

Denise and Tom O'Brien on their Grady-White Fisherman 257



SMOOTH Moves

With one of the softest and driest rides in its class, Grady-White's Fisherman 257 lives up to the brand's stellar reputation

by **GEORGE LABONTE**

One of the greatest rewards boat manufacturers can receive for their efforts is brand loyalty from their customers. Boat owners who faithfully return to the same brand over the years as they work their way up, or even laterally, through a series of new models demonstrate something of great importance to any builder—customer satisfaction.

For Tom and Denise O'Brien of Jupiter, loyalty and satisfaction are exactly what led to the purchase of their Grady-White Fisherman 257. The O'Briens' 15-year history with the brand began with an Escape 209 (before the Fisherman 257 came along), and the couple is already thinking about which Grady-White model they might choose next, should a larger boat be in their future. (Hint: It's a Canyon Series.)

For the time being, the Fisherman 257 suits their fishing and cruising needs perfectly. With previous coastal experience fishing around their summer residence in New Jersey, the sheer variety of opportunities offered by our local waters has been an exciting change of pace for the O'Briens. And with a perfect balance of comfort and fishability, the Fisherman 257 has opened lots of new possibilities for the couple in Florida.

For the avid angler, this model offers many of the features necessary to be both successful and efficient. Three insulated



The ample seating is outfitted with luxury upholstery and under-seat storage.

fish holds (a 185-quart and two 120-quarts) and a 32-gallon live bait well are standard equipment. A smartly styled T-top with an integrated full-height wraparound windshield keeps both the sun and spray at bay.

As a cruising model, the 257 checks all the boxes for family comfort as well. Seating options include port and starboard bow seats with forward-facing, foldaway backrests, and the space beneath the seating provides abundant dry storage. A convertible



Clockwise from top left: The cockpit; the O'Briens relaxing on their boat; three insulated fish holds and a 32-gallon live bait well are standard features; a T-top and a wraparound windshield make for comfortable cruising in the Florida sun.

POWER FILE

- LENGTH:** 24 feet, 9 inches
- BEAM:** 8 feet, 6 inches
- DRAFT:** 20 inches
- DEADRISE:** 20 degrees
- WEIGHT:** 4,300 (without power)
- FUEL:** 135 gallons
- MAX HP:** 400
- gradywhite.com

stowaway aft bench is included in the cockpit, while the helm lean bar with backrest and split flip-up bolster offers a shady spot for the helmsman's comfort. All of this seating is outfitted with luxury upholstery, and a

cockpit bolster trims the interior nicely. Few builders can claim a more loyal customer base, and perhaps the one thing that keeps the faithful Grady-White family coming

back most is the ride itself. The company's original SeaV2 hull design offers a continuously variable deadrise bottom, which results in one of the softest and driest ride experiences in its class. The combination of stability at rest, confident tracking underway, and spray deflection provided by down-angle chines and lifting strakes all work together to provide an extremely comfortable experience even on the choppiest of days.

From a performance standpoint, she's no slouch either. With twin F-200 Yamaha power, the Fisherman 257 tops out at 52.5 mph at 6,000 rpm and offers 2.66 mpg cruising 30 mph at 3,700 rpm. ❖

ABOUT THE WRITER



Hobe Sound resident George LaBonte is a professional captain and a world-class angler who has run a successful local charter fishing operation for 40 years. He was the host of a pair of widely acclaimed boating-related TV shows that aired nationally for five years, as well as a popular radio show on ESPN for 20 years. Book a charter with Captain LaBonte at edgesportfishing.com, and follow him on YouTube at George LaBonte Outdoors.