

## Albemarle 268 Express Fisherman

**A**fter launching its first model 25 years ago, Albemarle Boats quickly earned a reputation for building rugged, seaworthy fishing machines. That's not too surprising, considering that the unpredictable waters off North Carolina's Outer Banks, known as the "Graveyard of the Atlantic," was the company's nearby proving ground. But just because a fishing boat is tough doesn't mean it has to be austere. Case in point: the new 268 Express Fisherman.

"The 268 is a great entry-level boat for families interested in a safe, seaworthy vessel, or for serious fishermen looking for a solid, soft-riding and trailerable boat," says Albemarle vice president, Burch Perry. "The hull has been modified somewhat and

**THIS RUGGED 26-FOOTER WILL GET YOU OFFSHORE IN COMFORT — AND STYLE.**



features a transom deadrise of 21 degrees. The entry forward is deep and sharp, like that of the other boats in our line. Put this combination together and you have a perfect fishing machine that delivers stability for trolling and drifting, as well as a great head-sea ride."

North Carolina's Bogue Sound provided a perfect exclamation point to that last statement as I joined Ed Bailey of Coral Bay Marina in Morehead City last summer. An unrelenting wind had whipped the Intracoastal Waterway into café latte frothiness, but the 268 was up to the challenge. Its sharp entry pushed right through the confused waves of the inlet without the slightest shudder on the backside. With the optional fiberglass hardtop and full enclosure, we stayed comfortably dry. The 268's Pompanette helm chair provides good visibility over the bow, as well as a commanding view of the full instrument panel and the flush-mount

electronics dash. Hydraulic steering and trim tabs are standard.

Our test boat was equipped with the optional 8.1 Gi Volvo 375-hp EFI engine with a Duoprop jackshaft (a 320-hp Volvo Ocean Series Duoprop is standard), and the boat popped on plane quickly for its size. With 135 gallons of fuel we were able to reach a top speed of 39.2 mph while turning 4600 rpm. Dropping back to a 3500 rpm cruise, our speed was 34.8 mph, which offers the best fuel economy with the 172-gallon fuel tank, according to Bailey. Additional power options include the 285-hp Volvo KAMD 300 diesel or 375-hp Mercruiser EFI Bravo 3. Routine maintenance is simplified thanks to the convenient and spacious engine compartment (with gas-assisted hatch lifts) and aft access to the bilge.

In keeping with Albemarle's fishing heritage, the 268 is well suited for offshore work, starting with the roomy cockpit. The hardtop option includes spreader lights and side rocket launchers, while flush-mounted rod holders and locking cuddy rod racks are standard. A deep transom fishbox with split lid is included in the basic package, along with both fresh and salt water washdowns. A double-seat live well and tackle center can be added, along with either Lee or Taco outriggers.

With these features the 268 Express Fisherman should excel in



the chunking or trolling departments, yet it's also functional as an overnight or weekend cruiser. The lockable vee-berth cabin is well lit with overhead and natural light, while wood cabinetry and accents provide a yacht-like finish. The enclosed stand-up head with shower adds to the amenities, along with the galley sink and dinette table. Serious cruisers will probably opt for the convenience package, which includes the expanded galley (with Isotherm refrigerator and Whirlpool microwave), 110-volt dockside wiring, an extra battery box, charger and switch. An anchor windlass and swim platform are also available if one's cruising itinerary calls for remote stops.

Make no mistake about it — Albemarle is still building serious, bluewater fishing boats, and that includes the 268 Express Fisherman. The company has simply added a few more creature comforts, and there's nothing wrong with that! *Albemarle Sportfishing Boats, Edenton, NC; (252) 482-7600; [www.albemarleboats.com](http://www.albemarleboats.com).* ~

## SPECIFICATIONS

LOA	28'
Beam	8' 6"
Draft	2' 10"
Weight	7,500 lbs.
Water	14 gals.
Deadrise	21°
Fuel	172 gals.
Max. hp	375
Price (as tested)	\$115,460

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