

## BOATS

# Grady-White Freedom 255

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*By Kevin Falvey | March 24, 2011*

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Choosing the right boat is easy if your waterborne activities are singular in purpose. But if your needs vary, that is to say, if you need to consider the desires of other people in your life, then hitting a boat show can leave you more confused than a goat on Astroturf. One solution is to check out a big dual console, like Grady-White's Freedom 255. A hefty, self-bailing boat riding a blue-water hull, the 255 delivers more amenities than most fish boats, while providing easier maintenance and more confidence in plying open water than most bowriders.

Grady-White's reputation for robust construction and accessory installation remains untarnished following my test. Despite running harder than prudence dictated in three-to-four-footers, the hardtop refused to rattle. Additionally, I could detect no movement of the gunwale where the uprights mounted. The structure is backed and bolted, and if you look closely you'll see some cool mitered joints where the pipe work comes together to support the finished fiberglass lid. Each weld is as smooth as a caulk line, an indication of high quality. The top was fitted with outriggers and LED spreader lights.

A great hardtop alone doesn't mean a boat makes the grade. Other factors include through-bolted hinges and deck hardware, which I could check because Grady provided wide-open access to the anchor locker, itself an uncommon feature for this size boat. Then there are the six cleats, each big enough to belay at least two half-inch-diameter lines at a time. The main electrical panel is just inside the helm console door, so you can work without having to crawl on your back. Pull rods for the seacocks mean you don't have to lie on your belly to close a through-hull. There's more, but the headline reads: robust and serviceable.



The Freedom 255 joins an expanding fleet of dual consoles built by Grady-White and others, such as Pursuit, which offers the DC 265 (\$114,165 powered like my test boat), a boat we tested in our October 2010 issue. Comparing the two, one could nitpick the standards – Grady offers six under-gunwale rod racks to the Pursuit's three; the Pursuit has a sink in the head and the Grady doesn't; the Grady offers a cutting board while the Pursuit offers a tackle drawer, etc. Looking at physical dimensions, the Pursuit is 13 inches longer and 3 inches wider and displaces an additional 500 pounds. Both boats share identical fuel capacities and horsepower ratings, and both are built to the highest standards you'll find. The difference is more in how things are done, rather than in the specific features.

Take a look at the Freedom 255's split-bow lounge. you can walk all the way forward for handling lines or casting to a fish, and like the Pursuit, with plush upholstery and nicely angled backrests, comfortable seating for four remained, even after I installed the cockpit table. Aft of the windshield, my tester was fitted with a module that incorporated an electrically adjustable helm seat on its forward side and the optional electric grill and wet bar aft of that. To port, a back-to-back sleeper seat was installed. With the standard folding transom bench and enclosed head, the amenities really make the dual-console layout pop for family cruising and dockside entertaining. But don't think for a minute that Grady-White abandoned its fish-boat heritage with the 255.



There's the self-bailing cockpit, and, as on every Grady, the insulated fish boxes drain directly overboard. This makes it a snap to keep this boat clean, whether things get bloody or just covered in cheese snacks from the kids. The rod racks aboard the 255 securely stowed 6-foot-long spinning rods during our day offshore. Incorporating a toe-kick and stowage bins, these racks are installed in a way that has become a Grady-White hallmark. The transom door is fiberglass, not poly plastic, and makes boating a whopper as easy as accessing the swim platform with its integral ladder.

Opening the livewell, I discovered a deep, 24-inch-diameter cylinder rated at 26 gallons. It's insulated, illuminated and fitted with full-column water distribution to keep livies lively.





At 60 square feet, the 255's cockpit proved ample for a full offshore crew – this despite the wet bar and sleeper seat options, which take up more room than the standard pedestal helm chairs. Were we inclined, we had room for chaise lounges to toast the sunset. That's the beauty of the Freedom 255: easy transition from fishing to pleasure.

AVAILABLE POWER:  
OUTBOARDS



### High Points

- ▶ Doors for the head, console and wet bar are gasketed to keep water out.
- ▶ Installed in the bottom, rather than on the side, the head compartment's drain ensures no mopping up after cleaning.
- ▶ Rough test conditions proved no match for this wave-taming 25-footer.

### Low Points

- ▶ The chart plotter/sounder is mounted low on the helm, while gauges and switches are mounted high; I'd like to see these panels swap positions.
- ▶ Three-step boarding ladder comes up a rung short on convenience compared with the four-step ladder aboard comparable boats.

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▶ LOA: 24'9" ▶ Beam: 8'6" ▶ Draft (max.): 2'7" ▶ Displacement (lb., approx.): 4,459  
▶ Transom Deadrise: 21 degrees ▶ Bridge Clearance: 7'8" (8'7" with hardtop) ▶ Max. Cabin Headroom: 4'2" ▶ Fuel Capacity: 153 gal. ▶ Max. Horsepower: 350 ▶ Available Power: Single or twin Yamaha outboards to 350 hp total

## ▼ BOATING Certified Test Results

rpm	SPEED		EFFICIENCY				OPERATION	
	knots	mph	gph	naut. mpg	stat. mpg	n. mi. range	s. mi. range	sound level
1000	4.43	5.10	1.50	2.95	3.40	407	468	67
1500	6.08	7.00	2.50	2.43	2.80	335	386	69
2000	7.43	8.55	4.50	1.65	1.90	227	262	76
2500	8.60	9.90	6.50	1.32	1.52	182	210	79
3000	11.38	13.10	8.70	1.31	1.51	180	207	80
3500	20.25	23.30	10.70	1.89	2.18	261	300	85
4000	25.90	29.80	13.00	1.99	2.29	274	316	84
4500	29.28	33.70	16.60	1.76	2.03	243	280	85
5000	33.46	38.50	21.90	1.53	1.76	210	242	87
5500	37.71	43.40	28.90	1.30	1.50	180	207	89
6000	41.02	47.20	33.90	1.21	1.39	167	192	90

**MOST ECONOMICAL CRUISING SPEED**

### HOW WE TESTED

**ENGINE:** Single 350 hp Yamaha F350 outboard motor **DRIVE/PROP:** Outboard 15" x 16¼" 3-blade stainless steel **GEAR RATIO:** 1.73:1 **FUEL LOAD:** 100 gal. **WATER ON BOARD:** 5 gal. **PASSENGER WEIGHT:** 600 lb.

**Grady-White Boats** Greenville, North Carolina; 252-752-2111; [gradywhite.com](http://gradywhite.com)

# BOATING

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