

# Natural Evolution

Cobia's updating continues with the 237 Center Console. BY CAPT. DAVE LEAR

WHEN MAVERICK BOAT COMPANY acquired Cobia a couple of years ago, many of us welcomed the news. It was time for a fresh approach for this venerable brand. MBC president Scott Deal and his design team went to work, and in short order splashed the 296 and 256 Center Consoles, examples of well-executed fishing machines that meet the family budget. Using those same parameters, the latest 237 CC is a continuation of this trend.

With help from longtime Cobia dealer Homosassa

Marine, I jumped aboard the 237 recently for a chilly shakedown cruise. After making our way down Florida's picturesque Crystal River and its numerous manatee zones, we throttled up into the open Gulf of Mexico. A stiff northern breeze greeted us, but the pocket center never skipped a beat. With its 8-foot-9-inch beam and variable deadrise hull, the 237 rides and performs like a much bigger craft. The sharp entry parted the chop like a honed fillet knife, while the bow flare deflected the gust-driven spray. The beamy hull transitions to 21.5 degrees at the transom for a soft, sure ride, but despite this aggressive angle, the boat is extremely stable. Even in hard beam-to seas, I

couldn't duplicate the snap-roll that's common with some deep-V bottoms.

Our test model was rigged with the standard 250-horsepower Yamaha four-stroke. With the digital throttle, the response was immediate with little stern squat. The bow settles quickly for unobstructed sight lines. Although the engine was barely broken in, we made a top speed of 46.7 miles per hour in very cold water. Give the engine time to loosen up and in normal boating conditions, and I'm confident the GPS would broach the 50 mph mark. While the single outboard is a good match for the hull, twin 115 hp four-strokes are also available for those anglers wanting to venture way offshore with peace of mind.

The designers at MBC love to fish, and that focus is

“With its 8-foot-9-inch beam and variable deadrise hull, the 237 rides and performs like a much bigger craft.”



## TEST CONDITIONS



**LOCATION:** Crystal River, Florida

**WEATHER:** Sunny, 50 degrees

**WIND:** North at 20 knots

**SEA STATE:** Choppy

**TEST LOAD:** Two people and 35 gallons of fuel. Speed measured by the author's handheld GPS. Fuel readings recorded by on-board Yamaha Command Link gauges.



**SPECIFICATIONS**

## COBIA 237 CC

LOA: 23'6" BEAM: 8'9" DRAFT: 1'5"

WEIGHT: 3,500 LBS. MAX HP: 250 HP

FUEL: 129 GALS. PRICE: \$59,994

W/ 250 HP YAMAHA FOUR-STROKE OUTBOARD

Cobia Boats • 772.460.5258 • [cobiaboats.com](http://cobiaboats.com)



PERFORMANCE

RPM	MPH	GPH
4,000	30.5	9.0
4,500	35.1	11.8
5,000	38.6	14.1
5,500	42.8	18.3
6,000	46.7	22.4

W/ 250 HP YAMAHA FOUR-STROKE OUTBOARD

readily apparent here. A full level deck means no pole vaulting with hot fish. The beefy cleats are all flush-mounted, while the low-profile bow rail is practical yet unobtrusive. The helm leaning post comes with a four-rod rack across the back. A convenient rigging station is housed underneath, complete with multiple drawers and built-in boxes for terminal tackle. Horizontal rod storage under the gunwales and mounted rod holders will stow the extra outfits.

A 28-gallon tinted livewell is nestled into the transom next to a swing-away gate. The covered telescopic boarding ladder is immediately aft for those who like to snorkel or wade-fish. Forty-gallon macerated fish boxes straddle the cockpit deck. In the bow, an extra-large storage compartment is also located in the sole, just forward of the insulated 72-quart console cooler/seat combination. The oversize anchor locker will easily hold an offshore hook and retrieval ball.

Our test boat was rigged with the optional T-top, and I can't imagine ordering a center console without one. It comes with an overhead electronics box, life-jacket storage, spreader lights and a four-rod rocket launcher. It is solidly designed and built. Salt- and freshwater wash-downs, outriggers and a choice of weather enclosures highlight some of the other available add-ons.

The current feature du jour, the stowaway transom bench seat, is standard here, but Cobia offers a sensible twist over some other brands. Instead of having exposed upholstery facing outward, this one comes with a hard acrylic bottom covering to ward off errant treble hooks — a very nice touch.

Additional seating forward comes in the form of an integrated split bow (with a removable insert). A cushion package and backrest bolsters are optional, but you have to unsnap the seat cushions to get to the latch for the storage compartments underneath. If you don't need constant

access, that's a small worry. In the cockpit, bolsters are standard for protracted fights, though.

Cobia also did a nice job designing the 237's console. Its footprint is small enough to allow easy passage without sacrificing full functionality. For example, the acrylic windshield is the right height for either a seated or standing position. The Yamaha gauge package and rocker switches are strategically located around the wheel for easy reach and scanning. Hydraulic steering and Lenco trim tabs are standard, while Garmin electronics packages are available as factory options. The console opens to starboard for access to the roomy interior compartment and portable head. At 6'3", I had to stoop slightly on the lower deck but didn't bang my elbows.

Constructionwise, the 237 is hand-laid with advanced fiberglass composites for a high strength-to-weight ratio. Compartment lids are finished for easy cleaning. Cobia builds its own wiring harnesses and uses waterproof switch panels to ensure reliability.

If you're searching for an affordable family fishing boat, add the Cobia 237 to your list of possibilities. This brand just keeps improving with age. ~

