



# Anchorline

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GRADY LIFE

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*Cesar Castillo's Canyon 376, Double Time,*  
sitting pretty on Chiva Blue Beach in  
Vieques, Puerto Rico.





## Dear Grady Friends:

As summer boating season begins each year in our part of the world, it is a time of anticipation, joy, and reflection. This past year, life was very different for many of us. Our habits changed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We found that our Grady-White boats allowed us to escape to the great outdoors and provided a unique opportunity to enjoy time with friends and family at a level our busy lives may have prevented in the past. Though these were trying times, full of challenges and losses in many ways, we learned that boating created priceless, joy-filled memories as we formed strong and unforgettable bonds with friends and loved ones on the water.

It has always been our passion to build boats that do just that: provide relaxation, enjoyment, and wonderful experiences that lead to happy, lifelong memories, and great stories. This issue of the *Anchorline* highlights a few that will be told through the generations, like the story of Josiah VanFleet and his nine-year-old son, Ezekiel, who together with friends, caught a 9-foot bluefin tuna, estimated at 1,000 lbs., on their 22-foot *Tournament 225*. And, “Walking Man,” Jeff Rudisill, marked another item off his bucket list, as well as enhanced his boating skills traveling the Gulf portion of the Intracoastal Waterway on his *Freedom 225*.

As we begin our “new normal” life, let’s remember what we’ve learned and commit our time to making boating memories with those we love. Join a Grady-White Boat Club, invite a new friend to experience the joy of boating, and send us your photos! Your stories inspire us to continue building the very best family fishing boats every day!



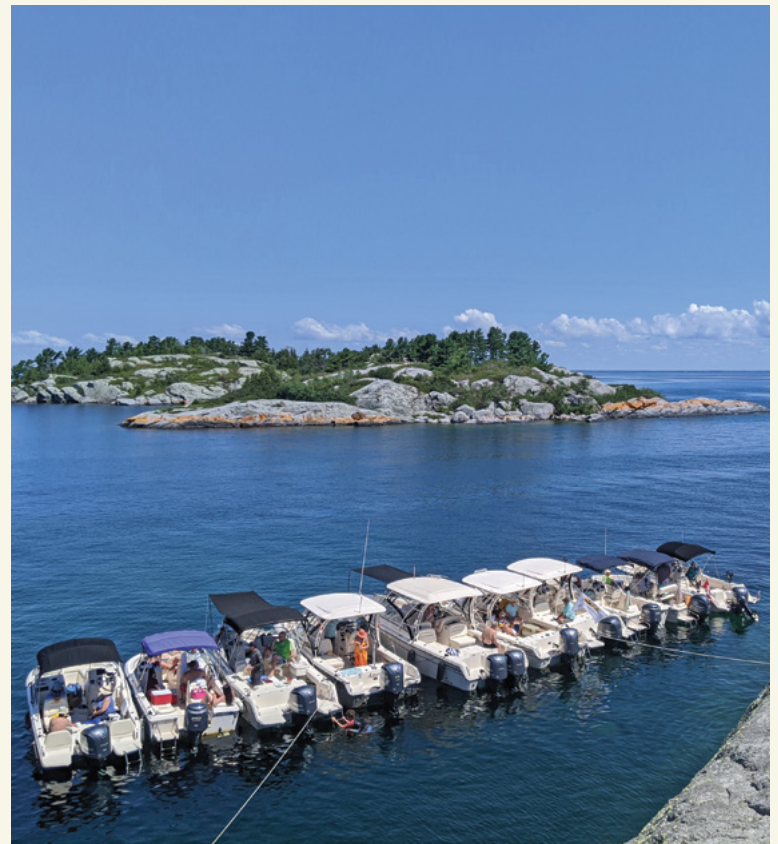
Eddie Smith, Jr., Chairman, CEO



Kris Carroll, President



**The Sanchez family**, who boat out of Cape Cod, Massachusetts, says 10-month-old, Marina, approves of their recent upgrade to a Grady-White *Canyon 306*.



**Alex Pasemko submitted this image of his family** rafting up with the Great Georgian Bay Grady-White Club at the Western Islands in Georgian Bay, Ontario, Canada.

**We're all eager to continue enjoying time on the water with family and friends.** As you head into summer, excited to create lasting memories on your Grady-White boat, remember to send us your photos!

# Grady Owner Witnesses God's Humor in this Gi-Normous Catch!

As they left the dock for their first offshore bluefin tuna expedition, Josiah VanFleet, his nine-year-old son, Ezekiel, and two other crew members literally prayed for “a very big fish and a safe day on the water.” Looking back, Josiah says, “God sure does have a sense of humor,” as the father and son reflect on the catch of a lifetime: a nine-and-a-half foot, approximately 1,000-pound bluefin tuna, on their Grady-White *Tournament 225*.

Last summer, Josiah and his wife, Ashley, decided it was time to invest in a family boat. They'd been on the hunt for the perfect model, but they weren't having much luck as boat sales had taken off during the COVID-19 pandemic and availability was low. Finally, Josiah called the local dealer, Southeastern Marine, and was told they had a boat for sale that hadn't been listed yet. The VanFleets immediately got in their car and went to see the boat, a Grady-White *Tournament 225*. Right away Josiah knew it was the perfect boat for his family of six. With two daughters and two sons, Josiah longed to create the same special memories with his children that he had shared boating with both of his grandfathers around New York and New Jersey.



**Josiah and Ezekiel VanFleet** straddle the massive 1,000-pound bluefin tuna caught aboard their *Tournament 225*.

Throughout the summer and fall, they enjoyed both fishing and cruising on the boat. Ashley explored on the shore and looked for sharks' teeth, the children went tubing, and Josiah, often accompanied by Ezekiel, did a lot of fishing. Staying close to home at first, Josiah was paying attention to their gas consumption and trying to determine how far he could take the boat offshore. Inspired after watching back-to-back episodes of *Wicked Tuna*, Josiah and Ezekiel started preparing for their own bluefin tuna experience.

Late in February the perfect weather window presented itself. That day Josiah, Ezekiel, and three experienced fishing friends along

with another boat of fishing companions launched at Oregon Inlet, North Carolina, and traveled 45 miles off the coast to where they had heard the bluefin were biting. By 8:15 am they were already hooked up! Soon after, Ezekiel asked their angler friend, Steve Hux, “Is this a bluefin?” to which Hux responded, “Yep!” He could tell it was a bluefin by the way the fish hit the bait and then took off on a fast and long run, pulling off a lot of line.

This fish was not only a beast to reel in due to its sheer size, but there were some equipment challenges as well. At one point, when they flipped the reel into two-speed, it broke. At first, they





**No matter the activity,** being on the water delighted the VanFleets during the summer of 2020 aboard their *Tournament 225*.

thought they would have to handline the fish the rest of the way in. Luckily, they were able to take line off that reel and crimp it to another reel to finish the job and bring the fish to the boat. While they knew the fish was a large one, they had no

idea how big until they got it alongside the boat.

It didn't take long for the crew to start wondering just how they were going to get the fish into the boat. They tried a variety of angles, but nothing seemed to work.

They even tried to tow it alongside the boat to no avail. Finally, they called their companion boat over, and some additional crew members joined them on the boat. After looping the line over the hardtop and positioning the fish at the stern of the



**The crew** worked hard to haul the nine and a half foot catch aboard their 22-foot Grady-White.



**Ezekiel** holds a tuna caught aboard his family's Grady-White boat.





During the summer and fall, Ashley and the kids have made many memories cruising on the boat.



Josiah, Ezekiel, and Ashley traveled to Greenville to see where their boat was made and the many model choices they have for their next Grady-White boat. They like them all!

boat, they waited for the right wave to come along and tip the boat down enough that the seven men could haul it aboard.

Back at the dock the fish measured at nine and a half feet with an 83-inch girth.

Unfortunately the weigh scales were broken, preventing them from getting an accurate weight on their monster catch. Based on the length, the Coast Guard estimated the fish to be about 17 years old and to weigh around 1,000 pounds. Never in their wildest dreams did they expect to land a bluefin over 400 pounds, much less this massive fish that Ezekiel declared was “Gi-Normous!”

When asked about the performance of their Grady-White boat on this epic trip, Josiah said when they bought the boat they didn’t know that much about Grady-White, just that others recommended them as being solid, safe, and reliable. Once they did a little research, they happily realized

they had a genuine diamond! After this fishing experience he noted, “We were even more thrilled and thankful that our Grady-White came through for us in this moment that will forever be remembered!” Josiah added that after showing the video

and photos of this amazing fish to friends and family, the consensus is, “We need a bigger boat!”

To hear Josiah and Ezekiel recount the story in their own words, see our video at: [gradywhite.com/explore/the-grady-life/videos/](http://gradywhite.com/explore/the-grady-life/videos/).



The VanFleet family of six creates special memories boating aboard their *Tournament 225*.



## GRADY CREW STORIES

# Living a Double “Grady Life”

Grady-White team member and boat owner

*Eddie has been with Grady-White Boats since 2015. Having owned a number of boats before he purchased his new Fisherman 257, he says this boat is really living up to its “fisherman” name, as well as many other uses that make the boat just as suitable for family cruising. Having input into the boat’s recent upgrades as his boat was the prototype for the 2022 model year changes, Eddie got to experience what it was like on the customer side of a new Grady-White purchase.*

My boating memories stretch back to when I was seven years old, fishing and water skiing on the Pamlico River with my family on my dad’s first boat. I grew up with a love for being on the water with family and friends, and that hasn’t changed one bit. These days you can find me and my wife, Lynn, out on our *Fisherman 257* with our son Connor, daughter-in-law Kelli, black lab Callie, and granddog Grady. We all make it a point to spend as much time on the water as we can.

Growing up boating in Eastern North Carolina, Grady-White was a household name. My dad frequently talked about buying a Grady, but my first experience of “The Grady Life” began when I became part of the engineering team at Grady-White in 2015. As



**Grady-White Boats employee Eddie** and his family spend as much time on the water as possible.

the Tooling Shop Supervisor in the engineering department, I have the pleasure of working with the talented team of craftsmen that produce the molds for all of the fiberglass parts.

A few years later I finally got to experience what it’s like to be a Grady owner. I purchased a used *Chase 273* and began my

double “Grady Life.” I have to say that as rewarding as it is to be part of the team building our boats for others, if I had to choose between the two, my alter ego of spending time on the water with family and friends wins out!

How my family has used our boats has evolved quite a bit over the years, and we have owned boats of all different makes from 17 to 27 feet. We were always in search of the one boat that could do everything. Eventually, we concluded there wasn’t one boat that could check every box on our wish list, and we decided to order the closest thing – a 2021 *Fisherman 257*. We took delivery of the boat in September 2020, and I was thrilled to eat my words when it became obvious the 257 was the absolute perfect boat for our family. It checked all the boxes and even some we hadn’t thought about! We use it for picnics, sunset cruises, beach trips, and of course, fishing. One other exciting aspect of our new boat

**The 2021 *Fisherman 257*** is the absolute perfect boat for Eddie’s family. It does it all!





**Grady, the granddog,** enjoys the Grady Life too!

was that it became the prototype for the new center console T-top for the 2022 model year. This top would be used on the *Fisherman 216*, *236*, and *257* as well as the *251 CE*. Though this wasn't my project directly, I was involved with the design team as a "customer." They would show me the plans and ask questions like, "How would you use this?", then revise the design to fit the needs I noted. It was exciting to be able to offer insight from an owner's perspective and see the improvements come to life on my new boat!

It is my lifelong love of fishing that has molded me into an avid inshore and offshore fisherman. I am beyond grateful that my son, Connor, has inherited that same love. After we broke-in our new boat, the two of us were itching to test it out offshore. On our maiden trip together, we landed a citation wahoo and released a sailfish. Not much can compare to the rush of working together, father and son, to get a nice fish like that wahoo in the boat!

Our next boating adventure was another family affair when we entered the three-week-long Atlantic Beach King Mackerel Tournament. The weather on the first day turned out to be cool and rough, so we decided to sit it out. Connor decided to fish on another boat with some friends. The rest of us slept in and were having a late breakfast when my daughter-in-law suggested we "tough it out" and not let the "guys" out-fish us. With that, the three of us, with the dogs in tow, loaded the boat and headed out. After an hour of trolling in some fairly rough seas, we hooked up a decent king. Kelli was the angler, Lynn was our captain, and the dogs and I served as the mates. This was the most eventful landing of a fish I ever experienced! It was especially successful because we very much "out-fished" the "guys." That mackerel was

big enough to put our boat, *Gel Break*, in second place. Kelli held the top Lady Angler spot through most of that first week of the tournament. Although we never caught any larger kings and fell off the leaderboard, several other memories were made during the tournament. Kelli released her first billfish, a huge sailfish, and Connor caught his first citation cobia.

The versatility of our Grady-White makes ownership of this boat really gratifying! The boat's many comfort features make her equally great for going out to the restaurants along the waterfront of Morehead City and Beaufort in the evening or visiting the shallow waters at Cape Lookout. No wonder boating is not only our family's favorite pastime, but our dogs' too!

Working in the engineering department at Grady-White and being a part of the meticulous planning that goes into creating a design that provides "the ultimate boating experience," our vision at Grady-White, is truly rewarding. Having the opportunity to experience it with my wife and kids is over the top! It's something that I never would have dreamed of when I was a kid on the Pamlico River with my family.

My experience working with Radio Island Marina's sales and service team was exceptional too. We've had a lot of fun taking part in the Cape Lookout Grady Club's events, joining in the excursions with fellow Grady owners in and around Atlantic Beach.

Needless to say, boating will always mean a great deal to my family, and we look forward to creating more memories and reeling in fish on our *Fisherman 257*. There are a lot of people buying their first boat these days, and my hope is that they all get to experience as much joy, excitement, and happiness on the water as I have. As my fellow Grady-White boat owners often say, "Get the Grady!"



**Captain Lynn and Kelli** at the helm.



GRADY-WHITE CLUBS FIND WAYS TO COME TOGETHER SAFELY

## Club News

Here are highlights from recent Grady Owners' Clubs events and outings. If you have Grady Club information to share or are interested in clubs in your area, email [anchorline@gradywhite.com](mailto:anchorline@gradywhite.com). Go to [gradywhite.com](http://gradywhite.com) for links to club websites.



**Northwest Grady-White Club** members on the dock in Roche Harbor show off the new club burgees.



**The Low Country Grady Club** took a lunch cruise to The Wyld Dock Bar just a little south of Savannah. It was a lovely day to be on the water!



A nice peek at the "behind the scenes" production activity from the Quick Bytes Walleye Seminar sponsored by South Shore Marine, Grady-White Boats, and **Lake Erie Grady-White Club**.



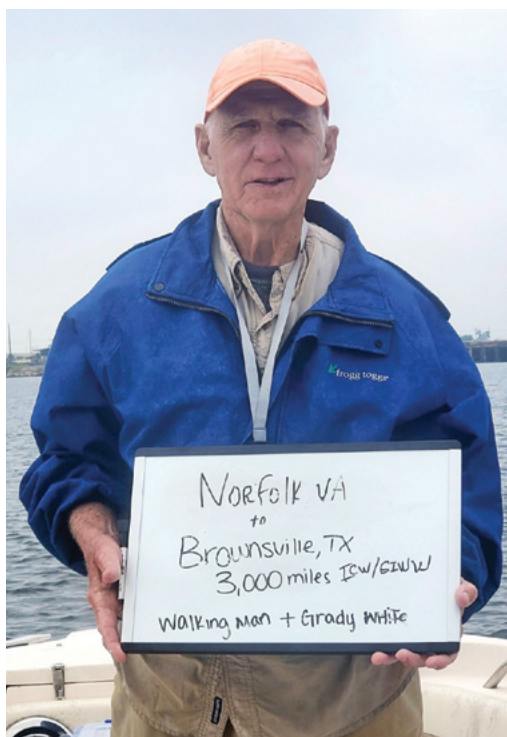


# The Adventuresome “Walking Man,” Jeff Rudisill, Completes Another Grady Adventure!

When we last talked with Jeff Rudisill for the Spring 2016 *Anchorline*, he'd just come off a solo trip going down the East Coast portion of the Intracoastal Waterway (ICW) from Virginia to Apalachicola, Florida, on his *Freedom 205*. There, Hurricane Patricia thwarted his plans to go all the way to Brownsville, Texas, and he returned home with hopes of someday completing the journey.

Since that trip, he has kayaked the Suwannee River twice, had both knees replaced, and walked the Natchez Trace. After the COVID-19 pandemic, he was ready to complete the ICW trip. Now, with a Grady-White *Freedom 225*, he trailered the boat from his home in Daleville, Virginia, to Ft. Walton Beach, Florida. From there, he and friend Ben Tarpley launched the boat for the western leg of his ICW Grady-White adventure.

By the time he reached New Orleans, Louisiana, Jeff began noticing big differences in the Gulf waterway versus the East Coast ICW. He first noted that when traveling through the ICW on the East Coast, you pass a lot of towns and there are not many large bodies of water to navigate. In contrast, the Gulf ICW has many large bays and sounds to travel across, and he rarely saw a town – mostly just fishing villages. Primarily traversed by barges and commercial fishing boats, Jeff also realized there were not many recreational boats; in fact, he didn't see a single recreational boat between New Orleans and Galveston, Texas. This was quite



The “Walking Man,” Jeff Rudisill, Grady-White *Freedom 225* owner.

the opposite of the East Coast trip that was predominantly traveled by pleasure craft. Some of this was not a huge surprise to Jeff who knew of the relative lack of towns along the way, so prior to the trip he had concerns about getting gas and supplies. He was, however, pleasantly surprised by the number of full-service marinas along the route. That, combined with the Grady-White 90-gallon gas capacity, ensured he never had any problems going from port-to-port.

Since there were no towns with hotels, Jeff and Ben slept on the boat every night for 17 nights. Jeff kept the bimini up with the full canvas enclosure attached so they were protected from bugs and weather. For sleeping arrangements, Ben, who's not as tall as Jeff, slept on the fold out companion seat, and Jeff slept in a sleeping bag on a mat just behind the captain's chair. “When you travel on the boat all day long,” noted Jeff, “you can sleep just about anywhere.”

Used to primarily boating on lakes, there were a few boating skills Jeff was not proficient with. The first were the trim tabs. “While I understood the principle of how trim tabs function, it wasn't until I used them for two weeks straight that I really got a feel for how and why they work,” Jeff surmised. Tying up was another aspect of boating he learned more about with the experience he gained on this journey. Indicating that he'd read a lot about the need to use spring lines and fenders, he said, “those were really just words before this trip.” He went on to say that





**Jeff's daughter and two granddaughters** traveled from Dallas to spend the day with him in Galveston.

when you're constantly tying up in fast currents, you quickly learn why you need spring lines and four fenders just for one side of the boat. Most importantly, he had to get used to using his radio. Because of the heavy commercial traffic, he needed to communicate with the other boats in addition to the people operating the many bridges and locks along the way.

Not too far into the trip, Jeff was sitting at a lock in New Orleans and the Lock Master told Jeff to tie up to a small commercial boat. This gave him an opportunity to talk to the captain of the boat about the radio and how it needed to be used on these waters. Each time Jeff got close enough to a boat to see the name he'd hail them on the radio to let them know he was going to pass. Sometimes they'd tell him what side to pass on and sometimes he would look at the chart and tell them. "Most of these boats had a nine-foot draft so they hugged the center and I had to go around them – hoping the waterway was wide and deep enough," said Jeff.

Jeff elaborated on his experience along the Mississippi River recounting a hair-raising moment. "The Mississippi River is a big, big, big, strong, powerful force with wind, current, and BIG boats!" he exclaims. Just before going into the Mississippi River, Jeff followed the protocol of calling Vessel Traffic Services (VTS) and telling them he was on a 23-foot boat coming from the west. VTS instructed him to pass an oncoming boat on the port side. Because they were coming at one another instead of traveling in the same direction, Jeff got confused and began passing on the wrong side. Fortunately, the larger boat's captain hailed Jeff and told him to hold his position, and the larger boat was able to maneuver around him. Problem averted!

**Tying up with spring lines and fenders** was another aspect of boating Jeff learned more about on this journey.





Crossing the Matagorda Bay in Texas was probably the roughest leg of the entire trip. The winds were blowing about 20 miles per hour and the moment he entered the bay Jeff encountered tall waves causing him to go at a slow pace. This made the 30-minute trip take about three hours. While it was uncomfortable, he expressed that he never felt in danger and the SeaV<sup>2</sup>® hull kept the water from coming over the bow. On the return trip, a fisherman told him a front would be coming later the next day. Learning from his previous experience, they were up and out early the next morning crossing the bay ahead of the front in just 30 minutes!

One of the highlights of the trip was their stop at Myers Landing and RV Park in Lake Arthur, Louisiana. The people there were fascinated by their travels and asked them to come back on their way home. When Jeff and Ben returned, the RV folks served them a home-cooked meal, a true Cajun dinner, which Jeff said was excellent, but a little spicy!

Another special aspect of this trip was getting to visit with his daughter and two granddaughters who traveled from their home in Dallas to spend the day with him in Galveston.



**Ben Tarpley and Jeff Rudisill** complete the western leg of their ICW Grady-White adventure and head home.

As he reflected on the overall trip, Jeff realized that almost every day brought with it some kind of challenge – but each time his trusty Grady-White held steady as they worked through gates that wouldn't open, a low train trestle with a train, and other interesting situations. With every trial came a learning experience that made him even more prepared to continue to explore new places on his Grady-White boat.

We imagine we'll be hearing from Jeff again as he crosses more boat trips off his bucket list. From traveling to the Dry

Tortugas, to the West End of the Bahamas to explore the Abaco Islands, and taking the loop from St. Lucie, Florida, around the south end, up the west to Fort Myers then back across Lake Okeechobee, Jeff doesn't plan to stop any time soon. And a Grady will surely be a part of any travels by water as he proclaimed, "I've usually never bought the very best of anything – but when it comes to buying a Grady-White boat, I can emphatically say – I own the best!"

*Do you have a great Grady adventure you'd like to share with us?  
Drop us a line at [anchorline@gradywhite.com](mailto:anchorline@gradywhite.com)!*

**Ben and Jeff kept the bimini up** with the full canvas enclosure attached to protect them from bugs and weather while sleeping.





HAVE AN INTERESTING STORY OR PHOTO?  
EMAIL US AT [ANCHORLINE@GRADYWHITE.COM](mailto:ANCHORLINE@GRADYWHITE.COM)

## Letters & Photos



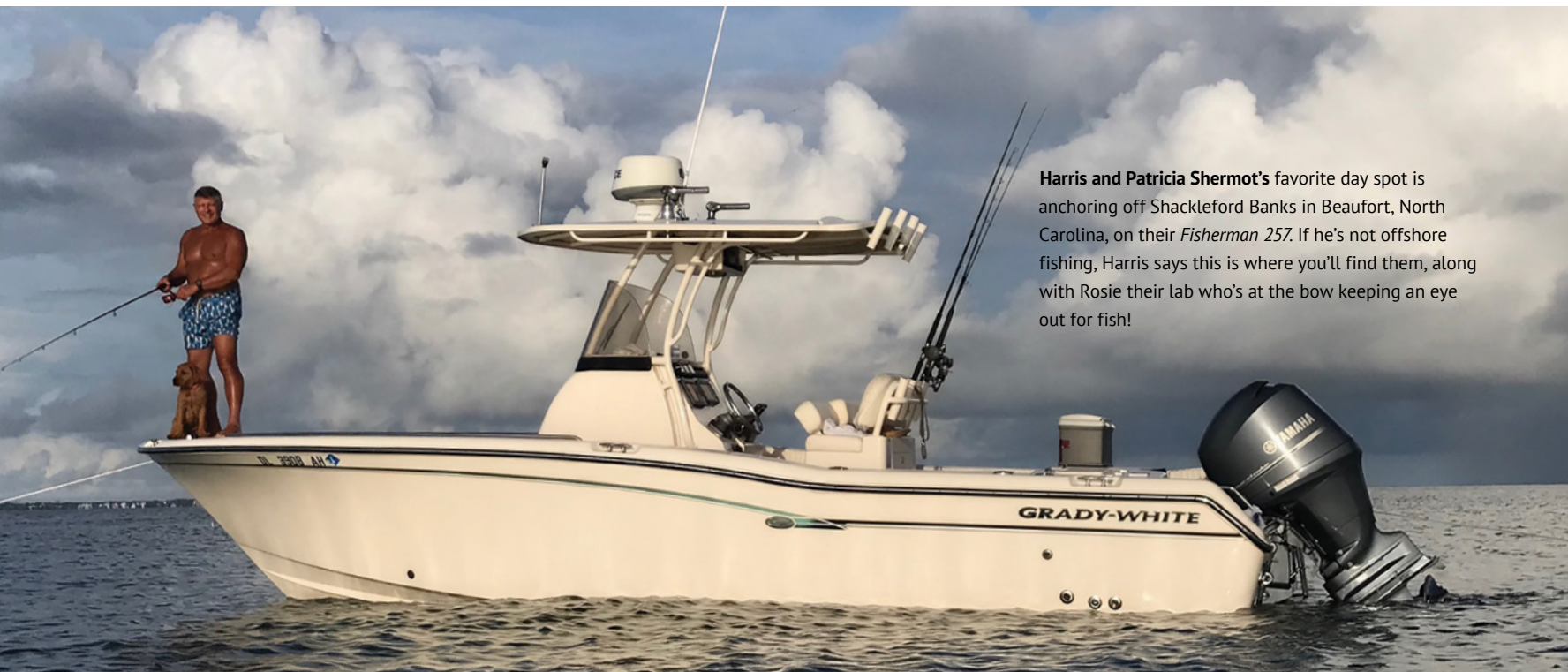
**The Mendez family** spends time together with friends in Culebrita, Puerto Rico, on their Grady-White *Canyon 336*.



**Chris and Beth Yaroscak** can't wait to make more great Grady memories! They own a 1985 *Overnighter 20* that they raised their kids on around Long Island Sound and Rhode Island and an *Express 330* that's been from Greenwich, Connecticut, to Montauk, down around the Statue of Liberty and up the Hudson River!



**Russell Goroway** fishes his *Canyon 336* offshore for tuna and inshore for striped bass out of Lavallette, New Jersey.



**Harris and Patricia Shermot's** favorite day spot is anchoring off Shackleford Banks in Beaufort, North Carolina, on their *Fisherman 257*. If he's not offshore fishing, Harris says this is where you'll find them, along with Rosie their lab who's at the bow keeping an eye out for fish!





**The Wiggle family** has been making incredible family memories on their Grady-White boats. Whether on their *Freedom 375* or their *Express 330*, boating close to home or fishing in the Exumas Islands, this family is creating stories that will be shared for generations to come.



**Corey Evans Baysden** loves to hang out at Cape Lookout and Shackleford Banks and go offshore fishing in North Carolina on his 2006 *Journey 258*.



TO SHARE A PHOTO OF YOUR FURRY GRADY FRIENDS,  
EMAIL US AT [ANCHORLINE@GRADYWHITE.COM](mailto:ANCHORLINE@GRADYWHITE.COM)

## Grady Buddies



**Lucca and Rocco** enjoy boating around Clear Lake in Texas on their *Fisherman 216*. They love their Grady-White leashes, and mom and dad, Cathy and David Orlando, love their Grady-White hats and cooler!



From the bow of John Baldino's *Sailfish 282*, **Jetty** is calling for "ruff" seas in Cape May, New Jersey.



**Max**, David Mauney's 12-year-old rescued golden retriever, is always onboard with the family. They live in New Iberia, Louisiana, and boat between Mobile Bay and Perdido Key, Florida, on their 2009 Grady Express 330.





Ann and Bill Kornegay's goldendoodle, **Charlie**, loves his rides near Ocean Isle Beach, North Carolina, on their *Freedom 225*.



**Mulligan** loves boating in Hilton Head, South Carolina, on Kristy and David Folkwein's 2021 *Freedom 255*.



Kevin and Treasa Guilfoyle's dog, **Charlie**, is all set in his spot on their 251 *CE* as they ride on the ICW near Emerald Isle, North Carolina.



Mary-Michael St. John's dog, **Grady**, enjoys boating on Willa Bea and Mike Coates', *Freedom 275*, "Off Duty" around Carolina Beach, North Carolina. This picture was taken on a Cape Fear Grady-White Club trip, and yes, he is named after Grady-White Boats!





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# Two Florida Grady Clubs Gain Boating Confidence on Recent Trips

Two Grady-White Owners' Clubs, the Gulfstream Grady Group and the Tarpon Coast Grady-White Club, recently enjoyed traversing the waters of Florida on two terrific trips.

A first-time trip for the Gulfstream Grady Group, they traveled across the state east to west, starting in Stuart, Florida, and ending in Fort Meyers on the Gulf Coast. With seven boats and 14 people, including some new boat owners, this was a chance to expand their horizons as they made the 308-mile round trip. While it was their intent to

go all the way up the west coast to Boca Grande, the weather did not cooperate, but Plan B worked out well and a good time was had by all.

Six Grady-White boats from the Tarpon Coast Club with 18 people aboard, left Punta Gorda, Florida, to journey around the full Florida Southern Loop, a 600-plus mile journey! Many of these boat owners were also new to the Grady-White family and the trip provided a perfect opportunity for each captain and their first mate to gain the confidence needed to start exploring

more locations on their own. For most of the trip the weather was on their side, as the club was able to travel along the Atlantic Ocean on two portions of the trip from Stuart to Fort Lauderdale then on to the Florida Keys.

Each club said the trips afforded members the opportunity to gain skill and self-assurance in boat handling and navigation while traveling with other Grady Club members.

*To find your nearest Grady-White Club visit [www.gradywhite.com](http://www.gradywhite.com), click on Explore. You'll find Grady Clubs listed under The Grady Life.*



**Six boats from the Tarpon Coast Grady Club** ended their pandemic lockdown with a cruise around the Florida Southern Loop.



**The Gulfstream Grady Group** gets settled in one of the Lake Okeechobee locks as they go from the east coast to the west coast of Florida.