

Grady-White Freedom 235 Review



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No matter how well a boat sells after a few years the manufacturer generally redesigns the model to bring it up to date, and we shouldn't expect anything different when it comes to the Grady-White Freedom 225—or, should we? Instead of the usual face-lift, despite this model's popularity Grady-White has come out with an all-new Freedom 235 for 2017. Let's take a peek.



Why choose a dual console boat in the first place? While it isn't ideal for fishing it still gets the job done, and dual consoles tend to function well for [watersports](#) and family day-cruising. Plus, modern versions have lots of conveniences, like a head in the port-side console, and bow fillers that turn the entire bow cockpit into a “playpen”

Any way you look at it, however, the dual console's popularity is proof enough that for many boaters, it's an ideal design. And the Freedom 235 joins a long list of dual-console offerings ranging from the [Freedom 192](#) all the way up to a 37-footer. This extensive experience with larger dual console models allows Grady-White to walk some of the big-boat features down the line, and incorporate them into the new boat. Like the [Freedom](#)

285, for example, the port-side console in the 235 houses a roomy head compartment with a dome light, mirror, and teak-and-holly sole. And as they did with the [Freedom 275](#), Grady's engineers found ways to boost interior cockpit volume. In this case, however, they didn't just slim down the gunwales and push out the inwales, they also increased the boat's beam from 8'0" to 8'6". Put these two factors together, and the Freedom 235 feels significantly roomier in both the fore and aft cockpits than the 225 does. Other features that have been incorporated from elsewhere in the line include multiple slots and pockets and 12V outlets for convenient cell phone stowage and charging, a transom gate, and an extremely large helm flat for flush-mounting electronics.

Naturally, the larger footprint and increase in displacement also have an effect on performance. The 225 could get by with 200 horses and cruise at around 30 MPH while topping out in the lower 40's, but the 235 uses a [Yamaha F250](#) to attain the same results. If you feel the need for speed, you can opt for a 300 HP powerplant. Cruise jumps up into the mid 30's, and top-end touches 46.4 MPH. We couldn't take the Freedom 235 out for a sea trial when we saw it (grrr... it was parked inside the convention center at the Fort Lauderdale Boat Show) but since it rides on the standard-issue Grady-White SeaV2 variable-degree deadrise hull, anyone familiar with running a Grady-White of this size knows more or less how it will handle the seas.



Without question, the greatest strength of the dual console design is versatility. You can use a boat like this for fishing one day, and family cruising the next.

Also familiar to those who have experience with Grady-Whites is the boat's construction. Like all of their offerings, the glass is hand-laid, resin is temperature-controlled, stringers are glassed to the hull, and foam is sprayed into belowdecks cavities. There's been plenty written about Grady-White's attention to detail, quality control, and 14-year run winning the NMMA Customer Satisfaction Award (which requires a 90-percent or higher customer satisfaction rating), so let's just say we feel we're on solid ground when we assert that the Freedom 235 is well-built.

That does not, of course, mean the boat is perfect—none ever is. The adjusting port-side seat is nifty, but even with the seatback placed all the way on the end it isn't really large enough for stretch-out lounging; some sort of extension or filler that connected it to the aft bench seat would be nice for the sun-worshippers in the crew.

Quibble, quibble. When considering price one should also note that Grady-Whites maintain much better than average resale value, and a look at used [Freedom 225 listings](#) is quite eye-opening. As with most things, when it comes to boats you get what you pay for. And in this case, you'll also find that a lot of the cost-adding items that are considered optional on competing boats are standard fare on the Freedom 235. The trim tabs, for example, are the expensive hydraulic auto-retracting Bennetts with indicators. The 20 gallon pressure freshwater system, windshield wiper, and blue cockpit LEDs, all of which are listed as optional equipment on most boats of this size, are included on the standard features list. And along with the boat you get the Captain Grady app, which is an AV operations guide covering the boat from stem to stern.



Loaded? Pretty much—in stock form, the Freedom 235 comes with a lot more than most competitors.

If you're looking to maximize LOA for the buck, this is probably not going to be your next boat. If you're a die-hard angler or a die-hard watersports fan and you want a laser-focused, single-mission boat, it's likely you'll keep on looking. But if you're searching for a multi-use boat that puts quality ahead of size—and if you're not afraid to invest big bucks to play the long game—it might be time to check out a Grady-White Freedom 235.