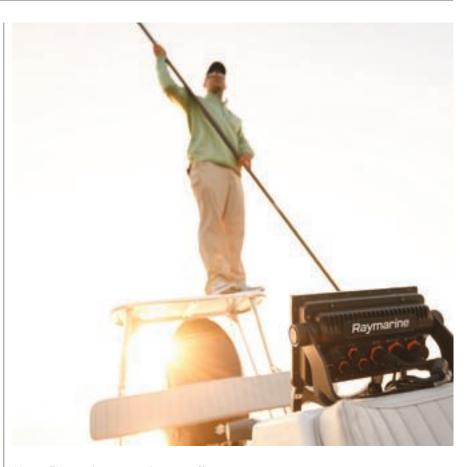
"If it's hooked up properly, the screen can walk you through what's going on in an emergency. It gives you a script, and it gives you your coordinates, as well as put the VHF into DSC mode and send out a signal," Garmin's Dunn says.

In a recent announcement, Vesper Marine debuted its Cortex system, which combines a VHF radio with a smartAIS transponder as well as remote vessel monitoring. Cortex already provides builtin, properly set up DSC distress calling.

BONUS BUYS

"Radar is an obvious addition, and many times a necessity," says Jeff Kauzlaric, Furuno advertising and communications manager. "The great thing about today's radars is all the options. For example, Furuno offers both powerful magnetron radars with its X-Class series, which bring a lot of power for finding flocks of birds, and also solid-state NXT Doppler radars that excel at navigating."

Furuno's DFF3D multibeam sonar shows anglers what's under the boat 120 degrees port to starboard in depths to



Above: Electronics companies now offer small displays with key inshore-fishing features for skiff and bay-boat owners. Side- and down-imaging functions, live sonar, and aerial-photo overlays help the shallow-water angler find more fish; detailed charts create a safety factor.

about 900 feet. "You can determine which side of the boat the fish are on, and display 3D pictures of structure," Kauzlaric says.

Garmin's LiveScope reaches only 200 feet, but it gives a real-time look at what's beneath anglers. "If you're bottomfishing, you can actually see fish swimming up and hitting the bait," Dunn says.

SiriusXM weather is another near necessity; it requires a subscription and a satellite antenna. Sirius and Garmin just launched Fish Mapping, which overlays sea-surface temperature, weed-line concentrations and plankton maps via satellite, and even proposes likely fishing areas for specific species.

INSHORE OPTIONS

Furuno says its GP1871F (7-inch) and GP1971F (9-inch) units work well for inshore anglers. Both feature multitouch displays with a GPS/WAAS chart plotter, plus chirp and conventional fish finders.



SAFETY FIRST

While a VHF radio is the first electronic line of defense for safety, emergency beacons, such as EPIRBs and PLBs, play a critical role. A PLB—personal locator beacon—costs less than \$300.

PLBs and EPIRBs use satellites to transmit emergency signals to the appropriate marine rescue agencies, and they don't need ongoing subscriptions. Other devices, such as the Spot X, Garmin GPSMap 86sci and InReach satellite messengers, can cost a little less but require service plans. However, they also deliver more than emergency services, such as the ability to check in with family and friends.

Our survey showed that at least among confirmed offshore anglers, the majority own an EPIRB or PLB, while inshore anglers do not.





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Standard Seakeeper Gyro Stabilizer



Optional 5-N-1 Performance Leaning Post w/ 2nd Row Seating

Performance with Class.

style, innovation, functionality & efficiency.

no sacrifice.





ELECTRONICS





2



Digital signal processing, commonly used in sonar technology, can optimize stereo systems by adjusting output settings to each specific speaker and amp in the setup. ① Polk offers an optional DSP module that can be connected to the UMC1 controller. ② Fusion's DSP is integrated into its Apollo series stereos. ③ JL's new multicore DSP amplifier—MVi—can work with any source unit, including this JL MediaMaster 100.

COURTESY POLK, FUSION AND JL AUDIO



Popular features include bottom discrimination, which helps locate low relief. Easy add-ons include Furuno's DRS4W wireless radar, which overlays onto MFD charts or networks with smart devices.

Dunn says sonar and GPS rank as the top needs for inshore anglers—sonar to find fish, and GPS "because you can mark your dock and your favorite spots, and you don't have to worry about getting lost." GPS also allows you to pinpoint your exact location in case of emergency.

"The hottest setups we have right now

are the EchoMap Ultra 106sv and 126sv," Dunn says. "They have high-resolution IPS displays, come pre-loaded with coastal g3 cartography, have our UHD sonar (ClearVu and SideVu), and they come with the GT54UHD so you get midband chirp too."

Adding Garmin's Panoptix brings 3D technology to sonar, particularly with the introduction of LiveScope, which delivers a videolike view of

what's beneath the boat that's so clear. anglers can ID fish species. "Traditional sonar shows you where the fish were when your boat passed them," he savys. "Panoptix is game-changing."

DIFFERENT VIEWS

Side- and down-scan sonar view, such as those from Lowrance, can help show snook under docks or locate other species near jetties and in sloughs. Transommounted transducers work fine for that kind of low-speed prospecting.

> But when considering a chirp transducer. Lowrance recommends an in-hull or a through-hull version so anglers can better track the bottom at high speeds and through low- and high-speed turns.

> AVHF marine radio (at least a handheld) remains a necessity inshore, despite today's better cellular signals. Also, a smartphone can't directly connect you to the proper marine emergency personnel.

PHOTO OVERLAYS

Inshore anglers need a plotter or app with satellite-image overlay, side-scan, and super-bright displays, says Raymarine's McGowan. "The charts are good, but nothing beats the satellite image to see the flats, sandbars and channels," he says.

Side-scan lets anglers image more area than downward-looking sonar. Today's units offer incredible clarity at a distance farther than anglers can cast. Bright displays are important because many smaller boats lack T-tops.

Interestingly, our survey showed that only 30 percent of bay-boat owners and 21 percent of flats-skiff owners have side-scan on board. The percentages are similar for those owning chirp sonar.

Raymarine's Axiom RV (RealVision) units support a wide variety of charts with satellite-overlay options, including Standard Mapping's super-highresolution aerial charts, McGowan says. In addition, RealVision 3D sonar provides chirp SideVision, capable of reaching 300 feet port and starboard in water as shallow as 1 foot.



OF BAY-BOAT **OWNERS SAY** THEY HAVE SIDE-SCAN SONAR.







聞INSHORE/COASTAL



COURTESY RANGER

erhaps no other style of boat has as many varying demands made on it as does the coastal fisherman under 26 feet.

Forty-two percent of our survey respondents preferred a boat in the 21- to 24-foot range. Among current boat owners, 25-feet was the ideal size, while among first-time buyers, 22.9 feet was the median for consideration.

Overall, respondents were about evenly split as to the type of fishing they enjoyed, with 47 percent most interested in fishing bays, flats, wrecks and reefs, and 51 percent expressing a preference for offshore fishing.

While this category includes smaller center-consoles—often scaled-down offshore models—and dual-consoles, which excel when buyers are willing to sacrifice dedicated fishing features for a family-focus, clearly the king of the versatile midsize boat, built for inshore fishing, capable of safe offshore ventures, and is family-friendly, is the bay boat.

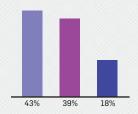
50 Carolina Skiff / 52 Caymas / 54 Pathfinder / 56 Ranger / 58 Robalo / 60 Skeeter



"If you can get one boat to do it all, that's where it's at," says Capt. Larry L. Jett, manager of saltwater business for Ranger Boats. "We take that into consideration and recognize that you buy a bay boat for a range of fishing and family use."

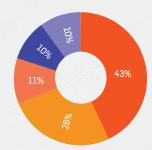
To wit, 61 percent of survey respondents said "to fish more" was their primary purpose in buying a boat; 62 percent want a hardcore fishing machine; 36 percent felt that the company of family and friends was an important consideration; and 38 percent were after a multipurpose boat.

The bay boat checks all of those boxes.



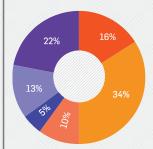
HOW OFTEN DO YOU FISH WITH LIVE BAIT?

- Less than 50% of the time
- More than 50% of the time
- Nearly 100% of the time



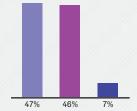
WHAT EQUIPMENT **WILL YOU MOUNT** ON YOUR CURRENT **PRIMARY BOAT?**

- Trolling motor
- One shallow-water anchor
- Two shallow-water anchors
- Push pole
- None of the above



HOW FAR AHEAD DID YOU PLAN YOUR BOAT PURCHASE?

- Less than 6 months
- 6 to 12 months
- 13 to 18 months
- 19 to 24 months Over 24 months
- I'm always planning my next purchase



HOW MANY LIVEWELLS DO YOU NEED?

- One is enough
- Two, one forward and one aft
- Three to keep different baits separated

"IF YOU CAN GET ONE BOAT TO DO IT ALL, THAT'S WHERE

Do It Right

By Glenn Law

are great places to drool, with one oat shows and dealership showrooms hand on your checkbook, but a wise decision takes some time and thought.

The comments made by our respondents regarding the correct approach to finally making a purchase boiled down to simple and straightforward advice: "Fish the boat"; "Talk to people who own the boat you are considering"; and "Do some in-depth sea trials." In short, "Do your research" was the overwhelming advice expressed by survey respondents and experienced buyers.

When making the buying decision, quality and durability are important considerations, and well worth paying for initially because the median age of bay boats owned by survey respondents was nine and a half years.

It makes sense to choose a manufacturer with a stellar reputation.

If all you want a boat for is to fish, your choices are simplified: Add nothing that doesn't contribute to the chosen mission.

If, on the other, that mission is split, or diversified—as is nearly infinitely possible with bay and inshore boats—then the buying choice requires a fair amount of well-considered choices.

The first step in a boat-buying decision defaults to determining what kind of fishing you want to do, and how you will use the boat.

Those decisions clarify the type and model in your sights; next comes zeroing in on the particulars that put those goals within reach. This is where abundant research, sea trials and simply looking at as many boats as possible that fit your desired parameters come into play.



ACCOMMODATIONS

Deciding on interior layout and seating becomes a primary consideration.

"A lot of our customers are not sure what they want," says Alan Lang, director of sales and marketing for Scout Boats.

"Do you have kids? How many people will you typically carry? Is a head important? How are you going to use the boat?"

If fishing is paramount, look no further than the signature fore and aft casting decks that typify the bay-boat design. If your boat will share its fishing time with

entertaining, then comfortable seating for nonanglers becomes more important, perhaps even if compromising fishability.

Our survey revealed that interest in forward seating was mixed: A third of respondents considered forward seating of moderate importance, and another 20 percent of low importance. Only about 20 percent considered it high importance.

Cockpit space was most important to 73 percent of our survey respondents.

A tribute to bay-boat versatility, no single layout eliminates options. "While



EDITOR'S TIP

One the lessons learned by experienced boat buyers, as opposed to first-time buyers, is the importance of getting what you want with the initial purchase. Planning to add desirable features later sounds good, but every week your boat is in the shop, or under renovation, is one less week you have it to enjoy on the water.



drain overboard. They are foam-insulated so they can be used as a fish box," which allows for versatility.

Bear in mind: The more dry storage aboard, the more options you have in how it's utilized. Dry storage may be used for storing wet items, but wet storage will never keep things dry.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Efficient rod storage is extremely important in this class of boat, and it needs to be carefully designed to keep gear out of the way when playing, yet handy to fire off a cast when fish are sighted.





Larger bay boats handle offshore duties handily (left). Abundant livewell space guarantees plenty of ready baits (above).

Because of the day-use nature of bay boats, the majority of respondents found locking storage unimportant. Still, 27 percent carry three or four rigged outfits for a day's fishing; 65 percent pack along five to 10 outfits; and 7 percent carry 11 or more.

Before you buy, consider how much rod storage is enough for the kind of fishing you plan to do, and make sure you have enough for efficiency and safety of passengers and tackle alike.

Gunwale rod holders are standard issue

our 2350 Bay Ranger has a full back seat in

it," Capt. Larry L. Jett says, "you sacrifice

the rear of your boat to comfort."

But that might be of little consequence. "We find that most inshore fishing is done from the front of the boat," he says.

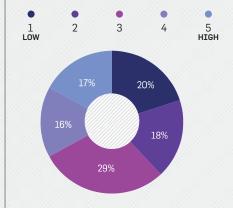
STORAGE

Our survey indicated that second behind safety and comfort, onboard storage was the priority for buyers.

"Experienced boaters know what they need in terms of storage," says Jeff Vaughn, VP Sales, marketing and service for Boston Whaler. But the company configures its storage so even those who haven't had the time on the water to determine their needs won't be caught short.

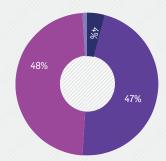
"Everyone needs dry, protected storage," Vaughn says. "All of our storage areas are finished in class-A condition and

ON A SCALE FROM 1 TO 5, WITH 1 BEING "LOW IMPORTANCE" AND 5 BEING "HIGH IMPORTANCE," HOW IMPORTANT IS FORWARD SEATING?

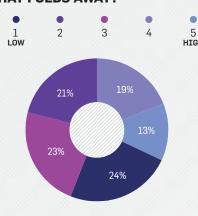


HOW SKILLED ARE YOU AT USING YOUR ELECTRONICS?

- An expert
- Well-versed in technology
- Somewhat of a novice
- Uninterested (1%)



ON A SCALE FROM 1 TO 5, WITH 1 BEING "LOW IMPORTANCE" AND 5 BEING "HIGH IMPORTANCE," HOW **IMPORTANT IS AFT SEATING** THAT FOLDS AWAY?





on any fishing boat, but supplementing them with additional holders, placed where they suit your fishing style, is always an option you should consider.

Only a quarter of survey respondents used more than four gunwale-mounted rod holders.

But among bay-boat owners who routinely fish offshore, over 80 percent felt that they need up to six gunwalemounted holders.

Rocket launchers-either on a seatback, leaning post or T-top—offer additional safe storage, and is an option worth considering.

Scout's Lang says: "Rocket launchers are not always standard, but we see a lot of them added on a new boat. They also help with the aesthetics."

Aesthetics might seem superfluous,

but pride in ownership plays a big part in buying the right boat and impacts resale.

Styling shouldn't be underrated when envisioning the boat you see yourself in.

LIVEWELLS

Both standard and essential. livewells and inshore boats go hand in hand. The configuration, capacity, number and purpose of those, however, vary as widely as styles of fishing and geography.

Two-thirds (68 percent) of survey respondents routinely carry a few dozen live baits on a typical fishing trip, and only 24 percent usually carried less than a dozen. For

WHAT READERS WANT IT'S A GREAT **ALL-AROUND** BOAT, I GO OFF-SHORE ON CALM DAYS. FISH FOR REDFISH IN THE RIVER, AND TOW THE KIDS AROUND.



Hulls designed for shallow draft and lateral stability provide the ideal platform for fishing inshore and nearshore on deeper flats.

that 24 percent, a single small well might suffice, but when live bait is your game and the success of the day depends on keeping baits healthy and frisky, additional wells or additional capacity become essential.

Forty-eight percent of our respondents felt that a single well serves their needs, with 45 percent preferring to have one well forward and another in the stern.

TWO-THIRDS OF RESPONDENTS CARRY A FEW DOZEN LIVE **BAITS ON A TYPICAL** FISHING TRIP.

Many of these decisions are based on where you live and how you fish. Large capacity, strong flow and the option to recirculate water in the well are all important when frisky live baits are the mainstay of a successful day.

If a dozen pinfish and a few dozen live shrimp are all you need, a small well in the stern and a crustacean well in the bow will certainly be adequate. Livewells are a subjective and personal decision.

"We have different options based on different fisheries," Jeff Vaughn explains. "In southwest Florida, a larger well is more desirable. In the Northeast, we

> don't use livewells: a livewell is used for trash. We try to match the livewell configuration in our boats to the market areathe place the buyer will most often be fishing."

POWER UP

Fuel efficiency and range, as well as a comfortable, solid ride, topped the list of important considerations; 63 percent of survey respondents agreed.

A solid, secure ride depends on the hull design as well as construction. Suffice it to say, top builders leave nothing to chance here, which leaves fuel



EDITOR'S TIP

Don't underestimate the convenience and versatility of the livewells. One fore and one aft should be the minimum. It's a pain to have to walk the length of the boat for a fresh bait in the heat of the action. The days when you need only one will be far outnumbered by those days when the added convenience of a second well makes life easier.

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BAY BOATS

GREEN NEW DEAL

Politicians often demand revolution, but engineers are scientists who knew marine propulsion would benefit most through evolution. Over 25 years, that evolution has satisfied the most stringent environmental demands, while also improving the boating experience. Four-stroke outboards from Yamaha, Mercury, Honda and Suzuki enhance boaters' experience by being more powerful, quieter, and more fuel efficient, while emitting fewer pollutants into the air and water. Much of those accomplishments have been enabled by new, electronically driven ignition and timing systems, and those have evolved into effortless, integrated electronic steering like Yamaha's XTO Offshore and digital throttle and shift systems enjoyed by all brands.

efficiency and range a variable, both of which are a function of the outboard power and fuel capacity.

All boats are rated with a maximum horsepower allowance for that particular hull. But just because you can doesn't necessarily mean you should. Powering to the max certainly gives you top speed, but that's not always the most important consideration. Fewer than 20 percent of those surveyed ranked maximum speed as the most important considering when choosing a boat/motor combination.

Hanging the largest possible engine off the transom will certainly give you speed, and perhaps a shorter time to jump on plane, but the additional weight of a larger engine might not be worth the limited benefits. More power might allow you to cruise at a lower rpm, but that has to be balanced against a possible decrease in range, depending on the fuel-consumption differential between maximum horsepower and acceptable horsepower.

Jordan DeLong, director of marketing for Contender Boats, explains that while the company's bay boat is rated for 400 hp, "the most popular motor on our 25 Bay is the 300 Yamaha, due to the weight and reliability. And you don't lose much speed. That engine runs superbly in the mid-60 mph range. Most of the time you don't want to go much faster than that."

MECHANICAL SYSTEMS

Gone are the days when stainless fittings and sound constructions were considerations. In a competitive market, subpar execution writes its own demise.

However, an additional set of mechanical considerations has emerged, with once-luxury-but-now-standard accessories such as shallow-water anchoring systems and trolling motors.



Within our polled sample, 67 percent of current owners' boats are equipped with a trolling motor. Forty-two percent are fitted with a shallowwater anchoring system, and 17 percent have a pair of them.

Our survey indicted that 65 percent of buyers want their boat fully equipped with the option of choice at purchase, a growing trend among buyers.

Those who choose to add the gear later would do well to set up the boat properly, with backing plates and wiring in place and accessible.

"One thing we do at Scout is install Deutsch waterproof connectors on our wiring harness," Lang says. That makes it easier on the dealer's additions later, and for the owner, it provides a plug-and-play installation.

ELECTRONICS

Right along with livewells, electronics is a personal choice and a highly customizable

WHAT READERS WANT I WANTED A 24-FOOT BOAT **BUT BOUGHT A** 21-FOOTER, I SHOULD HAVE STAYED WITH MY ORIGINAL THOUGHT.



feature. Sonar leads the list of popular installations, with 83 percent of owners having it or planning to purchase it. A VHF radio/essential safety is second in popularity, with 67 percent of respondents having it on their boats.

The formerly minimalist layout of the bay-boat helm is rapidly expanding, as buyers opt for more and bigger multifunction displays and wider variety of electronics. Traditionally a 9-inch screen was large on a bay boat, but that's changing.

"We are putting more and more space at the helm for bigger screens," Vaughn says. "There is a lot of customization at the helm, and we make sure we provide enough space to make that easy to do."

Overall, the trend in electronics is to replicate what is on larger boats, from side-scan sonar to radar.

"The movement is the bigger the





THE BAY-BOAT HELM IS EXPANDING, AS **BUYERS OPT FOR MORE AND BIGGER MULTIFUNCTION DISPLAYS AND A** WIDER VARIETY OF **ELECTRONICS.**

better," DeLong says. "Our boats have up to 16-inch MFDs. We get lots of requests for dual sounders—chirp and such."

Buyers are also trending toward purchasing electronics with the boat, rather than adding specific items later.

"Over half of our boats go out with

Bay-boat features, such as casting decks, give sight-casters a better view, improving accuracy. Deeper deadrise and longer length add the option of offshore fishing.

Raymarine electronics," Vaughn says.

As well as simply getting what you want when you buy the boat, having a factoryinstalled electronics suite allows servicing or replacement later to be much simplerand more economical.

"People are increasingly buying all their electronics with the boat," DeLong says. "Our electronics installations have increased. We see a real trend in factory installations, and we like it that way. It keeps other hands—over which we have no control—off the wiring when there's one group of people who touch it."

THINK AHEAD

With time, effort and agonizing rolled into the final boat-buying decision, it's important to recognize that someday you'll put your boat up for sale. That's when you'll discover the true cost. The initial price of a boat is secondary to the actual cost, which you realize once you sell it. The price is what you negotiate up front for a new boat; the cost of that boat is the difference between the price you paid and the amount you are able to get out of it when you sell it.

It makes little sense to skimp up front on the purchase price; every feature on the boat makes it more valuable to the next owneryour buyer. And you'll have the enjoyment of using those features over the course of your ownership.



EDITOR'S TIP

The quest for the elusive one boat that does it all continues, and the increasing popularity of dual-console designs attests to the versatility of the layout. More than ever, manufacturers are turning out dual-console boats that incorporate important fishing features as part of the design rather than as an afterthought.



Shallow Ventures

By Alex Suescun

f you find sight-fishing in shallow water f you find signt-usining in some for fabled inshore game like bonefish, redfish, permit, snook, striped bass or tarpon especially appealing, a flats boat or technical poling skiff is the right choice for you. Not only do they float shallower than other boat types, but they also superbly negotiate tight quarters in coastal creeks, marsh bayous and backcountry lagoons. The fact that they're a breeze to trailer, can be stored in a garage, and require less horsepower are major bonuses, especially for the budget-minded.

POLE OR TROLL

Should you plan to focus primarily on stalking species that forage in water a scant few inches deep and are endowed with seemingly supernatural powers of detection, a poling skiff will be hard to beat. Boasting a narrower, more lightweight hull than a flats boat, a poling skiff is designed to draw less than 8 inches of water and glide stealthily—with no hull slap to alert fish in the vicinity-propelled by a push pole, as the name implies, while the occupant tracks down their target. It can also turn easily with a stroke of the push pole to quickly respond to the quarry's sudden changes in course.

The Maverick 17 HPX-S, Yellowfin 17 Skiff and Spyder FX17 Flicker are good examples, providing the desired shallowwater performance, and equipped with spacious fore and aft casting decks, poling platforms, and all the necessities for what amounts to skinny-water hunting.

Flats boats still draw less than a foot, but they aren't meant just for poling. In fact, it's common to see anglers fishing shorelines, channels, docks and jetties



aboard flats boats propelled by a bowmounted trolling motor, which allows greater water coverage in less time.

The popular Hewes Redfisher 18 or Carolina Skiff's JVX CC Series exemplify the flats-boat category, offering more versatility—a desirable trait among inshore boaters surveyed. Along with its bigger footprint comes more storage, fishing room and seating; increased stability; a larger fuel capacity—which translates to greater range—and more amenities, like a bigger or additional livewell, sizable insulated fish box/cooler, and perhaps rod lockers; and integrated spray rails or a pronounced bow flare to mitigate sea spray.

BENEFITS AND LIMITATIONS

Venturing way up the flats or deep into the backcountry-far from the Intracoastal Waterway and other high-traffic, high-fishing-pressure areas—is perhaps the greatest benefit flats boats and poling skiffs afford. Some models incorporate a tunnel or transom pocket in their hull design, enabling you to run shallower with the motor-and

Flats boats and skiffs have the singleminded purpose of bringing you face to face with your quarry before you cast.

propeller-trimmed higher. Others accomplish the same with a hydraulic jack plate, which raises the outboard vertically and also helps takeoff in shallower water.

Of course, knowing how much water your flats boat or poling skiff draws is crucial to avoid getting stranded far from the nearest channel when the tide ebbs or a strong wind blows all the water out of the flats or marshes you're fishing.

Going by a boat's published specs could prove costly. There's no regulation dictating how boatbuilders must measure draft, so some list that of the empty hull; some the draft of the boat with motor, fuel and actual fishing-situation load; and others fall somewhere in between. As you narrow down your boat choices, contact the builders to learn how each measures draft. Then ask boat owners for their real-life assessment before finalizing your short list.



EDITOR'S TIP

Shallow-water access was essential for 15.7 percent of surveyed flats- and bay-boat owners, but a lightweight, shallow-drafting boat isn't always better. If you don't fish only shallow flats, or must cross open water to reach the fishing grounds, a hull with a bit more heft and somewhat of a "V" at the bow will make the ride more comfortable.



Boats shown in photographs may include additional features not included in the available list of options. See your local Skeeter dealer for complete details. *Nationally Advertised Price; actual sales price determined by dealer. Price does not include freight, dealer prep, and T.T.L.. Manufacturer's Suggested Retail Price (MSRP). Prices may vary due to supply, location, freight etc. Actual prices are set by the dealer. ©2020 Skeeter Products, Inc. All rights reserved. This document contains many of Skeeter's valuable trademarks. It may also contain trademarks belonging to other companies. Any references to other companies or their products are for identification purposes only, and are not intended to be an endorsement. Remember to observe all applicable boating laws. Never drink and ride. Dress properly with a USCG approved flotation device and protective gear.



Carolina Skiff

arolina Skiff proclaims its boats to be "the most durable, versatile and affordable...on the market," with more standard features than most, yielding a tremendous value for every boating family looking for an extension of their boating lifestyle.

They're virtually indestructible and consequently among most-commonly-seen brands nearly everywhere, and among those most represented in our survey.

A Solid Fiberglass construction produces, durable, non-flexing and wood-free Carolina Skiff hulls, now warranteed with a 10 year structural hull warranty, in addition to a 5 year limited bow to stern warranty.

The Ultra Elite Series expanded its lineup with the all new 26 Ultra Elite. Ready for family fishing, tubing, and other watersports along with cruising inshore, offshore, in the baysand don't forget large rivers and lakes, this boat does it all. Versatility, says the company, is the hallmark of Ultra Elites.

26 ULTRA ELITE

Largest in the series, the new Carolina Skiff 26 Ultra Elite comes standard with a step-in console with a port-a-potty, lockable storage, rear jump seats, self bailing deck, stainless steel hardware, rod holders, and U-shaped bow seating with drop-in table (36 percent of respondents say they need bow seating).

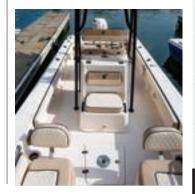
Like its Ultra Elite slip-mates. the 26 has lockable console doors, full instrumentation, and quick-disconnect windshield for easy storage. Also standard are plenty of LED illumination, high-capacity bilge pumps and high-speed water pickups, premium gelcoats, and fully molded liners with nonskid surface.

Standard fishing features include an aerated livewell (meeting the needs of 63 percent of respondents; an optional leaning post's 32-gallon livewell satisfies nearly all of the rest), and an insulated aft fish box. A dozen undergunwale racks alone meet the needs of all but 20 percent of CC survey respondents.

Anglers might eye options such as a trolling-motor panel, additional gunwale-mounted rod holders (to please the 70 percent of CC respondents who said four rod holders, the 26 Ultra Elite's standard, aren't quite enough), and a 6-inch hydraulic jack plate.

Comfort and entertainment options include canvas Bimini or T-top, stereo, electric flushable head, freshwater tank with shower nozzle, and raw-water washdown. Pick from nine hull colors to create your dream boat.

MORE INFO carolinaskiff.com



Survey Says:

ON TARGET

Aft seats convert to casting deck, maintaining comfort and fishability

Step-in console is family-friendly

Rod and tackle storage are ample

OWNERS SAY

Rides great

Fishability, comfortable and economical

Ease of maintenance and efficiency

BRAND SAYS

Quality, value and style

Most features and best functionality on the market

SPECS

LOA: 26'

Beam: 8'

Fuel Capacity: 78 gal. Dry Weight: 3,734 lb. plus power

Max HP: 300

Certifications: NMMA

Wide walkways around the deck ensure plenty of cockpit and foredeck fishing space.



WINTER SALES EVENT





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Caymas Boats

ormer world-champion boatracer Earl Bentz founded and nurtured the Stratos, Javelin and Triton fiberglass-fishing-boat brands to combined sales of more than 200.000 boats.

Now, Bentz has founded Caymas Boats, dedicated to meticulous design and construction of the highest-quality, bestperforming custom fiberglass bay and offshore fishing boats possible for uncompromising inshore and offshore anglers.

Caymas boats are produced in Ashland City, Tennessee, by an expert team with an average of 30 years' fiberglass experience each, making a combined total of more than 1,500 years!

Saltwater boats will arise from Michael Peters' patented Stepped-Vee Ventilated Tunnel hull, or SVVT, which provides increased speed and fuel economy by reducing water drag, as well as producing a more luxurious and drier ride.

CAYMAS 26 HB

This new crossover centerconsole combines premium

tournament-fishing features with family-style creature comforts; both enjoy a velvet-smooth ride.

Caymas says that most hybrid or crossover bluewater boats leave out such key fishing features as sufficient livewells and baitwells, lack enough interior room and comfortable seating for passengers, or deliver a ride ranging from bumpy to bone-jarring. Not so with the Caymas 26 HB, the company says, with its combination of pro-level fishability, distinctive contemporary styling, and family-focused comfort.

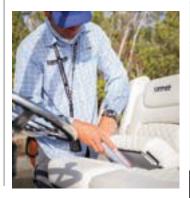
Construction standards include fully finished fiberglass console, lids, boxes, doors and bilge area. The boat's hull carries a limited lifetime warranty, and components a three-year limited warranty.

Fishing-minded features include a nonskid casting deck, massive built-in storage compartments, including lockable storage in the bow (requested by 34 percent of survey respondents), two 35-gallon livewells, multiple aerated livewells and baitwells, four gunwale-mounted stainless-steel rod holders (the minimum for 30 percent of respondents; two more are optional), and a 4-inch jack plate.

For the family, there's cushioned seating at bow (one-third of offshore CC respondents asked for it) and stern, wide-beamprovided extra elbowroom, high freeboard, and deep gunwales for added safety and security, a Bluetooth stereo system, and a port-a-potty in the console.

It's fishing-ready and family-friendly.

MORE INFO caymasboats.com



Survey Says:

ON TARGET

Dual 35-gallon livewells

Michael Peters' hull delivers solid ride, speed and efficiency

Dual swim platforms, one with a ladder

Aluminum backing plates for major components add lifelong durability

BRAND SAYS

Will provide great memories and a phenomenal ride

Does it all for the serious fisherman and for family fun

Designed for family fun and a day's comfort

SPECS

LOA: 25'7"

Beam: 9'

Fuel Capacity: 90 gal.

Dry Weight: 4,100 lb. plus power

Max HP: 400

Certifications: NMMA

OPTIONALLY POWERED



Tackle storage is generous, including compartments under the leaning-post seat.

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BUILDER BENCHMARK





Pathfinder Boats

athfinder, in keeping with its "angler-driven" descriptor, designs each boat model from a challenge: comfortable and safe mastery of a specific angling application, informed by pro guide staff members and its legion of loyal customers.

Pathfinder is part of the Mayerick Boat Group with sibling brands Mayerick, Hewes and Cobia.

PATHFINDER 2600 TRS

Pathfinder's 2600 TRS is a charmer of a bay boat, with the good looks and comfort amenities that suggest an evening of island hopping or dinner. But it's more than ready for tournament-level hardcore fishing the next day.

A double-stepped hull -lightweight thanks to vacuuminfused construction—pops onto plane, swift and fuel-efficient. It's stable at drift or anchored, and a standard Atlas jack plate makes it shallow-water versatile. Despite its bay-boat designation, it's ready for some bigger waters too.

Open space—of major

importance to 73 percent of bay-boat fishers—is retained thanks to in-floor storage and large, lockable storage areas for rods and other gear, which is something 38 percent of our bayboat respondents require. The console contains flip-out storage compartments for neat containment of more tackle and tools.

The boat is wired and ready for a 36-volt trolling motor, favored gear of two-thirds of bay-boat anglers. Raw-water and freshwater washdowns make keeping it clean a breeze, even when fishing action has been frantic. The livewell measures 36 gallons.

Seating is both generous and flexible, with spots for up to 10. The deluxe helm seats, with backrests, have fold-down armrests and flip-up bolsters. Forward console seating has a cooler beneath. Up front, flip-up forward-facing backrests disappear when fishing. Integrated rear deck seating provides perches for three, each with an independent flip-up seat; they fold out of the way and create a large casting deck. Four

flush-mounted rod holders line the gunwales. (A rod rack on the optional hardtop holds four more.)

Inside the fully finished console is room for storage, privacy for changing, or it can be rigged with a head. Other options include Power Poles, cushion packages, hardtop or T-top, upper station, Garmin electronics and more. And for the moment that begs for neither cruising nor fishing? Well, there is an optional tow pylon.

MORE INFO pathfinderboats.com



Survey Says:

ON TARGET

Lockable rod storage

Raw-water and freshwater washdowns

OWNERS SAY

Very versatile

Rides quite well and can go in about 17 inches of water

Easy to fish out of, great looks, cleans up great

Can go skinny water or nearshore comfortably

BRAND SAYS

Born to do one thing: put dedicated anglers on fish

Pathfinder defined the term "bay boat"

SPECS

LOA: 26'2"

Beam: 8'10"

Fuel Capacity: 78 gal.

Dry Weight: 3,350 lb.

with power

Max HP: 350

Certifications: NMMA

EXCLUSIVELY POWERED



Rod lockers store 81/2inch sticks, and forward seats fold up from the hatches.



The road to paradise Isn't Actually a Road.

Where you're going there are no roads.

No stop lights. No traffic jams. Because paradise doesn't have a street address.

It's the water kissing the sky along the horizon. The sun on your face.

Paradise is out there for you to find.

You just have to pick a COBIA and go.







Ranger Boats

S panning more than 50 years, Ranger Boats has crafted an extensive lineup of fiberglass and aluminum saltwater and freshwater boats, plus fishing and cruising pontoons.

Each new boat fills a specific niche, while classics are continually tweaked. Ranger-pioneered innovations are now industry standards. It famously led the way toward new US Coast Guard flotation standards, through its addition of safety-foam flotation material. Ranger also patented the aerated livewell, which keeps fish frisky for post-tournament release.

Ranger's fiberglass boats have a patented pultruded fiberglass transom, fiberglass knee braces, and a fiberglass stringer system that dampens engine and roughwater vibration, optimizing its stable ride.

RANGER 2510 BAY

Ready to step up your fishing game in a big bay boat? The redesigned 2510 Bay Ranger will take you there.

The 2510 is already famous

for its soft ride and Carolina flare, reverse chines, easy-access head compartment with a large, shock-supported door, diamond nonskid surface, and raw-water and freshwater washdowns. Lockable rod storage with rod organizers are included in port side and accomodate rods up to 9'.

A 40 gallon recirculated livewell with 2200gph aerated flow, a handy crustacean well aft and a 26-gallon forward livewell give plenty of bait-keeping options. A 210-quart insulated fish box with a large drain can alternately supply dry storage.

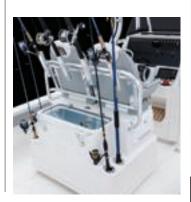
Now the 2510 comes refreshed, with deft touches including a larger back deck that drains water from the rear deck box channels. The bow cooler/livewell latch is now stainless steel, and the console door's larger gas shock eliminates slamming in rough seas.

A massive fuel tank and horsepower-rating boost to 400 means you can go far and get there fast. Fold-down aft seatstuck away quickly at fishing time. Gunwales and transom rod

holders total eight-more than most offshore and inshore survey respondents say they need.

A larger hydraulic jack plate, trim tabs and a Ranger Trail trailer are standard; hardtop. second station, shallow-water anchors, trolling motor, bow cushions, backrests and handrails are optional.

MORE INFO rangerboats.com



Survey Says:

ON TARGET

Upright, level flotation tops US Coast Guard specifications

> Livewells exceed expectations

Raw-water and freshwater washdowns come standard

OWNERS SAY

Perfect for not only saltwater fishing, but bass fishing too

Wide-open flat casting deck fore and aft

> Fishability, room and stability

BRAND SAYS

Wide-open layout and organized storage everywhere

Big-water capability throughout

SPECS

LOA: 24'9"

Beam: 8'6"

Fuel Capacity: 97 gal.

Dry Weight: 3,600 lb.

plus power

Max HP: 400

Certifications: NMMA

OPTIONALLY POWERED



Dual circulation pumps plus a recirculation pump are at the heart of one of the best livewells afloat.



Chirp Advantage

Unleash the true power of your fishfinder! AIRMAR Chirp-ready transducers will take your fishfinder to the next level...superior target resolution and amazing detail

Unleash the true power of your fishfinder! AIRMAR Chirp-ready transducers will take your fishfinder to the next level...superior target resolution and amazing detail such as lure tracking and thermoclines...that's the AIRMAR Chirp advantage.

Visit AIRMAR.com or call one of our AIRMAR Certified Installers to find the right transducer for your boat.

AIRMAR, DEFINING CHIRP TECHNOLOGY







Robalo Boats

obalo, a leader in the marine ondato, a reader in industry since 1968, calls building world-class fishing boats "a passion and a way of life."

It builds center-consoles, Cayman bay boats, dual-consoles and walkarounds. What they share are super-tough, Kevlarreinforced Hydro Lift hulls. in variable deep-V designs with straight-tracking 22- or 23-degree transom deadrise and a wave-splitting bow.

The Hydro Lift design produces quick plane times, thrifty fuel efficiency, and a soft ride. Robalo traits also include high freeboard, so anglers and others feel secure even in deep cockpits.

Robalos are hand-built in Nashville, Georgia, in a 1.2-million-square-foot production facility that has earned the company the title of world's largest single-site boatbuilder.

The company prides itself on its use of stainless-steel hardware, loom-wrapped wiring, triple O-ring waterproof electrical connectors, standard heavy-duty rub rail, and premium

upholstery. Robalo also makes its own hardtops, storage-compartment lids, dash consoles, doors and interior components.

ROBALO R230

The Robalo R230-which is near the midpoint, lengthwise, of its eight-boat center-console line—has both fishing and family boating in mind.

The fishing focus is in vertical storage for six rods, and horizontal-tubes storage for four more, along with the four gunwalemounted stainless-steel rod holders that meet the minimums for about one-third of our centerconsole survey respondents. The aft seat's folding backrest converts to a casting platform.

The aft cockpit livewell holds 25 gallons. Serving the helm, standard is an anodized leaning post with backrest, four rod holders and a 72-quart cooler; leaning-post options include powder-coated models with dual flip-up bolsters.

Up top, options include a Bimini top, console cover, hardtop in anodized aluminum or powder coat, and Taco Grandslam outriggers.

Standard are an aluminumframed glass windshield, lockable console door, forward console seat and bolster, bow cushions, two insulated 23-gallon storage compartments, portlight, porta-potty and premium audio.

You can add LED underwater lights, electronics packages, and trim tabs with indicators.

MORE INFO robalo.com



Survey Says:

ON TARGET

Ample family seating

Roomy fishing cockpit

Generous storage

OWNERS SAY

Stability is great

From fishing to scuba diving, I can do it all

Style

Stable and versatile

BRAND SAYS

Cutting-edge technology with timeless styles

The [Robalo] goal is to make boating easy

One of the driest and smoothest rides on the water today

SPECS

LOA: 23'

Beam: 8'6"

Fuel Capacity: 90 gal.

Dry Weight: 4,000 lb.

plus power

Max HP: 250

Certifications: NMMA

EXCLUSTVELY POWERED



The centered helm is comfortable, with leaning post seating and large dash for electronics.



HX890 Floating 6W Class H DSC Handheld VHF/GPS

New Ergonomic Design with the Most Advanced Features

Standard Horizon is proud to introduce the new HX890, our high-end Floating Class H DSC VHF/GPS that packs a ton of features into a sleek new ergonomically-designed case. Some prominent new features include two scrambler systems built in to ensure secure communications out on the water, and a built-in FM broadcast band receiver for times when radio communication is not necessary.

The HX890 also features a new rounded case design that provides excellent ergonomics and has been rigorously tested to conform to Military Standard. With its advanced design and features, the rugged HX890 is an industry leader, backed by Standard Horizon's 3 Year Waterproof Warranty.

- Floating, IPX8 Submersible Construction
- Extended Range 6W Transmit Power
- 700mW Loud Audio and Noise Canceling
- Two Scrambler Systems Built In
- Built-in FM Broadcast Band Receiver
- Group Monitor Function with Digital Selective Calling
- Oversize Full-Dot Matrix Display
- Versatile Scanning Operation
- Rugged New Ergonomic Case Design
- Available in Black or Navy Blue

STANDARD HORIZON



Skeeter Boats

S keeter, a Yamaha boat company and leading builder of performance fishing boats, has been building boats since 1948. It has received 18 consecutive NMMA CSI Customer Satisfaction Index awards, and its boats are certified to meet US Coast Guard, NMMA, and American Boat and Yacht Council standards.

SKEETER SX2550

At 24 feet, 6 inches, the new SX2550 is the largest in Skeeter's SX bay-boat family, an inshore/ offshore boat with the highperformance features trailblazed by its siblings. It boasts plenty of space (top concern to 73 percent of bay-boat survey respondents), a powerful ride, and familyfriendly fishability.

The brand-new boat comes in Family and Fishing packages. Rest assured: You can have plenty of family fun in the Fish model, and do plenty of fishing from the Family package. They're just tweaked a bit more in their respective directions.

Here's what the two models

share: Yamaha F300 four-stroke outboard power; a larger, taller oversize console with full-size side entry door; space enough to accommodate a portable toilet plus serve as a changing room; and within the bow deck a 145-quart fish box with macerator, and aft a 43-gallon livewell. A three-position step converts from step to deck extension to table, as you like. Fore and aft seat pedestals are also standard.

Four gunwale-mounted rod holders meet or exceed expectations of 53 percent of offshore-fishing-of-bay-boats respondents, 72 percent of inshore. Counting those on the leaning post, there are nine vertical rod holders. The SX2550 also features a 12-inch manual jack plate, built-in LED lighting, trim tabs, and raw-water washdown. Tall gunwales and a Carolina flare hull add a distinctive look and create a smooth, dry ride. Both models include stowable rear jump seats and removable rear deck backrest and cushion to seat up to four.

The SX2550 Family comes

standard with a two-tone Omni hardtop, Fusion audio with four speakers, leaning-post baitwell, bow handrails, Omni swim platform, aft underwater accent lights, and freshwater washdown. It also features removable bow deck cushions.

The Fish package offers a deluxe coastal white leaning post with fixed backrest and 80 quart Engel cooler underneath. Lifted forward, these seats create extra storage compartments.

MORE INFO

skeeterboats.com



Survey Says:

ON TARGET

Rod holders meet or exceed expectations

Forward seating meets/ exceeds expectations

OWNERS SAY

Runs in skinny water

Comfortable for four to five people to fish

Great ride

Lots of walk-around space

BRAND SAYS

Performance fishing or a family dayboat, this is your boat

High-performance features signature to Skeeter's top-quality bay boats

Quick, comfortable. convenient

SPECS

LOA: 24'6"

Beam: 8'5"

Fuel Capacity: 76 gal.

Dry Weight: 3.660 lb.

plus power

Max HP: 300

Certifications: NMMA

EXCLUSIVELY POWERED



The Family edition seating includes a removable cocktail table.



Mia, nice meeting you last night. About our date...would you like to join me on my boat tomorrow?



✓ 12 sec ago

It has a Seakeeper, right?



✓ 4 sec ago



ONCE YOU FEEL IT, YOU'LL NEVER BOAT WITHOUT IT.

SCHEDULE A DEMO RIDE TODAY





BOFFSHORE



S

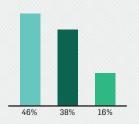
ome have likened offshore waters to a vast blue desert. Indeed, you can troll for miles and miles without seeing anything. But suddenly things change. You happen upon a patch of ocean that springs to life. Flying fish skitter above the waves. Frigate birds swoop down from on high. Schools of ballyhoo shower across the surface. You spot your quarry: the unfurled dorsal fin of a sailfish as it attacks bait. Schools of mahi, charge the boat. Blackfin tuna explode in a feeding frenzy. This is no desert. Hands tremble as you pin a live bait to your hook. You cast. Your bait lands in the epicenter of the action, and in a nanosecond, line whirls off your spinning reel in a blur. You close the bail, the line cinches taut, and the drag screams. This is what you've come for. This is offshore fishing at its finest. Getting here, however, is often a journey that begins well before you leave the marina or launch ramp. For many anglers, it begins as a quest for a boat that fits

76 Aquasport / **78** Belzona / **80** Cape Horn / **82** Boston Whaler / **84** Cobia / **86** Contender / **88** Everglades / **90** Fountain **99** NorthCoast / **100** Pursuit / **102** Regulator / **104** Scout **106** Sea Fox / **108** SeaVee / **110** Solace / **112** Yellowfin



their type of fishing, their taste in design, their boating lifestyle and, of course, their budget. Plus, for blue water, having a boat that offers offshore capabilities, sufficient range and key safety features such as self-bailing decks and navigational electronics is critical. Helping you find the right boat that fits your preferences for offshore fishing is what this section of the 2020 Fishing Boat Buyers Guide is all about. You will find the guidance you need in the pages that follow. So get out there and find the boat that will enable you find the fish amid the vast blue desert.

92 Grady-White / 94 Invincible / 96 Jupiter / 98 NauticStar



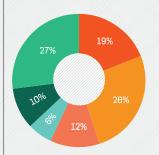
HOW OFTEN DO YOU FISH WITH LIVE BAIT?

- Less than 50% of the time
- More than 50% of the time
- Nearly 100% of the time



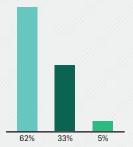
HOW MANY GUNWALE ROD HOLDERS DO YOU NEED WHEN YOU FISH OFFSHORE?

- 4
- **6**
- **8**
- 10
- More than 10



HOW FAR AHEAD DID YOU PLAN YOUR BOAT PURCHASE?

- Less than 6 months
- 6 to 12 months
- 13 to 18 months
- 19 to 24 months
- Over 24 months
- I'm always planning my next purchase



HOW MANY LIVEWELLS DO YOU NEED?

- One is enough
- Two, one forward and one aft
- Three to keep different baits separated

LINE CINCHES TAUT; THE DRAG SCREAMS. THIS IS WHAT YOU'VE COME FOR.

Center-Consoles

By Jim Hendricks

oday's most popular offshore fishing machine takes the form of an outboard-powered center-console boat. More than 30 percent of respondents in our survey own such a model-more than other kinds of saltwater fishing boats, and three times the number who own traditional inboard sport-fishers. The reason is simple: The center-console offers unfettered 360-degree access to the rail to cast, net bait, fly kites, troll dredge teasers, deep-drop, man the anchor, and battle big, powerful fish. But there's more. Centerconsoles have grown to sizes that imbue them with offshore capabilities that few could have imagined a decade ago. Some new models in this genre are pushing into the 40-, 50- and even 60-foot range.

POWER AND COMFORT

The trend toward bigger center-console boats is spurred by the introduction of ever-more-powerful outboards. Motors ranging from 300 hp all the way up to 627 ponies—bolted to transoms and brackets in triple, quadruple and even quintuple configurations—enable the development of big center-consoles, many of which reflect lightweight fibers and vacuuminfused resin construction. Big outboards, combined with advanced computer-aided running-surface designs such as step-hulls and multihulls, smoothly propel offshore center-consoles to speeds that leave lumbering diesel sport-fishers well astern.

Yet, this trend extends beyond performance and fishing. Offshore center-console boats allow more room for creature comforts such as posh loungers, foldout cockpit benches, supportive helm chairs with flip-up bolsters, mezzanine seating, and roomy, well-appointed



THE TREND TOWARD **BIGGER CENTER-CON-SOLES IS SPURRED BY EVER-MORE-POWER-FUL OUTBOARDS.**

console interiors with convertible berths. marine toilets, showers, air conditioning, and even galleys, expanding opportunities for cruising and overnighting. Plus, many consoles now come with three-sided.

full-height glass windshields to safeguard the helm from wind blast and spray, a benefit that anglers and nonanglers alike will appreciate.

Though there are many elements to consider in the purchase of these boats. Let's take a closer look at four of the rapidly evolving and practical features contributing to the growing popularity of the category. These include joystick systems to ease docking of bigger boats in tight quarters, and to maintain boat position and drift angle while fishing;

EDITOR'S TIP: VIRTUAL-ANCHORING CAVEATS

If you use a virtual anchor to hold the boat in position while you fish, pay close attention to the direction of the current. While the boat won't move, the current underneath might be running strong and could possibly carry your fishing lines into the outboard propellers, which are constantly working to maintain the boat's position with engines in virtual-anchor mode.



networked digital marine electronics that allow access and control of a wide range of onboard systems via multifunction displays; built-in high-capacity livewell systems for effectively transporting live bait to the offshore grounds; and expansion of rod and tackle stowage, allowing anglers to capitalize on a wide range of fishing opportunities if and when they occur.

JOYSTICK SYSTEMS

Even a moderate-size center-console boat -say, one of about 30 feet in length-can be handful in a crowded marina when trying to depart for a day of fishing or docking at the end of a trip, especially with a strong breeze or powerful current (or both) affecting the boat. As boat size increases, so can the difficulty factor. That's why you should consider a joystick low-speed control option, such as Yamaha Helm Master for outboards, when buying a center-console boat for offshore fishing.

Designed for multiple outboard configurations, these systems allow you to slowly and precisely maneuver a boat by simply pointing a single joystick control in the direction you want the boat to gosideways, backward, forward or any angle in between. You can also pivot the boat on its center point in either direction by twisting the joystick control.

Outboard joystick systems work by turning and shifting each outboard independently, and they are generally offered as factory options on new boats. One exception is the SeaStar Solutions Optimus 360 system, which is available either factory-installed or as an aftermarket addition by a certified installer.

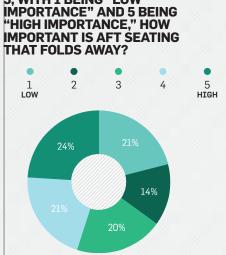


Elevated second stations—such the ones on the Solace 345 (left) and Wellcraft 352 Fisherman (above)—make it easier to spot birds, weed lines and fish from a distance.

Ease of docking is a great benefit, but there are others reasons to consider a joystick system. Station-keeping functions -also known as a virtual anchor-on the Mercury, SeaStar and Yamaha systems not only let captains automatically maintain position in wind and current, but can also lock in a heading, whether holding the boat in place or drifting over structure.

Yamaha's Helm Master system includes a Stay Point, Bow Hook, Heading Adjust and Drift Hook. The multifaceted SeaStation system integrated into the SeaStar Optimus 360 joystick steering package features Position Hold, Heading Hold and a combined Position/Heading Hold. Yamaha's Helm Master system features include Stay Point, which holds the vessel's heading and position; Fish Point, which aligns the boat with the current and wind to stay put but without maintaining heading; and Drift Point, which maintains the boat's heading while

ON A SCALE FROM 1 TO 5, WITH 1 **BEING "LOW IMPORTANCE" AND** 5 BEING "HIGH IMPORTANCE HOW IMPORTANT IS FORWARD **SEATING?** 1 10w 20% 18% **HOW SKILLED ARE YOU AT USING YOUR ELECTRONICS?** An expert Well-versed in technology Somewhat of a novice Uninterested (1%) 61% ON A SCALE FROM 1 TO 5, WITH 1 BEING "LOW IMPORTANCE" AND 5 BEING "HIGH IMPORTANCE," HOW **IMPORTANT IS AFT SEATING**





allowing it to drift over structure.

Such systems also available from Mercury, Evinrude and SeaStar Solutions use multichannel GPS positioning data, sophisticated electronic heading sensors, onboard processors, and the joystick independent outboard steering and throttle control. Activating virtual-anchor systems requires only the tap of a button or, sometimes, two. One of the coolest applications would be holding the boat over a wreck on a windy day, allowing anglers to fish straight down.

With features like Drift Hook, Heading Hold and Drift Point, you can keep the boat's bow pointed in whatever direction

you wish while drift-fishing, which can help when kitefishing. With the Position/ Heading Hold, Heading Adjust and Stay Point, you have the benefit of a virtual anchor while also maintaining the bow heading. Systems can be digitally integrated and controlled with third-party multifunction displays. SeaStation, for example, is compatible with current Garmin, Raymarine and Simrad displays. Mercury's Skyhook interfaces with Simrad displays, and Yamaha's system networks with Garmin displays.

DIGITAL INTEGRATION

The digital revolution is permeating virtually every aspect of our lives,



including fishing boats, and especially new offshore center-console models. The trend is centered on touchscreen multifunction displays, or MFDs, which serve to access, view and control a wide range of onboard systems, including electronics, lighting, propulsion, batteries, pumps, entertainment, security systems and more. Over 40 percent of owners of offshore center-console fishing boats have an MFD of 5 to 9 inches, and nearly 30 percent have an MFD that's 12 inches or larger, per our survey. C-Zone and Naviops rank as two of the leading companies in this revolution, working in coordination with boatbuilders, MFD manufacturers and

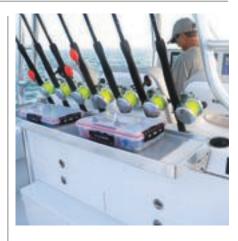
> marine-accessory companies to design customized digital switching networks.

As you sea-trial a new boat, you might not notice any difference versus conventional analog switches. But it's the versatility of digital integration that makes a difference.

For example, rather than using a switch panel to turn on an accessory, you can access controls on a networked MFD.

Digital integration also means access to a wealth of information about your boat. For instance, many outboards now output vital information via a digital network, and outboard brands such as

Evinrude, Honda, Mercury, Suzuki and Yamaha have developed displays to read this data.



Left to right: Conventional deep-V hulls remain popular today. Digital integration offers easy systems control at the helm. Tackle stowage is as important as ever.

With offshore center-console fishing boats now sporting multiple outboards, integrated MFDs reduce clutter and wiring at the helm. One MFD can cover multiple engines.

Available engine data includes rpm, speed, fuel consumption, fuel level, mpg, alternator output, battery voltage, engine temp, trim angle, engine hours and more. Displays will also show maintenance reminders, system warnings and alerts, and engine diagnostics. With all information in one place, MFDs also prove easier

DIGITAL INTEGRATION **ALSO MEANS ACCESS TO A WEALTH OF INFORMATION ABOUT** YOUR BOAT.

to read, allowing captains to quickly recognize relevant engine data at a glancean improvement over having to scan a sprawling array of dials and gauges. Info can also be shared with other displays.

LIVEWELL DESIGN

Thirty-six percent of survey respondents said that the size of the livewell was a more important aspect to fishability. Bigger is better when it comes to carrying an abundant amount of live bait on an offshore center-console.



EDITOR'S TIP: WIRELESS WONDER

WHAT READERS WANT

OFFSHORE CEN-

TER-CONSOLE

FISHING-BOAT

BUYERS OVER-

WHELMINGLY

PREFER OUT-

TO THE TUNE

OF 96 PERCENT

IN OUR SURVEY.

BOARD ENGINES.

Your boat has analog gauges, but you want the capability of an engine MFD. If the outboard is a recent Mercury of 40 hp or greater, you can add a compact VesselView Mobile module to the engine and download the free VesselView Mobile app to turn your tablet or smartphone into a de facto engine MFD. VesselView Mobile (for iOS and Android) lets you access and read engine data on your mobile device. VesselView Mobile also displays maintenance reminders, engine alerts and diagnostics.



JUPITER 37

A NEW LEGEND IS BORN







CENTER- CONSOLES

Yet baits such as ballyhoo, blue runners, goggle-eyes, mackerel, pilchards, sardines, speedos, pogies and threadfins require more than sheer capacity. They demand carefully designed livewell systems.

One of the most important considerations is the geometry of the livewell interior. It should be taller than it is wide-a column shape, so to speak-to minimize sloshing that can slam live baits against the sides of the tank and injure them. This is especially critical for boats that might run in heavy seas. A column of water with a round or oval interior also promotes "milling"—the tendency of the bait to swim in a relaxed circle.

Most new offshore center-consoles have the livewells located in the aft area of the boat, such as the transom bulkhead. This location provides the softest ride to pamper the bait. Transom livewells are also easy to access while fishing in the stern.

Nearly 40 percent of offshore center-consoles have two more livewells, our survey indicates. Some boats have two separate wells in the transom, and some have one in the transom and another behind the leaning post. A well under the aft deck is also common, and it's easy to drop a cast net full of bait into it.

The livewell should be free of interior obstructions, such as an exposed standpipe. More-advanced wells have the side drain at the top, plumbed overboard on the outside of the tank. In other wells, the standpipe resides inside a baffle within the wall of the tank.

Pressurizing a livewell is a relatively new method. It keeps bait in better condition

NEW HULL CHOICES

While many boat models still feature conventional deep-V hulls, two offshore hull designs have gained tremendous popularity in recent years. Stepped monohulls use steps to separate the running surface into three parts: bow, midsection and stern. This divides the hull's pressure wave into a trio of ridges. to minimize bow rise and draw in air from the sides, reducing friction to boost efficiency—a top consideration for 70 percent of survey respondents. Multihull boats, aka cats, might also feature steps, but the key lies in having two slender hulls versus the single beamier running surface. The two hulls knife smoothly through seas and experience less deceleration after crossing waves. These boats tend to have wider beams for more lateral stability. Cats often remain flat or lean outward in turns, but the semi-asymmetrical cross-sectional design of Invincible Boats' cat hulls allows these offshore models to bank inward in turns.



by almost totally eliminating any air voids. This, in turn, eliminates sloshing. Pressurizing requires a pump system that slightly overfills the well, and a sealed hatch to keep water from spilling onto the deck. Builders often use clear acrylic hatches that let you see the bait without opening the top. A few offshore center-consoles now feature tuna tubes for keeping large baits such as bonito alive until needed. Today's most advanced offshore center-console fishing boats use pump boxes to purge air that the water pickup ingests while the boat

is underway. Otherwise, the livewell water can become excessively aerated, which can kill bait.

TACKLE STOWAGE

Over 50 percent of survey respondents rank rod stowage as the most important aspect of fishability, and 48 percent say it's tackle centers. Bluewater anglers need

WHAT READERS WANT

IN OUR SURVEY. 54 PERCENT OF OFFSHORE CEN-TER-CONSOLE **OWNERS SAY** THEIR BOATS HAVE ADEOUATE TACKLE STOW-AGE; 46 PER-CENT SAY NOT.



yellowfin tuna might show up, requiring trolling tackle. What is the best place to stow rods and reels? Many new offshore center-console boats feature vertical rod holders along the sides of the center console. These keep

more fishing gear in anticipa-

tion of finding a wider range

of fishing opportunities. For

example, the crew might start

out the day jigging sabiki rigs

spinning rods, then switch to

conventional outfits for kite-

fishing or heavier spinning

gear for wreck-fishing. Or a

to catch live bait with light

the rods out of the way vet accessible. Front entries to the console interior (as opposed to side doors) and Key West-style tops that narrow forward help maximize the number of rods that can be stowed along the console.

Many offshore center-consoles feature rod holders along the transom, which is great when you're not fishing. But





Above left: Increasingly powerful outboards have led to ever-more-capable offshore center-consoles. Above: Catamaran hulls are growing in popularity.

for unfettered access to the stern while fishing, you'll need to move them to other locations. Rod stowage abaft the helm seating, in the area known as a rigging station, is also common. These rod rackssometimes call rocket launchers-are angled slightly aft and are easy to access.

Many center-consoles also sport rod racks along the aft edge of the T-top or hardtop, but these can more difficult to access because they are up so high.

Gunwale rod holders are generally reserved for outfits that are actively fishing, be it trolling, drift-fishing, kite-fishing, etc. That's because using gunwale rod holders while underway can expose expensive gear to corrosion-inducing spray.

Most new offshore center-console fishing machines abound with drawers and cabinets for stowing lures, spools of leader line, terminal tackle, needles and rigging tools. These lockers are located

LOOK FOR A CENTER-CONSOLE BOAT THAT OFFERS LOCKABLE ROD AND TACKLE STOWAGE.

in different places on different boats, but one of the most common and convenient spots is in the rigging station abaft the

helm seats. This way, you can quickly access tackle and rigging items while prepping lure and baits at the station. Some boatbuilders locate tackle stowage in cabinets and in drawers on the sides of the leaning-post module, and many center-consoles are equipped with tilt-out lockers in the inwales with trays designed to stow two or three plastic tackle boxes.

What about when you need to leave the boat tied up and don't want to haul all of your tackle home? Look for lockable rod and tackle stowage.

For rods, these are sometimes built into forward compartments under the bow deck, below the forward lounges or inside the console. General tackle lockers can be equipped with keyed locks to help prevent pilferage.



EDITOR'S TIP: GYROSTABILIZERS

It might surprise some readers to learn that 37 percent of our survey respondents would consider a gyrostabilizer such as a Seakeeper on their next new-boat purchase. Gyrostabilizers effectively eliminate roll (side-to-side motion) experienced in rough seas, and this is particularly helpful aboard an offshore center-console fishing boat. A gyrostabilizer greatly increases the comfort and safety when bluewater angling. Think about such an option in your next new-boat purchase.



A Step Ahead

Bv Sam White

alkaround boats have been popular designs for decades, offering boaters the best of both worlds: a large, unobstructed cockpit aft, with a substantial windshield or curtains forward for protection from the elements, plus accommodations belowdecks for an enclosed head and a V-berth for overnight trips. As the name implies, bow access is via alleys alongside or set inboard of the gunwales, making it much easier to handle the anchor while offshore or bow lines at the dock.

Walkarounds are efficient fishing platforms that typically feature a large cockpit, with many offering in-deck fish boxes along with multiple livewells, and ample storage for tackle on board (no more toting heavy boxes of tackle on and off the boat each day). Add a set of outriggers and/or downriggers to spread the

Walkaround boats can provide a very comfortable ride thanks in part to excellent protection from the elements.

baits and lures across the water column, and trolling or live-baiting is a breeze from a walkaround. In fact, 84 percent of the Fishing Boat Buyers Guide survey respondents noted that a large cockpit was their No. 1 demand of walkaround boats. At the helm is ample space for one or more multifunction displays as well, while a fiberglass hardtop provides plenty of shade on those hot, sunny days on the water.

In fact, the survey revealed that comfort was another key point. In addition to cockpit shade, 43 percent of respondents noted that having ample aft seating was of high or very high importance to them. Given their multipurpose nature, these

TURNKEY READY?

While the majority of our survey respondents indicated that they preferred purchasing a boat that was already fully equipped with options, many also reported they wanted to add a host of additional items. Among these in popularity were gyrostabilizers, especially for those who said they were spending one to three nights aboard during fishing trips or while cruising with the family. Electronics were another key consideration: A majority of respondents said that they wanted to upgrade from standard sonar to chirp and/or side-scanning sonar units in their walkaround boats. They wanted to add radar and autopilot capability as well.

boats can just as easily offer cruising options for friends and family as fishing; among the popular options are a small generator for power and to allow for air conditioning belowdecks, a great choice for overnight trips. Also of growing importance is the increasingly affordable Seakeeper gyrostabilizer for crew comfort in seas. An anchor windlass is an option almost always checked on the order form.

SAFE AND SOUND

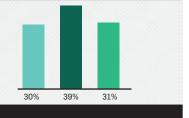
Although top speed is not among the strong suits, a soft, dry ride is certainly in the wheelhouse for a good walkaround design. In our survey, a majority of respondents wanted fuel efficiency and a comfortable ride in rough sea conditions (69 and 74 percent, respectively). Because the crew is protected from wind and spray, these boats are among the safest and most comfortable on the water.

For power options, the overwhelming majority of walkaround boats are powered by single, twin or triple outboards, offering terrific reliability, fuel economy and performance.

Our survey respondents were divided nearly in half as to whether a walkaround was best for hardcore fishing (53 percent) or as a comfortable, family-friendly multipurpose vessel (47 percent) capable of fulfilling a variety of roles, including diving, beach combing and cruising. That speaks volumes to the walkaround design's ability to easily switch gears from one role to another, doing so safely and in style along the way.

IF YOU WERE TO **PURCHASE A NEW BOAT. WOULD YOU** CONSIDER A GYROSTABILIZER?









(386) 302-6287 SOLACEBOATS.COM

Multipurpose

Bv Sam White

here is truly no such thing as a perfect boat, but there are a few designs that can expertly fill multiple roles, easily switching from hardcore fishing machine to family sandbar cruiser to tow boat for wakeboards and inflatables. One of the most popular of these is the fast-growing category defined as dual-console.

With a walk-through windshield for weather protection and easy access to the bow, plus helm and companion seating and additional seating in the stern, dualconsoles are perfectly suited for hosting families or larger groups of friends. And because there is no need to roam around an outer deck, they are also inherently safe for small children.

FISH AND CRUISE

While dual-consoles might not have the fishing reputation of a center-console, don't dismiss them entirely. Because of the forward, offset helm, the cockpit is remarkably wide open, lending itself to a variety of angling pursuits. Switching gears from trolling to anchoring on a wreck or reef for bottomfishing is quick and easy, in part thanks to safe, easy access to the bow. Few other designs offer this kind of versatility.

And with an emphasis on seating and creature comforts, it's not surprising that 54 percent of our survey respondents indicated that the reason they purchased a dual-console boat was to spend more time on the water with family and friends. Of those looking to purchase a new dualconsole, 65 percent said they wanted a multipurpose fishing boat that could be used for other activities, including cruising and watersports. Features like an enclosed head, fiberglass hardtop, multiple rod holders, built-in coolers and fish boxes, and ample room for electronics displays are present in most dual-consoles.

SAFETY FIRST

When asked about the primary design and construction of a potential purchase, 72 percent of our survey respondents said they wanted a safe, dry ride in rough sea conditions. This fits the bill perfectly with the dual-console design: In inclement weather, crew can remain seated behind



Ample seating, especially in the bow, is a hallmark of the dual-console design.

the protection of a large windshield. In fair weather, the forward seating accommodates two to six or more passengers with a first-class view of the passing ocean waters. With many dual-consoles—such as Grady-White's Freedom series, Boston

TODAY'S BUYERS ARE LOOKING FOR BRAND REPUTATION AS WELL AS THE PRICE OF THEIR INVESTMENT.

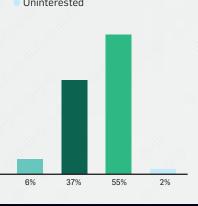
Whaler's Vantage series or Blackfin's DC series incorporating foam-filled construction—these are among the safest boats on the water.

In terms of value, today's buyers expect a strong brand reputation (72 percent) to good purchase value (75 percent) supported by the reputation. With the ability to fill a wide variety of needs, the best-built dual-console boats offer an exceptional value by providing a multipur-

pose platform that seamlessly transitions from an outstanding fishing machine one day to a laid-back family cruiser the next to business entertainer the day after.

HOW SKILLED ARE YOU AT USING YOUR **ELECTRONICS?** An expert Well-versed in technology

Somewhat of a novice Uninterested





More **LATITUDE** and **LONGITUDE**.

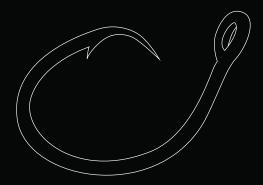
Expand your destination possibilities.

Run longer, further and in more comfort. The helm station wraps the driver and passengers in bolstered seats, while the rear fold-away bench and forward lounge entertain the crew.

The reliable Yamaha four-stroke power allows you to travel further on less by blending fuel economy with performance.

Extra storage, extra seating and extra comfort help soften the edges and define the 36XS.

Whether exploring the canyons or entertaining a group, the 36XS is dialed in.











The Big **Boys**

Bv Sam White

nboard-powered sport-fishers are the top of the heap when it comes to offshore fishing. They are usually powered by at least a pair of reliable diesel engines set within the boat's hull, not outboards exposed on the transom. They can be a convertible design, where the primary steering station is located on the flybridge, or an express or walkaround style, where the primary helm is on the command deck below, with a second station located in a pipework tuna tower 40 feet above.

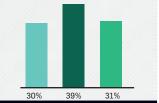
A comfortable, air-conditioned salon is a welcome respite after a long day of chasing billfish offshore.

LONG-RANGE FISHABILITY

A significant benefit of inboard-powered boats is their ability to be self-sustaining for extended periods of time. Even smaller vessels in the 40- to 50-foot range are equipped with generators to supply ample power while away from the dock to run an ice maker, watermaker, air conditioning, a full galley, and a slew of other amenities. So whether you're targeting tuna and swordfish in the distant canyons of the Northeast, overnighting in the Gulf of Mexico, or running across the Gulf Stream from Florida to the Bahamas, being able to fish in comfort for days at a time is where inboard boats truly excel.

HOW MANY LIVEWELLS DO YOU NEED?

- One is enough
- Two, one forward and one aft
- Three to keep different baits separated



PERFORMANCE

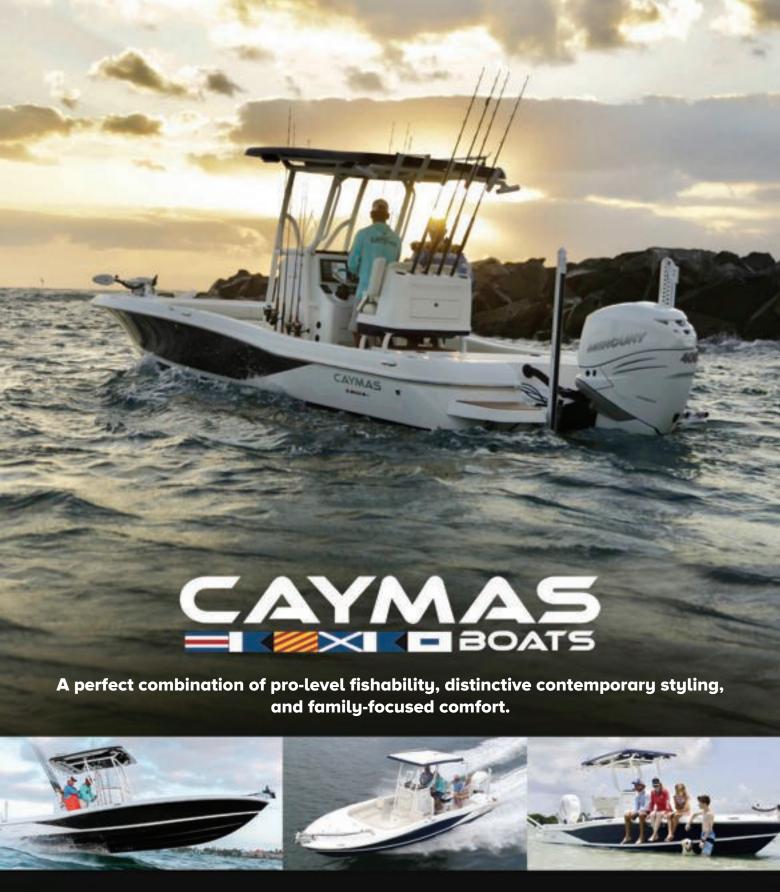
In years past, inboard boats were considered the slowpokes of the sea, with a pair of loud, clattering diesel engines leaving a haze of exhaust in their wake. No longer. Today's engines are among the cleanest-burning imaginable, leaving nary a trace of exhaust smoke (or smell). Modern inboard boats are capable of cruising from 20 to 35 knots, with top speeds approaching-or exceeding-40 knots or more. However, the top three responses from our reader survey regarding performance for inboard boats noted a focus on a soft, solid and dry ride in rough conditions, as well as good fuel economy at cruising speeds. With an inboard boat, you might not be the first one to the fishing grounds, but more than likely you'll have a much more comfortable ride getting there and back, while also enjoying amenities such as an air-conditioned salon, hot meals in the galley, and a full head with shower.

DO YOUR HOMEWORK

When you're shopping for an inboardpowered boat, myriad factors come into play. In our 2020 Fishing Boat Buyers Guide reader survey, the overwhelming response when purchasing a new or used boat was to thoroughly research your purchase. Look at as many models as possible from different builders in order to get a feel for their amenities and practicality. Consider quality of construction and long-term durability, and the hidden costs of boat ownership. These include annual maintenance and upkeep, in-water dockage, insurance, the cost of a professional crew if needed, and many other factors. We haven't even added in bait, fuel or tackle to go fishing at this point. But if you want to tangle with giant tuna, marlin and sailfish, it's hard to beat a comfortable, reliable inboard boat.

A SIGNIFICANT BENEFIT OF INBOARD BOATS IS THE ABILITY TO BE SELF-SUSTAINING FOR **EXTENDED PERIODS.**

Another bit of advice from the reader survey: Always buy larger than what you think you might want. These boats seem enormous sitting at the dock, but in the middle of the vast ocean, they get a lot smaller. When the weather kicks up on the way home, you'll be happy to have a few extra feet to help span the distance across the seas and smooth out the ride.



Experience the bone-dry, butter-soft ride in rough seas and the extraordinary shallow water capability of the new Caymas 26' and 28' Hybrids...handcrafted quality from marine industry legend Earl Bentz.



Aquasport Boat

quasport is back. First A appearing in America's fishing waters in the '60s, the brand is now a division of Ebbtide Holdings, building centerconsole, dual-console and bay boats. The ruggedly built boats are classically styled to match the needs of owners, whether they're eyeing a day afloat skiing, cruising or fishing.

AQUASPORT 2500 CC

The 2500 CC is the largest of Aquasport's three centerconsoles (one-half of its roster), and it stands ready for a day of fishing.

Full-composite construction includes hand-laid fiberglass lamination with biaxial fiberglass and woven roving, an integrated fiberglass structural stringer, KV Kevlar reinforcement, and composite transom core.

The Kevlar-reinforced hull and Dvna-Core hullside construction create a durable offshore boat with a flared bow and tall freeboard promising a dry ride to the fishing grounds.

The helm is shielded by a

tempered-glass windshield, while the dash has room for multiple electronics. The standard T-top features four rod holders and a pair of spreader lights; an optional fiberglass T-top adds another rod holder.

Thirty-six percent of offshore CC survey respondents call forward seating important; they and others will be served by the bow cushions that are standard on the 2500. A forward console seat tops a built-in cooler. Entry to the console is via a side door.

The 2500 features folding rear seats, as requested by 44 percent of CC survey respondents (although just 27 percent say their current boats have this feature).

Four gunwale-mounted rod holders meet the requirements of 63 percent of inshore CC anglers, and 30 percent of offshore. An above-deck insulated baitwell holds 30 gallons; 63 percent of survey respondents said one baitwell is enough. Forward fish boxes are insulated, with overboard drains. There are undergunwale rod racks port and starboard, and a swim platform is

integrated into the boat.

Options include color choices, stereo system, handheld coldwater shower, trim tabs, portable toilet, and washdowns with both raw and pressurized fresh water.

MORE INFO

aquasportboat.com



Survey Says:

ON TARGET

Freshwater and rawwater washdowns

Undergunwale rod storage

OWNERS SAY

Excellent fuel consumption

BRAND SAYS

Designed for a great day of fishing

Aquasport boats are designed to do exactly what you need them to do

SPECS

LOA: 24'10"

Beam: 8'10"

Fuel Capacity: 176 gal.

Dry Weight: 4,200 lb. plus power

Max HP: 500

Proven hull designs bring this venerable brand back to the waterways.



With the NauticStar 32XS, you can have all three. The 32XS is an outstanding offshore performer. It simultaneously delivers cutting-edge styling, features and comfort for a serious angler.







BULLY FOR FAMILIES AND FISHERMEN.



Belzona Boats

decade ago, Belzona Boats Agathered a team of boatbuilding veterans and began creating boats around a few core concepts: indomitable hulls, intuitive and practical features, and an elevated boating experience.

Today, in a 100,000-plussquare-foot facility in Doral. Florida, the company uses highly engineered molds formed from plugs carved on a seven-axis CNC router. From those molds. fiberglass hand-laid wood-free hulls are formed, designed to exceed ABYC standards and deliver exceptional performance.

Each hull provides a smooth, quick-planing ride with both stability and agile handling characteristics, ready for any offshore excursion.

The Belzona 27 CC is packed with unique features. Construction is with methacrylate bonding. A reinforced stringer system gives a solid ride. Deutsch connector wiring ensures long-lasting electrical systems. Each boat built to the specifications of the owner is given a thorough quality-control

inspection and rigorous sea trial before delivery to the customer.

BELZONA 27 CC

Envisioning its new 27 Center Console, Belzona took its proven 27 Walk Around and stripped it to the essentials required for a day of serious angling.

To maximize deck space (a key feature to 78 percent of CC survey respondents), the cabin was swapped for a head compartment.

The additional bow deck space allowed for more optional wraparound seating (bow seating cited by one-third of respondents as important) and extra storage, even an extra fish box.

Within the cockpit was added a fold-down transom bench and integrated cooler, and a pair of fish boxes.

A 200-gallon fuel tank puts distant hotspots within reach. The open floor plan features a third fish box (twin livewells optional), a slide-out cooler, plenty of storage, seating for eight, and abundant rod holders, including five across the transom and six

more along the gunwales-well in excess of the six that 68 percent of our offshore CC respondents say they need.

A novel feature of the 27 CC is the Belzona Jumper Door: Instead of swinging in to intrude on the cockpit, or out where it could strike a dock, the Jumper Door lifts and swings aft, parallel to the gunwale, to create a spacious opening, with a telescoping ladder that makes boarding from a dock, or diving in and reboarding, a cinch. Big fish slide right in.

MORE INFO belzonaboats.com



Survey Says:

ON TARGET

Cockpit space is maximized, and comfort is provided by foldaway transom seat.

Rod holders meet or exceed expectations

Solid construction is enahnced with methacrylate adhesives, not screws

Dual livewells meet expectations of most survey respondents

Optional third 50 gal. livewell available

BRAND SAYS

Boats with uncompromising quality

Flawlessly executed from concept to completion

SPECS

LOA: 27'2"

Beam: 9'4"

Fuel Capacity: 200 gal. Dry Weight: 6,500 lb.

> with power Max HP: 450

Certifications: NMMA

Hardtop supports are off the floor, clearing walkways. Optional black dash reduces glare.



BRING ON THE AWARDS.





BRING IT ON.

Visit www.icomamerica.com/marine for additional features and specs.



BUILDER BENCHMARK



READER RESPONSE

"PERFECT FAMILY BOAT"



Boston Whaler

Boston Whaler continues to build upon its 60-year reputation as a pioneer in creating unsinkable hulls, even as it continues to refine its designs to send today's boating anglers out in solid, comfortable style. It's among the top two boat brands that respondents would consider purchasing for saltwater fishing, and among the top three our respondents currently own.

Boston Whaler has seven distinct lines, among them the Conquest family: fishingfocused craft that also serve as virtual homes afloat, with dining space, cabin with enclosed head, galley and entertainment zone, and other features to delay the return to port delightfully—and catch plenty of fish while at sea!

325 CONQUEST

Boston Whaler's new 325 Conquest cabin cruiser goes beyond that designation, with versatile touches that make it ideal for fishing and other on-water activities.

The spacious cabin begs for an overnight stay, with a convertible V-berth sleeping and dining area, full-height hanging locker, and deckhouse windows through which natural light pours. There's even a skylight. The spacious bow sun lounge has handrails for comfort and safety.

At the helm, a full singlepiece front glass windshield provides unobstructed vision, while restyled side glass fosters what the company calls a "greater sense of intimacy" with the water.

A complete hull redesign delivers smooth performance, better planing and increased stability. (Safety underway in rough conditions is one of the most important elements of a walkaround design, survey

respondents said. Second was unsinkable constructionessentially a Boston Whaler trademark.)

Standard on the 325 are a pair of 300 hp Mercury Verado engines, with Joystick Piloting and Seakeeper gyrostabilizer optional.

Fishing? A starboard dive door makes it possible to drag large catches onto the deck. A stern seat folds away to create fishing room. The port seat can face aft to watch fishing action.

Other fishing features include a bait-prep center, two 40-gallon in-deck fish boxes, insulated livewell, and three rod racks within the cabin. On deck are four gunwale-mounted stainless-steel rod holders, plus three shotgun rod holders across the transom—just what our survey respondents said they needed in an offshore boat. Four more rocket launchers stand on the hardtop's ladder.





405 CONQUEST

Boston Whaler's 405 Conquest delivers heady performance, serious fishability and versatility for easy cruising.

The cabin boasts master and guest sleeping quarters, teak cabinets and sole, ample rod storage, an enclosed head with separate shower, and galley.

At the helm, a single-piece windshield and half side glass or optional full side glass provides total visibility and protection.

For the angler, an optional deluxe prep center at the transom includes a corian topped bait-prep area with hot and cold water, fillet board, 40-gallon pressurized livewell, tackle drawers, leader holders and net bucket storage. Exchange the bait prep area for a summer kitchen and stick with a 19-gallon pressurized, insulated aft livewell.

Fifteen rod holders include ten on the gunwales and five shot guns. A pair of undergunwale rod holders at starboard and hard top holds six more.

Foldaway cockpit seating adds comfort while keeping the deck clear for a fight—a feature prized by 84 percent in our survey. Mascerated fish boxes are refrigerated and she can be rigged with Gemlux 22-foot graphite outriggers.

Boarding options include a transom door and port side dive door with stowable ladder.

Max available power is quad 400 hp Mercury Verado engines, with Joystick Piloting optional, as well as a Seakeeper gyrostabilizer, which one-third of prospective walkaround boat buyers said they'd consider.

MORE INFO

bostonwhaler.com



ON TARGET

Unsinkable

Abundant fishing room

Ample rod holders

OWNERS SAY

Able to take my wife on cruises, as well as fish

Can handle rough weather

It has been a trouble-free boat

BRAND SAYS

(Boston Whaler) owners (are) confident to the

A leader as well as a legend

The most reliable and thoughtfully designed boats on the water

SPECS

325 CONQUEST

LOA: 32'3"

Beam: 10'8" Fuel Capacity: 300 gal.

Dry Weight: 10,500 lb.

plus power

Max HP: 800

Certifications: NMMA

405 CONQUEST

LOA: 41'4"

Beam: 13'6"

Fuel Capacity: 600 gal.

Dry Weight: 22,000 lb.

plus power

Max HP: 1,600

Certifications: NMMA





Cape Horn Boats

family tradition of fishing Aand fun continues at Cape Horn, where the Fabbro family -owners and operators since the beginning-oversee every step building premium offshore boats, from laying fiberglass to rigging engines. Company president Chris Fabbro still personally inspects each Cape Horn boat before it leaves the factory.

Chris and his father, Bob, built their first Cape Horn 16 Classic in their garage 30 years ago. They wanted a hardcore but comfortable fishing boat, with larger fishing platforms and bigger livewells. Unable to find one, they built it, making sure it was also affordable and easy to maintain.

All hull voids in a Cape Horn is pressure-filled with closed-cell foam, quieting the ride, adding stiffness, and making it unsinkable. The boats range from 22 to 36 feet, in bay and offshore models.

CAPE HORN 32

The new Cape Horn 32in Tournament (T) and Extra Seating/Space (XS) configurations-boasts a redesigned floor plan.

Many features are out of the way until needed. (Survey respondents rank fishing space above all other CC attributes.) The rear bench folds away, the shower's concealed until wanted, and standard electric trim tabs are tucked in pockets under the transom, away from battling fish.

The leaning post contains tackle drawers and compartments; 58 percent of survey respondents want permanent tackle drawers and/or utility box slots.

A rear-facing seat conceals a huge 60-gallon livewell, and there's an additional 20-gallon transom livewell (33 percent of survey respondents prefer a second one).

A large dash accommodates multiple large-screen displays, which most survey respondents say they have or plan to add to their boats.

A7-foot-long insulated fish box provides 700 quarts of frozen storage. The boat has 29 rod holders, standard; add more on optional rear legs for the top (25

percent of offshore CC respondents carry 11 or more rods).

Standard are T-top with electronics box, bolster seats/captain chairs, electronic power steering (upgradable to joystick control), portable head (VacuFlush toilet optional), and raw- and freshwater washdown.

The sibling Cape Horn 32XS shares the 32T's hull and floor plan, but it adds forward seating (which 36 percent of CC survey respondents want) and additional storage.

MORE INFO capehornboats.com



Survey Says:

ON TARGET

Unsinkable construction

Large dash expands electronics options

> Abundance of rod storage

OWNERS SAY

She had a wide front end that made for a dry ride

The ability to go 100 miles offshore in most weather conditions and feel confident that my equipment/boat will get me back safely

Love the smooth ride

Dry ride for its size, and unsinkable

BRAND SAYS

More comfort, more storage

One of the driest designs on the water

SPECS

LOA: 31'10"

Beam: 9'1"

Fuel Capacity: 275 gal.

Dry Weight: 5,400 lb. plus power

Max HP: 800

OPTIONALLY POWERED



Shotgun rod holders offer trolling options and safe transport back to port. Seat folds away.



Fountain's magnificent 43NX flagship knows no rivals. Because it's a Fountain, expect unmatched top speeds, incredible midrange, precise tracking, a dry ride, and miserly fuel economy. In the cockpit, the 43NX can be decked out as a luxury sport boat or a tournament-ready fishing machine. Triple bolsters, a dive door, forward chaise lounge, and a queen-sized overnight berth say "Welcome Aboard." Serious anglers should consider a supersized tackle/bait center and extra rod holders as must-have options. Fish or Sport, when it comes to performance, construction and style, the 43NX rates best-in-class...but you wouldn't expect anything less from an Iconic name like Fountain.







Cobia Boats

obia prides itself on deck layouts with everything where it's most likely used, and where that use is as easy as possible.

No awkward steps or trip hazards on deck. Handholds are handy when you need them, unobtrusive when you don't. Displays within sight, controls within reach. You focus on the fish, not negotiating your boat.

Cobia hulls' far-forward bow entries extend running surfaces to slice through waves before pushing them away for a dry ride. Variable deadrise hull gives soft, relaxing and fuel-efficient rideswhat 80 percent of offshore center-console owners call their most valued characteristic.

Cobias are built with backing plates and screw-retention materials at each fastening point, double-clamped hoses reinforced with sealant, epoxy-coated and pressure-tested aluminum fuel tanks, and labeled, copper-tinned wiring harnesses built in-house. Bilge interiors are finished, and decks are stiffened with carbonreinforced beams.

Maverick Boat Group, which

acquired Cobia in 2005, also builds the Maverick. Hewes and Pathfinder brands, each a market leader in its segment.

COBIA 350 CC

Cobia's new 350 Center Console, its biggest CC, boasts a doublestepped hull that gets you to the fishing grounds swiftly and fuel-efficiently, powered by triple F300XCAs or twin 425 XTOs.

The 350 CC, along with all Cobia's 26 feet and larger, are vacuum infused using Maverick's proprietary VARIS (Vacuum Infused Resin Infusion System).

Topside amenities include triple independent helm seats, a two-person chaise longue, and forward sun-lounge seating.

Seven insulated boxes provide abundant cooler space and dry storage. The console's interior houses an airy berth amid wooden cabinetry, plus an electric head and sink/shower.

Cobia didn't forget that this is a fishing boat; its dual 42-gallon bait tanks, two huge in-floor macerated fish boxes, full tackle station/bait-prep area, and lockable below-deck rod locker exceed survey respondents' expectations.

The 350's open cockpit and 11-foot-2-inch beam create plenty of space for several anglers to fish at once—or to chase a hot fish around boatside. Battle over, an inward-opening side door welcomes aboard even a big tuna.

Optional fishing features include flush-mounted kite rod holders, pressurized livewell sea chest system, T-top kingfish rod holders, deluxe hardtop, and outriggers.

MORE INFO cobiaboats.com



Survey Says:

ON TARGET

Fishing space maximized

Eight standard rod holders exceed expectations of six

Outstanding livewells

OWNERS SAY

Favorite features: everything

This boat is capable of doing everything within reason—great boat

Spacious for family and friends; extremely functional offshore; stable and dry ride

BRAND SAYS

Fishes and plays hard

Tournament-capable fishing features

Built better than any boat in its class

Boating and fishing on a Cobia is just easier

SPECS

LOA: 34'4"

Beam: 11'2"

Fuel Capacity: 320 gal.

Dry Weight: 8,600 lb. plus power

Max HP: 900

Certifications: NMMA

EXCLUSIVELY POWERED



Optional electronics pacakges include a Garmin acrylic dash with radar, VHF and auto pilot.

ANGLER DRIVEN



THE RESULT OF 20 YEARS

OF A SINGLE-MINDED DEDICATION

TO PERFECTING WHAT WE STARTED.

EVERYTHING ELSE IS JUST A BAY BOAT

#1 STILL FOR A REASON.

WWW.PATHFINDERBOATS.COM



BUILDER BENCHMARK



READER RESPONSE "EFFICIENT, SIMPLE, RELIABLE AND VERY VERSATILE"



Contender Boats

omestead, Florida-based Contender Boats, Inc. celebrated their 35th anniversary, and has launched several thousand boats spanning the three and a half decades. The boats are recognized world wide as tournament winners, and are known to keep captain and crew "Always in the Game" when they are on the hunt for big fish.

Contender builds boats from 24-44 feet for fisherman and their families to explore the blue water, or just enjoy a day cruising around the bay to the sandbar.

Each boat is custom-built featuring different options for engine power, electronics, and upholstery. The list of options seems nearly endless with a variety of fishing, convenience, and other options available to every model. Front and rear seating are available on all models, but standard options traditionally keep the cockpit

minimal and clean.

Contender Boats' founder. president and owner Joe Neber is an avid saltwater angler who has been very active in marine-resource conservation, particularly the Coastal Conservation Association (CCA).

The company proudly proclaims, "When adverse weather prevails without notice, people are confident in our product to get them home safely and comfortably."

CONTENDER 44FA

The 44FA, new for 2020, is built from the same hull as the game changing 44ST, with a fisharound cap that features queen-sized berth, an enclosed head with shower, a galley sink, refrigerator/freezer, and stovetop. Together they create a luxurious and comfortable setting for travelling offshore or to the islands. Compared with

the 44ST, it's more cabin than console, but doesn't sacrifice walk around fishability for the cabin comfort.

The 44FA remains very much a fishing boat, and one that allows you to catch 'em big: The 44FA has a 250-gallon forward fish box and a pair of 110-gallon aft fish boxes.

78 percent of walkaround boaters are satisfied with one livewell, but the 44 FA (designated by the Fish Around cap) offers two 55 gallon live wells for dividing baits between multiple tanks, a practice used by many tournament fishing crews.

The dash is massive, ready for two large multifunction displays. There is no lack of feature choices on the custom boats including triple Llebroc helm seating, second-row seating beneath the hardtop, bow lounge seating, and triple or quad Yamaha 425XTO Offshore outboards.





This boat may be luxurious, but it's not boring-it's "44 feet of full-tilt, wave-cutting, chest-pounding bad-boy boat," according to Contender.

CONTENDER 28T

That's "T", for "Tournament," and this Contender is always ready for action. One of the original Contender models, the 28 returns with a new more aesthetically pleasing rounded cap, and other small modifications to the re-launched classic. You can have it loaded, with forward and rear seating, or without the seating for and more spacious deck and room to fish. The standard forward seating has removable backrests, and features substantial storage underneath.

With the standard forward seating, three storage compartments are beneath forward seating, which has removable backrests.

Up front is a fully lined and insulated 140-gallon fish box; aft you'll find another pair, port and starboard, 76 gallons each. Bait flourishes in a 40-gallon transom livewell with standard 1100GPH pump

The pair of under deck rod lockers will please our offshore CC survey respondents, who say they carry an average of eight rods with them per trip.

The 28T comes standard with 4 gunwale flush mounted rod holders; five more rod holders line the back of the leaning post.

At the helm, an oversized panel welcomes room for plenty of electronics from the multi brand options installed by the Contender factory.

MORE INFO

contenderboats.com

Survey Says:

ON TARGET

Spacious fish boxes

Two livewells to keep separate bait species lively

OWNERS SAY

Looks sharp

A great fishing boat

Handles very well in heavy seas

Fast, spacious, reliable

Built like a tank

BRAND SAYS

Built to fish

Unparalleled fishability, comfort, range and speed

Boats born from passion

SPECS

44FA

LOA: 43'10" Beam: 12'

Fuel Capacity: 575 gal. Dry Weight: 21,600 lb. plus power

Max HP: 2,000 Certifications: NMMA

28T

LOA: 28' Beam: 8'10"

Fuel Capacity: 180 gal. Dry Weight: 7,400 lb.

plus power
Max HP: 600
Certifications: NMMA

EXCLUSIVELY POWERED







Everglades Boats

 $leader in \, premium \, off shore \,$ Afishing boats, Everglades Boats was founded in 1999 by renowned marine engineer and marine industry entrepreneur Robert J. (Bob) Dougherty.

Dougherty's company brought to market its award-winning Rapid Molded Core Assembly Process for making smoothriding, one-piece unsinkable hulls, its foam core molded separately and then bonded to the boat's hull and deck. (Unsinkable construction is the most valued boat attribute among our survey respondents.)

Each component of an Everglades boat-including console, hardtop and wiring harness-is handmade in-house, subjected to rigorous qualityassurance testing, and only then installed to Everglades' demanding fit and finish standards.

Distinctive Everglades touches include sliding console windsheilds, and adjustable helm seats that serve as either seats or comfortable leaning cushions.

Everglades has received numerous industry awards, and has a reputation for superior safety, performance and quality of its variable-deadrise deep-V hulls.

EVERGLADES 395 CC

Everglades' new 395 Center Console is designed for those looking for something larger than the company's 365 CC but not as robust as the 435 CC.

Packed with creature comforts. the 395 CC has standard mezzanine seating and full-beam-width folding transom seating, finished flooring within the opulent cabin, and an interior dining area that transforms into an oversize sleeping area. Air conditioning, TV and more are standard.

At the console is Everglades' patented hydraulic sliding windshield, with tempered glass and built-in washer/wiper; an electronics mounting area ready for 16-inch flush-mounted displays; and, a first for a production boat manufacturer, Garmin's digital switching system with touchscreen control.

Supremely fishing-friendly, the 395 CC comes standard with a single-level cockpit; two insulated fish boxes (112-gallon in-deck, 75-gallon in transom); two pressurized livewells (40 gallons each-together exceeding expectations of 63 percent of offshore CC survey respondents); undergunwale power ports; 39 total rod holders (also overdelivering on what our survey respondents require). with forward in-gunwale lighted rod-storage compartments; and outrigger quick-cam cleats. LED courtesy, cockpit, underwater and storage lights abound.

MORE INFO evergladesboats.com



Survey Says:

ON TARGET

Unsinkable Ramcap construction

Tackle storage above expectations

Raw-water and freshwater washdown

OWNERS SAY

Great riding boat both inshore and offshore

Quality and ride

BRAND SAYS

A meticulously outfitted fishing machine

Best-in-class fishing features and design

SPECS

LOA: 39'

Beam: 12'

Fuel Capacity: 600 gal. Dry Weight: 16,650 lb. plus power

Max HP: 1.275

Certifications: NMMA

EXCLUSIVELY POWERED



The upper station boasts full Yamaha controls and the leaning post below three bucket seats.



Whether you're creeping along a flat or rolling in the blue, Bay Ranger® designs are built to get you to your destination quicker, safer and more economically. Experience the wide-open, angler-friendly interiors, abundant storage and plush comfort of the Bay Ranger Series...From bow to stern, these total-performance saltwater predators give you command of the world's biggest playground.

THE NEXT GENERATION of BAY RANGERS IS COMING...

Don't Miss What We've Got In Store At The **2020 MIAMI INTERNATIONAL BOAT SHOW.** Visit Booth B-205, Slips 325 & 327 For A Sneak Peek.



For The Name Of Your Nearest Ranger® Dealer, Call:

| Fill | Fill



Fountain Powerboats

ountain Powerboats celebrates it's 40th Anniversary with an impressive array of center console fishing boats that stretch from 34 to 43 feet.

A dominating force on the bluewater tournament scene, Fountain's revolutionary twin step, Positive Lift bottom design is noted for its low-speed tracking, dry ride, fuel efficiency, and top speed advantage over rivals..

Whether you're a serious offshore angler in search of a trophy catch or a family boater that thinks fishing should be a luxury sport, Fountain's 2020 lineup is priced right and comes well-equipped as standard.

Today, Iconic Marine Group continues to build on the Fountain tradition, mixing luxury, performance and an array of fishing minded features. Built for the long haul, all Fountain Center Consoles feature a unitized four-step construction process, heavy-duty marine adhesives, top-grade fiberglass, through bolts with lockdowns, and rub-rail screws. Put it all together and anglers are assured

a trouble-free day.

FOUNTAIN 38CC

It's almost impossible to find a center console under 40-feet that can handle so many power options. Whether the owner goes for base power (triple 300 Mercury Verados; 70 mph at wide-open throttle) or takes it to the max (quad Mercury 450Rs; 90+ mph), the 38CC is ideally suited for offshore locales or big lakes.

Standard features include Simrad electronics and autopilot. Key options include a deluxe Garmin electronics package, dive door, bow thruster, and/or SeaStar Optimus power steering with joystick and SeaStation.

There's plenty for anglers to like: under gunwale storage for rods and gaffs, and five fish boxes with Gulpher pumps. Eight gunwale-mounted rod holders meet the standards of 85 percent of center-console survey respondents.

The transom's live wells are enough for all but 4 percent of respondents. Plus, there's a freshwater and saltwater washdown.

Fishing options include six additional rod holders, GS 280 outriggers, helm-seating tackle center, and electric-reel outlets. The standard T-top bears sevenrod holders, courtesy lights, and bow and stern spreader lights; an optional Electric SureShade extends T-top protection aft.

Additional comfort options include a three-piece centerconsole enclosure, dive door, and sure-footed composite flooring.

MORE INFO

fountainpowerboats.com



Survey Says:

ON TARGET

Generous seating for crew

Two livewells in transom

Abundant fish boxes with macerators

Optional electric-reel outlets

OWNERS SAY

Handles very well in heavy seas

Lots of room for fishing

High speed and good ride in rough water

> The ride handles everything

BRAND SAYS

You've added an asset to the family

A proven hull design that delivers amazing efficiency on the water

A boatload of amenities designed to please everyone on board

SPECS

LOA: 38'

Beam: 10'6"

Fuel Capacity: 418 gal.

Dry Weight: 11,300 lb.

plus power

Max HP: 1.800

Mezzanine seating converts to a rigging station. Rod holders abound and cockpit space is ample.



CAPT Danny Hearn always wears his Seat Belt.

While boating, he wears his Coast Guard Approved light-weight Inflatable Life Jacket

But, just like seat belts, life jackets only save lives when they're worn!









Produced under a grant from the Sport Fish Restoration and Busting Trust Fund, administered by the U.S. Coast Guard.

Of 2017 drowning victims, 84.5% were reported as not wearing a life jacket.

Source: U.S. Coast Guard 2017 Recreational Boating Statistics Report boatingsafetymag.com/boatingsafety

BUILDER BENCHMARK



READER RESPONSE "STABLE, DRY, SOLID FISHING PLATFORM"



Grady-White Boats

G rady-White is one of the oldest and most wellrespected brands in saltwater fishing boats and across several categories; they're at home from bays to big waters.

Popular? It's the single boat brand most represented in our survey, its fame and presence extending well beyond the demanding North Carolina waters where Grady-White was born more than 60 years ago.

Grady's reputation rides in large part on its handlaid SeaV2 progressive hull. Deadrise begins at a stable 20 degrees, with wide chines providing stationary and trolling stability, and sharpens as it approaches the bow, where it splits waves cleanly and softly.

Fans of offshore centerconsole boats know what they want: Our survey respondents rank as top attributes reputation, value, low operating cost, and resale value, in that order;

they say Grady-White serves them up. In boat performance, CC fans go for a soft, stable ride in rough water; fuel efficiency and range; and a dry ride—what owners consider to be Grady-White's strengths as well.

CANYON 326

Near the middle of Gradv's six-boat Canyon lineup of 27to 45-footers, the new 326 combines the line's top attributes with midsize agility.

Features include a full-height windshield integrated into the standard T-top, with three-across helm seating-a roomy arrangement courtesy of the boat's generous beam. (The fiberglass T-top, by the way, has outrigger plates ready for that option.)

Handy are transom and portside doors, built-in swim platforms, and an anchor windlass with remotes at helm and windlass. The cabin boasts a lockable head compartment with VacuFlush head.

For anglers there's a 32-gallon recirculating livewell (a single one satisfies 63 percent of center-console survey respondents; another 33 percent will be pleased by adding an optional 38-gallon second well); four insulated fish boxes, including one in the leaning bar; plenty of vertical rod holders (four in the bow and four in the console); and horizontal storage for three more.

The leaning bar is also a rigging station, with rod holders, seating, and lockable storage drawers to please the 58 percent of CC respondents who want drawer/cabinet storage.

Standard are bow and foldaway aft bench seating. Options include SureShade power sunscreen with Sunbrella canvas, outriggers, and ski pylon for pulling kids on tubes.





CANYON 336

Grady-White's Canyon 336 center-console, like the 326 near the midpoint of the Canyon line, is often described as a fishing machine. Evidence backs that up.

It's available with the exciting performance of Yamaha's new XTO Offshore 425's and integrated electric power steering.

Four insulated fish boxes are ready for filling—two in the bow, one in the leaning-bar rigging station, and one aft. The rigging station also has lockable tackle drawers and storage, freshwater washdown, and a 45-gallon livewell.

There are five cockpit, two amidships and four bow rod holders, plus four rod holders on the T-top, six more on the leaning bar, and vertical storage for six tuna sticks within the console.

At the helm are a trio of Command Elite horizontally adjustable contoured helm chairs. Electronics are flush mounted in the expansive dash.

Below, within the lockable console, is a berth with flip-up backrest, and a stand-up head area with shower, sink, vacuflush head, rod storage and drawers.

Features the 336 shares with the 326 include standard fiberglass T-top, integrated windshield, remote-controlled anchor windlass, foursome of insulated fish boxes, and transom and cockpit side doors.

Options for the 336 beyond those of the 326 include generator, water heater, microwave, refrigerator/freezer fish box, cockpit air conditioning.

MORE INFO

gradywhite.com



ON TARGET

Abundant vertical and horizontal rod holders and racks

Tackle storage is above expectations

Lockable storage

OWNERS SAY

An extremely soft ride

Seaworthy, easy to maintain

Easy to fish

Has a hull design for stability, comfort and safety

Plentiful storage

BRAND SAYS

Exceptional attention to detail

Advanced helm and windshield design

Inspired workforce, impassioned leaders

SPECS

CANYON 326

LOA: 31'2" Beam: 10'9"

Fuel Capacity: 327 gal.

Dry Weight: 8,500 lb.

plus power
Max HP: 700
Certifications: NMMA

CANYON 336

LOA: 33'6"

Beam: 11'7"

Fuel Capacity: 361 gal. Dry Weight: 10,100 lb.

plus power

Max HP: 900 Certifications: NMMA

EXCLUSIVELY POWERED





BUILDER BENCHMARK



READER RESPONSE "ADMIRABLE SPEED AND RIDE IN ANY

CONDITIONS"

Invincible Boat Company

Whether applied to its original (and refreshed) 36 Open Fisherman, or its recently launched 35 Catamaran, Invincible proclaims itself maker of "the fastest, driest and best-riding open fishermen ever built."

That's big, when 73 percent of offshore center-console survey respondents call brand reputation key to the value of their boat, and 80 percent peg a soft, solid rough-water ride as central to performance.

Invincible's patented monohull, designed by naval architect Michael Peters, boasts one of the lowest drag coefficients of anv. Its air-fed tunnel attains higher speeds with lower power, and a more stable ride—while maintaining maneuverability for comfortable, dry adventures even in rough seas.

Some of the monohull's best features are echoed in Invincible catamarans, with the additional stability of the patent-pending hybrid semiasymmetric multihull design of Morrelli & Melvin, Like a monohull, these cats heel into turns, avoiding the pronounced "lean-out" roll and instability Invincible sees in competitors.

In either format, central to the fishing experience is Invincible's single-level deck, and 360-degree walk-around fishability.

Features include generous underdeck storage and angled leaning-post housing coolers. A sturdy, optional hardtop is ready to receive outriggers, a spotlight and an infrared imaging camera. Under it. a main helm is arranged to provide confident control under rough conditions and accommodate large electronics. In the sponsons are insulated boxes designed specifically to fit wahoo and kingfish without bending their tails.

36 OPEN FISHERMAN

The 36. Invincible's original boat and foundation of its reputation, is still renowned for its great rough-water ride. It's been refreshed over the years, notably with a side-entry console, and now with new, line-wide seating options.

Available with twin or triple outboards, the 36 Open Fisherman tops out at 75-plus mph, ahead of triples. With a 475-gallon fuel capacity, you'll get to distant fishing grounds and back-a round trip of 600plus nautical miles-swiftly and comfortably.

The 36 features above- and below-deck livewells, and insulated fish boxes-two each aft and forward.

Where other boatmakers take an educated guess at how you'd like your boat configured, Invincible leaves much to your educated judgment.

Thirty percent of offshore





center-console anglers say they need only four gunwale-mounted rod holders, and 38 percent want six—but a considerable number, 15 percent, say they need 10 or more. Each can order what best suits them. (After all, more than half of survey respondents ranked "rod holders" among their top three fishability criteria, even if they apparently don't agree on those numbers.)

Other options include a clear acrylic baitwell lid, electricalreel outlets, hardtop or tower, deluxe leaning post, bow thruster and side dive door.

35 CATAMARAN

Invincible's new 35-foot catamaran joins its new-lastsummer 37-foot cat, and the 40-footer that premiered at the Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show two seasons ago. The 35 was designed to meet requests for the stability and space efficiency of the 40, in a smaller, easier-to-handle package. It boasts more deck space than a comparable 39-foot monohull.

Several power options, in twins or quads, are balanced to maintain a perfect running angle without requiring extra negative trim or ballast.

Double-livewell storage is plenty for the 95 percent of offshore CC anglers who head off with a couple dozen baits or fewer. (Only 4 percent say they need more than two livewells, and a full two-thirds would be happy with just one.)

Seating options include a new console coffin-box seat available across the Invincible catalog.

MORE INFO

invincibleboats.com



Survey Says:

ON TARGET

Options for plenty of gunwale and console rod holders

Generous fish-box storage

Livewells meet or exceed demands of 95 percent of CC anglers

OWNERS SAY

Speed to fishing grounds and stability at anchor

Speed and ride in any condition

BRAND SAYS

Same Invincible performance, smaller package

Fishability, performance and yacht-quality finish

Looks as good as it rides

SPECS

36 OPEN FISHERMAN

LOA: 36'8"

Beam: 10'

Fuel Capacity: 475 gal.

Dry Weight: 9,200 lb.
plus power

Max HP: 1,200

35 CATAMARAN

LOA: 35'10"

Beam: 11'7.5"

Fuel Capacity: 500 gal.

Dry Weight: 10,350 lb.
plus power

Max HP: 1.200

OPTIONALLY POWERED



BUILDER BENCHMARK





Jupiter Marine

upiter was founded in the early 1990's with the release of the Jupiter 31 Open, and later purchased in 1998 by Marineindustry veteran Carl Herndon.

From its inception, the Jupiter 31 quickly drew fans for its uncompromising quality that continues to distinguish the company 30 years later as a premier builder of outboard-powered offshore sport-fishing boats.

Performance is attributed to its Posi-Stern hull-pad design that reduces drag by enhancing lift, and a variable dynamic stern that increases efficiency by providing a perfect running attitude; the results are higher speeds, superior handling, increased fuel economy and a smoother ride-all without a loss of visibility from the helm.

Using infusion and their unigrid stringer system the boat is so durable that the company offers a transferable limited lifetime warranty for structural integrity.

JUPITER 32

The Jupiter 32, a clear descendent of the original 31, bears the best features of its slip-mates

throughout the Jupiter line.

Forward cockpit bench seats top insulated, overboard-draining boxes for gear. Between them are two deck storage bins, both ready to accommodate either the versatile storage needs of family day trips inshore or standing ready to bring home the spoils of a successful tournament.

The console houses a finished stand-up head with electric toilet. A hatch lets in light and fresh air. Up top, the helm's dash is roomy. The standard leaning post, with its four rod holders, provides tackle storage. Behind it is a 150-gallon in-deck fish box with macerator; behind that, a hatch provides access to mechanicals.

In-deck lockable storage boxes flanking the console can house four 8-foot rods each; 34 percent of respondents said they want such security for their sticks.

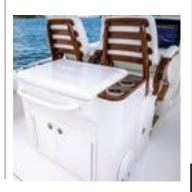
Four rod holders are mounted under the gunwale—enough for 30 percent of offshore CC anglers; adding an optional additional pair raises the satisfaction to 68 percent.

Optional features include

outriggers, removable stern jump seats, Garmin electronics package, JL Audio stereo package, and Release Marine forward seating backrests.

More impressive are the features that come standard on the 32; Release Marine teak ladder back helm seats (now a standard on the entire Jupiter model line on models 30 feet and up), a fiberglass T-top, tackle storage, sink and head, port side dive door, rod holders (with the option to add additional), and a Pro Curve glass windshield.

MORE INFO jupitermarine.com



Survey Says:

ON TARGET

Release Marine Teak Ladder Back Helm **Seats Standard**

> Pro Curve Glass Windshield

OWNERS SAY

Rides pretty dry in rough seas

Perfect boat-dry, comfortable and catches fish

BRAND SAYS

Has features that are not found with highvolume competitors

The finest boats, worthy of the brand's legendary name

Jupiters run at high speeds in big seas while keeping passengers comfortable and dry

SPECS

LOA: 32'8"

Beam: 9'9"

Fuel Capacity: 300 gal. Dry Weight: 9,215 lb.

with power

Max HP: 900

Certifications: NMMA

EXCLUSIVELY POWERED



Jupiter's solid hulls, brightwork and performance make it an oft- chosen tender.

Star brite*.

THE SCIENCE OF STAINS FOR THE NEW BOAT OWNER

Keeping your boat looking great is easy when you know the basics. Those basics include four common types of stains that can be frustrating if you don't know how to remove them. This handy Stains 101 Guide will help you properly identify and remove each of the four basic stains, and keep your boat looking like new.

It's the science of stains, made simple!

SURFACTANT TECHNOLOGY

THE STAIN

Dirt, grime, gunk, muck. Fish blood, food, drinks. These are your surface stains.

THE SCIENCE

Most surface dirt will wash right off with boat soap and water. However, some gets ground in, especially on non-skid surfaces. That's where surfactants come in. Surfactant molecules fully surround the dirt molecules and lift them from the surface that you're cleaning. This allows them to be washed away with water. Chelating Agents are supercharged surfactants for specialized cleaning.

THE SOLUTION

Star brite Boat Wash will definitely remove most surface dirt. For tough grime and gunk, use a cleaner/ degreaser, such as Star brite

Xtreme Clean

or choose a surfactant based on the surface: Non-Skid **Deck Cleaner**



ACID TECHNOLOGY



THE STAIN

THE SCIENCE

THE SOLUTION

Star brite Instant Hull Cleaner acid that safely neutralizes

tannins and rust. There's much more science behind it but trust us on this one, simply spray or wipe on and watch the stain disappear.



THE STAIN

Black, brown, green, and even pink mold and mildew stains.

BLEACHING TECHNOLOGY

STAINS

THE SCIENCE

Similar to grass stains, these stains are caused by organic material, and need something stronger than a surfactant alone to remove them. The oxygen in a bleaching agent attacks and breaks up these types of stains, and removes any discoloration.

THE SOLUTION

While most people believe that regular chlorine bleach is the answer, it also causes a lot of problems, such as breaking down fabrics and stitching and destroying gelcoats. Instead use Star brite Mildew Stain Remover—a buffered bleach

formulathat attacks the stain without harming the surface.

ABRASION TECHNOLOGY



THE STAIN

Black shoe marks, rub rail and bumper scuffs, marks left from dragging hoses and equipment.

THE SCIENCE

Scuff marks—or "transfer stains"—happen when material is transferred onto a surface and is mechanically bonded. Chemicals are rarely strong enough to remove these marks, since many times the material that has transferred is chemicalresistant (think of a rubber shoe). These abrasive marks require the same to remove them: abrasion.

THE SOLUTION

Star brite Ultimate Magic Sponge uses nanosized scrubbers to grab hold and erase most marks easily. For your hull, use **Premium Cleaner Wax** to buff the stain away.





NauticStar Boats

auticStar, founded in 2002, builds more than two-dozen boat models, 18 to 32 feet: The NauticBay Series, Sport Deck single- and dual-console boats, XS offshore center-consoles. Legacy Series center- and dualconsole boats, and Hybrid series boats for flats/bay boat fishing and coastal cruising.

Now a member of the MasterCraft family, NauticStar manufactures boats in its 200,000-plus-square-foot plant on 17 acres in Amory, Mississippi. Features include wood-free construction, limited lifetime hull warranty, durable vinylester barrier coat to prevent blisters, and one-piece molded stringer systems, foam-filled for flotation, sound-dampening and vibration reduction.

Deck and liner are molded as one unit and joined to the deck shoebox-style with a stainless-steel fastener every 2 inches. NauticStar makes its own upholstery and both-sidesfinished fiberglass lids. Each and every boat is water-tested or tank-tested at the factory.

NAUTICSTAR 32XS

Largest of its line is NauticStar's 32XS offshore center-console. Its leaning post has Lebrock double billfish seats with flip-up bolsters and pivot arms, Corian countertop, sink and spray faucet, tackle storage, and a 35-quart slide-out Yeti cooler (or optional refrigerator or additional livewell).

To the standard integrated T-top, you can add options like a retractable shade, or even a fold-down 32-inch cockpit television that replicates what's on the dashboard display, in either the standard dual 12-inch or optional single 16-inch displays.

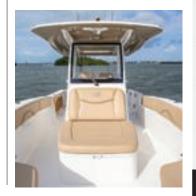
Up front, a spacious bow has forward lounge and wraparound seating, all atop storage compartments. Beneath a large console lounge seat is a step-down storage compartment with SeaDek flooring and six rod holders—a good start toward the nine-rod storage capacity our survey respondents said they need.

The head console has a fully lined interior with a stainlesssteel sink, SeaDek floor and electric-flush porcelain toilet.

Aft, a transom lounge flips up to create a spacious cockpit, with port and starboard 8.8-cubicfoot fish boxes in the deck. A large portside door makes access easier. A single aft baitwell meets the needs of 63 percent of our respondents; 95 percent said they carry a couple dozen live baits.

The 32XS has eight stainlesssteel gunwale-mounted rod holders and five shotgun rod holders, surpassing the demands of 92 percent of our offshore CC survey respondents.

MORE INFO nauticstarboats.com



Survey Says:

ON TARGET

Plenty of rod holders on deck

Bow comfort for the one-third who demand it

Generous fuel capacity for long range

OWNERS SAY

Ease of handling

Lots of storage, easy to handle by myself

BRAND SAYS

An outstanding saltwater performer

Cutting-edge styling and comfort features for serious anglers

SPECS

LOA: 32'

Beam: 10'6"

Fuel Capacity: 307 gal.

Dry Weight: 8,500 lb. plus power

Max HP: 850

Certifications: NMMA

EXCLUSIVELY POWERED



Ample shade and weather protection come from the hardtop. There's loads of storage as well.

BUILDER **BENCHMARK**



NorthCoast Boats

Rhode Island-based NorthCoast Boats, a division of C&C Marine and C&C Fiberglass, is owned and presided over by Jose C. DaPonte, who has been involved in boatbuilding since the early 1970s.

In 2000, struck by the "stout lines and excellent performance" of NorthCoast boats, DaPonte bought its brand and hull molds, the company says.

NorthCoast's boats—four cabin models and six center-consoles have reverse chines for stability, and aggressive longitudinal strakes for additional lift, great tracking, fuel economy, handling and overall performance.



NORTHCOAST 255 HT

NorthCoast says fans of its 235 Cabin asked for a big bigger boat, with a private head and comfortable accommodations for two. Add a longer and wider cockpit with cockpit space being the top consideration of 84 percent of walkaround survey respondentsand a fish-welcoming walk-through transom door, and you've got the hardtop 255 Cabin.

The company says the 255's 22-degree deadrise equips it to run

SPECS

LOA: 31'2"

Beam: 9'5"

Fuel Capacity: 159 gal.

Dry Weight: 7,981

lb. plus power Max HP: 500

OPTIONALLY POWERED



soft and dry at up to 60 mph with optional twin 250s.

The 255 has a 26-gallon transom livewell, a 105-quart transom storage box, and two tacklestorage bins. Four stainless-steel gunwale-mounted rod holders meet requirements of 37 percent of walkaround survey respondents; more rod holders are available as options.

MORE INFO

northcoastboats.com





Pursuit Fishing Boats

or over half a century, Pursuit Boats has been building luxury offshore fishing boats using distinct engineering and production processes championed by the Pursuit family of employees. Pursuit's Offshore, Center Console, Sport and Dual Console models from 23 to 42 feet in length are manufactured in a state-of-the-art facility in Fort Pierce, Florida.

Pursuit Boats are designed, developed and manufactured in the US using refined lamination techniques, vacuum-infused stringer grids, verified installations and patented designs. They have premium gelcoats backed by five-year blister warranty, plus five-year hull and two-year component warranties.

Pursuit installs EPAcompliant, lined, roto-molded polyethylene fuel tanks that eliminate condensation and avoid the effects of ethanol.

The company fabricates its own fuel feed lines, as it does custom wiring harnesses for each model, and its technicians fabricate and install upholstery and canvas components.

PURSUIT S 378 SPORT

The S 378 Sport is the secondlargest in Pursuit's Sport line of luxury center-consoles that are ready to take on big water and bigfish—in big comfort!

Stable as only a big-beamed boat can be, this one's a dozen feet across, with a 22-degree deadrise, rigged standard with triple Yamaha XTO Offshore 425 hp outboards.

Pursuit is particularly proud of the boat's patent-pending entertainment center: It electronically moves into place at the touch of a button, otherwise positioned out of the way to open up the cockpit for fishing.

The boat has several versatile

"social zones," including one anchored by a multifunction forward sun pad. Hullside and cabinside windows provide stunning views. The adjustable helm comes standard with Yamaha's Helm Master.

Anglers will find standard gunwale-mounted rod holders and bow rod holders, a lighted livewell, undergunwale rod storage, a pair of fish boxes, and lockable rod storage such as requested by 34 percent of CC survey respondents.

An optional Fishing Package includes such upgrades as a second livewell to please the 33 percent of center-console survey respondents who say they need it (63 percent are satisfied with a single livewell, while 4 percent need a third one in order to keep bait species separate). Other options include hardtop rocket launcher, rod holders and Taco Grand Slam outriggers.





PURSUIT DC 326

The DC 326 features an integrated fiberglass hardtop with wiper-tended temperedglass windshield, port and starboard ventilation hatches with screens, and fore- and aft-facing LED spreader lights.

A rotating helm seat swings along the coaming to join port cockpit seating and foldaway transom seat to offer plenty of room for friends, family and crew. (Sixty percent of dualconsole survey respondents call forward seating important, the highest of any boat type.) More comfort is had at the bow seating.

At the ready are nine gunwale- and transom-mounted rod holders, exceeding the needs of all but 6 percent of dual-console survey respondents. There's a recirculating 28-gallon lighted livewell, and dedicated tackle storage within the cockpit tackle center with storage for three Plano boxes—the median number dual-console fishers report using.

A 300-gallon fuel capacity gives the 326 a nearly 300-mile range, and twin Yamaha F300s scoot it along a tad beyond 48 mph. For easy docking, a bow thruster is joystick-controlled.

Options include Yamaha Helm Master steering system with Set Point, diesel generator, air conditioning, grill, underwater lights, cockpit refrigerator, bridge-deck teak table, ski tow, sunshades and curtains, hardtop rod holders, Taco Grand Slam outriggers, and Garmin electronics packages.

MORE INFO

pursuitboats.com



ON TARGET

Tuck-away entertainment center on the S 378 Sport preserves fishing space

Plenty of rod storage, both undergunwale and lockable

OWNERS SAY

Tough, dependable and a well-made hull capable of handling extreme conditions

Space and functionality

Gets me to where I need to go to catch the fish I'm after

BRAND SAYS

Dedication to delivering an authentic, high-quality product through all levels of development

Provides endless hours of enjoyment to all who encounter it

SPECS

S 378 SPORT

LOA: 40'5"

Beam: 12'
Fuel Capacity: 427 gal.

Dry Weight: 19,500 lb.
plus power*

Max HP: 1,275 Certifications: NMMA

DC 326

LOA: 34'6" **Beam:** 10'10"

Fuel Capacity: 300 gal.

Dry Weight: 12,900 lb. plus power

Max HP: 600 Certifications: NMMA

per tilleations. While

YAMAHA

estimated



BUILDER **BENCHMARK**





Regulator Boats

t's been more than 30 years since Joan and Owen Maxwell built their first Regulator 26, in the process reinventing the deep-V center-console and introducing what has come to be known as Regulator's "Legendary Ride."

Regulator Marine still builds each boat by hand, with a hull comprising four solid pieceshull, stringer system, liner and deck cap-polybonded, fiberglassed and foam-filled in place to create a single unit with no noise, creaking, soft spots, leaking, cracks or caulk. And all with no wood.

REGULATOR 28

Regulator has refreshed its classic 28 fishing machine (itself a stretched version of the original Regulator 26) with new standards for 2020: fiberglass T-top with multicolored LED lights and integrated wraparound windshield, and factory-installed Garmin Offshore 28 Premium Package electronics.

They're on a Lou Codegadesigned hull that's been pleasing offshore anglers since

its launch. Its legendary soft ride is proven in the Outer Banks of North Carolina and all along US coastlines year after year.

For anglers, the heart of the boat is its 28 tackle center, a rigging station with storage and rocket launchers in the dual-seat leaning post. Four stainless-steel rod holders are mounted on the gunwales, and there are options to add more to reach the six that cover the needs of 68 percent of offshore CC survey respondents.

The transom bears a 124-quart fish box and 25-gallon livewell. Up front is an in-deck, illuminated 456-quart fish/storage box; flanking it are two insulated fish-box/dry-storage bins, which are illuminated and 169 quarts each. A center dry-storage compartment offers 256 quarts more space that could be the locked rod storage that one-third of survey respondents say they need.

In total, there's plenty of storage for safety gear, cruising supplies and water toys-and, of course, bait, tackle and fish.

A tuna door welcomes aboard fishers and big fish. The console

features a fiberglass-lined head with electric toilet.

Hard-fishing options include T-top rocket launchers and Taco Grand Slam 390 outrigger bases with 20-foot carbon-fiber telescoping poles; optional forward comfort touches include sun shade and a dual-height pedestal table with sun-bed. (Thirty-six percent of our center-console survey respondents called bow seating important.)

MORE INFO

regulatormarine.com



Survey Says:

ON TARGET

Performance and cockpit space optimized by engine bracket

Solid ride thanks to four-piece bonded-hull construction

Space for fish and storage exceeds expectations

OWNERS SAY

Great fishing platform, safe ride

Run straight into slop and at a decent speed, and still be comfortable and dry

Soft-riding boat in sporty seas

BRAND SAYS

Built to fish and designed for comfort

Fit. finish and ride that only Regulator can deliver

Big-boat features come standard

SPECS

LOA: 27'8"

Beam: 9'5"

Fuel Capacity: 219 gal.

Dry Weight: 8,260 lb. with power

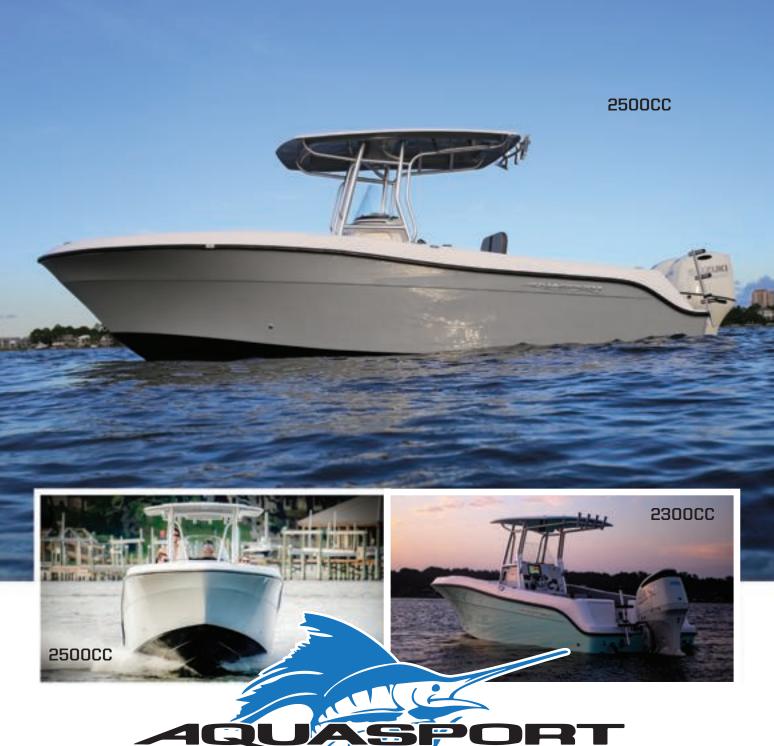
Max HP: 600

Certifications: NMMA

EXCLUSIVELY POWERED



Hardtop and leaning post add nine rod holders. Electronics box frees dash space for GPS/sonar.



46UASPORT

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aquasportboat.com | 615-797-3193

2545 Jones Creek Road, White Bluff, TN 37187



Scout Boats

omfortable fishing and luxurious cruising in centerconsoles, dual-consoles and bay boats, from 17 to 53 feet.

Each Scout is an original, with in-house research and design teams working with engineers to nurture concepts from sketch to blueprint to production, efficiently, all the while growing the company's reputation for quality, strength, durability and value.

Scout. founded 25 years ago. counts among its selling points its superior fit and finish; best-inclass strength-to-weight ratio; fully finished bilge, lids, doors and hatches; and the company's family ownership and operation.

SCOUT 420 LXF

Three years in development, this 42-footer takes its place in Scout's LXF Collection, a line of luxury sport-fish boats the company calls a unique blend of high-performance fish boat and high-end cruiser.

Stevie Potts, son of Scout CEO and founder Steve Potts, headed up development of the 420, which the elder Potts said "rivals

even some of the larger luxury sport-fishing machines with its appointments, technology and attention to detail."

That technology includes an epoxy-infused, carbon fiber/ e-glass double-stepped hull that welcomes quad outboards. Standard are full transom walk-through with teak swim platform, side boarding door, Kohler generator, and Seakeeper gyrostabilizer.

Also standard are two 92gallon in-floor fish boxes with overboard diaphragm discharge, powder-coated hardtop with curved glass enclosure, and three-person aft-facing cockpit seats that are part of a leaning post that contains an ice maker, drawer refrigerator and/or tackle drawers (you select two).

The cockpit baitwell holds 80 gallons, a nod to the 5 percent of offshore center-console survey respondents who carry hundreds of baits. (Sixty-three percent say a single livewell is enough, by the way.) The boat bears 10 stainless-steel gunwale-mounted rod holders, with seven more

on the transom; offshore CC respondents ask for an average of six total. Optional hardtop rocket launchers articulate downward, making rod access easier.

Below are amenities Scout compares to those on a private jet: stove cooktop, microwave, flush-mounted TV, DVD player, galley sink, refrigerator, enclosed shower, and two single beds that can be combined into one large king berth.

The hydraulic portside beach platform adds a floating veranda.

MORE INFO scoutboats.com



Survey Says:

ON TARGET

Luxurious seating abounds

Ample tackle-storage options in leaning post

Rod holders double most expectations

OWNERS SAY

Takes waves well, great fishability

Fishing friendly plus family creature comforts

Dry ride

BRAND SAYS

Loaded with standard features

Countless unique features

Digital switching enhances reliability

SPECS

LOA: 42'2"

Beam: 13'1"

Fuel Capacity: 500 gal. Dry Weight: 16,800 lb.

plus power

Max HP: 1,675

Certifications: NMMA

OPTIONALLY POWERED



Hardtop supports and the windshield are integrated for clear foot traffic and helm protection.



Sportfishing pavilion, demo docks and more.

MiamiBoatShow.com





Sea Fox Boats

S ea Fox Boat Company began with the aim of building hand-crafted saltwater boats with the best amenities, features, performance and function. Over several decades, boatbuilding materials and methods have changed, but that aim hasn't.

Today Sea Fox builds centerconsole, bay, side-console and dual-console boats, all paired with Yamaha outboard power. (Yamaha Command Link digital gauges are standard on boats 20 feet and above.)

Sea Fox boats are built with all composite hulls and decks. Decks have aluminum plates fiberglassed into the motor-mount splashwell area for extra strength to support maximum horsepower and heavier motor weights.

Bait remains fresh in aquarium style livewells. A glassed-in keel drain tube from bow to stern ends bilge puddles. Wiring is colorcoded for easy maintenance and service.

368 COMMANDER

Launched in summer 2019, the 368 Commander is the Sea Fox flagship. It has a sharp 23 degree deadrise and resin infused hull to handle the roughest water conditions. The 3-inch-thick composite transom can hold either triple Yamaha F300s or twin F425s.

Like all Sea Fox boats, the 368 has plenty of seating: three deluxe captain's chairs at the helm, a double-wide lounger at console front, electric-actuated bow table amid bow seats, a flipout aft bench (which 44 percent of respondents called important), and rear-facing jump seats. Invite a big crew—there are plenty of perches for them!

The Ultima hardtop has a full glass enclosure and powered air vent.

The fishing-focused cockpit has twin pressurized and lighted 45-gallon livewells, four in-floor fish boxes, and two refrigerator/ freezer units in the transom.

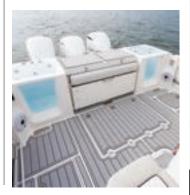
The boat bears 31 stainlesssteel rod holders in the transom and gunwales and an additional nine rod rocket launchers in the top for a total of 40.

An aft rigging station has a bait

tray, six-tray tackle compartment (84 percent of respondents $said\,they\,need\,storage\,space\,for$ six utility boxes or fewer), plus other storage compartments and

Options include eight colors, air conditioning, autopilot, DEKit marine mat flooring, diesel generator, outriggers, radar, Seakeeper gyrostabilizer, seating and upholstery upgrades, sun shade, and Yamaha Helm Master joystick.

MORE INFO seafoxboats.com



Survey Says:

ON TARGET

Raw-water washdown fore and aft, and 30-gallon freshwater washdown

Twin livewells, standard

Rod holders in abundance

OWNERS SAY

Its deep-V Carolina flair throws water away from boat for a dry comfortable ride

You can fish all the way around the boat without any obstructions

> Four chine vents add efficiency

Roomy, handles great, runs smoothly

BRAND SAYS

Bow designed for comfort

Cockpit a serious fisherman's dream

A unique blend of fishing-/family-friendly options

SPECS

LOA: 36' Beam: 11'

Fuel Capacity: 382 gal.

Dry Weight: 13,982 lb.

plus power

Max HP: 1.200

EXCLUSIVELY POWERED



Dekit is a marine mat sole covering growing in popularity for comfort and secure footing.



Lift off toward new adventure in a precision crafted Sea Fox. Each model is buttoned up with innovative features and finished with saltwater safe creature comforts for all aboard. Get more boat for your money. Enjoy more fun on the water in a Sea Fox. **SEAFOXBOATS.com**



SeaVee Boats

S eaVee is a semicustom manufacturer of highperformance center-console, bay, fish-around and sport-express boats. It sells its boats factorydirect, each boat built to the specifications of its owner.

SeaVee's proprietary vacuumassisted resin-transfer molding technology infuses the fully cored hull, stringers and bulkheads simultaneously, creating a stronger, lighter and more durable laminate. Translation: The boat is faster, more fuel-efficient, and quieter. And it lasts longer.

Construction details include high-quality 316 stainless-steel hardware; overgauged anodized or powder-coated aluminum components; and yacht-quality electrical materials and installation, with wiring you can follow from source to destination.

SEAVEE 290B

Available in Open Fisherman and Luxury Edition versions—the SeaVee's prismatic deep-V hull, with an aggressive 25-degree deadrise and keel pad give superior sea-handling capabilities.

The hull facilitates smooth and stable drifts, impressive hole shots, and a more comfortable ride in rough sea conditions.

Standard features include an integrated engine platform with transom door, underdeck dry storage, dual marine AGM batteries, high-performance trim tabs, hydraulic steering, and dual automatic bilge pumps.

Choose from options including hardtop, second station, fixed or removable seating, and the latest marine-electronics equipment from all major brands. Choose your brand of power too, in twins up to 400 hp each; new, larger epoxy-coated aluminum fuel tanks team up with them to make for long-range adventure.

Dual in-deck aft compartments are topped by molded-fiberglass storage hatches with deep gutters and coamings, providing a solid seal to keep compartments dry.

Fishermen will appreciate the massive, insulated fish box, and the 50-gallon livewell system. Additional livewells can be added for capacity and/or species separation; 33 percent of our CC

survey respondents said they need two livewells.

Choose between a simpler Coastal leaning post and a Captains Edition, which includes a tackle station, eight Plano boxes, five rod holders, four cup holders and a handrail.

Comforts and convenience options include an integrated forward console seat and door, retractable cooler, electrically operated forward lounge seat backrests, freshwater shower and toilet facilities.

MORE INFO seaveeboats.com



Survey Says:

ON TARGET

Speed, fuel-efficiency and comfortable ride check the boxes for performance

Pump box keeps livewell refreshed and bait lively

Raw and fresh water are conveniently located

> Storage for up to 21 rods

OWNERS SAY

Open fishability and storage

Big enough to go offshore and small enough to fish inshore

Love the setup

BRAND SAYS

Economical to run and easy to trailer

The kind of affordability that makes offshore adventures happen

A diverse lineup of high-performance sport-fishing boats designed with the whole family in mind

SPECS

LOA: 29'6"

Beam: 9'

Fuel Capacity: 251 gal.

Dry Weight: 5,900 lb.

plus power

Max HP: 800

Certifications: NMMA

SeaVee's cockpit space is ample, and rod holders and tackle storage are in easy reach.

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Solace Boats

S olace co-founder Stephen Dougherty brings what Solace calls the "the Dougherty Difference" to this new company.

The boat-industry veteran has an extensive history with Boston Whaler, and as a co-owner of the EdgeWater and Everglades boat companies. His background and others' are already reflected in new ideas at Solace: cuttingedge designs, original ideas, and commitment to the customer.

Boats and components are built in a 200,000-square-foot facility in Edgewater, Florida, where the company builds its own plugs and molds. Metal components are made using CNC machining equipment and five-axis waterjet.

The boats incorporate highstrength, lightweight carbon fiber throughout hulls and major support structures, replacing aluminum in such applications as hardtop supports.

The company promises nothing less than a revolution in the market, which is apparent immediately in its first boat, the Solace 345.

SOLACE 345

One glance is all it takes to appreciate that this is no ordinary center-console V-hull.

Solace's patented FishThru transom extends aft between two outboards of up to 450 hp each. That maximum outboard spacing places the boat's keel lowest so that its draft is the same-24 inches—with motors up or down.

A hydraulically actuated swim platform—another first—extends out 4 feet past the transom door, allowing the angler, the company says, to "fight the fish, not the engines." (The boat carries two length designations: at transomand at end of FishThru.)

Transom and platform combine to provide effortless access when fishing, swimming, diving or snorkeling.

Fishing features abound, including 10 gunwale-mounted rod holders; only 8 percent of center-console survey respondents said they need more than that.

The 345 has standard features that are most often options on other boats. They include a

Seakeeper 2DC gyrostabilizer, an inverter system, and helm seating—three plush seats with arms and bolsters-with shock mitigation and hydraulic helm raiser. A stainless-steel refrigerator/freezer centers a workstation with grill, baitrigging bin, and freshwater sink. Options include a fully outfitted second station.

Twin livewells meet needs of 96 percent of CC survey respondents; and a pair of 7-foot fish boxes await catches.

MORE INFO solaceboats.com



Survey Says:

ON TARGET

Fish-fighting cockpit space is best in class due to transom extention beyond the motors

Pressurized livewells cradle bait in rough water

Abundant rod storage throughout the boat

BRAND SAYS

High-end, custom-style luxury boats

A level that no other can achieve or surpass

SPECS

LOA: 38'

Beam: 10'6"

Fuel Capacity: 325 gal. Dry Weight: 14,300 lb.

> plus power Max HP: 900

OPTIONALLY POWERED



Cockpit space is enhanced by the unique extended transom beyond the outboards.









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BUILDER BENCHMARK



READER RESPONSE

"LOVE THE RIDE AND LINES OF THE BOAT"



Yellowfin Yachts

Wellowin racino per undeniable imprint of its ellowfin Yachts bears the founder and president, Wylie Nagler, known for his pledge of personal responsibility for the standout quality of every boat his company ships.

That goes from Yellowfin's smallest boat, a 17-foot skiff, to its largest, a 42-foot offshore center-console. Each is a highperformance fishing platform, custom-built of the highestgrade materials and products, and skillfully assembled.

Although built in Florida, Yellowfin boats clearly show Carolina Outer Banks design influences, with wide flares and high bows. On stepped hulls, they leap onto plane.

For over 20 years, Yellowfin has been a leader in offshore boats; it's more recently achieved inshore success and prestige as well. Those who know Yellowfins call them solid, fast, spacious and flexible.

YELLOWFIN **39 OFFSHORE**

This massive center-console boat, Yellowfin's second-largest, welcomes the family aboard for a safe, comfortable weekend outing, but just as readily fields a hard-charging team's run at the tournament prize.

The company calls the 39 Offshore "built for ultimate performance when the weather refuses to cooperate." It's designed for triple or quad outboards which, drawing from a 564-gallon fuel supply, put distant fishing grounds within reach.

The 39's generous 11-foot-6-inch beam creates a spacious fishing platform that's poised for entertaining as well, with such comfort touches as a stand-up head and shower within its console. It's Yellowfin-trademark stepped hull produces a smooth, dry and swift ride.

The boat's 165-gallon macerated fish box-like everything else about the 39-is big, wellappointed, and ready for fish. Two livewells-72-gallon in the transom and 80-gallon in the leaning post—meet the stated needs of 96 percent of CC survey respondents. Expect even bigger catches? A South Beach coffin box is an option.

Six gunwale-mounted rod holders are ready aft (those alone meeting the requests of 68 percent of respondents), with six more forward within the gunwales.

Other options include a leaning post with jump seats; hardtop, dual or marlin tower: hull and trim colors, forward seating and bolsters; and additional rod holders.

YELLOWFIN 24 BAY

The 24 Bay, in the decade since its launch, has set standards for bay-boat speed, fuel efficiency





and ride, with an ergonomic layout suiting both family and tournament-angler boaters.

The center-console 24 Bay has a recessed forward casting deck that is clean and clutter-free, endearing it particularly to fly-fishers. There's plenty of room for two to fish, maybe more spin- or bait-fishers. (There is space, by the way, for an electric trolling motor.)

From the deck, three hatches access a huge storage area. More storage space is within the seat-fronted console. The aft deck contains three livewells.

Flanking the helm are five vertical rod holders per side (65 percent of bay-boat survey respondents say they carry five to 10 rods aboard), and the transom has a pair of angled flush-mounted rod holders.

Leaning post, livewell and rocket launcher are available,

as are a hardtop, Key West soft top and second stations. Select aft seating if you're among the 45 percent of survey respondents who consider it important. Pick your colors of hull, rub rail, pipework and upholstery.

With a 75-gallon fuel tank, the 24 Bay runs far as well as fast. It comes with a standard jack plate (and Power Pole), and draws just 14 inches.

The 24 Bay offers a variety of custom power options.

MORE INFO

yellowfin.com



Survey Says:

ON TARGET

Abundant fish storage—standard and options

Seaworthiness and performance clearly a high priority

Baitwells and rod holders exceed expectations

OWNERS SAY

Expert layout, quality

Perfect boat and setup: fishing, sandbar, cruising—wow!

Reliability

Nothing beats a Yellowfin

BRAND SAYS

Incredible acceleration, fuel economy, and eyewatering top end

Sheer number of tasks it does well

Unmatched attention to detail

SPECS

39 OFFSHORE

LOA: 39'8" **Beam:** 11'6"

Fuel Capacity: 564 gal. Dry Weight: 13,000 lb. plus power

Max HP: 1,650

24 BAY

LOA: 24'10" **Beam:** 8'6"

Fuel Capacity: 72 gal.

Dry Weight: 3,050 lb.

plus power **Max HP:** 400

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