

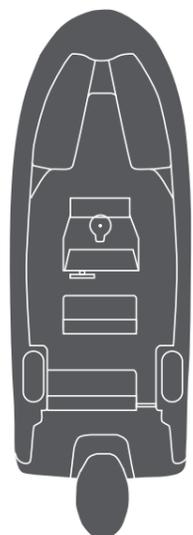


Length (LOA): 7.4m / 24ft 4in
 Beam: 2.6m / 8ft 6in
 Displacement: 1769kg (ex engine)
 Fuel capacity: 598 litres
 RCD category: C
 Engine as tested: Evinrude E-Tec 300hp
 Other engine options:
 Single or twin Evinrude, Yamaha or
 Mercury outboards from 1 x 250hp up
 to 2 x 200hp
 Price from **£74,067**

BOAT TEST

Wellcraft 242F

*“Wellcraft is back in the UK,
 with the iconic Scarab brand”*



Think of centre console, walkaround boats and there are a few iconic brands that will spring to mind, Boston Whaler being perhaps the obvious one. However, there are plenty of other brands out there providing a similar package, often at more affordable prices. Wellcraft, is perhaps not

a name you would immediately think of, possible because the brand has been absent from our shores for a few years, but they are back, and if the Wellcraft name itself is not iconic enough for you, how about combining it with Scarab?

The Scarab name is a Wellcraft brand, known largely to us in the UK, thanks to the 1980's TV show, Miami Vice. Scarab branded boats were mostly large powerful offshore performance boats, some of which have a passing resemblance to what

we would call a centre console walkaround boat, albeit one on steroids. Wellcraft now produce some small performance runabouts under the Scarab name, but also give the name to some of its new brand of modest centre console boats.

The boat we are looking at here is one of a five-boat Fisherman range, starting with the 182 and going up to the 302. In between, you have the 222, the 242 and the 262. The 222 to 302 are all also available in 'Scarab Offshore' versions,

which apart from coming in slightly heavier, appear to be more about graphics and styling than anything else.

The 242 is, as the name suggests, designed as a fishing boat. If that is your thing, then the boat has plenty of features that are sure to tick your boxes. For a start there are more rod holders than you can shake a stick at, with four on the transom, another four behind the helm seat, a further four high up on the aft end of the T top, and six more in the console,

with three either side. The 242 also has a fish box with overboard drain, a livebait well on both sides of the transom and rod storage built into the coaming on both sides of the cockpit. Having said that, the 242 isn't just a fishing boat, it also has some great features that would make it a really useful dayboat for cruising and watersports. That fish box, for example, could just as easily be filled with ice and turned into a coolbox for drinks and food, so let's have a closer look at this boat's features.

In the bow you get some good seating options. The benches on either side have a backrest at the bow to provide two great aft facing loungers. The aft end of these seats can have removable backrests installed to turn them into forward facing loungers, if you prefer to see where you are going. The seats themselves house a good sized, self-draining locker each, and the whole area can be in-filled to create a nice sunpad area. You can also add a table up here to form a useful dinette. In between these seats at the bow there is a small draining locker, the lid of which forms a



With 300hp on tap, the 242 can be a sedate, comfy mile muncher or an outright sportsboat

step to access the boat over the bow, where you will find a pretty large anchor locker and an optional electric anchor winch.

Moving aft, and to the front of the centre console, you have a forward facing seat with grabrails on either side. This whole section, seat and all, lifts up to reveal what Wellcraft call a changing room. In here you can opt for a toilet, either portable or plumbed in with holding tank, and with the door shut you do just about get enough room to make use of it. The large door to this compartment doesn't open if you have the aft backrests of the bow seating in place, and care needs to be taken not to leave



it open, as the fibreglass edges sit just at head height for anyone walking around the deck. Having said that, a feature such as this is a fantastic bonus on what is essentially a day boat, and is a creature comfort that might make the difference between staying out on the water and heading for shore.

Above the console is a hallmark feature that defines this style of boat, the T top. Despite its importance to the design, look and usability of the boat, this is not standard, and you can specify a 242 without it. There are a couple of different options here, but our test boat had a metal frame with GRP top, which incorporated a useful overhead locker, accessible from fore and aft, some overhead lights and a pair of speakers. The helm console itself is nicely laid out with plenty of space for electronics, a couple of drinks holders and a pair of charging points for your portable equipment. The windscreen is a single piece of clear plastic, which is curved to form two side pieces. This curvature does provide a distorted view forward if you need to look over the port or starboard bow, but it's no big deal to shift your head

to one side or the other for a better view.

The helm position is made up of a non-adjustable leaning post, and the steering wheel is a sturdy stainless steel model with built in steering knob for comfortable one handed helming. The bottom cushion of the leaning post lifts, and underneath there is a small locker for ropes or other bits and bobs. Below the seat the boat comes, as standard, with a removable cool box.



A toilet compartment-cum-changing room in the front of the helm console is a useful feature



PERFORMANCE					
<i>As tested 50% fuel 4 crew Force 4</i>					
RPM	Knots	LPH	GPH	MPG	Range (nm)
600	1.5	1.1	0.24	6.3	828
1000	3.7	2.8	0.62	5.9	776
1500	5.8	5.4	1.19	4.9	644
2000	7.0	10.6	2.33	3.0	394
2500	8.2	20.5	4.51	1.8	236
3000	9.8	26.2	5.76	1.7	223
3500	11.2	34.0	7.48	1.5	197
4000	20.8	37.2	8.18	2.5	329
4500	29.9	47.5	10.5	2.8	368
5000	33.8	60.3	13.3	2.5	329
5500	38.1	67.9	14.9	2.5	329
5800	42.0	91.0	20.0	2.1	276



On the transom you get a seat for two, which folds flat if you need a clear cockpit for fishing and lifts up to give access to the aft bilge area. A small transom gate leads out to the bathing platform where you will find a bathing ladder on the port side. Unusually for an outboard powered boat, the bathing platform is full width and usable across the width, even with the engine fully tilted.

Underway

The 242 Fisherman is rated up to 400hp, using twin 200's, but our test boat was fitted with the most potent single engine option, a 300hp Evinrude E-Tec G2. With a top speed of 42 knots, the boat felt more than adequately powered. If that's not enough for you though, the extra 100hp split over two engines provides a top speed of nearly 50 knots. For the more conservative buyer, a single 250hp, which should provide a 38 knot top speed,

offers a sensible choice, both financially and performance wise. The G2 delivers a punchy performance, as you would expect of this two-stroke technology. Acceleration was brisk throughout the rev range and the boat jumped onto the plane quickly. At higher RPM's the G2 is a noisier engine than an equivalent four stroke, but the 242 is also available with either Yamaha or Mercury engines on the transom, so you can choose between the performance of the E-Tec or the refinement of a four stroke. The 242's hull gave a good account of itself when bashing into a typical F4 head sea. We could maintain a comfortable 25 knot cruising speed with minimal fuss and a fairly dry ride. The screen would benefit from being a little bit wider and higher, for even better protection, but overall it does its job reasonably well. In a following sea we couldn't seem to get the bow trimmed up as much as we would have liked

without the prop ventilating. This was almost certainly a rigging issue on our test boat, but it meant that, during our test, it delivered quite a wet ride as the bow stuffed into the back of each wave. At slow speeds the flared bow kicked up quite a bit of water in the choppy seas. The wind then carried this onboard, again making a wet ride if the wind is in the wrong direction, but bring the boat up on the plane and drive into or across the waves and everything settled nicely, and that same flared bow does a great job of pushing water away from the occupants. The boat was easy to drive, and felt completely 'in the zone' at anything from 20-30 knots. Take her above 30 though and the fun begins, as the 242 turns into a real sportsboat that the helmsman needs to actively drive. In our choppy and blustery conditions, the transom seat was quite a wet place to be, as were the bow seats, but this aside there are plenty of comfortable

places for your crew when underway.

Conclusion

This centre console boat is clearly designed for fishing, but we think it would make a great family boat too. It's easy to drive at modest speeds, but can also deliver the engaging lively drive of a sportsboat, should you feel the need to go for a blast. It's nicely appointed too, with a toilet compartment/cum changing room, lots of storage and plenty of comfortable seating options. The Scarab branding certainly adds to the overall look, and is available in three colour schemes, but if that is not for you then the standard boat comes with a choice of six conservative hull side colours.

ENQUIRIES: Sea Ventures
Tel: 01489 565444 www.sea-ventures.co.uk