

BOAT TEST

Custom Feel

Jupiter's new 26 FS offers a wealth of features in a production model.

| BY KARL ANDERSON |

Jupiter Marine has built customized, niche center consoles for quite some time. Its full line of boats ranges from 26 to 39 feet, is designed with features that meet fishing and cruising requirements, and gives a flexible platform from which to create boats that suit customers' needs. For everything from serious fishing boats to family cruisers to yacht tenders, Jupiter offers a wide range of options and layouts to help owners get the most out of their boats.

The new 26 FS is no exception. It's available in a variety of packages such as the Cape Cod, Mid-Atlantic or Palm Beach editions among others, each with features relative to the namesake area. By combining information from previous sales with dealer and customer input, Jupiter created editions that are set up from the factory to accommodate the more popular features that customers from different regions typically request. Add in the flexibility of customizing certain things for your needs, and you

get a boat that truly does the job you want.

I spent a spring day chasing tarpon on Florida's west coast in a 26 FS and came to appreciate its clean and well-executed layout, its gentle ride and the fine fit and finish for which Jupiter has become known. Starting on the foredeck, with its windlass option, pop-up cleats, pop-up navigational lights, finished on-deck anchor locker and recessed handrail, you immediately get the sense that the boat is set up right.

The cushioned forward seats along either side offer fish boxes that drain overboard, with no macerator necessary, which reduces cost and maintenance issues. There are even drink holders tucked behind the seats and under the gunwale to hold your favorite beverage while you're drifting for fluke

The boat fished beautifully while drifting or stalking the bait schools and the tarpon following them.



■ CONDITIONS



LOCATION: Tampa, Florida

WIND: SW 10 knots

SEA STATE: Calm

TEST LOAD: Full tank of fuel and four adults

■ SPECIFICATIONS

Jupiter 26 FS

LOA: 26'5" Beam: 8'8" Fuel: 160 gals.

Max hp: 400 Deadrise aft: 22 degrees

Weight: 5,460 lbs. Draft: 20" Base Price: \$110,880

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or hanging at the sandbar. In-deck between the seats, there's a huge 23-cubic-foot storage bin. Full 360-degree coaming cushions are standard and nice as forward-seating backrests and for leaning against when you're hooked up to a big fish.

A fully functional console with an insulated drink box cooler under the forward seat features a completely finished interior with a stand-up head that is accessed from the port side of the console via a step down. Jupiter did a great job of finishing off the inside of the console while making large opening panels for access to batteries and the backside of the electronics panel. These openings make it easy to get to the back of not only your electronics but also your steering, binnacle, switch and gauge panels. It is such a plus to have a boat that you can work on both when you have time and when you need to get to things quickly.

On the business end of the console, the 26 FS offers a comfortable, ergonomic layout with dash space for mounting the offset helm to port, with a centerline binnacle and an angled

face to house the engine gauges, Lenco electric trim-tab actuator and switch panel. The electronics face is large enough to take two 12-inch units or a single 15-inch multifunction display. Our test boat had a hardtop that was mounted to the console so it didn't eat up deck space. There were four rod holders across the back of the T-top, along with spreader lights and general helm lighting.

Jupiter has several options for leaning posts: Our test boat had a very comfortable leaning post with a tackle center and a wraparound backrest, which gave the unit a bolster feeling, so you could really lock into the seat. It had four rod holders across the back and a handrail to hold on to if you're standing behind or alongside. Jupiter also offers a more generic leaning post, as well as one with a livewell and tackle center built in.

The well-designed console allows for a large cockpit, which features under-gunwale storage and a 102-gallon in-deck fish box behind the leaning post, along with excellent access to the lazarette so you can service your bilge pumps and stow your gear in the bilge. Along the transom lies a walk-through door to starboard, an oval 35-gallon livewell along the centerline, and a sink and a pullout shower to port for rinsing off after a dive on a reef.

The 26 FS came rigged with twin Yamaha F150s, but you can also opt for a single Yamaha F300 or F350. As we cruised out the river and pushed the boat up, it slipped onto plane quickly, without excessive bow rise. As we cruised along with four of us aboard, we made 23.7 mph while burning 10.7 gph at 3,500 rpm. Pushing it up to 4,500 rpm, we made 34.6 mph, with a very reasonable and comfortable ride. Wide-open, the boat neared 50 mph even though we were full of fuel and had four

people with a heap of gear on board. As we made it out to the mouth of the bay, we didn't encounter many waves, but the boat proved smooth as we jumped major wakes from ships leaving the port of Tampa. The boat turned well and certainly fished beautifully while drifting or stalking the bait schools and the tarpon following them.

I've always appreciated the finish work and execution of Jupiter boats, and the new 26 FS fits right in the family and offers a great opportunity to own a Jupiter. Be sure to do a sea trial and check out the boat's fit and finish, and you'll know why a Jupiter boat is such a popular option for the fisherman who likes his family to be comfortable. ~

■ PERFORMANCE		
RPM	MPH	GPH
3,000	15.2	8.9
3,500	23.7	10.7
4,000	29.5	13.5
4,500	34.6	17.2
5,000	38.8	21.0
5,500	43.8	28.0
6,025	48.5	33.1

With twin Yamaha F150s