

BOAT TEST

# Simple Solution

Cobia's 256 SE provides a lot of boat at an attractive price. | BY KARL ANDERSON |

**Y**ou can water ski, entertain the family and cruise from a serious fish boat, but it is hard to seriously fish from a ski boat, cruiser or bowrider. Yes, it can be done, but it is not as efficient a process as when done from a platform designed with fishing in mind. Feature-heavy boats that manufacturers feel inclined to build so they can compete mean raised prices on these models, leaving out very important market segments — the simple fisherman and the entry-level customer.

In an effort to simplify and build an affordable line of boats, Cobia created the SE series, boats that are clean, purpose-built and can do everything their counterparts can, only with less waste and at an affordable price. The motto for the SE series is:

“Everything you need in a boat — and nothing you don't. With the prices to match.” With the new series' solid lineup, including the 194, 216, 237, 256 and 21 Bay, the folks at Cobia have taken some very successful models and not overloaded or “over-featured” them. If you want a full array of features, you can still get it with the regular models, but the SE series keeps things clean and simple.

I recently tested the new 256 SE, which is based on a solid-running, proven hull that Cobia developed to handle sloppy sea

conditions without getting beat up. Our test boat was rigged with a single Yamaha F250 four-stroke. The single-engine package is a great fit for the boat, as one engine performs nicely while keeping the initial purchase and annual operational costs lower than twins would, but an optional twin package is available. The F250 pushes the 256 SE onto plane with little effort and offers a fine economical cruising speed.

We tested the boat out of Fort Pierce, Florida, on a chilly January day after a cold front left 10- to 15-knot north-northwest winds in its wake and a remnant swell that gave a great opportu-

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■ CONDITIONS

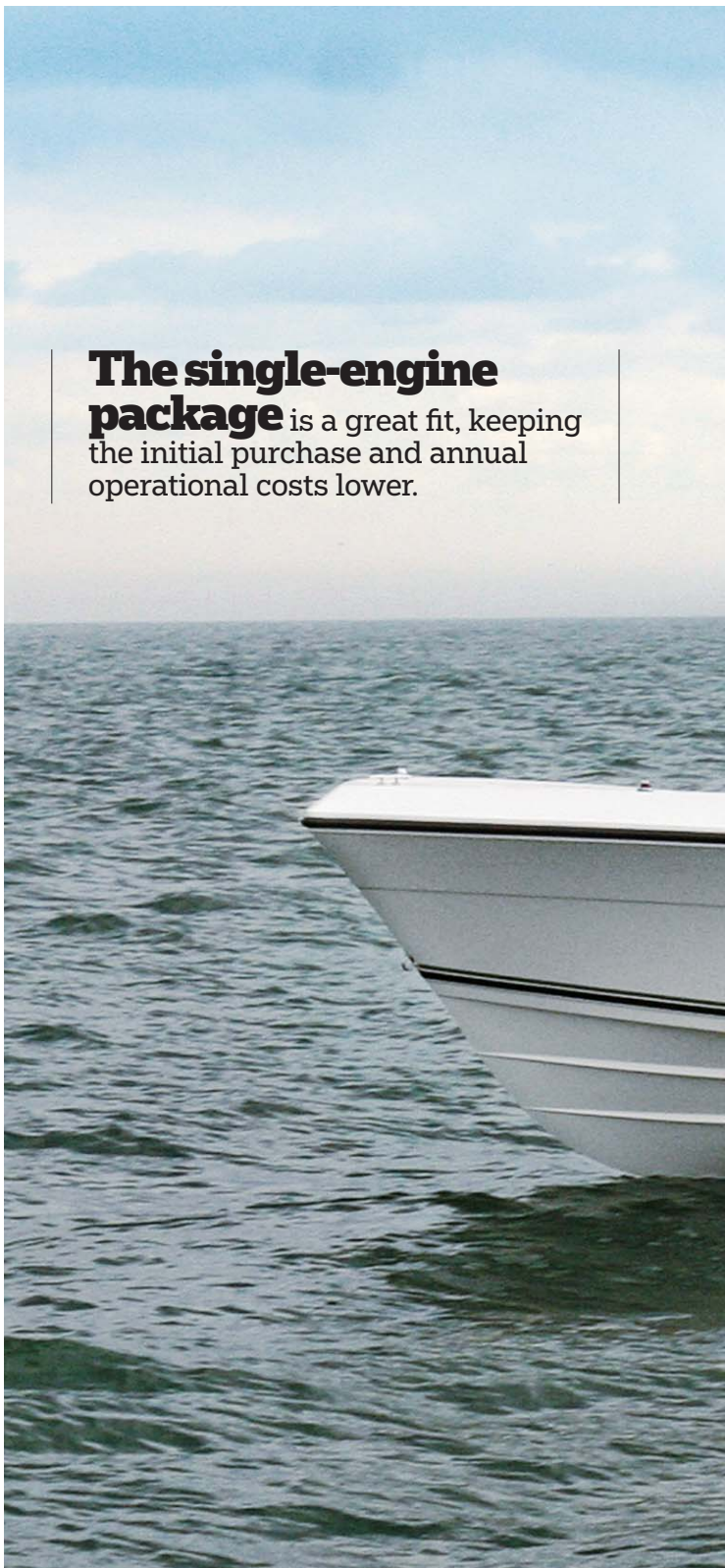


**LOCATION:** Fort Pierce, Florida

**WIND:** North-northwest at 10 to 15 knots

**SEA STATE:** Three- to five-foot swell with one- to 2-foot chop

**TEST LOAD:** Two adults and a full tank of fuel





■ SPECIFICATIONS

Cobia 256 SE

**LOA:** 25'6" **Beam:** 8'10" **Draft:** 17"

**Deadrise:** 21½ degrees **Fuel:** 162 gals. **Max hp:** 300

**Base Price:** \$46,869 With a single Yamaha F250

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nity to feel the 256 hull in action. We ran out the inlet to an area where birds were working over a school of Spanish mackerel. The 256 runs on a very soft-riding and dry bottom, and tops out at 47 mph. We cruised at 37 mph at 4,500 rpm, handling the swell and chop with few ill effects.

It's laid out neatly, with a foredeck-access anchor locker, recessed wraparound handrail and forward seats with storage under to port and starboard, allowing walk-up access to the foredeck in the center. A large in-deck locker forward of the console makes the forward area of the 256 very usable. The boat's console has a 72-quart insulated drink box cooler in the forward seat and excellent side access to its finished compartment, which can house an optional head. The inside of the console is neat and clean, giving good access to the rear of the helm dash and electronics panel. The business side of the console has a port-mounted helm with Yamaha Command Link gauges and a switch panel mounted over it. The binnacle is to the starboard of the helm along the centerline, and the electronics dash is large enough for one 15-inch machine or two 10-inch



machines. The boat comes with a standard T-top with canvas, four rod holders and a spreader light. Aft of the console, there's a standard aluminum-frame leaning post with backrest.

The fully functional cockpit contains two 40-gallon storage/fish boxes in-deck alongside the leaning post in the cockpit sole. There are undergunwale rod storage racks and four flush-mounted rod holders in the gunwale, as well as a saltwater washdown. The transom sports a 28-gallon livewell, an optional cushioned bench seat, a walk-through door to port and a standard dive ladder. The 256 SE standard boat is a fully functional fish boat as is; however, should you need more, it offers a list of optional equipment to further complement its functionality.

The folks at Cobia have not only raised the quality bar with their construction practices and good-looking designs, they have also tailored a boat that can get to the grounds with a nice ride and all the functionality needed to catch fish at an attractive, affordable price, providing you everything you need to enjoy your time on the water. ~