

Setting Up For Sportfishing

GRADY-WHITE MARLIN 300

ONE SERIOUS SPORTFISHER



*The Grady-White Marlin 300
has impeccable breeding
and marine manners.*



There is no shortage of tackle storage.

Just when *NZ Fishing News* managing editor Grant Dixon thought he was in remission from his BE (Boat Envy), he spent time on the Grady-White Marlin 300 for a day out of Tairua and realised he was far from cured...

I have suffered from BE from a young age. As a teenager, it was the Haines Hunter 198 that kicked it off, followed by a Viking 82 Sportfisher after spending nine days on one as the sole angler off the Mexican coast. For some time, I thought I had the 'green eyes' affliction under control – that was until last month when I stepped on the Grady-White *Marlin 300*, a 9.6-metre walkaround.

American made Grady-White boats are probably the most awarded boats in the world. There are some 26 boats in the current range, from under six metres in length up to the 14-metre *GW Canyon 456*. The vessels have a reputation for their blue water capabilities and quality build where attention to detail and the use of only the best componentry are apparent.

Grady-White produces around 1500 boats a year, and all the hulls are hand-laid using solid fibreglass, rather than a laminated core construction. This gives them both integrity and strength. The company has been around for over six decades and over that period have refined both the overall performance and the practical fishing aspects. All corners are nicely rounded, with no sharp edges to damage any crew that may encounter them.

All fittings – hatch clips and hinges, rod holders, drink

holders, the steering wheel, drawer runners, through-hull fittings, deck hardware, rear seat frame, dive ladder and the like – are manufactured from American 316 marine grade stainless steel and will last the life of the boat. The company's mantra is 'exceptional attention to detail', and once you step onboard, this is patently evident throughout the boat.

Fishability

The *Marlin 300* is one of the most 'fishable' boats I have been on. Around the cockpit, there are two standard holders set into either gunwale for trolling, 10 in the rocket holder and rail mounted on the hardtop frame; plus three further horizontal holders set into the cockpit sides beneath the gunwale. Inside the cabin is even more storage with six racked holders plus more space in the aft berth. Grady-White has even come up with a dedicated downrigger ball holder!

Every spare bit of space has been converted to tackle storage which keeps smaller items safe and dry but close at hand. Pride of place is a rigging station set behind the helm chair. This incorporates a freshwater sink, an insulated and drainable bait box; topped off with lockable drawers beneath. One of the neatest storage areas is under the step up to the helm station, a perfect



The hardtop offers plenty of protection



The 120-litre livebait well is designed to maximise bait life.



There is plentiful storage space nestled in all corners of the vessel.



Stu Arnold

Introducing Stu Arnold

Grady-White is represented in New Zealand and the Pacific by Stu Arnold.

Stu came to New Zealand in the early 2000s on a fishing trip and liking what he saw, he and wife Rosie set up a dolphin watch business out of Tauranga before eventually selling up and moving to Tairua.

A former boat builder and charter skipper of some repute back in England, Stu was a Grady-White owner for ten years before taking on the franchise. He is as passionate about his diving and fishing as he is about Grady-White boats!

He also finds and imports bigger American sportfishing boats for New Zealand clients.



Grady-White's patented fold-out rear seat.

spot to keep game lures out of the way and safe, but still close to the action.

On the port side is the 120-litre insulated and lit live bait set-up to which a 4160 litre per hour pump delivers a constant flow of water via a full-column plenum system to keep the baits swimming unharmed in the one direction. When not in use, it makes for additional cold storage when filled with ice.

Set into the transom is an insulated 274-litre capacity fish bin that will take most kingfish and albacore tuna. It also eliminates the need to carry additional ice boxes on board, leaving the large cockpit as uncluttered as possible.

The self-draining cockpit space is large enough to fish half a

dozen anglers in comfort. There is good toe space, and the cockpit bolsters help protect the anglers and crews when dealing with a tough fish on either the rod or leader. Stepping onto the swim step, there is room between the transom and the outboards to walk from one side of the hull to the other. There is a four-step retractable, stainless steel ladder to make getting back on board a breeze.

All deck areas have a non-skid surface. There is plenty of room to walk around to the bow casting area, with well-placed handholds to ensure angler safety, even if it is rough. The slightly buff colour gelcoat is great in that it reduces much of the glare you get off a white surface.

The 4.6-metre outriggers are

hardtop mounted and easily adjustable through crank bases. The riggers themselves are telescopic with the halyards conveniently stored on the riggers so there are no loose cords to tangle. While there was not one fitted, there is a reinforced section in the cockpit floor specifically for a fighting chair.

Lighting throughout the boat is all Lumitec LED – floods, under-gunwale and hardtop illumination, and can be changed to blue, red, or white, depending on the circumstances.

At the helm

The first thing you notice at the helm station is how everything is at your fingertips. Even the toggle switches have been placed tactfully, with those used most



The genset is housed in its own soundproofed compartment in the transom; Right: A 274-litre insulated and drained fish bin dominates the transom.



First impressions of the helm station – a place for everything, and everything in its place. Stu prefers standing up to drive and appreciates the folding seat bolster support incorporated in the helm seat

often used being closer than less frequently used functions.

Underway, the Yamaha electronic steering is a big plus, especially when it comes to close-quarter manoeuvring. The Yamaha HelmMaster is great and makes docking effortless. Normally

the time of greatest stress for many boaties, berthing a vessel could not be simpler where the HelmMaster is fitted (see the September issue for a full review). A bow thruster is a factory option, but with the HelmMaster on board, it is made redundant.

Dominating the instrument display is the latest Simrad 16" NSSEvo 3 sounder/plotter, flush-mounted on an expansive dash that also includes a Simrad VHF and auto-pilot, Lewmar capstan control, trim tabs, along with Yamaha's proprietary engine

display and throttles.

There is excellent all-round vision with clears in place to keep the elements out or to provide natural air conditioning on the warmer days. The wipers keep the screen clear, with the starboard one having freshwater available.

Nothing else comes close to a Grady-White Boat!
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The *coup-de-grace* of the helm fit-up is the helm seat. The test boat had Command Elite seats that are contoured to provide maximum support and are adjustable vertically and horizontally. I particularly enjoyed the flip-up bolster that offers support when helming from a standing position. The footrests for both the skipper and the navigator are also adjustable.

Power to burn

Providing the drive are twin 300HP Yamaha 4.2-litre four-stroke outboards which have more than enough boogie to get the Marlin 300 quickly up on the plane and hold it there.

Grady-White provided some fuel figures for a fully laden vessel (5245kg – fuel, water, and four crew) that make for interesting reading. At trolling speed (just on seven knots) the twin rig burns 15.5 litres per hour (lph). The stated optimum cruising rate of 3800RPM puts out 28 knots, with the engines burning 90.5lph. At wide-open-throttle (5800RPM), the burn is 198.0lph, and speed a swift 42 knots. Fuel capacity is 1067 litres.

Creature comforts

While the *Marlin 300* is a magnificent day boat, it is also well-appointed for extended stay-away trips.

There are two forward berths, converted to a reasonable sized double – with an infill and a heap of storage below – and another double bunk tucked back in aft. The galley includes a microwave and ceramic cooktop, a sink with hot and cold water, a 19” LED/LEC flatscreen television and satellite receiver, a vacuum flushing head and shower, the latest Fusion sound system with speakers in three zones; and there is an option for air conditioning.

Fitted nicely under the cockpit sole is a fully insulated and soundproofed 5kW diesel generator with an 80-litre diesel fuel tank, as well as access to all the pumps and seacocks – the latter can be opened and closed using a lever system that does not require you to bend

down to operate.

There are freshwater outlets at the bow for washing down the anchor area, as well at the stern, where divers can even enjoy a warm-water rinse after their plunge.

In conclusion

Grady-White has fitted many of the features you would only expect on a bigger boat into 10 metres of balls-out fishing machine, yet with enough refinements and home comforts to make staying away on multi-day trips a breeze.

Because these boats were designed for long range trips, safety is paramount. There are two 2600GPH auto bilge pumps and every space not used for storage has been filled with foam to make the vessel unsinkable. There are handholds and grabrails exactly where you would expect them to be.

I didn't get to experience the marquee's rough water capabilities, but the small chop we encountered saw the spray dispensed low and wide, making for a dry ride. For its size, this would be the best-appointed sportfishing boat I have ever had the pleasure of stepping aboard – and it has resulted in a serious recurrence of my boat envy affliction!



Specifications	
Beam (amidships):	3.23 m
Centre Line Length:	(w/o engines) 9.30 m
Bridge Clearance:	2.97 m
Cockpit Depth:	0.74m
Hull Draft:	0.58m
Transom Deadrise:	19.5 degrees (SeaV2® progression)
Maximum HP:	700
Fuel Capacity:	1067 litres
Freshwater:	250 litres

1) Even the downrigger ball has a dedicated spot; 2) Negotiating tight spaces with a 10-metre craft is no problem using Yamaha's HelmMaster electronic control system; 3) The well-appointed galley; 4) More storage, this time in the transom. This too, is insulated; 5) The bait rigging station is insulated and features a freshwater tap.