

BOAT TEST

# Family Friendly

Pursuit's OS 345 gives fishing families plush comfort with real fishing features.

BY JOHN BROWNLEE

**P**ursuit recently introduced its new OS 345 express boat, a scaled-down version of the company's popular OS 375. The main difference between the 37- and 34-foot versions comes in terms of power options and room — the 375 has a triple-engine option, while the 345 comes rigged with only twin outboards, and the 345 obviously sports a slightly smaller cabin.

But that's about it in terms of what you give up by opting for the smaller boat, and in return, you save a lot of money, so the choice is yours: You can go for gold with the triple-engine 375 or get 90 percent of the benefit in a less expensive package in the 345. It's a classic win-win situation.

We tested the 345 courtesy of Caribe Boat Sales (the Keys Pursuit dealer) in Islamorada, Florida. The 345 looks larger than 34 feet, thanks to a large crowned bow deck, which is shaped that way to create ample room down below — where it counts. More on that later, but as we eased away from the dock for a sea trial, I checked out the cockpit, the business end of the boat.

The twin Yamaha F350s sit on a large integrated engine platform, separated from the cockpit by a transom bulkhead which

has a gate to port, allowing access to the stern, where you'll find a shower with both hot and cold fresh water. A large fold-down seat disappears into the bulkhead when not needed for passenger seating. Inside the bulkhead, there's a handy storage area for the boat's batteries and switches, accessed by a large fiberglass hatch which raises on gas rams, making it a snap to get to a battery or throw a switch. The hatch seals with a rubber gasket and a locking stainless-steel latch to keep everything dry.

Two large in-deck fish boxes run fore and aft in the cockpit sole, outboard of a huge centerline lazarette, which contains



**If you are** looking for a large, family-oriented fishing boat, this would be a great choice.

CONDITIONS



**LOCATION:** Islamorada, Florida Keys

**WIND:** SE at 10 knots

**SEA STATE:** Calm

**TEST LOAD:** Full fuel and water, three persons

SPECIFICATIONS

## Pursuit OS 345

**LOA:** 36'4" **Beam:** 12'0" **Draft (engines down):** 2'11"

**Weight:** 15,950 lbs. **Fuel:** 340 gal. **Water:** 50 gal.

**Base Price:** \$356,475, with twin 350 hp Yamaha outboards

**Pursuit Boats:** (772) 465-6006; pursuitboats.com



■ PERFORMANCE		
RPM	MPH	GPH
4,000	32.1	28.4
4,500	36.6	36.0
5,000	41.2	43.8
5,500	47.8	59.4
5,900	50.5	67.6

With twin F350 Yamahas

the boat's pumps and through-hulls, all easily reached for service. The boat's Fischer-Panda generator sits down here too, protected by a canvas cover to ward off saltwater spray.

A large tackle center resides at the forward end of the cockpit, and it holds yet another folding passenger seat, this aft-facing one disappearing into a recess in the port side of the molded fiberglass unit. The port box also contains two pullout tackle drawers, and a Kenyon grill rests on top next to a freshwater sink. The starboard cockpit box holds a refrigerator-freezer box. You control the temperature by turning a knob, making it handy for storing drinks, frozen bait or anything in between.

Steps lead up to the bridge deck, an area protected by a massive molded fiberglass hardtop which seamlessly incorporates handrails, lights, hatches, life-jacket storage and speakers, covering a truly spacious and well-done helm area. Pursuit, and its sister company Tiara Yachts, has this design element down cold. No one does a bridge deck and helm area better.

The starboard-mounted helm chair sits atop a molded fiberglass box which has a hatch, affording access to lots of stowage space. The large helm area features a flat surface above the wheel for mounting two or more large electronics displays, and visibility is very good through the massive tempered-glass windshield.

The center section of the windshield opens on an electric ram to provide fresh air, but you don't really need it because the entire bridge deck gets cooled by vents from the boat's air conditioning system. Rear drop curtains keep the cool air in. An L-shaped couch to port sits atop the boat's DC electrical panel.

Belowdecks, the 345 really shines, providing an impressive amount of room for a 34-foot boat. Remember that crowned bow? It creates tremendous headroom, enough for a guy that's 6-foot-4-inches tall (me) to stand up. The head sits to starboard as you enter the cabin and comes complete with a stylish glass-bowl sink and an aqua-blue acrylic door, which does double duty as a bifold closure for both the head storage closet and the shower compartment.

The boat's AC electric panel fits into the bulkhead on the

forward end of the head compartment, and in the forepeak there's a double berth that has a high-low table for dining, which lowers and is covered by a filler cushion to create a larger berth. A flat-screen TV sits at the very forward end of the cabin, by the anchor locker.

An ample galley sits aft and to port, and it has all of the necessary ingredients for time spent at sea: a microwave oven, a Kenyon cooktop and a small refrigerator. Aft of that, beneath the helm area, there's a midberth which will hold two people, or it can be used for additional storage. The entire cabin is finished with a rich teak-and-holly sole for a plush feel.

The twin Yamaha F350s provide all the performance you'll ever need, getting the big boat on plane quickly and reaching a respectable cruising speed of 32 mph at 4,000 rpm. The OS 345 is no lightweight and isn't meant to be. Instead, it provides a smooth, dry and solid ride in most conditions, and is long in the comfort department, a big plus for fishing families.

If you're looking for a large, family-oriented fishing boat, this would be a great choice. The OS 345 combine Pursuit's excellent fit-and-finish and quality construction techniques with well-designed and -executed fishing features. That's a combination that adds up to a winning package overall. ~

