

Jarrett Bay 38 Express



AUGUST 2001

There are boats that are built just for looks and boats that are built just for function, and then there are those rare boats that get both just right. Jarrett Bay Boatworks, the custom boat builders based in Beaufort, North Carolina, took that now-traditional offshore sportfisherman style with the distinctive Carolina flare around the bow and came up with a 38' Express model that's as practical as it is beautiful. And it's one of the smaller boats they've produced to date. Their list of recently completed hulls includes boats between 45 and 73 feet long, each one unique, but all sharing a uniquely clean styling.

Daryl Brower recently took us out on the new 38 Express for a quick run to the inlet and back. The Jarrett Bay yard is right there on the Intracoastal Waterway on the cut between the Neuse River and Beaufort. In addition to the Boatworks, there are a number of services already available in what is slated to become a major maritime industrial park. Their travel lift is one of the largest on the East Coast. But all these services on the east side of the channel are easy to miss, since the last time I was along that stretch, I had my eyes glued to the opposite bank, with its uninhabited expanse of marshes laced with winding tidal creeks, and all the ospreys and heron nesting there.

It was a brilliant day with a high overcast. We were enjoying a lull of several hours in between squall lines. We headed down the narrow cut, past the lush Newport Marshes, where a school of porpoises looped across the surface of the deeper water, teasing us into vainly trying to get a snapshot of them. I swear there were dozens of them, though nobody will believe me, since I managed to capture a measly single fin swirl along the bottom edge of one frame. We headed down the Morehead City Channel, past the big freighters tied up at the Port Terminal, and out through the inlet toward the Atlantic, where we opened up at last.

The twin Cummins 450 HP diesels zoomed to life, smoothly lifting the hull right up onto plane and surging out across the swells with ease. Running the 38 from the second helm station up in the tower was an exhilarating experience. The tower is optional, but it's custom built of aluminum and installed right there at the yard. Visibility is excellent from atop the tower as you'd expect, and it's from up there that you get to appreciate the exceptional stability of the hull. You feel in control, even in the tight turns, even in crossing through the wake of a passing tug.

Coming back inside, we used the relatively confined area of the turning basin off of Radio Island to run the 38 Express through some close maneuvers, easily manipulating the controls to run in small circles, pivoting in place, and effortlessly backing down on phantom marlin. The boat was too new to have the optional outriggers and center rigger installed, but the new fighting chair was there, mounted in the center of the roomy, 90-square-foot cockpit, the brightwork gleaming in the sun, the seat empty as the fish box, at least for now.

Boats selected for this column are from among the magazine's advertisers.

Length overall 38'6"

Beam 14'6"

Draft 3'4"

Displacement 27,500 lb

Fuel Capacity 360 gals

Water Capacity 50 gals

Standard power Twin Cummings
6CTA 8.3 at 450hp

Base Price \$540,000