

“A GOOD SPOONPLUGGING BOAT”



14 foot Ultracraft Boat Model 14 CT, 2009

Fishermen seem to be constantly **striving** to obtain that “**perfect**” or “**ideal**” fishing boat. Unfortunately, because waters, weather, individual goals, people, fishing methods, and other **factors are always changing**, the “**perfect**” boat for all situations does not exist. Over the years I have owned and used 9 different boats from a small canoe to a 15 foot Troller, most of them for Spoonplugging. When one looks at a boat as a tool used to control the depth and speed of lure presentation, the choices narrow considerably. Safety is of primary importance, and that depends on what type of waters you fish. Large wide open lakes that can get rough require a somewhat larger, wider, and deeper craft.

Last Spring I had been looking for a slightly larger boat than my 14 foot Sea-Nymph and 15 horsepower Evinrude that I had used for nearly 20 years. I loved the interior plan and the ease of handling it provided, but the narrow beam and lower sides did not provide the safety I felt I needed as I expanded my fishing to some larger waters. Yet I love to fish the Grand River, and wanted a boat that could be used to fish it also. At the 2009 Grand Center Sport and RV Show I noticed a boat that was considerably deeper and wider than my Sea Nymph, but still only 14 feet long. It was a new brand called Ultracraft Voyager Model 14 CT, made by Misty Harbor in Iowa, which makes quality pontoon boats. I looked at a 25 hp 2-stroke Yamaha to power it.

After thoroughly inquiring, examining, and measuring this boat, I ordered one from Dennis Fink at Camp and Cruise in Marne, MI (616-677-1274). It proved to me to be a good boat for Spoonplugging, and I am very pleased with its’ performance. Some of the features I am especially pleased with are:

---It tracks extremely well and turns on a dime, even better than my previous boat. This is important for trolling accuracy and response. 3 good sized keels and a reverse chine in the hull seem to account for that.

---It is **wide and stable**. A **72 inch beam** is the **widest I have ever seen in a 14 foot boat**, allowing plenty of room for tackle boxes, etc. I can **walk anyplace in this boat** without fear of it tipping. As I become more “mature”, this adds extra importance!

---It has a **deep-V hull and a 31 inch bow height**. That makes this boat safer and **more capable of handling rough water**. As always, common sense and watching the weather closely are critical in boat safety.

---The **total hull weight** without the motor is **only 475 pounds**. It floats higher in the water and a **25 hp motor is plenty of power to plane it when loaded**. This is important when fishing a river.

---The **high sides and less distance between seats** have **eliminated any line-in-the-prop accidents**.

---This boat comes with **many extra features** often not found in a 14 foot boat: **Plush carpet**, navigation lights, **3 large storage compartments** under the front deck, large **lockable rod storage over 7 feet long**, bilge pump, **36 inch aerated livewell** with divider, and **2 very comfortable bucket seats**. A seat base is included on the front deck for use with an electric trolling motor. This is a very **sharp looking boat**. Although not my top priority, **it doesn't hurt to look good!**

It comes with **plush carpet on the floor**, so I chose a **vinyl floor** when ordering the boat, since I **intend to place netted fish on it**. I also purchased a **bow mount electric motor** for spring and fall casting, as advised by John Bales. The 25 hp Yamaha is quiet and will troll down to 1.2mph, yet will go about 20 mph with 2 people in the boat. **Speed control** is excellent and **precise while trolling Spoonplugs**. This is not the “Perfect Spoonplugging Boat”, but one with great features that I am **very pleased** with, and **the most comfortable boat I have ever owned**.

Chase Klinesteker, CSI



Rod storage on right, live well on left