

## SPECIFICATIONS

- LOA: 33'0"
- Beam: 13'5"
- Fuel Capacity: 450 gallons
- Water Capacity: 52 gallons
- Weight: 19,500lbs
- Price (as tested): \$458,000

## Albemarle 330XF

*One For The Angler*



SPORTFISHER SHOWCASE – Please Tell Them You Saw It In PCS

The recurring theme while researching Albemarle boats for this article was the never-ending mention of fishing. The guys at Albemarle are adamant about building a vessel that truly lives up to the moniker “sportfisher.” For nearly thirty years they have been building boats to withstand the rigors of the harsh seas located off of Cape Hatteras, North Carolina, and the fact that hull number-one was built in 1978 and is still in use today is a testament to the durability and quality of their construction techniques. According to Albemarle, the three main reasons their owners will never own any other boat are the superior ride, the fishability, and the excellent customer service. With this kind of claim, I was looking forward to kicking the tires on the new Albemarle 330XF just to see if it did indeed live up to the hype.

Upon first inspection, there is no doubt that there is a lot of boat packed into this 33-foot express. The exaggerated Carolina bow flare generally associated with East Coast boats was conspicuously absent on this model, and once in the salon, it was apparent that the increased width in the forward hull is used to squeeze out even more room inside. Before I continue with the salon, let me first start outside. The first thing that is obvious is the color of the gelcoat. Unlike most boats on the water today with the ultra-white gelcoat, Albemarle is using an off-white color to reduce glare and provide a look unique to their boats. With a cockpit size of 76 square feet, there is plenty of room for four to six anglers. Located in the transom is a built-in 56-gallon fishbox and a transom door for

bringing the three-gaff fish onto the boat. There is also a 57-gallon removable cockpit fishbox with a built in macerator. I found out from Vladimir Beck of Horizon Yacht and Ship Brokerage that with the standard 10-gallon hot water heater and the addition of an optional nine kW generator and water maker, you can use the cockpit fishbox as a bathtub. Yes, he was kidding, but after thinking about it for a little bit – why not?

Before entering the helm deck, there is a bait and tackle prep station with sink to starboard and a 25-gallon bait well to port. With the size of the cockpit, there is ample room for an additional bait tank mounted in the center to handle our West Coast bait needs. The helm deck is located up two steps from





the cockpit and features the same non-skid deck for sure footing while underway. There is a wraparound bench seating for guests located to starboard with a bench seat located along the port side for even more guests or a quick nap. The helm is located starboard with plenty of room on the dash for flush-mounted electronics. The helm switches are located along the port side within easy reach of the captain and are comprised of lighted and waterproof switches. The helm chair and companion helm chair are made by Pompanette and proved to be quite comfortable.

Entry into the salon is located centerline and down three steps. The optional teak and holly sole creates a classic environment that begs for a good bottle of wine and a fine cigar. Located immediately to starboard is the main AC/DC electrical panel and generator controls. There is an enclosed head with shower located to starboard and an "Ultra" leather sofa that converts into a twin berth located to port. The galley consists of a Corian countertop with sink, a microwave, and a refrigerator. Moving toward the bow, there's a dining area that converts to a queen size berth for the master. There is a 15-inch LCD flat screen television located all the way forward to allow viewing from anywhere in the salon. There is teak cabinetry throughout, providing storage in every corner. With the optional enclosure for the helm deck and the optional central air and heating, you could conceivably warm and cool the helm with the salon door open.

The engine room is accessed through a hatch in the helm deck while underway, and when docking access is granted by raising the helm deck entirely with the assistance of a hydraulic cylinder. With the ability to raise the entire helm deck for engine room entry, access for maintenance and service is not only easy, but your knuckle and elbows will thank you as well. Located in the engine compartment are twin Cummins QSB 5.9 engines pumping out 425 horses each. Along the aft bulkhead in the engine room, is a nine kW generator from Onan that provides more than enough power when on the hook. All hoses are double clamped for safety,

and all of the fresh and saltwater hoses are color coded for easy identification. With the dripless shaft seals and optional oil changer system, the finished bilges should stay looking like new for years to come.

After crawling around this boat like Sherlock Holmes with a magnifying glass, I couldn't find any reason why we shouldn't start the engines and take her out for a shakedown. As we motored out of Wilmington Harbor for the test, I quickly remembered why I love the new technology in diesel engines: no smoke, quiet, and no smell. I must admit, however, that I do sometimes miss the smell of diesel smoke in the morning when leaving the dock for a day's fishing, but then again, being able to smell bacon cooking isn't all bad either. We finally hit the end of the break wall and lit the engines on fire, and we were off like a shot. There was a moderate rise in the bow that lasted for a few seconds and then we were on plane and ripping along at 30 knots. This was being done in two- to three-foot seas with 15 knots of wind on top. We finally got spray

on the windshield by turning hard, at speed, into the wind – not enough to run the windshield wiper but enough to notice. The solid feel of the Albemarle 330XF punishes the waves. There are no hollow sounds of wave slaps against the hull with a beam of over 13 feet; sitting in the trough is nothing to worry about. I couldn't resist the chance to back down upswell, and to my amazement – without a swimstep – this 330 can hang with any boat out there – if not outperform most when it comes to backing down.

When coming back in I felt there was something that was different, and it finally dawned on me that the forward windshield is much more upright than on most manufacturers. While this design may collect more spray at times, the increased visibility is well worth any tradeoff that might occur. I highly recommend taking a look at the Albemarle family, and



by all means give the guys at Horizon Yacht and Ship Brokerage a call at (310) 380-6725. I was not only impressed with the Albemarle 330XF but also the willingness of Horizon to accommodate my demands; I can only imagine how well they treat their customers. ■