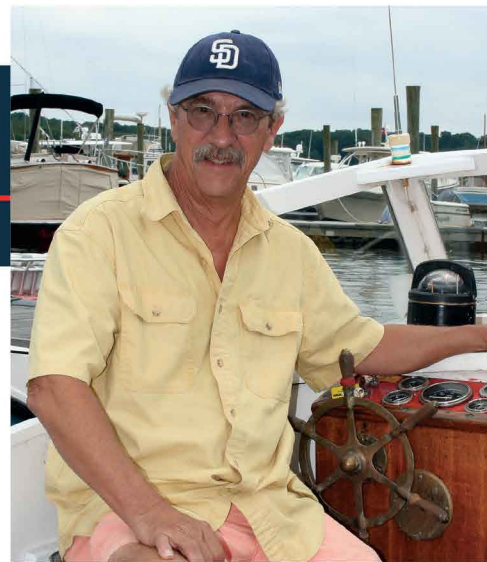


USED BOAT

By STEVE KNAUTH

Grady-White 330 Express



[USED BOAT]

BACKGROUND

Grady-White has been building boats since the mid-1900s, establishing itself as a fisherman's favorite when it comes to quality, performance and fishability. Introduced in 2001, the twin-outboard, deep-vee 330 Express became one of the North Carolina builder's most popular models, thanks to its versatility as a fishing-and-family boat. Upgraded over the years, the boat remains in production today. Early models can be found on the used market, starting below \$200,000. Late models (2009 and up) range from \$250,000 to \$299,000.

Publishing experts always tell authors, "Write what you know." And that's just what Kevin Saulnier did.

Saulnier, who is from Westport, Massachusetts, has published a maritime mystery, *Bart and the Compass Rose* (Create Space Independent Publishing, 2014) that takes place on his home waters in and around Block Island, Rhode Island, Martha's Vineyard and the Elizabeth Islands off Cape Cod.

The 50-year-old supervisor at Eversource Energy admits that cruising and fishing with family and friends aboard his 2002 Grady-White 330 Express helped him with local color for the maritime thriller. The 330 Express is Saulnier's first boat, and it's been a winner from the beginning, feeding a passion for the water that began when he was a child. "I grew up boating with my grandfather, who started the Acushnet Safe Boaters Club,

which is now New Bedford Flotilla 65, First District Northern Region Auxiliary Coast Guard," he says. "He would take me out on boats to do patrols, starting at age 4. And I was an avid sailor at summer camp in Mattapoisett."

As an adult Saulnier has boated, fished and gone scuba diving with a group of friends for 30 years. "We've also been going to the Fort Lauderdale boat show for 15 years, window shopping," he says.

In 2003 he decided it was time to buy. "We like to do anything and everything on the water," Saulnier

says of his family, which includes his wife, Anne, and two daughters. "We had cruised, I did offshore tuna fishing, and we'd anchored up with friends at many destinations."

They knew their own boat needed to be versatile, one that could handle the fishing as well as the family. The Grady-White 330 kept coming up in conversation. "I had been look-

ing for a good hull with regard to handling the conditions that Buzzards Bay throws at you on a daily basis," says Saulnier. "The [Grady-White] reputation for quality and holding its value had me looking at them for years. I also liked its Hunt-designed V2 hull."

In 2005 Saulnier found a year-old model at Boats Inc. in Niantic, Connecticut. "I drove down to look at it with a friend, and we went through her for a couple of hours," he says. After he submitted his price, the owner admitted that having two daughters the same age as Saulnier's made him want Saulnier to have the boat.

It was in great shape, with just 60 hours of use, and it had three things Saulnier wanted: a second sleeping area, a centerline helm and a raised cockpit. They settled on a price of \$175,000. "The day we picked it up in Connecticut, it was snowing," recalls Saulnier. "Cruising in the snow across Long Island Sound while being a boat owner for the first

time is a memory I will never forget."

More memories were in store. Over the years, they've cruised with friends, picking a spot and anchoring up for as long as two weeks at a time every summer. "And I have been out fishing as often as possible," he says.

Saulnier calls the 330 Express the "best rough-water boat I have ever been in" for its size. "I have experienced 11- to 12-foot seas during a fishing tournament, and it handled it very well. It's a dry boat that pushes the water well away from the hull, so there's not a lot of front wash hitting the glass. Taking my boat 110 miles offshore to the canyons fishing for tuna still keeps me up at night, waiting to do it again."

Power comes from a pair of 225-hp Yamaha 4-strokes. "I like to cruise around 24 to 25 knots," says Saulnier. "That would be at 4,400 rpm, burning around 22 gallons an hour, or 1.2 to 1.4 mpg."

Electronics include a Northstar GPS 6000i, a Furuno FCV587 8.4-inch color fishfinder and a Raymarine Pathfinder radar. "I use the GPS and fishfinder the most," Saulnier says.

Maintenance over the years has been minimal. Saulnier has replaced the Strataglass, reupholstered the outside cushions, installed underwater lights and LEDs beneath the gunwales, and added rod holders.

"This boat has been a dream come true," Saulnier says. "[It's] a safe boat in a range of weather, a comfortable boat for four, a battle-wagon for fishing and a great-looking boat from every angle. With the dependable Yamaha engines, I have no problems that would give me any regrets."

Walkthrough

The *PowerBoat Guide* calls the Grady-White 330 Express a "gold-plated express" and a "solid performer in all conditions." The boat rides a C. Raymond Hunt Associates deep-vee hull known as the SeaV2. With its tall bow and ample flare, the hull is intended for fishing in coastal and offshore waters. Fishing equipment includes an oversize transom fishbox, a 45-gallon live well, a full rigging station that includes a sink, and numerous rocket launchers and rod holders.

The deck layout includes aft-facing seats, a centerline helm station with a pop-up electronics console and companion seating. Below, the boat can sleep two in the V-berth forward (convertible to a dinette) and two in the handy two-person midcabin berth. There's a compact galley with a stovetop and a fully equipped, enclosed head.

Other amenities include an entertainment center, air conditioning and a teak-and-holly cabin sole. A hardtop and a generator are standard. Top speed is 35 mph with a pair of 250-hp outboards. The upgraded transom (2009) can handle a pair of 350s for a top speed of 40 mph. ■

SPECIFICATIONS

LOA: 35 feet, 10 inches

BEAM: 11 feet, 7 inches

DRAFT: 1 foot, 9 inches

WEIGHT: 10,840 pounds

HULL TYPE: deep-vee

PROPULSION: twin outboards, 250-350 hp

TANKAGE: 350 gallons fuel, 50 gallons water

BUILDER: Grady-White Boats, Greenville, North Carolina, (252) 752-2111. gradywhite.com



Kevin Saulnier