

PATHFINDER 2300 HPS

By Mike Holliday

The Boat

There's a reason Pathfinder Bay Boats have one of the highest resale value in its class—they're built with such attention to detail, features and fishing function that the current owner's never want to own another boat. The company is known for its fishermen friendly features like huge multiple livewells, extensive storage and a fast, comfortable ride.

The Pathfinder line has always staked its reputation on the ride and draft of the modified V-hull, so it was interesting to see the new Pathfinder 2300 HPS step hull enter the line-up. At first glance, the boat is a beast—overbuilt and sturdy, with a hint of a great open water ride.

SPECIFICATIONS

Beam	8' 04"
Cockpit square footage	58 sq ft
Draft*	12"
Fuel capacity	60 gal
LOA	23' 06"
Maximum capacities	8 persons or 1,500 lbs
Maximum HP	300 hp
Weight (approx. w/ engine)	3,000 lbs (w/ VF250)



The Ride

Being well acquainted with the open water capabilities of the Pathfinder 2200, 2200 Tournament and Maverick Master Angler 21, I was pleasantly surprised at the ride produced with the Step Hull configuration. The boat I ran was equipped with a 250 hp Yamaha VMAX SHO four stroke outboard, and easily jumped onto plane in a single boat length. The speed, torque and overall power of that engine are a perfect match.

The first noticeable improvement is the open water ride. While the standard Pathfinder 2200 Bay Boat can be taken into the ocean, you'll want to pick the day, whereas the 2300 HPS step hull just ate the open chop, much as you would expect from a heavier, sturdier beast of a bay boat. Only it's not really much heavier. Compared to the Pathfinder 2200 Tournament which weighs 2,850 pounds with the engine, the Pathfinder 2300 HPS step hull comes in at pounds 3,000 pounds with the engine.

The Features

One of the advantages you get when you purchase a boat from manufacturers who use their product are the little things that non-angling fishing boat manufacturers don't think about like a small lip around the forward and aft casting decks to keep fly lines from blowing overboard and to let the angler know he's close to the rail when it touches his toes. Also standard are a huge forward casting deck with room for two, a massive anchor locker able to accommodate any size anchor you'd ever need on a bay boat, port and starboard locking rod storage able to take up to 9' fly rods and under gunwale aft facing rod storage for quick access to rods for when fish swim up to the boat.

There's also reinforced forward dry storage in the center of the casting deck, and forward of the console a self draining castnet locked built into the deck to keep nets and other wet gear away from your other storage. The self-bailing cockpit drains quickly and efficiently, making for an easy clean-up after a long day on the water.

The Pathfinder 2300 HPS bay boat also sports a 35-gallon aft center livewell, and on the test boat the optional 25 gallon leaning post/livewell with a storage drawer and backrest. The aft section of the leaning post livewell has a clear Lexan panel to allow passengers to monitor the health of the baitfish, along with allowing light to enter into the well and keep the baits calm.

The rear casting deck provides enough height to see deep into the water column, something that you'll want when looking to sight cast fish or when fighting big fish close to the boat. Port and starboard aft dry storage boxes on either side of the casting deck contribute to the abundance of storage on board this boat, so there's always plenty of room for family, friends and all their gear. Access to the bilge and livewell pumps are through the aft access hatch, which provides a direct and easy open area for quick replacement of cartridge pumps.

One of the newest features on this boat is the redesigned console, with foot rest, rod holders that keep the rod butts from touching, and thus marring the deck, lighted switch panel and built-in recessed foot rest. Access to batteries and connections inside the console are through a locking console door, or the forward tilting access panel (with storage box) behind the forward console backrest.

The Options

Where do you start with this extensive option list? I guess you need to decide whether you want the boat to have more of a flats or bay boat configuration and then go from there. If you like the wide-open deck and walk around gunwales of the flats boat, then the Professional Battery Charger and Power Pole Shallow Water Anchoring System are a necessity as are the hydraulic tilt steering so you can adjust the wheel when standing or sitting.

For more of a conventional bay boat/family convenience, the powder coated T-top, which comes in soft and hard top are a necessity. As are the freshwater washdown, custom cooler and cushion set forward of the console and a swim/dive platform for getting in and out of the water convenience.

Live bait aficionados will love the opportunity to ramp up their livewell systems with either a recirculating pump or advanced livewell system with bubbler. You can also upgrade the leaning post to one with a tackle station, or for extra livewell space add the leaning post livewell mentioned above.

One of the most frequently ordered options is the Pathfinder tandem axle trailer, with upgrades that include aluminum wheels, spare tire and swinging tongue. The low-profile trailer allows the Pathfinder to sit somewhat recessed on the bunks for better handling in turns and a much easier climbing height when you want to jump in the boat on land.

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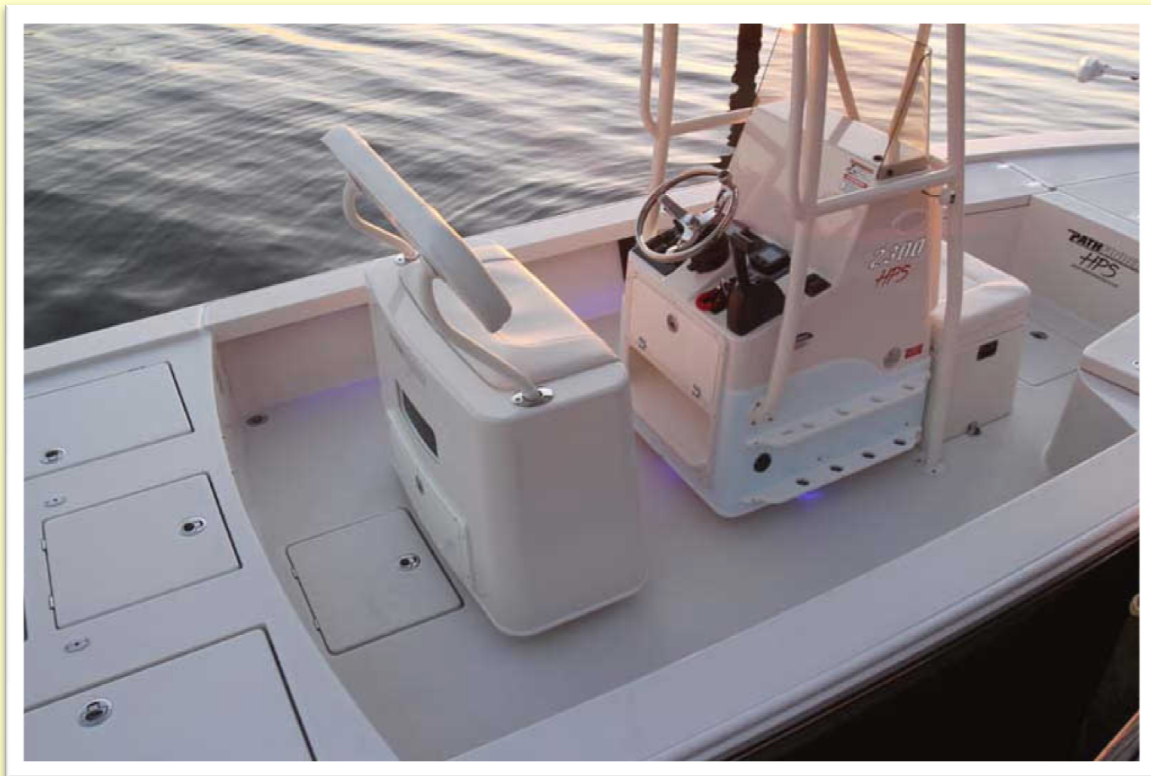
The Overall Impression

Big surprises for me were the overall ride (phenomenal, even in 2 to 3 foot chop) provided by the new step hull configuration and the super shallow draft. While maneuvering through the shallow grass flats via trolling motor, the boat was able to pass into water I know I couldn't get to in the other bay boat models, making this a truly diverse fishing boat that delivers in open water as well as the shallow flats.

As with all the products from Maverick Boat Company, Inc., the attention to detail and the fishability of all the features and options are the little values that come standard that you don't see

with other boats, but a major part of the reason for the pride of ownership that comes with all these models. Things like recessed pull-up cleats, console courtesy lights, trolling motor wiring and flush mounted gunwale rod holders all add up to producing the complete package at purchase time.

In short, this boat is a beast—a fishing and family recreational vehicle extraordinaire. The performance in calm, rough and shallow water is exceptional, while the layout and fishing, comfort and safety features are unsurpassed in the bay boat market. The new Pathfinder 2300 HPS step hull bay boat is a perfect fit for serious fishermen and casual family boaters alike.



For additional information, please visit
www.pathfinderboats.com