

BOATS
GRADY-WHITE FISHERMAN 236 - BOAT REVIEW

A FAMILY-FRIENDLY MULTITASKER
 BY CAPT. DAVE LEAR NOVEMBER 3, 2016



Courtesy Grady-White

Specs:

Length: 23'7" Beam: 8'6" Draft: 18.5" Fuel: 115 gal. Water: 10 gal. Deadrise: 20 degrees Weight: 3,900 lb. Max HP: 300 w/ Yamaha F300 Grady-White Boats: gradywhite.com

Test Conditions

Weather: Sunny, 92 degrees Location: Neuse River, North Carolina Wind: Light and variable Sea State: Light chop Test Load: Three adults, 86 gallons of fuel, 10 gallons of water

I'd tested Grady-White boats before, and I also had fond memories of fishing near Oriental, North Carolina. So when the opportunity came to combine both, I jumped at the chance. This time, I would get to run and fish aboard the new Fisherman 236, joined by local fishing guide Capt. Scott Wood.

The run across the broad Neuse River just after daybreak was exhilarating, and the trademark SeaV2 hull with the variable deadrise of the Grady-White sliced through the rolling waves without hesitation. After reaching a remote section of shoreline, Wood shut off the big four-stroke and handed out rods as we started a slow drift along a bank with nervous mullet flipping all around.



Courtesy Grady-White

Twin platforms aft add to the overall length and offer convenient entry and gear storage.

The boat earned top marks for fishability right off the bat. The forward casting deck has a fill-in section, and the outer insulated 89-quart boxes enhance the usable footprint. I was working a big popper, taking full advantage of the ample casting or trolling room, when a 51-pound red drum inhaled the surface plug.

After releasing the big fish, I surveyed the Grady and quickly located a number of key features, including toe rails, rod holders on the gunwales, horizontal racks for six combos, and a 160-quart transom box to port with a 15½-gallon livewell finished in bait-calming blue just inboard of the swing-away transom door, all standard issue.



Courtesy Grady-White

The transom houses a sizable livewell, as well as a 160-quart insulated fish box.

Thick coaming bolsters surround the cockpit of the Fisherman 236, and a comfortable leaning post serves as the standard helm seating. An upgraded version includes more rod storage, a companion tool rack and a second 25-gallon livewell.

The aft foldaway bench-style seat is also standard. It deploys easily, offering a good spot to relax during long-distance runs. A jump seat on the forward console lifts for access to a handy drink cooler. A tall compartment to starboard opens into the ventilated head with Porta Potti. And for family beach outings or a cruise to the local waterfront restaurant, a full cushion package with foldaway backrests (an available option) turns the bow into a lounging area.

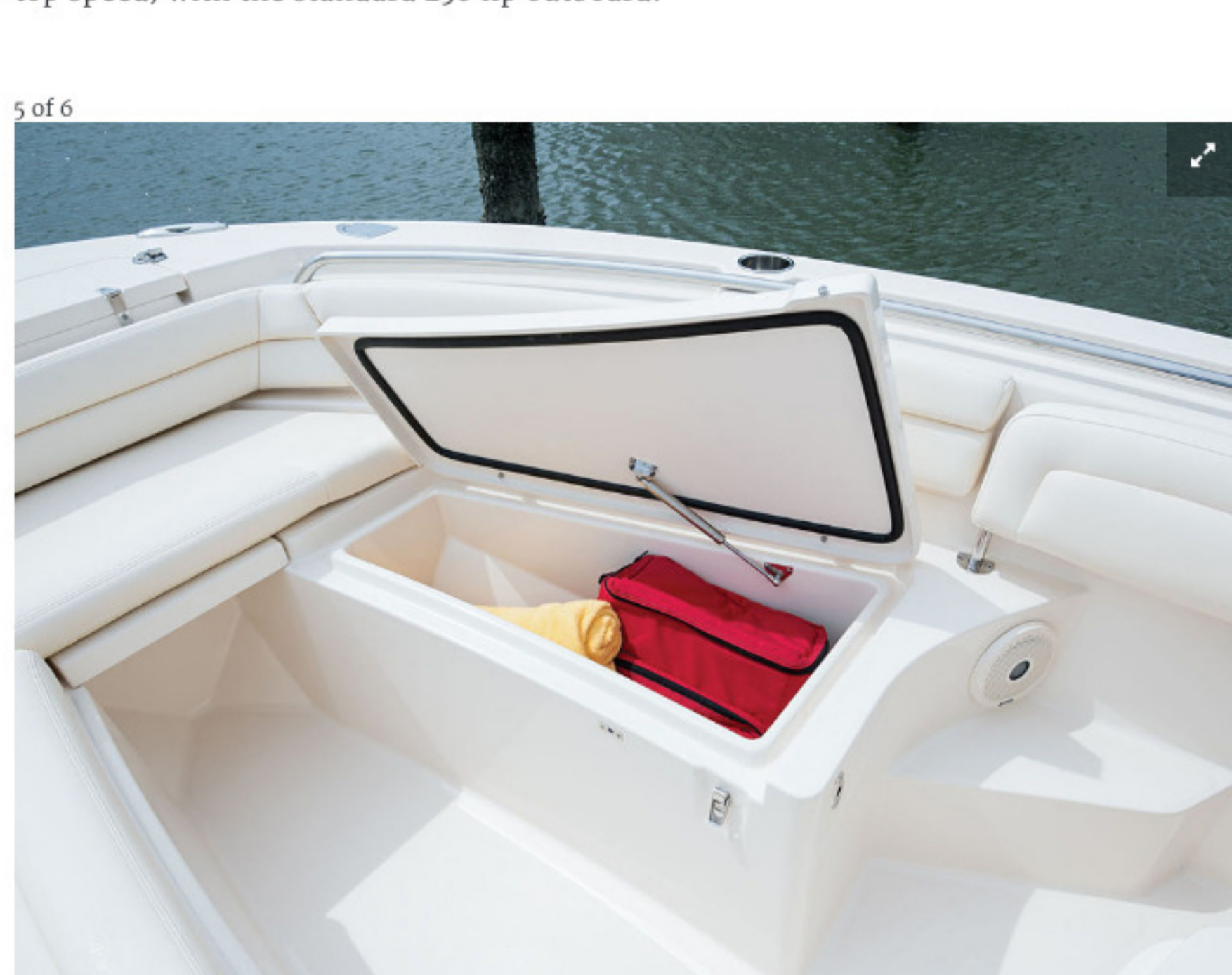


Courtesy Grady-White

A full-length windshield on the large console affords top protection from the elements.

The helm is large, yet it leaves plenty of room to move fore and aft effortlessly. The instrument and electronics panels are easy to scan and reach, while the angled footrest provides more operator comfort. The 236 feels much bigger than its actual length. The seamless, integrated twin swim-platform extensions are not counted in the boat's overall length, but they help to span bigger waves, and the adjacent storage compartments easily accommodate a beach anchor and dock lines, while the telescoping boarding ladder to starboard simplifies re-entry.

The test boat came rigged with a Yamaha F300 four-stroke outboard, which had torque to spare. The hole shot was impressive, and the handling effortless with hydraulic steering. With three-quarters of a tank of fuel, plus three guys and with hydraulic on board, the boat cruised at 28.5 mph doing 3,000 rpm while sipping a miserly 10.6 gph. Our top speed was 46.3 mph with a fuel burn of 26.4 gph, similar to factory performance tests (46.6 mph/26.2 gph), which don't show much of a drop (43.2 mph top speed) with the standard 250 hp outboard.

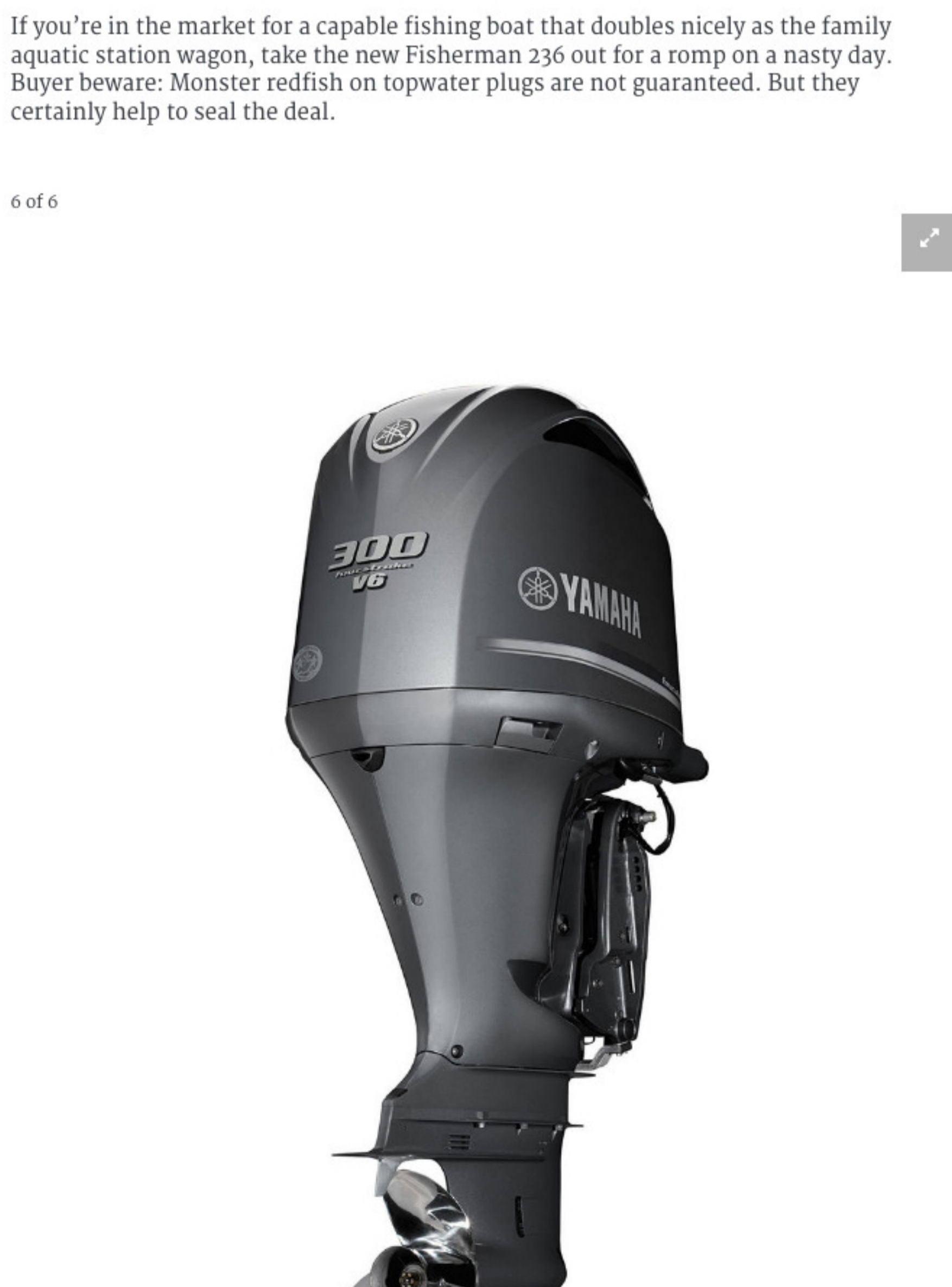


Courtesy Grady-White

The bow compartments offer insulated storage and convert into comfortable loungers.

As expected of Grady-White boats, the 236 is built solid. Hulls are hand-rolled to ensure the right resin-to-glass ratio for uniform layering. The stringer system and transom are constructed using all-composite materials, with a beefy aluminum brace molded into the transom for additional strength. Only high-grade 316L stainless-steel hardware is used, and each boat undergoes rigorous quality-control testing before being shipped to dealers. All these details and the exceptional fit and finish translate into a soft, smooth ride, even when seas get snotty, along with years of trouble-free operation and great resale value. Oh, and Grady-Whites don't come in just classic white anymore. Customers can choose among six gelcoat colors or one overall color, if paint is desired.

If you're in the market for a capable fishing boat that doubles nicely as the family aquatic station wagon, take the new Fisherman 236 out for a romp on a nasty day. Buyer beware: Monster redfish on topwater plugs are not guaranteed. But they certainly help to seal the deal.



Courtesy Yamaha

With the F300, this Grady has power to spare, an impressive hole shot, tops at nearly 47 mph and offers great fuel efficiency at cruising speed.