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JULY 2014

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# CENTER OF ATTENTION



JOHN LAMBERT

Center console boats deliver the performance and utility that has made salty, sun-drenched dreams come true for more than 50 years. Indeed, owners of more stately cruisers and trawlers are likely to have a smaller center console at the ready for inshore and offshore angling. Because the helm is positioned in the center, the bow and stern offer open areas for casting and fighting fish, while the port and starboard gunwales are at the ideal height to keep passengers safe yet still allow access to the water. Some gunwales are padded to allow anglers to lean against the side while fishing, and the decks offer insulated and non-insulated storage compartments.

Today's top builders offer center consoles in lengths from around 15 feet to 47 feet and larger.

Four-stroke outboards are the engines of choice, offering greater reliability, improved fuel economy and less harmful emissions than ever before. The ability to customize and accessorize center console boats has grown with options such as rod holders, heads, outriggers, bait wells, electronics, hardtops, and T-tops. Center console hulls are built to handle rough water, yet also offer high-performance at cruising speeds allowing for fast access to fishing grounds 100 miles or more away.

Here's a look at some of the top center console boats that offer the flexibility boat owners want and the power they need when taking to the sea.

By **DOUG THOMPSON & CHRISTINE CARPENTER**

## ALBURY 23



Generations of boat building experience in Man-O-War Cay, Bahamas, and Riviera Beach, Florida, have influenced the simplicity and seaworthiness of the Albury 23 to enhance its safe, smooth ride. The low center of gravity and hand-laid hull keeps green water out of the boat for a dry, comfortable day on the water. The full bow and three-piece construction allows for ample room to move about,

and the well-balanced, variable V-hull provides easy planing at 18-20 mph. Built for mid-range performance, the 23 shines when cruising at 20-36 mph.

The Albury 23 has two layout options—the 23 Bay & Bluewater, and the 23 Forward Seating. The Bay & Bluewater is the same Albury hull that built their company's rough water reputation but is equipped for inshore fishing as well by only drawing 16 inches. This edition of the 23 center console is loaded with a folding, dual-station, "Key West"-style tower and dual livewells, in-deck fish box, trolling motor, Talon or Power Pole, tabs, jack plate, electric reel outlets, and outriggers.

The Forward Seating is Albury's traditional hardcore fishing machine and one of Albury's most popular models—it has the same appointments as the Bay & Bluewater, is rated for 300 horsepower, and can be powered by one or two engines. [alburybrothers.com](http://alburybrothers.com); (561) 862-7006