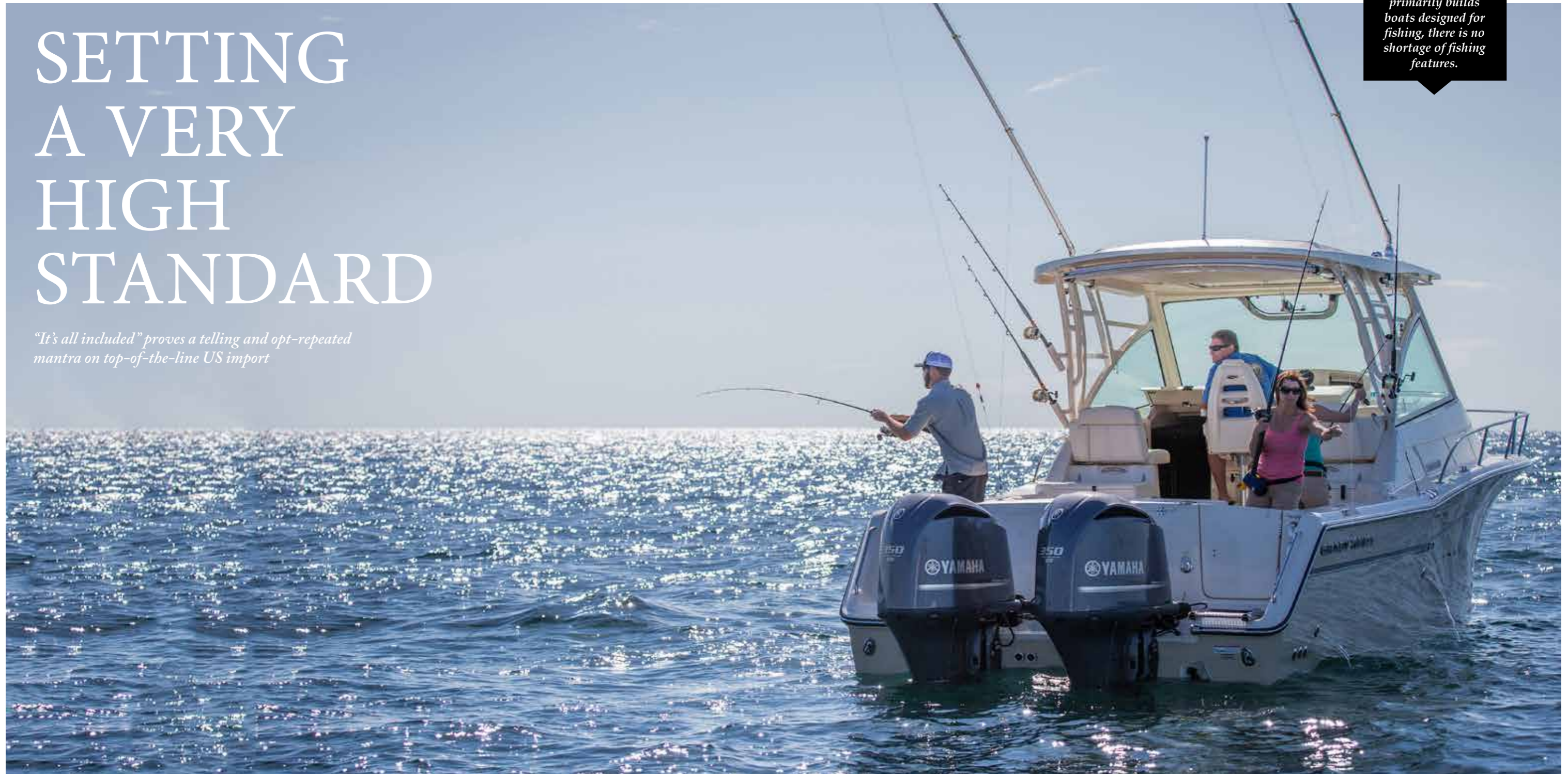


SETTING A VERY HIGH STANDARD

"It's all included" proves a telling and oft-repeated mantra on top-of-the-line US import

Because Grady White primarily builds boats designed for fishing, there is no shortage of fishing features.



WHILE it is has often been fashionable among local boaties (and a number of boatbuilders) to mock the powered trailer boat offerings from the US (and especially their ability to handle our sea conditions), that derision usually stops when the words Grady White are mentioned.

Generally acknowledged as America's finest GRP trailer boats, Grady White has long been seen as among the world's very best. Their combination of obvious solidity, masculine good looks and ability to tame

even the nastiest of waters has made them among the most admired and lusted after of power boats.

Despite this, they have never been able to maintain much of a presence in this part of the world. In New Zealand especially they have appeared only briefly at very irregular intervals and then disappeared again.

That may be about to change. Stuart Arnold, a 40-year marine industry veteran experienced at importing boats from the US, has secured the Grady White agency for New Zealand. From his idyllic, if

somewhat remote, base in the Coromandel town of Tairua, he is determined to establish a permanent beachhead for the brand.

In that quest, he has fortunately been aided by his first New Grady White owner. An experienced boatie (he had previously owned several launches), he, too, has a strong connection to Tairua, was determined to get the very best and prepared to spend the time to find the perfect boat.

And take the time he did. "We spent 14 months looking at over 30 different models,

in the US, Europe and New Zealand," he recalls.

The criteria were simple, if demanding. He wanted: to be able to overnight with his wife or friends; a really good, efficient day boat that could accommodate 4-8 people; a boat that was set up for watersports, fishing, gamefishing and diving. And it couldn't be a launch.

While his preference was for GRP, he even considered the new breed of 9m-plus aluminium boats with their GRP-like finish. Through it all, the Grady White kept rising

to the top so, as a final test, Stuart and he headed to the giant Fort Lauderdale boat show in Florida. There, they spent two days comparing their chosen boat, the Grady White 330 Express, with everything else on offer.

"In terms of its unique features, its value for money, it was streaks ahead. Nothing else came close," he says.

"IT'S ALL INCLUDED"

To see if all this hyperbole matched the reality, a trip to Tairua was required, on

what proved to be a fairly typical January 2016 day: some sun, quite a lot of cloud and no shortage of blustery winds.

On its berth in the new Tairua Marina the as yet unnamed Grady White 330 Express certainly stands out. That distinctive cream coloured hull, the unmistakable Carolina sheer, the manly projection of robustness, all instantly proclaim that this is a vessel that demands to be taken seriously.

It is an impression that is further enhanced on board. It is immediately obvious that everything here is well built. There is no



Credit for the Grady White's legendary sea-keeping is due to the company's continuously variable hull design, SeaV2.

flimsiness, none of that "only for show" frivolity often encountered on more entry level American offerings.

It also quickly becomes clear that, in Grady White terms, all this is nothing particularly special. Despite the very high level of appointment, there are very few optional extras. Virtually everything is a standard fitting. Indeed, as we work our way through the boat, the phrase "It's all included" becomes something of a refrain, one that both the owner and agent take great delight in repeating.

It also quickly becomes apparent that this is a vessel packed full of sophisticated systems and features, far too many to comprehensively detail in an article like this. The sheer number and complexity of these could also threaten to overwhelm a new owner (especially a relative novice) were it not for two things: the systems, although complex and sophisticated, are actually relatively easy to operate; and every Grady White comes with its own Captain Grady.

This latter is a clever iPad app that shows owners, both experienced and novice, how everything on board works. With an easy to follow menu and clear, easy to understand instructions, it covers everything from starting or shutting down the engines (and using the built-in engine flush) to gaining access to the generator; from operating the air conditioning system to locating a seacock or helping dock the boat. Model specific and free to download, Captain Grady is clearly a great innovation and must be a huge bonus for those selling the brand, especially to those relatively new to boating or those moving from, for example, yachting to powerboating for the first time.

Because Grady White primarily builds boats designed for fishing, there is no shortage of fishing features. For a start, the large cockpit (around 7.5 square metres) is surrounded by well-positioned bolsters which, when combined with the toe rails, are ideal for leaning into while battling big fish. There is also a live bait locker. Operated with just a simple push of a button, it is quite sophisticated, featuring five filling tubes to improve aeration, rounded edges and a sky blue gelcoat proved to help calm the fish.

In addition, there is a large insulated locker in the transom (under one of the few non-standard extras on board, the Manta bait station), divided in two by a removable bait board. There are also fresh and seawater outlets in the port side locker, the obligatory moulded rod holders on both sides and drainage everywhere, even in the coaming-mounted rod and drink holders. For those who like to have their rods on show or close at hand there are the two rod holders per side in the coamings, another three per side in the hard top supports and a further five at the back of that bait station.

Other cockpit features include a nifty rubbish locker, a hot and cold water transom shower and last but not least, a patented transom seats that swings up to give access to the generator. The diesel filler inlet for this is out on the platform, which also houses an expandable drop-down boarding ladder and a centrally positioned step to make it easier to move from side to side. Behind the passenger seat, 330 Express owners get to choose between a set of tackle drawers with a small sink on top, or a fridge below and a barbecue above; the latter getting the nod in this case.

ON THE HELM DECK

The area under the 330's hardtop is what the Americans call a helm deck. Completely protected by a curved GRP hardtop, stylish windscreen and clears (all of which are standard), the helm deck is the only place to be while underway. Luckily there is no shortage of comfortable places to stand or sit. In addition to the stand alone helm chair, there is both fixed and "infill" seating on both sides, all with excellent all-round visibility.

The helm is a clever piece of work with a hinged section raising electronically to display the twin Garmin MFDs. Both are touch screen models and have, according to the owner, proved surprisingly easy to master. Lots of thought has also clearly gone into the layout of the dash with the rocker switch array mounted from the inside out in the order they are mostly likely to be used. A further nice touch sees the horn picked out in red so it can be instantly identified in an emergency.

Other controls within easy reach are those for the Bennett trim tabs, the Lewmar bow thruster and windlass, and the Fusion stereo. The Yamaha digital engine gauges complete the picture.

For those more interested in recreational activities than technology, there is also a total of 9 carefully-positioned drink holders on just the helm deck, as well as two more for cups or mugs (designed with space for the handles).

CONTRASTING CABIN

Although still subdued, there is far more colour and contrast in the 330's interior than there is up on deck. The gelcoat below is a mixture of cream and white, there are

teak veneers and solid teak teak surrounds, a solid lacquered rosewood table, a Corian benchtop and splash board and black fascias for the fridge and electrical boards. There are also carpeted steps and a teak and holly floor.

There is a microwave, a TV and a clever infill for the sink to keep a bottle and glasses safe while underway.

For overnighting, there is a large vee berth for'ard with a second double berth back under the helm deck. There is also a separate head complete with shower, a mirrored door and an innovative wardrobe fitting to accommodate clothes better not folded.

There is plenty of handy stowage, with the

cupboards and drawers using catches that need to be pushed in and then twisted to open, and stylish roof-hung rod holders for those more expensive parts of the fishing armoury.

EATING THE OCEAN

Grady White has long had an exclusive arrangement with Yamaha and all models come with Yamaha outboards on the transom (neither company does inboards). In this case the powerplants are twin Yamaha 350hp V8 four-strokes.

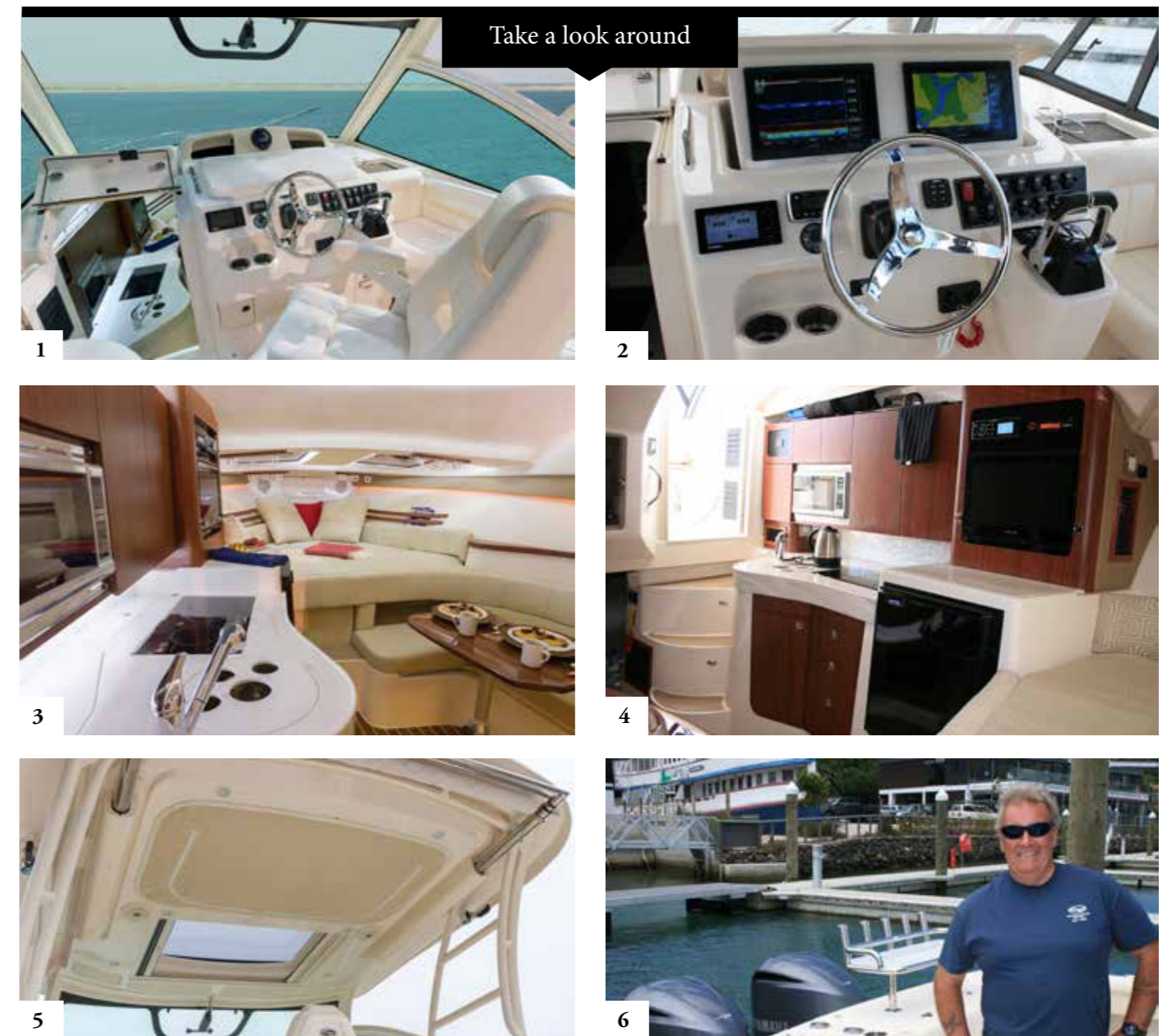
Using 700 horses to power a less-than-11-metre trailer boat must no doubt seem excessive to some (not to mention expensive) but the 330 Express is no

lightweight. It is a traditionally hand laid GRP creature throughout, carries up to 1250 litres of petrol, 450 litres of water and 30 litres of diesel and displaces between 7 and 8 tonnes.

Nor, as our fuel figures show, is this an overly expensive combination to run provided, as always, that one doesn't go flat out all day.

Conditions for our trip out on the east coast of the Coromandel were not rough but nor were they comfortable. There was a sloppy metre or so sea with very little structure and subject to the influence of the surrounding islands.

It proved a good test for a brand that prides itself on its ability to cope with unpleasant



1. The area under the 330's hardtop is what the Americans call a helm deck. 2. The helm is a clever piece of work with a hinged section raising electronically. 3. The interior features a galley, head/shower and two accommodation spaces. 4. A compact and well equipped galley. 5. The hardtop comes with an extension for more cockpit shade. 6. TBC

conditions. With three of us on board we first sought out the calm water for the speed and fuel figures (see table) and then went hunting for the roughest water we could find.

What we found was a boat that seemed impervious to even sloppy beam or aft seas, that required very little trim regardless of the point of attack and which remained almost completely dry upwind, downwind and across the seas. Despite our best efforts we only once made it slam off the waves into a trough (and that was in a tight turn in particularly snotty conditions). The rest of the time was, given the messy seas, remarkably smooth

While those not driving did need to hold on, there was no need for a tight death grip, the 330 Express landed softly and predictably. Not was there a need to feather the throttle or continually alter the trim when running downwind or with the seas off the aft quarter. One could literally take one's hands on the wheel and throttle safe in the knowledge that the boat was not going to broach or yaw.

Tight turning at speed, even in the stop, was likewise generally not a problem; there was no suggestion of letting go and no noticeable cavitation. While it is unlikely that a complete novice would be in charge of such a top of the line vessel, should circumstances demand, they would be unlikely to face many problems of the handling variety.

In short, this is a boat that can plane as slow as 12 knots, can comfortably quarter at 25 or 30 knots and can back up sharply without causing any distress to the V8 outboards.

SUMMARY

Although it might appear that this review is enormous detailed, those familiar with a Grady White will be aware that many of the features have been glossed over and others not mentioned at all. There is simply not enough space to do justice to every item, system and innovation on board.

Were money no object, it would be damn hard, well nigh impossible, to go past this vessel. However, the reality is all this great handling, stylish sophistication and wonderful boatbuilding does not come cheap. The best rarely does. Nonetheless, as someone who demands the very best, the owner is very satisfied and believes he has got very good value for money.

If there are sufficient others like him, then this very well regarded US marque may finally find a permanent home in New Zealand. ☼



Behind the passenger seat, 330 Express owners get to choose between a set of tackle drawers with a small sink on top.

THE SEAV2 HULL

Credit for the Grady White's legendary sea-keeping is due to the company's continuously variable hull design, SeaV2. Although all designs have some variation in deadrise between bow and stern, the nature of the SeaV2 is that at no two places along the keel is the deadrise the same. The graduation forward is quite acute, too. Starting at a relatively flat 20 degrees at the deadrise, it is already around 30 degrees by amidships, greater than that found on even the old radical deep vee designs. Yet unlike those racy designs of old, the SeaV2 is remarkably stable at rest, thanks in part to its wide chine aft. It is also popular with owners: SeaV2 hull performance has been ranked #1 in all 8 J. D. Power Associates marine studies. *Grady White Boats will be on display at the Hutchwilco New Zealand Boat Show on stand 585.*

SPECIFICATIONS

Make & Model:	Grady White 330 Express
Manufacturer:	Grady White Boats
Priced from:	
Price as tested:	
Type:	Hardtop
Construction:	Hand laid GRP
LOA:	10.92m
Beam:	3.53m
Deadrise:	Continuously variable 20 degrees at transom, 30 degrees amidships
Height on trailer:	4.22m
Trailerable Wgt:	4729KG
Test Power:	Two x Yamaha 350hp V8 4-stroke outboards
Propeller:	S/Steel 16 1/4" X 17 SWS XL SDS
Maximum RPM:	700hp
Top Speed:	44 knots
Optimum Cruise Speed:	32mph at 3900rpm
Power Options:	Outboard only
HP Range:	Two x 300-350HP
Fuel capacity:	1253 litres
Trailer:	Magic Tilt

NOTABLE STANDARD ITEMS

4Kw Panda diesel generator, fitted engine flush system, all NZ 230v A/C appliances, fridge, freezer, ice machine, retractable power electronics panel, air conditioning, heating & de-humidifier system, 45 gallon full column distribution liveveel, integrated outboard mounting system with swim platform and ladder, built in tackle drawers, Captain Grady i-Pad app with every new boat

PERFORMANCE DATA

RPM	Knots	L/H
1000	5.0	11.1
1500	7.3	20.3
2000	9.0	33.1
2500	9.5	48.3
3000	14.4	65.8
3500	22.0	88.7
4000	24.2	96.0
4500	29.2	138
5200	34.7	200

NOTABLE OPTIONS

Bow thruster, hot & cold cockpit shower, cockpit fridge/freezer, 1300kw cockpit BBQ grill, 4 underwater blue LED lights, Taco 24ft outriggers

Boat Supplied by:
Marine Imports Ltd,
Tairua 3508, New Zealand

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