



Boat Reviews by Jack Hornor N.A.

Power Boats

Grady-White Offshore 24

Grady-White boats was founded in 1958 by partners Glen Grady and Don White, who owned the company until current owner Eddie Smith Jr. bought it in 1968. Firmly rooted in the rugged Carolina tradition of offshore fishing, this company's boats have earned a reputation among coastal fisherman as well built, durable, well suited to their task and, dare we say it, a little bit pricey. And though used Grady-White Offshore 24 models are among the highest priced boats of this size and type, they remain in high demand. They're great for bays and coasts, providing minimal accommodations without sacrificing their true mission in life, which is fishing.

The Offshore 24 series includes four models, first introduced in 1979 and remaining in production until 1991. The models varied only in propulsion options rather than in any significant design modifications. The first was the Offshore 240, a cutaway transom outboard model. In 1984, the company added the Offshore 241, a stern-drive model, along with the Offshore 242, a solid transom model powered by single or twin OMC Seadrive units. After Seadrives were discontinued, this model became the Offshore 242G, the same solid-transom configuration with a fixed outboard bracket. All models shared the same walkaround cuddy cabin accommodation plan.

By today's standards, Grady-White construction methods are not considered high-tech, but their boats are built with above-average fit and finish. The hulls and decks are built with hand-laid layers of fiberglass cloth for a uniform structure with high strength and durability.

The boat consists of three main components: the hull, an inner liner and the deck mold. The hull is longitudinally strengthened by plywood stringers encased in fiberglass. The liner is a cored composite (plywood core in some areas, balsa in others) and is bonded to the hull and longitudinal stringers with fiberglass tabbing.

The deck, also a plywood or balsa cored composite, is attached to the hull in a shoebox fashion with stainless steel screws. A 93-gallon welded aluminum fuel tank is installed beneath the cockpit deck and between the two main longitudinal stringers.

As Offshore 24s age and are used — and sometimes abused — there are several problems that crop up. The most common involves the center section of the cockpit installed over the fuel tank. Plastic inspection ports were not adequately sealed where they pass through the core and the screws have not been sufficiently bedded; water enters and destroys the core. This problem is often not detected until the deck is soft underfoot and the section must be removed and rebuilt.

Secondly, several Offshore 24 models have suffered failures where the longitudinal and athwartship supports attach below the V-berth, and where the longitudinal stringers meet the transom. In most cases this occurs on boats that have been beaten up in extreme conditions. If it's caught before there's any structural damage to the hull, the repairs are not difficult or terribly expensive but are best left to an experienced repairer.

Potentially the most serious problem to anticipate on these models is a corroded fuel tank. The welded aluminum tanks are installed on centerline in the bilge below the cockpit. Although the tanks are raised slightly off the bottom, it's nearly impossible to keep the area entirely dry, and eventually these tanks will fail. The good news is that Grady-White allows access for replacement without having to cut away and re-build the cockpit deck. Still, a tank replacement is likely to cost over \$1,000. For safety's sake, it's best to take a good sniff in this area on older models before heading out.

The Offshore 24 is what is commonly referred to as walkaround, differing from the pure center console by providing minimal below-decks accommodations. This compromises some fishability, but it's not much of a sacrifice. The cockpit is unobstructed and provides sufficient space for two fishermen to move about without getting in each other's way. Built-in rod racks are on each side of the cockpit, plus two insulated fish boxes and a live baitwell.

The helm is forward to starboard and has a single pedestal helm seat mounted atop a tackle locker. The console forward of the helm is short on convenient places to mount electronic navigation gadgets and fishfinders.

Accommodations below are the bare minimum, to say the least, but anything more on a boat this style would seriously impinge on its purpose as a fishing boat. A single V-berth snugly sleeps two adults. Storage is beneath the berth cushions, and an optional portable toilet fits along the companionway.

Grady-White has always preferred powering its boats with outboards, although the Offshore 241 model was offered with gas and diesel engine options. With a single 200 hp outboard, about the smallest engine I would recommend, performance is marginal with a full load of fuel and four adults. The 225-hp Yamaha was a popular choice for years and engines in this range can cruise at 22-25 mph with top speed of a little over 30 mph when not overloaded. Twin outboards, in the range of 115 to 150 hp each are a good choice.

Although the Offshore 24 is generally a stable and sturdy boat, like many of her contemporaries such as Aquasport, Mako and Boston Whaler, the ride can be rough and wet in choppy seas. All Offshore 24 models were fit with hydraulic trim tabs, and handling is very good at speed, although her slow-speed maneuverability leaves something to be desired. The 242 and 242G models are a much better choice for fishing along the coast or on large bays where you might expect big waves and rough conditions —every year an alarming number of outboard-powered boats with cutaway transoms (like the Offshore 240 model) are swamped by a wave over the transom. The closed-transom models are considerably safer in rough weather.

According to Grady-White, the company built about 5,000 of the Offshore 24 series. My research turned up 25 boats for sale, the oldest a 1981 model and the newest a 1991. Asking prices ranged from \$17,500 to \$29,500. More than half of the boats had been

repowered with new engines or powerheads.

Grady-White's Offshore 24 series are first and foremost fishing boats intended for daylong or shorter outings. The quality of construction is a cut above average, and although the price is also a bit above average, Grady-White boats are well regarded and generally represent good value.

Jack Hornor, NA is the principal surveyor and senior designer for the Annapolis-based [Marine Survey & Design Co.](#)

[Home](#) : [Online Store](#) : [Boat Buyer Services](#) : [Membership](#) : [Boat Insurance](#) : [TowBoatUS](#) : [Marine Centers](#)

©2012, Boat Owners Association of The United States. All Rights Reserved.