

# Wellcraft 262 Fisherman

American fast fishers have become more popular in recent years. **Greg Copp** reports on one such example, the Wellcraft 262 Fisherman ...

Ten years ago I remember catching numerous curious glances while taking a Grady-White down the Hamble. Now tough T-tops are far from unusual, as fishing aside, they make very versatile boats.

The Wellcraft 262 Fisherman, proudly sporting the Scarab name on its hull sides, is built to be a serious fishing boat. However, angling aside, it

also has a broader appeal, being equipped with a full-height heads in the forward section of the console and offering various family-friendly extras. The comfy forward section of the boat has the options of a bow infill section to create a large sun pad, a bow table, and the rather clever rail-mounted cool box that can slide from being a console seat forward of the heads to part of the forward seating area. Our test boat had the basic chemical cassette toilet, but there is the option of a proper electric sea toilet. You can also opt for a bimini and, like our test boat, a 'Premium sound package' comprising a Fusion system with subwoofer

**Photos by:**  
Graeme Main

## BIMINI

Our test boat had a bimini and a 'Premium sound package' comprising a Fusion system with subwoofer and T-top-mounted speakers.

## UP FRONT

The comfy forward section of the boat has the options of a bow infill section to create a large sun pad, a bow table, and the rather clever rail-mounted cool box that can slide from being a console seat forward of the heads to part of the forward seating area.





ONBOARD THE WELLCRAFT 262 FISHERMAN



CLOCKWISE - TOP: The helm set-up works well - you just need some electronics. 1. One of three large under-deck catch tanks. 3. The optional 29-gallon aquarium baitwell tank is a great idea. 4. Seated or standing, the seating arrangement works well with the height of the console. 5. There is no shortage of rod holders. 6. The bench seat folds up.

and T-top-mounted speakers.

The flooring is what is called 'Reed Flooring'. Available in grey or tan, it has a distinctly soft feel to it, and is used inside the gunwales at key points to prevent hard knocks on the legs, as well as providing a comfy non-slip deck surface at the helm. There is a cockpit sink and transom shower - which our test boat did not have - which would make good sense from both a pleasure and fishing boat perspective. The electronics on offer consist of a Garmin 7610xsv plotter or a full Simrad package including a 12in plotter, VHF and broadband radar. What did catch my eye on the options list was a FLIR night vision system, which, though it does cost £6,400, is a piece of kit worth having in a boat that is likely to make a few moonlight fishing trips.

In contrast to the foredeck, the cockpit is more fishing focused. Inset rod racks sit in

**PERFORMANCE IS GOOD FROM THE TWIN 200HP YAMAHA F200S, WHICH SEEM WELL SUITED TO THE BOAT.**

the gunwales amidships, so when you are cracking on at 30 knots, everything stays where it should and you don't catch yourself on a rod spool as you move forward. Seven rod holders bristle around the T-top and another six around the transom and cockpit. Arguably more impressively, the boat has the option of three live wells - one on each stern quarter and a 29-gallon LED-lit aquarium live well behind the helm seats, complete with cutting table on top and the all-essential drinks holders. All of these

can be fitted with freshwater feeds. Fish tanks sit under the deck: two medium-sized 42-gallon compartments either side of the console, while a larger tank is positioned between the cool box rails forward of the heads. The deck hardware, grab rails, locker hatches, cleats and catches are impressively hard-core - nothing moves unless it should, and when it does, it is with solid precision. Our test boat was a black version, but white, red, blue, grey and green are alternative colour schemes.

The helm design works well. I say this in particular because I am a fan of standing, and this works very well with the 262's tall console. Your feet wedge in securely against the console on the grippy Reed Flooring that adorns the angled footboard section. The folded seat backs keep you and the navigator firmly in place, while the T-top frame provides a substantial extra grab handle if need be. You have plenty



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## FUEL CONSUMPTION

(both engines – Yamaha fuel flow meter)

Engine speed	GPH	Knots	MPG
2000rpm	3.0	8.7	2.9
2500rpm	5.7	11.0	1.9
3000rpm	7.9	15.7	2.0
3500rpm	10.0	21.0	2.1
4000rpm	12.0	26.3	2.2
4500rpm	14.3	31.5	2.1
5000rpm	18.4	36.7	2.0
5500rpm	23.8	40.5	1.7
6000rpm (WOT)	30.0	44.7	1.5

of elevation to see perfectly over the bow, but equally when seated your feet still reach the board and the view is pretty good.

## Driving the 262

The main purpose of this boat may be providing fast passage to prime fishing spots, but she is also an exciting boat to drive in the process. Needless to say, any offshore powerboat needs to be capable of dealing with offshore weather conditions, which this boat clearly can. We did not have particularly demanding conditions, but the sea off Hurst Point and the wake of the photo boat proved how capable the Wellcraft is at cutting through confused water at 40-knot speeds. What struck me most about the 262 was just how solid she is, as her hull uttered not the slightest complaint when faced with a series of runs through this sharp chop at her top speed just shy of 45 knots. Her lines are pretty sharp with a transom deadrise angle of 21 degrees, and with plenty of forward flare, this makes her remarkably dry no matter how fast you come off a wave. Her forward buoyancy is such that she quickly picks up her bow afterwards. Consequently I imagine that in a

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On each quarter sits a baitwell.



The rod holders are neatly inset.

big following sea, this boat is just as much fun as she is running into the weather.

Performance is good from the twin 200hp Yamaha F200s, which seem well suited to the boat. There is the option of having a single F300 or the big V8 F350, but the pickup and bottom-end grunt of having two 200hp engines on a boat like this will prove its worth when you have to work the throttles – powering up and over large offshore wave patterns. You can

even order the 262 with twin F250s, which is her maximum rating, giving her a 50-knot top speed. With the base option of a single F300, you can expect 40 knots. Not surprisingly, our American cousins think 500hp on the transom is the only way to go with the 262, and it makes good sense if you anticipate carrying the large number of anglers that this boat can cope with. If you are disciplined in keeping to sensible cruising speeds, its efficient hull will not make



## SPECIFICATIONS

**LOA:** 8.03m (26ft 04in)  
**Beam:** 2.74m (9ft 0in)  
**Draught:** 0.74m (2ft 05in)  
**Displacement:** 2.5 tonnes (dry with twin 200hp Yamaha F200s)  
**Transom deadrise angle:** 21 degrees  
**Power options:** 2 x 150hp, 2 x 200hp, 2 x 250hp, single 300hp and single 350hp – all Yamaha outboards  
**Fuel capacity:** 598 litres (132 gallons)  
**Water capacity:** 45 litres (10 gallons)  
**RCD category:** B for 10  
**Test engines:** 2 x 200hp Yamaha F200

## PERFORMANCE

44.7 knots – sea conditions F3, with 70% fuel, 2 crew  
**0–30 knots:** 10 seconds

## PRICE

**From:** £111,827 (inc. VAT) (single Yamaha F300)  
 As tested: £135,000 (inc. VAT)

## CONTACT

**Sea Ventures**  
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A cassette chemical toilet is standard, a sea toilet is an extra. 2. All deck hardware is substantial. 3. The forward upholstery is hard-wearing. Note there is a cool box located forward.

you pay too much for the extra horsepower.

In engine terms, twin F200s is a light package, some 60kg lighter than a pair of F250s, so unless you have big payloads it works well with the 2.5-tonne Wellcraft, being capable of pushing it to 30 knots in 10 seconds. With the standard hydraulic steering system it does not steer like a sports boat, but then it was not designed to be one. However, power steering is on the options list, and I would recommend it, especially with a twin-engine set-up. The 262 turns well and she sticks doggedly to her course when banked over, so if you decide to have a bit of sporting fun with her you will not be disappointed.

## Verdict

Not being a fisherman, I have approached the Wellcraft 262 from a dual perspective, which I think is important in a country that does not have such an offshore fishing culture as the US. This boat will, of course, appeal predominantly to fishermen, but it is also a capable family

boat that can outstrip many RIBs when it comes to creature comforts, and is not far adrift in price comparison. It is a reassuring boat to go to sea in and gives the impression that there is not much you can throw at it that it can't deal with. When you consider how much some well-known comparable US brands cost in comparison, then it is not hard to understand why this boat already has a following on the other side of the Atlantic. **PBR**

## WHAT WE THOUGHT?

## For

- Good performance ■ Practicality
- Safety ■ Very solid build quality
- Seakeeping ■ Lots of storage

## Against

- The usual long list of extras