

GRADY-WHITE FREEDOM 285 (2020-)



Specifications

LENGTH OVERALL	28' 8.53 m (w/o engines)
BEAM	9'6" 2.89 m
DRY WEIGHT	6500 lbs. 2,948 kg. (w/o engines)
DRAFT	22" 0.56 m
DEADRISE/TRANSOM	19 degrees
BRIDGE CLEARANCE	8'3" 2.51 m
FUEL CAPACITY	214 gal. 810 L

Captain's Report

By Capt. Steve Larivee



A great performer for Grady-White just became better with a refreshed version of the Freedom 285.

Overview

With the dual console lineup of Grady-White boats being 9 models strong, there was no better model to re-engineer than the Freedom 285. In addition to building new models, this is a company that constantly strives to improve and revamp its existing boats to enhance the boating experience we so love. Lessons learned and the voice of the customer were combined to make this popular dual console better than ever.

This version is more ergonomic throughout and that manifests itself right upon boarding with the folding cockpit step that retracts into the bulwarks. Elsewhere storage has been enhanced to accommodate a boat-load of gear for however many people will be joining in on the trip. This includes rod storage for 5 rods in the deck, four in rocket launchers in the hardtop supports, horizontal storage for 3 under the gunwale and lockable storage for 2 more in the head compartment.

Cockpit

The completely self-draining cockpit starts out as an open platform suitable for everything from small gatherings to working fish. High freeboard adds to the safety factor and toe-rails are at deck level. At the stern, there's a working area that includes a 185-qt (175.07 L) fish locker with lighting and a 32-gallon (121.13 L) raw water livewell. This extends three-quarters of the way across the deck, so as to leave space for a walkthrough to starboard that leads through a fiberglass door to the swim platform. Just behind and centered is an optional retractable ski-tow pylon.



The stern fishbox is insulated – so if it's not filled with the catch of the day, fill it with ice, drinks and food.



The 32-gallon (121.13 L) livewell is colored blue and includes rounded edges to reduce the shock on live bait.



Battery switches are right inside the cockpit entrance. Notice the shore power plug. It's part of an optional convenience package.

When it's time for socializing, a flip-bench seat comes out from the transom just ahead of the storage and livewell "pod", and Grady-White has a knack for making these types of seats among the easiest to deploy and stow in the industry. We've seen this on other Grady-White models and are glad it's retained here.

Ahead and to starboard is an aft-facing seat. With the touch of a button, this seat's base extends out into the cockpit and converts into an aft-facing chaise lounge. To the opposite side of the walkthrough, the electromechanical adjustable aft-facing seat is repeated, or it can be swapped out for an optional wetbar that includes storage beneath a sink. A sliding section of the Corian counter closes off the sink when not in use. The under-sink storage can also accommodate an optional refrigerated drawer. In either case, a storage drawer and pull-out trash receptacle are just ahead.



The cockpit is well suited for socializing with the transom bench seat and aft facing seat just ahead.



Go with the standard extendable port side seat, or opt for this wet bar with a sink.



An optional refrigerator can be added in lieu of the three drawers.

Hardtop

Above is the upgraded hardtop offering protection from the elements. Four rocket-launcher-style rod holders are along the trailing edge. These will be removed if the electrically-retractable SureShade is chosen to bring the shaded area further aft into the cockpit. LED spreader lights are fitted fore and aft. Speakers are strategically placed for optimum sound. Reinforced receivers can accommodate optional outriggers. The hardtop also includes zippered life jacket storage. As an added option, consider matching a hull color to the underside of the hardtop.



Having a standard hardtop is a huge feature on this boat. Other builders would make it an option, which everyone would surely get.



An extendable SureShade brings the shade over the entire cockpit.



Optional outriggers can be added as the hardtop is already reinforced to accommodate them.

Ahead and to port is the observer's seat and its seat-and-a-half width adds to the comfort level. A recess in the bulwarks includes LED lighted beverage holders and USB connectivity. A grab handle is forward alongside the door to the head.

Head

The port console houses the head and it's a study in excellent fit and finish. Teak trims the side storage compartment and makes up the decking. Rod holders are fitted and extend under the forward bench seat. The toilet is electric-flush. A sink is under-mounted to the Corian counter.

At the backside of the door, there's a round mirror trimmed in teak with a cleat serving double duty as a hanger and grab handle to close the door. A teak trimmed shelf is just beneath. Of course, the perimeter of the entry is gasketed to eliminate any vibration when the 285 is underway.



The head is well-fitted and includes an electric flush toilet and teak highlights. Rod storage extends forward under the port bow seating.



Even the inside of the head door gets a fair amount of attention.

Helm

The helm is mounted to starboard and, as Grady-White chooses not to be in the electronics business, the panel is open and ready to accommodate any brand an owner desires. Being redesigned for this model year, the panel will now accommodate larger flush mounted displays. The compass is center-mounted to the top of the panel. Yamaha's diagnostic screen is to the starboard side of the panel, just above the rocker switch panel. To port are dual beverage holders with a Fusion Stereo just below. The helm is mounted to a tilt base and the wheel includes rubber insert strips to the front and back making it easier to grip with wet hands. A stainless steering knob is also fitted. An optional bow thruster is offered. An extended pod to starboard houses the engine controls. A recess to the side bulkhead includes beverage holders and a rocker switch that actuates the helm seat's fore and aft adjustment. A Helm Master joystick can be added to increase the ease of maneuverability in close quarters. It also includes Set Point for holding position at the touch of a button.



We really appreciate the choice of steering wheel on Grady-White boats. The rubber grip is a welcome addition, as is the steering knob.



Notice the windshield that has been made higher and wider for improved visibility. This model has the Helm Master joystick next to the wheel.



With a larger helm console, the panel can now accommodate larger displays. This is a 17" (43.18 cm) Garmin sharing space with the Yamaha engine monitor and a Garmin VHF.



The bow thruster is optional. We also appreciate added storage at the helm, especially when it's lockable.

Bow

As we make our way forward, the walkthrough can be closed off with a lower air dam, and the upper stainless-steel framed walkthrough windshield making climate control much more achievable. The stainless-steel framed windshield has been made taller and wider for improved visibility. A windshield wiper is fitted to the starboard side.

Bow seating is in the usual V-shaped configuration with two lounges, one to each side. Storage is underneath the port seat that runs to the head to accommodate the lockable rod storage there. The seat to starboard includes a 118-qt (111.67 L) ice/fish box with overboard drainage. Grab rails are just inside the caprails for both seats. Aft-facing speakers are mounted to the forward cushions. Aft-facing speakers are mounted to the forward cushions.



The bow table is standard and really adds to the functionality of this social zone.



Storage is under both bow seats. To port rod storage extends into the head compartment just behind. To starboard, an insulated box holds ice or fish.



Optional bow cushions convert the bow into a large sunpad.

A standard pedestal table adds functionality. As an option, filler cushions convert the area into a large sun pad. Of course, cushions can all be removed to create a non-skid casting deck. A forward section of seating flips up to allow closer access to the foredeck and the ground tackle as well as a lower hatch leading to the rode access.



An easily deployed bow shade can be fitted from the leading edge of the hardtop forward to two vertically mounted poles.

Ground Tackle

An elongated hatch opens on a gas assist strut to expose the recessed ground tackle. This compartment includes an electric windlass with safety cable. A cleat is mounted to the starboard side. The rode leads through a stainless-steel roller mounted through the stem. Push-button controls for the windlass are in the deck just to starboard and at the helm. Ahead are pull-up cleats to port and starboard, and a flip nav light is to center.



The windlass is standard. Controls are to the side. Notice how the hatch is finished on both sides.

Power

Grady-White powers its boats with Yamaha outboards exclusively. For the Freedom 285, choose from twin 250 or 300-hp four-strokes. Grady reports that the 250's will push her to a top speed of 51.5 mph (82.88 kph) and best cruise of 30 mph (48.28 kph) with a 16.4 GPH (62.08 lph) fuel burn. The 300's will have her running at a top end of 54.6 mph (87.87 kph) and produce a best cruise of 29.5 mph (47.48 kph) with a 15.4 GPH (58.29 lph) fuel burn.

The outboards are mounted to an integrated mounting system that includes the swim platform and ladder. At the transom is a hose attachment for an engine flush system.

An optional convenience package includes a battery charger and dockside power.



Grady-White reports a top speed with a pair of 300-hp Yamaha Four Strokes at 54.6 MPH.

Observations

To find something wrong with a Grady-White is an experiment in futility. They just do so much right. Such was always the case with the Freedom 285, but they still managed to find ways to improve the model. Is that to say the previous models were flawed... certainly not. But even Julia Roberts was able to clean up in *Pretty Woman*. Point being, there's always room for improvement, and Grady-White will always find it.