

Grady-White Express 340: *Pelagic Magic*



Let's start out this boat review by stating the obvious: the Express 340 is a Grady-White, so it's top-shelf from stem to stern. Whatever you're looking at—from the hull to the horn to the helm station—you'll see excellent design, the best quality accessories and the longest-lasting hardware. You will spot exactly zero corner-cutting. Of course, if you've been around fishing boats for more than a minute you already knew that, so let's move on.

What you might not know about the Express 340 just yet is that it replaces the 330 Express, which was Grady-White's first outboard powered express and was introduced over 25 years ago. For any boat model to stick around for that long is rather shocking (a decade is considered a long lifespan) and it's a testament to the 330's popularity. In the "if it ain't broke don't fix it" category, the hull of the 340 remains unchanged and rides on Grady-White's exclusive variable-degree deadrise SeaV2 with 20 degrees of deadrise at the transom and 30 degrees amidships, to chop open the seas yet maintain maximum stability and efficiency. From the

rubrail up, however, this is an entirely different boat.

In the cockpit you'll find a full complement of fish-catching accouterments including a 30-gallon livewell with a full-column inlet; four rodholders in the gunwales; four pipework rocket launchers; a tackle station in the mezzanine seat; 42- and 22-gallon fishboxes; and raw and freshwater washdowns. And since it's a Grady-White you can probably guess that you'll also find a full complement of family and comfort accouterments, like hot/cold freshwater showers at the transom; a fold-out transom bench seat (which deploys and folds smoothly and easily); coaming bolsters all around; and an electrically deployed cockpit sunshade. The Express 340 also boasts side-opening doors on both sides for easy entry and egress, a wet bar with a sink, stowage drawers, and/or if you opt for them, an electric grill and refrigerator.

Where luxury grabs you in a bear hug, however, is when you step up onto the helm deck—especially if it's August and you've opted to have the 18,000 btu air conditioning system piped in. While poking and prodding the Express 340 we found the

port-side dinette to be the biggest helm deck upgrade from what was on the 330. Previously the boat had a centered helm, which only left room for some basic passenger seating on either side. On the new 340 the helm shifts starboard and opens up gobs of space to port, allowing Grady-White to incorporate a dinette with L-shaped seating plus an aft-facing lounger.

Comfort also gets a boost in the lower cabin. The mid-cabin berth used to be a bit cave-like on the 330, but is now much more open and easily accessible because with the cabin entry centered, there's space to port for an elevated mid-cabin entry overhead. That provides more than sitting-height clearance as you duck in. The forward

Quick Facts

LOA: 33'6"

Beam: 11'7"

Displacement: 12,870 lbs.

Draft (min.): 2'1"

Transom Deadrise: 20 degrees

Fuel Capacity: 290 gal.

Water Capacity: 60 gal.

Max. Power: 1050 hp

Hot New Fishboats



■ The new arrangement gives the cabin a more open, airy feel.

dinette area has also been redesigned and enlarged with a full-size oak table that drops down to convert the area into a V-berth. To starboard there's a fully enclosed stand-up head compartment with shower, and to port a full galley with a single-burner cook-top, refrigerator, sink, microwave oven, and stowage drawers and cabinets.

The Express 340 is available with either twin Yamaha F450 XTO Offshore outboards or triple Yamaha F350s. With the 450s you're looking at a cruise in the upper 30s at 4500 rpm and a wide-open speed in the low 50s. Jump up to max power and the 4500-rpm cruise is in the low 40s while top-end jumps up into the upper 50s. An interesting point to note is that the triple-engine rig enjoys slightly better fuel economy, with the 4500-rpm cruise clocking in at right around one mpg and the best cruise going just over 1.1 mpg at 30 mph and 3500 rpm.

If you've been looking for a 30-something express to troll for stripers on the Bay, tempt the tuna offshore, or take out the kids or grandkids for a pleasure cruise, it would have been tough to top the Express 330. But Grady-White just did it. Welcome to the Express 340. ■