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FAMILY FAVORITE

Grady-White's New 218 Adventure

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Back to the Future

GRADY-WHITE POPULARIZED THE WALKAROUND CABIN BOAT MORE THAN FOUR DECADES AGO. NOW, THE BUILDER REDEFINES THE DESIGN WITH THE NEW ADVENTURE 218

In 1975 Grady-White introduced the Hatteras 204C Overnighter, a 21-foot walkaround cabin powered by a single outboard. It took the market by storm, and its popularity led to a progression of larger walkaround models from the builder. Almost 50 years later, Grady-White is reaching back to its roots with the introduction of the Adventure 218, a modern version of the compact walkaround concept the company helped to make famous. It's aimed squarely at a new generation of boaters.

The 218 is unmistakably a Grady-White. You see that in the sheerline and hull shape, although engineers have managed to make this 21-footer more spacious, versatile and better performing than its predecessor. It is a capable fishing, watersports and cruising boat; it's even a mini-overnighter, thanks to a bigger footprint (the 218 is 6 inches wider than its predecessor) and a longer options list.

"The reaction to this boat has been exactly what we had hoped for," says Shelley Tubaugh, vice president of marketing at Grady-White. "Customer and dealer orders have accounted for the entire first year's production already, and we are looking at ways to increase capacity to satisfy the demand."

The Adventure 218 sports an 8-foot 6-inch beam, the widest of any 21-foot boat in its class, according to Tubaugh. That beam contributes to a roomier cabin and more spacious helm and cockpit areas. The beam is carried well forward and it allows for a large cabin door that makes access below a little easier. Inside the cabin is a cushioned berth and head. Side windows and an overhead hatch provide natural light and ventilation.

The beam also provides room for larger, more comfortable helm seats. On this boat, those seats—each with armrests and premium upholstery—swivel 180 degrees; that means the driver and copilot can face aft to monitor lines when trolling, or engage with guests when entertaining in the cockpit. At the dash, there's space for Yamaha engine controls, a gauge package and a 12-inch multifunction display.

The cockpit is spacious, which makes it a good platform for fishing and entertaining. Fishing features include storage for up to 10 rods, six flush-mounted rodholders, knee-height bolsters and sturdy toerails that make anglers feel more secure when they stand to fight fish. There's a 100-quart port and 106-quart starboard fish box built into the fiberglass base of each helm seat, which will be helpful when you want to ice your catch. If you like to fish with live bait, one of those boxes can be plumbed as a raw-water livewell. Because the hatches for these fish boxes are cushioned, they double as seats.

There's a versatile pair of seats at the transom. The back supports for each swivel out to provide easier access to the molded-in swim platforms. And the base of each seat has two sides: one is cushioned for lounging; the other has a non-skid surface that turns the area into a mini casting platform. In between the transom seats are an optional ski pylon, a freshwater shower fed by a 10-gallon water tank; and a quick disconnect device that makes it easy to flush water from the motor at the end of the day.

To get some rays, bring optional cushions forward to the bow and set them up on the cabin roof.

The Adventure 218 rides on Grady-White's acclaimed SeaV² hull. It features 19-degrees of deadrise at the transom, but the V continuously sharpens from the transom to the bow, where there's a deep entry. This gives the boat a softer ride in a sea and reduces roll at slow speeds or at rest.

The boat is offered with a single Yamaha F200 outboard or an F250. The F250 provides a top speed near 39 knots and a cruise speed of about 26 knots. At that pace, the motor burns 10.8 gph. If you pull the throttle back and run near 21 knots, fuel consumption dips to 7.9 gph, or 3.18 mpg.

With the Adventure 218, Grady-White has reinvented one of the boats that was instrumental in the making of its reputation. Could this be the ideal entry-level boat for an active family that values time and fun on the water? If the past is any indicator, the future for this salty, trailerable walkaround model looks bright. — Gary Caputi

LOA: 23'3"
Beam: 8'6"
Draft: 1'4"
Bridge clearance: 7'7"
Fuel: 100 gals.
Standard power: (1)
200-hp Yamaha