

Grady-White Freedom 307



PHOTOS COURTESY OF GRADY-WHITE

Smooth operator.

by Chuck Warren

For more than 60 years, Grady-White has been building some of the finest fishing boats in the world. Founded in Greenville, North Carolina, in 1959, the company has been an industry leader in quality, craftsmanship and innovation ever since.

Although Grady-White originally built models that appealed to the blue water fishing crowd, it's no surprise to see its boats have grown in popularity on the unpredictable waters of the Great Lakes.

However, Grady-White boats are not strictly built for fishing. With models like the Freedom 307, the boats can easily slide over to the dayboat arena and go head-to-head with all comers.



Fair-reaching reputation

Growing up on the Jersey Shore, I've been a fan of Grady-White boats most of my life. But I really learned to appreciate the company's attention to ride, stability and design when I spent five years living in the Florida Keys.

While there, I regularly fished on a 24 Offshore, often running the boat 30-plus miles out from Marathon, Florida, to a natural formation called The Hump in search of tuna, wahoo and even marlin. With that experience in mind, I couldn't wait to meet the crew from Grady-White for a look at the Freedom 307.

It was a chilly late-April morning when I met Grady-White's Daniel Strickland and Adam Harrell at the test boat, docked at South Shore Marine in Huron, Ohio. I even had to run back to my truck to get a warmer jacket for the onboard tour.

Once back at the dock, I was given a run-down of everything that sets Grady-White apart from the competition — and the list was long. The Freedom 307 is exactly what I would expect from the company: A well-designed fishing machine with beautiful lines and enough creature comforts to make a great family cruiser or dayboat.

A beauty, not a beast

With its light-blue hull and white interior, our test boat was beautiful without being flashy, and capable without being single-minded. The curved, full-beam hardtop perched over the windshield did nothing to take away from the boat's appearance as can sometimes happen.

Entry through the side access door on the port side is easy from the dock — a welcome feature that provides access to passengers who might have trouble boarding otherwise. A solid door at the transom makes swimming and re-entry easy as well.

True to Grady-White's reputation for attention to detail, everything on the boat is thoughtfully designed with several innovations standing out from the rest. While some of the boat's best features were obvious, others were hidden out of sight. There are far too many to list them all, but these are a few of my favorites.

At the transom, a plenum-fed livewell does a great job of aerating the water and keeping bait alive, while every single cup holder, well, and anywhere else water can collect all drain to the truly self-bailing cockpit. You'll also find dual bilge pumps in every model over 25 feet.

Drawers and lids are gasketed to keep contents from getting wet, while all of the lift arms are backed with metal plates to keep them secure for years to come. In the bilge, extensions on the seacock handles mean they are easy to reach in an emergency without squeezing through a hatch.

Grady-White's fishing DNA can be seen in features such as the pop-up cleats and fold-down navigation lights meant to keep surfaces smooth and prevent tight lines from catching when something big is on the hook.

Multipurpose machine

However, this is no dedicated fishing boat. At the transom, a fold-away seat can be left stowed or easily deployed for extra passengers. Just forward, the port seat electrically extends to create a comfortable lounge.

To starboard, a nicely appointed wetbar provides a great place to prepare snacks or cocktails on its Corian countertop. Walk through the windshield and you'll find the seating hides huge, finished storage spaces and can be converted into a spacious sun lounge. Underneath the starboard seat, you'll find an insulated box with overboard drain, creating a great drink or fish cooler.

The Freedom 307's dual console design also hides a roomy head to port, which can also be used as a comfortable cabin with another innovative design. A removable divider extends the cabin depth forward, converting a storage locker into more room for long legs or fishing rods.

One of Grady-White's biggest innovations is its SeaV² hull. Designed in the late 1980s, the SeaV², or "Continuous Variable Vee" hull, provides a changing deadrise that goes from 20 degrees at the transom to 55 degrees at the bow.

The result is a quick-planing, smooth and dry-riding, fuel-efficient hull that has remained unchanged for more than 30 years. The design is so good that it has provided the foundation for all Grady-White models since the mid-1990s, including the Freedom 307.

Smooth as glass

It was still chilly when we fired up the standard dual Yamaha 300-hp engines to go for a sea trial. As we throttled up, the performance advantages created by the SeaV² hull's unique design were immediately obvious in the choppy seas.

With almost no bow rise, the 30-footer smoothly glided up on plane, handling the rough stuff with ease and cruising comfortably at about 30 mph. Leaning on the sticks, the boat quickly reached its top speed of about 50 mph.

The Freedom 307 may be backed by a long line of fishing machines, but the boat's design and features make it a perfect choice for anyone looking for a full-featured, multipurpose boat with great performance and one of the best rides of any boat afloat.

No matter what the conditions are on the Great Lakes, the Grady-White Freedom 307 is one smooth operator. ★



GRADY-WHITE FREEDOM 307

» SPECIFICATIONS

LOA: 30'6"

Beam: 10'7"

Draft: 22"

Weight: 8,350 lbs.

Fuel Capacity: 234 gals.

Water Capacity: 32 gals.

Std. Power: 2 x Yamaha 300 hp
outboards

MSRP: Contact dealer

GRADYWHITE.COM

» DEALERS

Beacon Marine
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Drummond Marine
DRUMMONDMARINE.COM

Jerry's Majestic Marine
JERRYSMAJESTIC.COM

Mega Power Sports and Marine
MEGAPOWERSPORTS.COM

South Shore Marine
SOUTHSHOREMARINE.COM



Incredible ride, stability and performance.
Mirror with storage in the cabin.
Four-rung swim ladder.



Could use better placement
of phone charging ports.



Watch the video at
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