

# Offshore

NORTHEAST BOATING AT ITS BEST

## Scout 280 Sportfish Offshore

Big, brawny center console delivers soft, steady ride

— by Jeff Holland



This is a big, brawny center console that Scout builds in its South Carolina plant, but it rides through the waves with sure-footed grace. The deep V-hull of this 28-footer has a 21-degree deadrise at the transom that becomes more and more acute toward the bow. There's a full-length outer strake and an inboard strake on either side, providing lift and stability.

There's no mystery why the Scout 280 rides so well, after you get to talking with Steve Potts, who founded the company in 1989. "I've been in the boat business since I was a kid," he says. "I started building a couple of small, little skiffs in the garage. The thing I set out to do was to build a line of boats with its own identity with its own style. Whether it's a 14-foot boat or a 28-foot boat, it looks like a Scout."

Up until a few years ago, Scout was best known for its line of small boats from a 14-foot dual console to a 22-foot center con-

sole. The smaller boats feature a bottom shape that looks like a tri-hull design, but in fact is a semi-V with tunnels on each side.

"What I did from the very beginning was play around with unique hull bottoms," Steve explains. "With a small boat, the stability is key, dry ride in a chop is key, as well as soft ride and how well it turns."

And while that hull design proved effective for small boats, he says, it doesn't work nearly as well in bigger, more open bodies of water where the seas tend to be heavier, so the boats over 17-feet long have a more conventional V-shaped hull.

Then in 1999, Scout came out with the 280 Abaco, an express walk-around design with a nicely laid-out cabin. That's the same hull they used to build the 280 Sportfish Offshore in 2001. But getting the hull exactly

right in the first place took a lot of time and effort.

"When we develop a boat, we build a model, then a running wooden prototype," Steve explains. "We wanted a dry boat. No matter how good the ride is, if you get spray in your face, it's not comfortable. A wet boat is a real problem, even in the South where people run offshore in mild weather."



The 280's foredeck (above) has loads of storage under the bench seats as well as under the sole. (below) The clean, no-nonsense helm station has an electronically actuated panel that covers the instruments.



The development of the 280 Abaco was a two-year process from the original concept to production, Steve says. "We spent eight months just working on the hull. We probably changed the shape of the deadrise twice, and lifting strakes and chines proba-

bly seven or eight times," he recalls. "We kept making changes and then we'd run it, and video tape it and study that. It was an expensive process. It takes more time to develop a boat from the ground up, but it's worth it. You're either a follower or a leader in this business. That's what sets apart the better brands."

They got "very aggressive" with the forward chines, he reports. "On the forward section of the boat, the chines keep the spray down low and keep it there," he says. "Even a 'Carolina flare' type of boat lets the spray get up too high. The reverse chine protrudes pretty far out from the upper V portion of the hull, so it's real effective at keeping the spray down low before it gets to the gunwales."

I had a chance to make a quick run on the Scout 280 with Nate Anderson, Scout's rep for the Northeast, out of Falmouth Harbor earlier in the summer. The wind was right on our nose as we rounded the jetty, but the Scout's remarkable stability and soft, steady ride tamed the three-foot chop on Vineyard Sound. It really was an extremely dry ride except for the occasional rogue wave that hit the bow quarter.

The sheer sweeps up toward the bow, providing a deep working platform in the forward cockpit, and plenty of protection for the helm station. There's also plenty of room inside the helm console for a toilet and a remarkable six-and-a-half feet of headroom.

Powered by twin 225 hp EFI four-stroke Yamaha outboards, those ultra-quiet power plants, the acceleration was phenomenal, the planing instantaneous, the performance stellar. We were making a top speed of about 52 mph with what seemed effortless ease. Factory tests under less strenuous conditions reveal a top speed of 56.4 mph at 5900 rpm. The chart shows that the twin 225's burn about 38.6 gallons per hour at that speed, while the rate is a reasonable 9.3 gph when running 23.8 mph at 3000 rpm.

Scout's unique "Strata-Mount" outboard engine mounting system helps distribute the stresses of engine weight and thrust equally throughout the hull. Remarkable details abound, like the lockable rod storage in the hatches in the cockpit sole where it steps up from the cockpit to the helm deck; deep, insulated fishboxes, a 30-gallon lighted livewell; and a yacht-quality bait prep station. The T-top is among the long list of standard features.

<b>Scout 280 Sportfish Offshore</b> Specifications:	
Length overall	28'6"
Beam	9'5"
Dry Weight w/o engines	approximately 4,300 lbs.
Fuel Capacity	208 gal; Maximum HP (Twin Yamaha 250 EFI's Outboards) 500
Draft	20"
Manufacturer's suggested retail price	\$97,240 (with twin 225 hp Yamaha outboards)
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## Your Scout 280 Sportfish Offshore Dealer

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