

For the discerning few
Bonadeo Boatworks 368 WA

a Beauty
OF A BEAST

BY MATT DRAPER

I don't write very many reviews on custom boats. Partly because I would hate to be critical of someone's life's work, but mainly because I save my efforts for the vessels that truly pique my interest and make me feel the

need to share. So when custom yacht builders Larry and Tony Bonadeo called me to say their latest creation was ready to hit the water, I knew I needed to get down to Stuart, Florida to help them get it wet.

Previous trips to the Bonadeo facility found me picking my way through the tight confines of a warehouse that Larry and his team had simply grown too big for. This was no longer the case. I almost doubted my GPS as I pulled up



to their brand new 12,000 square-foot building with three-story-tall bay doors and enough parking to accommodate the rigs required to haul boats of this

caliber. The whole place was bright and white, and it was easy to see how this new environment could inspire positive attitudes and creative thinking. Tony

Bonadeo, my host for the day, met me at the entrance and was proud to give me the grand tour.

Inside the travertine tiled offices sat

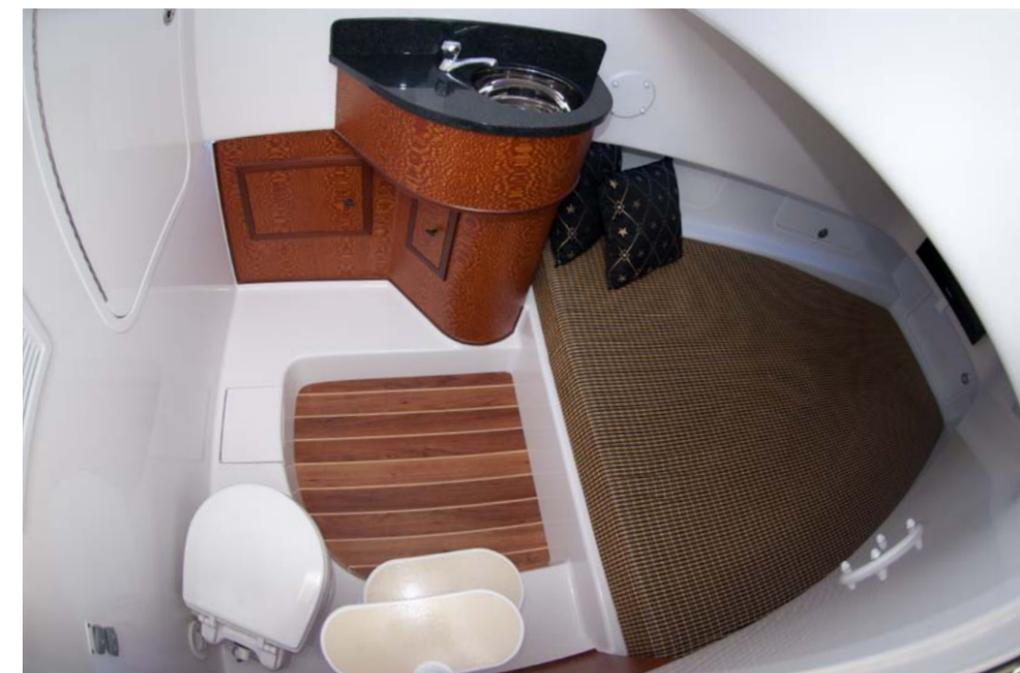


drafting boards where Larry and a naval architect study and refine designs to meet prospective buyer's dreams. Bonadeo's team of craftsmen with their obsessive eye for detail can customize a boat's interior to suit anyone from the serious offshore angler, to the wealthiest celebrity in South Florida. But when it comes to lending input on the hull, buyers need only consider picking a color, because you don't tamper with perfection.

Bonadeo hulls are second to none in ride quality. This is the result of many years of fishing on the often chaotic Atlantic and Pacific oceans, all the while studying and brainstorming ways to build lighter and stronger boats through the use of advanced engineering and new state-of-the-art materials. Over time Bonadeo developed his signature construction process, which involves resin infusion and vacuum bagging, utilizing vinyl ester and/or epoxy resin, Kevlar, carbon fiber, quadaxial fiberglass and composite cores. The process is complicated and time consuming, but the end product is a work of art that cuts waves like a sportfisher, is nearly impenetrable, and many would argue has no rival within 20 feet of its class.

The massive center bay housed the beautiful 368 Walkaround we'd be taking out for a mid-morning stretch. Some boats look their best half submerged in water, but the 368 even looks sexy on a trailer. The long, flawless, mirror-finished hull with its broad, sweeping Carolina bow begs to have a hand run along its curves. But a quick glance to the stern quickly quells your dreamy trance as you're confronted by 900 angry horses hanging off the back. Triple Mercury Verado 300s, color coordinated to match the boat, no less.

Tony and I trailered the big beauty to a public ramp on the Manatee Pocket, a large finger of water just a few miles inside of the St. Lucie Inlet. Similar to other experiences I've had while launching a Bonadeo; the boat draws an almost embarrassing amount of attention. I must admit the staring pumps you up a bit, because it's obviously out of admiration. Kind of like rolling up in a





Maserati; you don't need to race it, and it doesn't need flames on its sides. Its presence alone speaks volumes about your confidence, taste, and the level of success you've achieved. A quick splash later and we were adrift, allowing me a chance to look over the boat's many amenities.

This particular 368 was designed so cleanly, that it appeared to have very few options at a glance. But that's also part of why it's so beautiful. Everything is there; it's just seamlessly built into the boat's flowing curves and polished compartments. One feature that can't be missed, however, is the forward sun pad built out from the console. This comfortable convenience alone could cause many buyers' wives to give the go-ahead. The helm seating is plush in its own right; three seats wide and each can be adjusted individually into leaning posts, while its backside features a bevy of rocket launchers, a huge livewell and an elaborate tackle and bait-prep station.

The oversized command center's electronics continue the clean feel, with everything set under a flush-mounted acrylic lid. Only the throttles and the wheel on its lacquered exotic wood base interrupt the flow.

Entrance to the birth is through a contoured door on the starboard side of the console. Inside rests an eloquently appointed full queen birth with air conditioning, custom sink, head, an LED TV, book matched open grain lacewood cabinetry trimmed in Sapele hardwood, and low-maintenance Amtico flooring.

Now it was time to pick up some speed. Tony threw the throttles forward and the huge engines responded with a turbine-like roar as the inevitable power forced us deeper into our seats. Surprisingly, the bow did not aim skyward as the big props gripped the water and launched the boat forward. This is a result of the expertly tuned hull, which causes the boat to hop up and forward as opposed to digging in at the stern. We had very little weight in the boat

and managed 60 mph before approaching the inlet. Now she was going to get tested.

The seas were nasty and no one was heading out. If our mission was to see how far we could push this boat before something bad happened, then these conditions were perfect. But getting a real-world feeling for how the boat handles under these conditions was unnecessary, because you wouldn't go out in them. Of course you could get "caught" in similar conditions, we decided, and that was all the justification we needed.

Out the inlet we went, as boats contemplating the passage looked on from a safe distance. In pretty much any other boat I would have had to deal with that little voice in my head telling me not to be stupid. But I've been in a Bonadeo before, and the truth is it looked like fun.

As to be expected at a sensibly slow speed while passing between the jetties, the wave height and timing stood the boat up at a 45-degree angle on

several occasions—even freeing the props on one instance. Each time I listened intently for the horrible sounds that usually follow when a boat falls flat from that height. And each time the hull returned to the water as though it were made of iron with no moving parts. Bonadeo hulls are silent, and if you think you heard a noise, you better go check your gear because it must not have been stowed correctly.

Open water found us in 5- to 7-footers. Not a pleasant size to spend a day on the water, but certainly nothing to be concerned about in the 368. I took the helm and we splashed around a bit, making note of the amazing way the flared bow rejects waves. We'd done what we came to do, so with a load of confidence and a following sea, Tony laid on the throttles and we ripped back through St. Lucie Inlet.

It's my belief that the Bonadeo 368 WA is a perfect fit for the serious angler with very high standards; who enjoys the finer things in life and is looking for the next step up before a sportfisher. He must also enjoy his wife's company, because this is a fishing boat she's going to fall in love with, too. **G**

Please visit www.bonadeoatworks.com to view extensive standard feature and option lists. You can check out other reviews of Bonadeo's exquisite lineup at: www.gafflife.com

Bonadeo 368 Walkaround Specs

Length:36' 8"
 Beam:10'
 Draft:23" Est.
 Fuel:324 gal.
 Water:45-60 gal.
 Holding Tank:6 gal.
 Max Power:900 HP
 Cruise:47 MPH
 Top End:56/60 MPH
 Displacement:12,900 lbs.
 (Full Load Wet 3x300 Verado) Est.

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