



ON THE WATER

By Capt. John N. Raguso

ALBEMARLE 288 XFOB

Just launched for the 2009 model year, Albemarle turns a new page in its 30-year-old legacy of manufacturing top-shelf bluewater inboard sportfishing boats with the introduction of its twin 300 HP outboard powered 288 XFOB Express.

THE TIMES ARE A CHANGIN'

With the new wider beam 290 XF inboard express replacing its venerable 27/28 XF, the Albemarle engineers borrowed some of the key features of this proven craft by using the same 9-1/2-foot beam and 24-degree aft deadrise deep vee running bottom as the basis for a new outboard powered fishing boat. The 288 XFOB was born and is unique in that it is only offered one way, and that is totally turnkey and ready to fish with no options - just everything you'll need for a canyon overnigher or a weekender along your favorite stretch of shoreline.

I spoke with Albemarle's President Burch Perry and Sales Manager Chris Lufkin at an Albemarle-sponsored tuna tournament earlier this summer and they mentioned that they took a page out of automotive giant Henry Ford's Model-T playbook with this newbie in that "...you can have it in any color, as long as it's black."

Translated, this boat is offered at one price and comes loaded with everything that is listed on its generous spec sheet, including twin Mercury 300 Verados. However, unlike ol' Henry's Model-T, there are actually four ways to buy this boat, specifically in white, ice blue, aqua mist or soft yellow. Outside of that, Albemarle opted to streamline their manufacturing process to control production variables and to maximize consumer value; one package, for one price.

dealer

South Jersey Yacht Sales at South Jersey Marina

1231 Route 109
Cape May, NJ 08204
609-884-2400

South Jersey Yacht Sales at Canyon Club Resort Marina

900 Ocean Drive
Cape May, NJ 08204

South Jersey Yacht Sales at Arnold's Yacht Basin

1668 Beaver Dam Road
Point Pleasant, NJ 08742
732-899-9666

That said, this is a pretty cool boat in its new outboard configuration; removing those heavy cast-iron inboards from the deep-vee hull's innards frees up a lot of storage space down below, while making the boat a lot more nimble and responsive. The configuration changes also have added a few added knots of speed across the board for this 29 footer. Powered by twin 300 Horsepower Mercury Verado four-stroke engines and carrying 228 gallons of fuel, the 288 OBF boasts a fuel-efficient 30-plus knot cruise and over 300 miles of range, with a top end of 45 knots.

TURNKEY CANYON RUNNER

The new Albemarle 288 XFOB features a generous 60-square-foot cockpit equipped with dual 22-gallon transom livewells that can also double as fishboxes and/or beverage coolers. There is ample tackle storage, a dedicated 18-gallon portside insulated drink box, plus two 55-gallon in-deck fishboxes that are tucked under the cockpit sole. The raised bridge deck offers excellent visibility in a complete 360-degree sweep, with comfortable seating for four in the form of twin custom helm seats and aft-facing benches.

The helm deck can be raised via gas-assisted rams to unveil a huge multi-functional storage compartment down below. This area is great to stow additional tackle boxes, an emergency raft for the crew, extra batteries, PFDs or whatever. You can flush-mount your preferred marine electronics array in a dedicated vertical bulkhead area positioned just above the helm.

Notable fishing standards include anchor windlass and roller system; Lee Sidewinder outriggers with a lay down mount to get under low bridges; cockpit coaming pads; fresh and raw water washdown systems; a folding cockpit transom bench seat; fiberglass hardtop with full enclosure, spreader lights, side rodholders, five-rod overhead rocket launcher and radio box; a pair of underwater lights for efficient night chunking; plus four flush-mount rodholders in the gunwales.

The Albemarle 288 OBF features all the amenities needed in an under 30-foot class express boat to perform an overnigher at the 100-fathom line or to take the family for a weekend at your favorite beachside hideaway, all for a turnkey price of \$216,995. For more information, call 252-482-7600 or visit www.albemarleboats.com.

Specs

Length	29 feet, 1 inch (34 feet with outboard drive bracket and pulpit)
Beam	9 feet, 6 inches
Weight	9,500 pounds
Draft	24 inches
Deadrise Aft	24 degrees
Fuel Capacity	228 gallons
Standard Power	Twin Mercury 300-HP Verado four-stroke outboards

