

NEW BOATS

Jupiter 26 Forward Seating

By Dean Travis Clarke

THE FULL-MOON TIDE RUNNING AT MAXIMUM EBB OUT OF LAKE Worth Inlet on south Florida's Atlantic coast confronted the stiff north-east wind and stood the close-together six-foot seas in the inlet right on end. Heading directly into the seas at a prudent 15 mph, I worried that the guest sitting on the console front seat was about to get drenched. She didn't get a drop of water on her; the Jupiter 26 offered a smooth enough ride that she didn't even feel the need to move.

Performance

On the calm Intracoastal Waterway, the 26 cruised quite nicely at 31 mph while moving 14.2 gph through the

twin, four-stroke 150 hp Yamaha outboards for economy of 2.21 mpg. The Jupiter hopped up on plane very nicely with 150s, but you can also order the boat with a single 350 if

you want extra horsepower. With that package, it's about 1½ seconds faster out of the hole and 3 to 4 mph faster at top end. With the twins, top speed hit 48.7 mph at 5,900 rpm using 32.6 gph total. A single 150 was incapable of lifting the hefty 26-footer onto plane, however.

Overall, the 26 provided a remarkably solid ride. In a sloppy chop, taking waves from every angle, this center-console proved dry even in the stiff crosswind. No shimmy, shake or rattles to be found.

Idling with one engine in gear offered a superb live-bait speed with no water disturbance whatsoever. Trolling at 8 mph with both engines generated moderate subsurface white water but very little surface turbulence. Hard turns didn't throw

our passengers around, and handling around the dock was a breeze. All in all, this 26 handles every bit as well as its larger siblings.

Fishing

The transom walkthrough with a hefty flip-over coaming lets you reach the unusually spacious

bracket deck aft, making boating a large fish much easier. I also appreciate the built-in swim ladder deployable from the water.

The transom holds a deep-blue-colored, 35-gallon livewell on centerline and a freshwater sink with a shower nozzle outboard to port.

The heart of the fishing workspace is the helmseat module with rod holders and cabinets below that contain lure tubes, removable Plano tackle boxes, leader bags and large drawers. Two rod holders in each gunwale augment three under each gunwale, and if you go for the optional hardtop, you'll get four more there. Of course, that hardtop is the ideal place to mount the optional Taco Grand Slam outriggers too — or any brand you prefer.

The cockpit sports a fish box with a macerator and full coaming pads. In addition, the forward seating hides more fish and/or dry storage. The size of the anchor locker also impressed me, being large enough to easily handle 400 or 500 feet of the new Brait anchor rode from Yale Cordage, making deep dropping easier. I mention this brand because for the same tensile strength, it takes up about one-quarter the storage space.

One other standard feature I particularly like and would appreciate more companies including is the auto-retracting trim-tab system. This sure makes maneuvering on a fish or around the marina easier and safer — without worrying about accidentally bending a tab.

Design and Construction

When asked why the company decided to make a boat in the smaller range rather than something larger, Jupiter's vice president of sales, Todd Albrecht, said, "We probably should have had it out a year earlier. What we would really like to do is provide a product line that our customers can enjoy from cradle to grave. This boat is more affordable for the children of many owners of our larger boats. In addition, unlike those bigger boats, this vessel can be trailered easily. If you don't have a waterfront home at which you can keep your 34- or

38-footer on a lift in your backyard, you can keep this boat on a trailer in your driveway or backyard. The 26 addresses a different part of the market."

The way Jupiter builds its boats, you could buy one today and still have it when you reach your grave! The company uses a fully molded stringer grid glassed into the boat and then injects it with foam. That makes the 26 a little heavier, but that's not a bad thing in a rough sea.

Biaxial and triaxial knitted fiberglass, a high-density composite transom and a solid-fiberglass running surface all add to the weight of the 26 but also add to the smooth, dry ride. If you want a bigger-boat ride but don't have the budget, the Jupiter 26 should be one of the first boats you investigate.



SPECIFICATIONS

| | |
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| LOA | 26 ft. 5 in. |
| BEAM | 8 ft. 8 in. |
| DRAFT | 1 ft. 8 in. |
| DEADRISE | 22 deg. |
| WEIGHT | 5,460 lb. |
| FUEL | 160 gal. |
| MAX POWER | 350 hp OB |
| MSRP | \$119,990 (w/ twin 150 hp four-stroke OB) |

Jupiter Marine International

Palmetto, Florida
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YAMAHA 150 HP FOUR-STROKE

| | |
|--------------------|----------|
| TYPE | 4-IL |
| DISPL. | 163 cid |
| MAX RPM | 6,000 |
| HP/LB RATIO | 0.32 |
| FUEL SYSTEM | EFI |
| GEAR RATIO | 2:1 |
| WEIGHT | 466 lb. |
| ALT. OUTPUT | 35 amps |
| MSRP | \$14,000 |

NOTABLE STANDARD FEATURES

- Freshwater and saltwater washdowns
- LED lights
- Pop-up cleats and bow light
- Recessed trim tabs w/ auto-retract
- 35-gallon livewell
- Helmseat module w/ tackle storage

IMPRESSIONS

It's heartening to see a respected company start building quality boats in more affordable sizes. Welcome back, entry level!

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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