

Manitou 21 Aurora LE RF VP (2021-)

Brief Summary

Manitou says the 21 Aurora LE RF VP is targeted at the boater on a budget who wants the performance benefits of a third pontoon. It’s been updated with a new layout. The RF standards for “rear-facing” aft seats and the VP is for the company’s patented performance pontoon design.

Price

Base Price\$26125.00

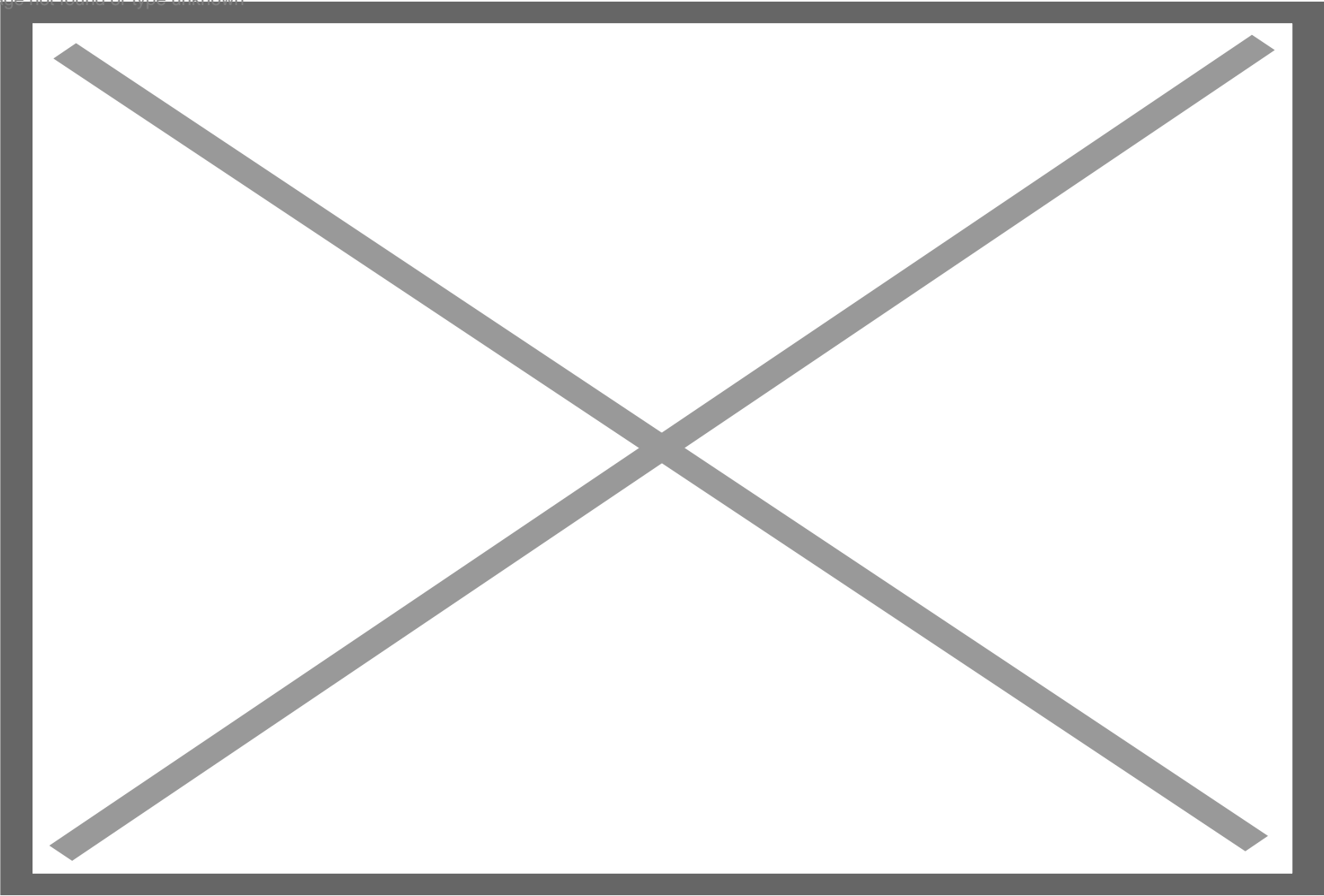
Test Results

RPM	MPH	Knots	GPH	MPG	NMPG	STAT. MILE	NM	dBa
700	2.6	2.2	0.5	5.7	4.9	219	190.7	51.7
1000	3.8	3.3	0.7	5.9	5.1	229	198.8	69.1
1500	5.4	4.7	1	5.4	4.7	209	181.7	66.9
2000	7	6.1	1.4	5	4.4	195	169.3	65
2500	8.5	7.4	1.9	4.6	4	179	155.4	66.7
3000	11.4	9.9	2.3	5	4.3	192	166.8	68.9
3500	15.2	13.2	3.2	4.8	4.1	184	159.8	73.8
4000	18.4	16	4.3	4.3	3.8	168	145.7	74.8
4500	21.2	18.4	5.6	3.8	3.3	147	128.2	76.1
5000	24.5	21.3	7.1	3.5	3	134	116.1	78.3

RPM	MPH	Knots	GPH	MPG	NMPG	STAT. MILE	NM	dBa
5500	27.3	23.7	8.7	3.2	2.7	122	106.2	78.6
6100	29.1	25.3	11.3	2.6	2.2	100	86.7	85

[View the test results in metric units](#)

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Specifications

Length Overall	22'4" 6.8 m
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BEAM	8.5' 2.5 m
Dry Weight	2,485 lbs. 1,127 kg
Tested Weight	3,484 lbs. 1,580 kg
Draft	18" 45.72 cm
Draft Up	
Draft Down	
Air Draft	
Deadrise/Transom	
Max Headroom	
Bridge Clearance	
Weight Capacity	
Person Capacity	
Fuel Capacity	43 gallons 162.8 L
Water Capacity	
Length on Trailer	
Height on Trailer	
Trailer Weight	

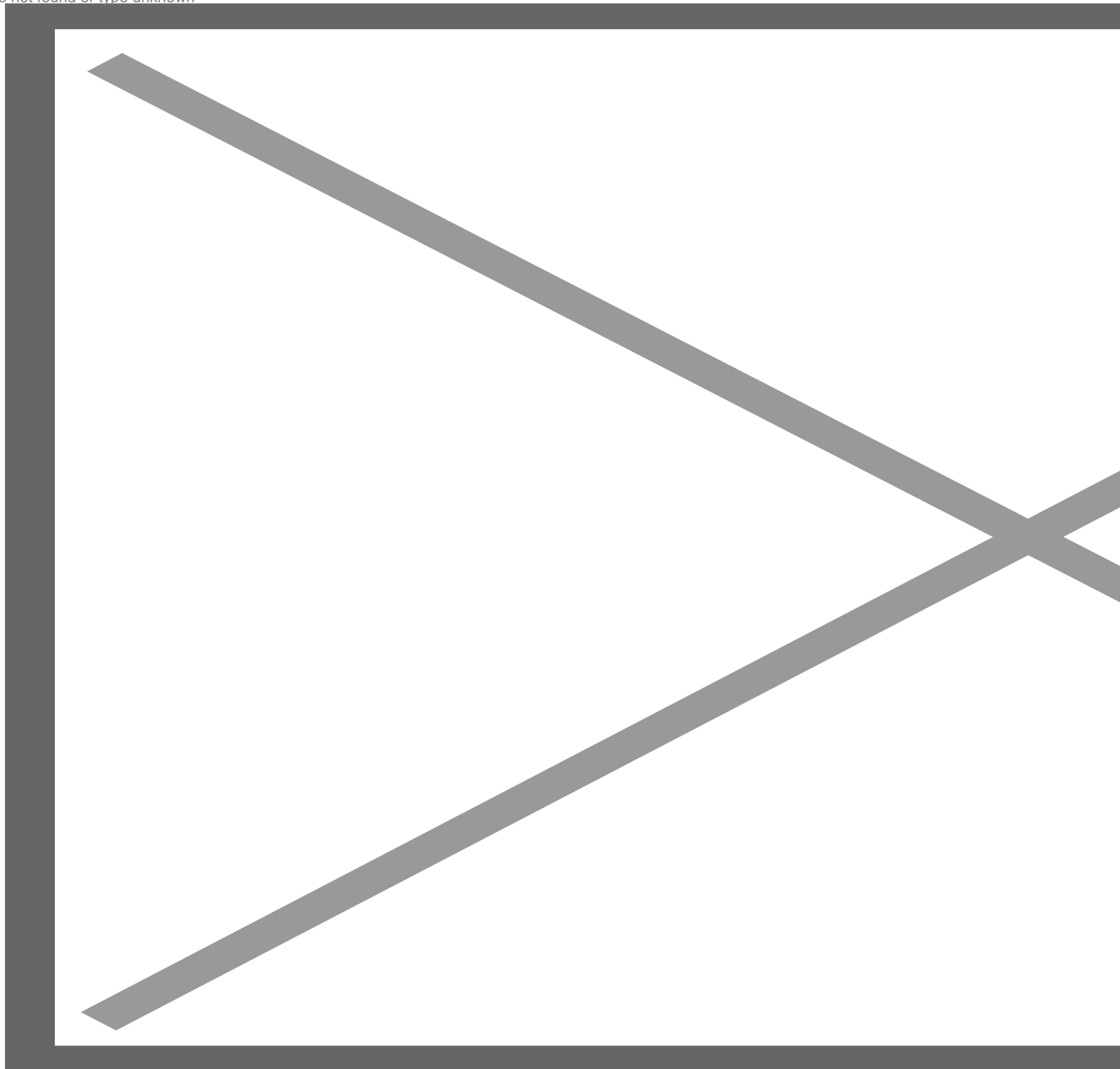
Total Weight	3,484 lbs. 1,580 kg
Aft Deck	
Salon Inside Width	
Salon Fore & Aft	
Salon Height	
Salon Volume	
Galley Volume	
Master SR Width	
Master SR fore & Aft	
Master SR Overhead	
Master SR Volume	
Eng. Room Volume	

Acceleration Times & Conditions

Time to Plane	
0 to 20	
Ratio	
Props	15.3x14 Enertia

Load	2 persons; 2/3 fuel; 50 lbs. of gear
Climate	65 deg.; 100 humid; wind: 10-15; seas: <1

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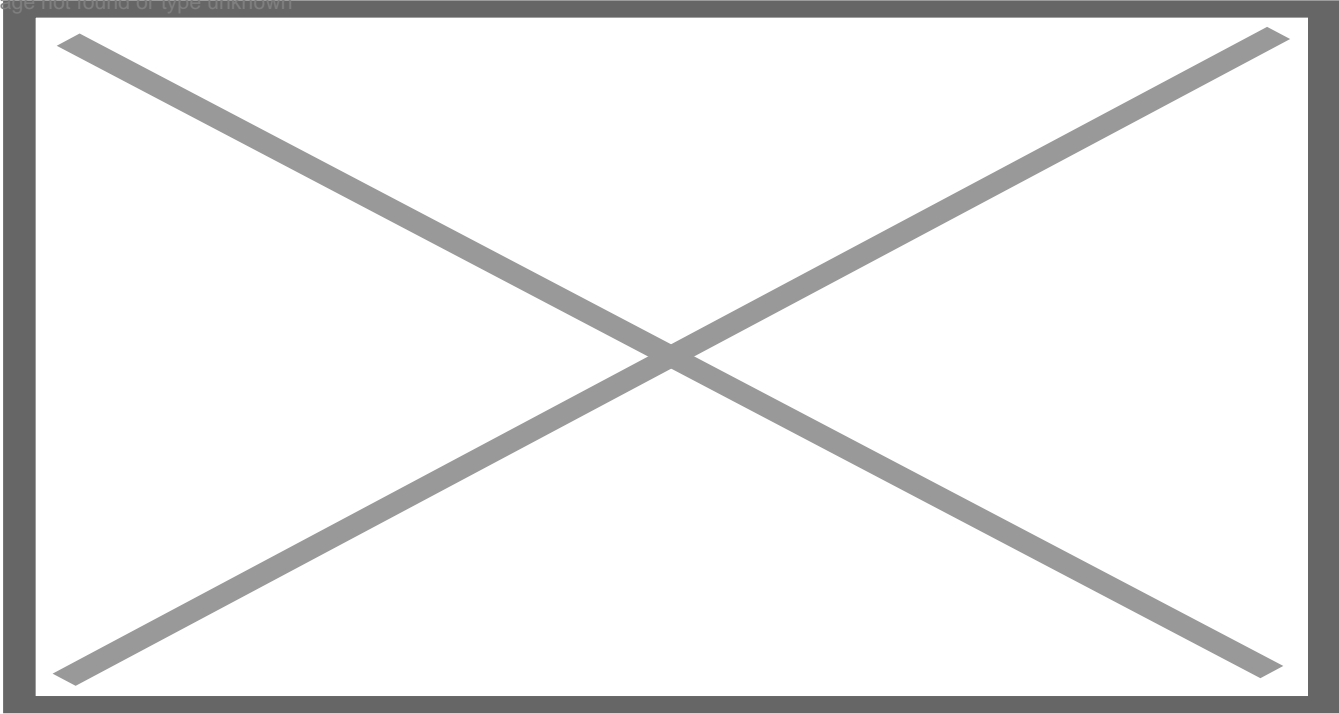
Manitou sells the 21 Aurora LE RF VP in three different sizes. Our test boat measured 22'4" (6.81 m) with an 8'6" (2.29 m) beam.

By Eric Colby

Mission Statement

Manitou designed the Aurora LE RF VP to be an entry-level model, but not in the basic pontoon segment. The intention is to provide a buyer who doesn't have an open checkbook a boat with a performance-oriented triple-pontoon design and a straightforward list of popular standard features like a digital dash and aft-facing rear lounges.

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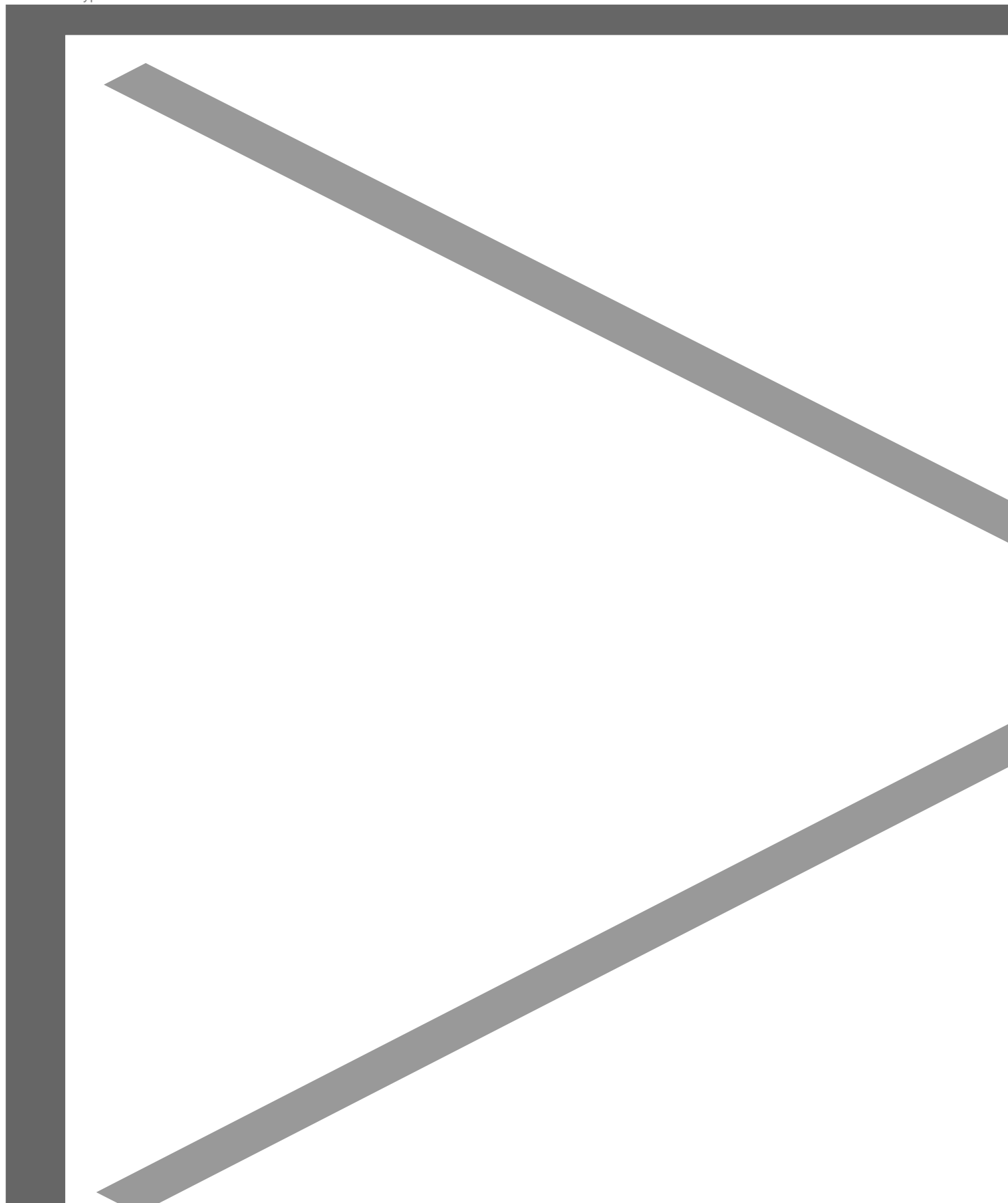
The RF in the Aurora LE RF VP's name stands for Rear Facing aft seats and the boat has a total of four lounging areas where passengers can stretch out.

Manitou Aurora LE RF VP Major Features

- Patented VP Performance pontoon design
- Barracuda Nose Cones
- Garmin digital screen at dash
- Heavy-duty ski tow
- Upgraded captain's chairs

Manitou Aurora LE RF VP Performance

The Numbers. Our test boat was powered by a 115-hp Mercury Pro XS four-stroke outboard. An owner can opt for up to 150 hp. She has an LOA of 22'4 (6.81 m), a beam of 8'6" (2.59 m) and a hull draft of 18" (45.72 cm). With an empty weight of 2,485 lbs. (1,127.17 kg), 75 percent fuel, and test gear, we had an estimated test weight of 3,484 lbs. (1,580.32 kg).



Manitou will power the boat with up to 150 hp. Our test boat felt properly packaged with the Mercury 115 Pro XS.

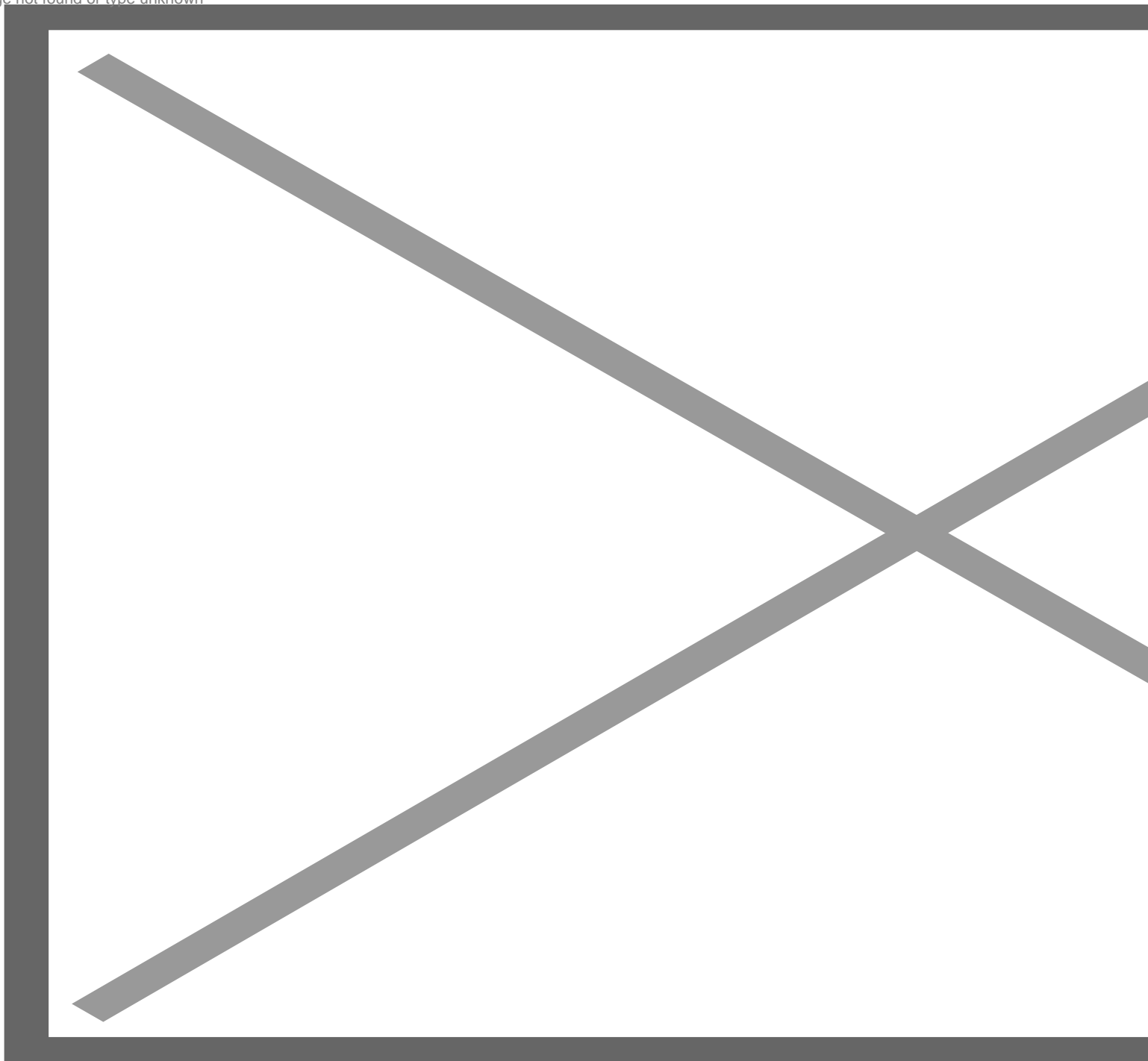
On our test boat, the 115-hp Mercury Pro XS Command Thrust outboard turned a 15.3" x 14" (38.86 cm x 35.56 cm) Enertia three-blade stainless-steel propeller. Winding up the engine to 6100 rpm, we hit a top speed of 29.1 mph. Best cruise came at 3000 rpm and 11.4 mph. The 2.3 gph fuel burn translated into 5 mpg and a range of 192 miles while holding back 10 percent of the boat's 43-gallon (162.77 L) fuel capacity.

In acceleration tests, the Aurora LE RF VP hit 20 mph in 5.1 seconds.

The Command Thrust designation is an important one for the Pro XS outboard because it means the engine is set up to push a pontoon boat.

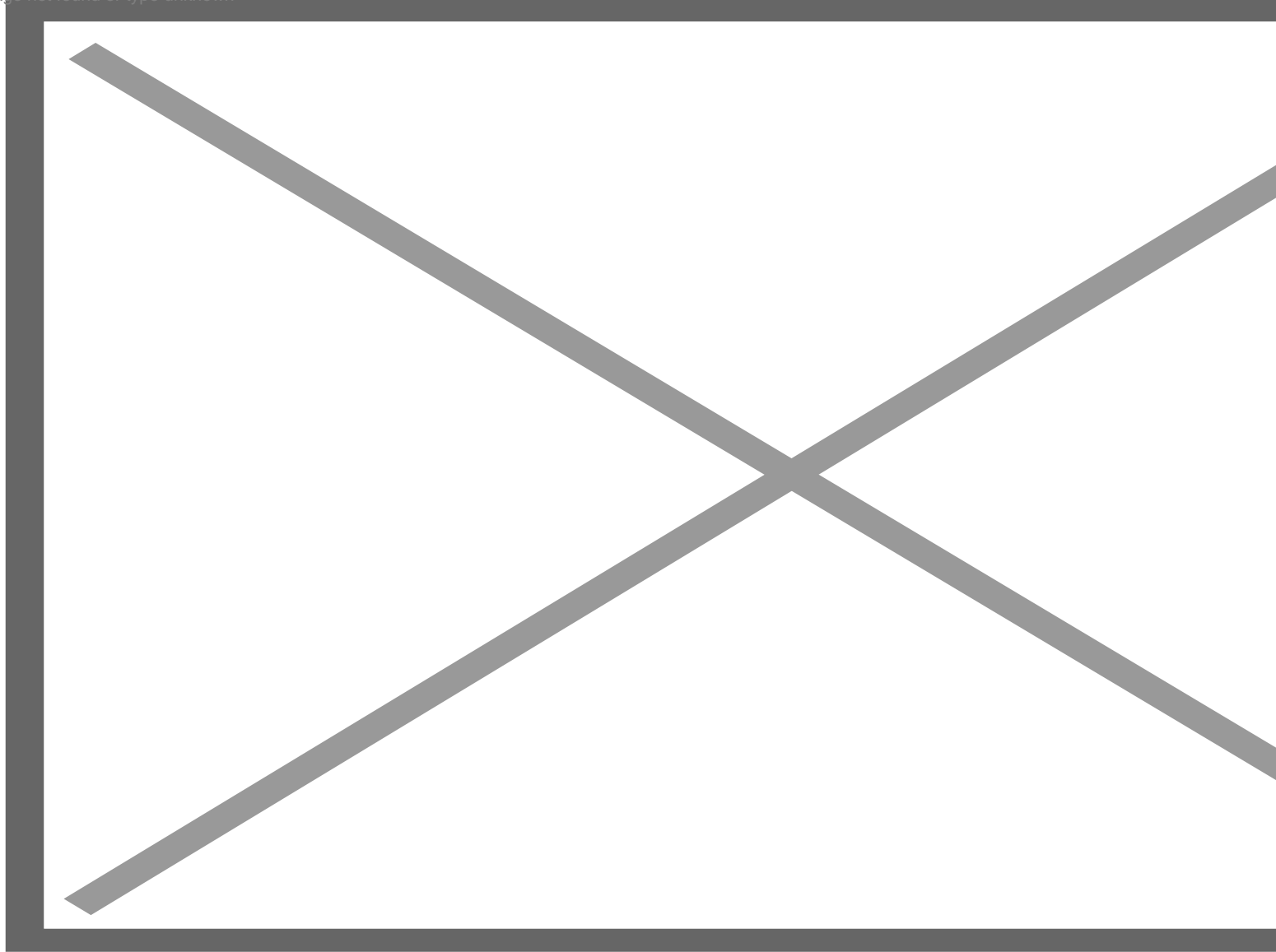
Handling. Manitou's VP bottom design features outer pontoons with 23" (58.42 cm) diameters while the center 'toon is 27" (68.58 cm). It's mounted 5 ¼" (13.34 cm) lower and has lifting strakes. In turns, the boat naturally leans into maneuver and carves like a V-bottom runabout. At the front of the pontoons, Manitou's Barracuda nosecones are reinforced to withstand inevitable bumps with the dock.

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Our test boat had Seastar hydraulic steering that made her respond with smooth precision to helm input.

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Manitou's Barracuda nosecones are reinforced at the bow and have extra spray deflectors.

Features Inspection

New and Improved. For the 2021 model year, Manitou upgraded the seating configuration and upholstery with multiple textures and colors. The rails that support the 26" (66.04 cm) tall exterior fencing have also been updated with a matte black powder-coat finish. The same finish is on the frame for the Bimini top. All three boarding gates are 23" (58.42 cm) wide and Manitou quadrupled the number of beverage holders from two to 10. Finally, our test boat had the optional Silver Luna Woven flooring covering the deck.

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For 2021, Manitou uses multiple colors and a stitched-in logo on the upholstery.

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All the entry gates close with secure latches and are finished in the same matte black finish as the rail fencing.

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The color-matched Bimini top stores in its own boot and can be easily deployed by one person.

The Bow. In the bow, the new layout has the conventional forward-facing lounge extending forward from the helm console. Opposite, the port-side lounge is set up facing aft. There's storage beneath the bottom cushions, which are hinged on the inboard side. The bow platform is 18" (45.72 cm) deep, which makes it a good area for boarding and transition into the boat via the centrally positioned gate.

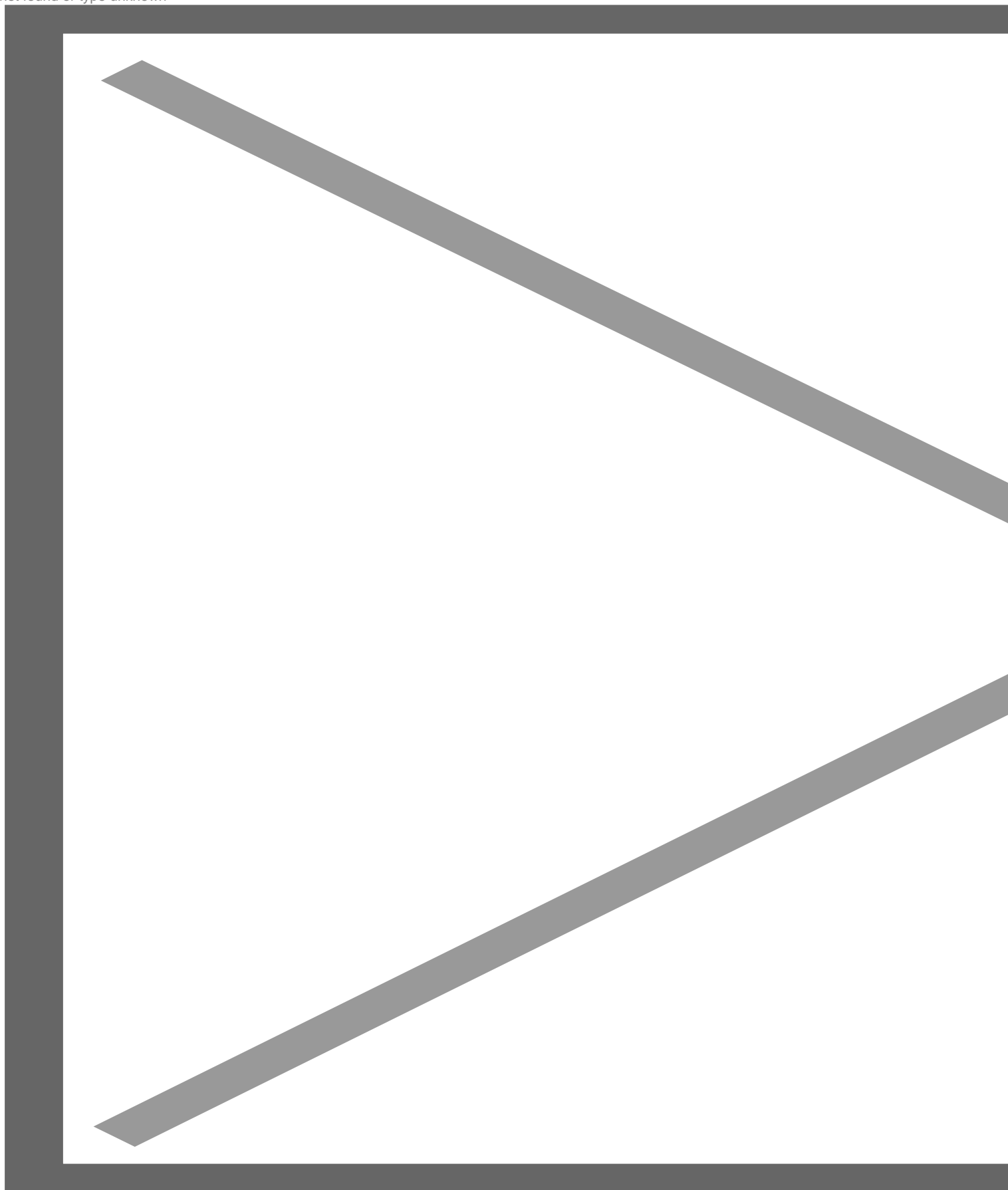
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The port seat in the bow has extra depth so people can sit facing inboard or aft.

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The bottom cushions in the bow fold inboard, so it could be a tricky reach for a shorter person to reach the contents.

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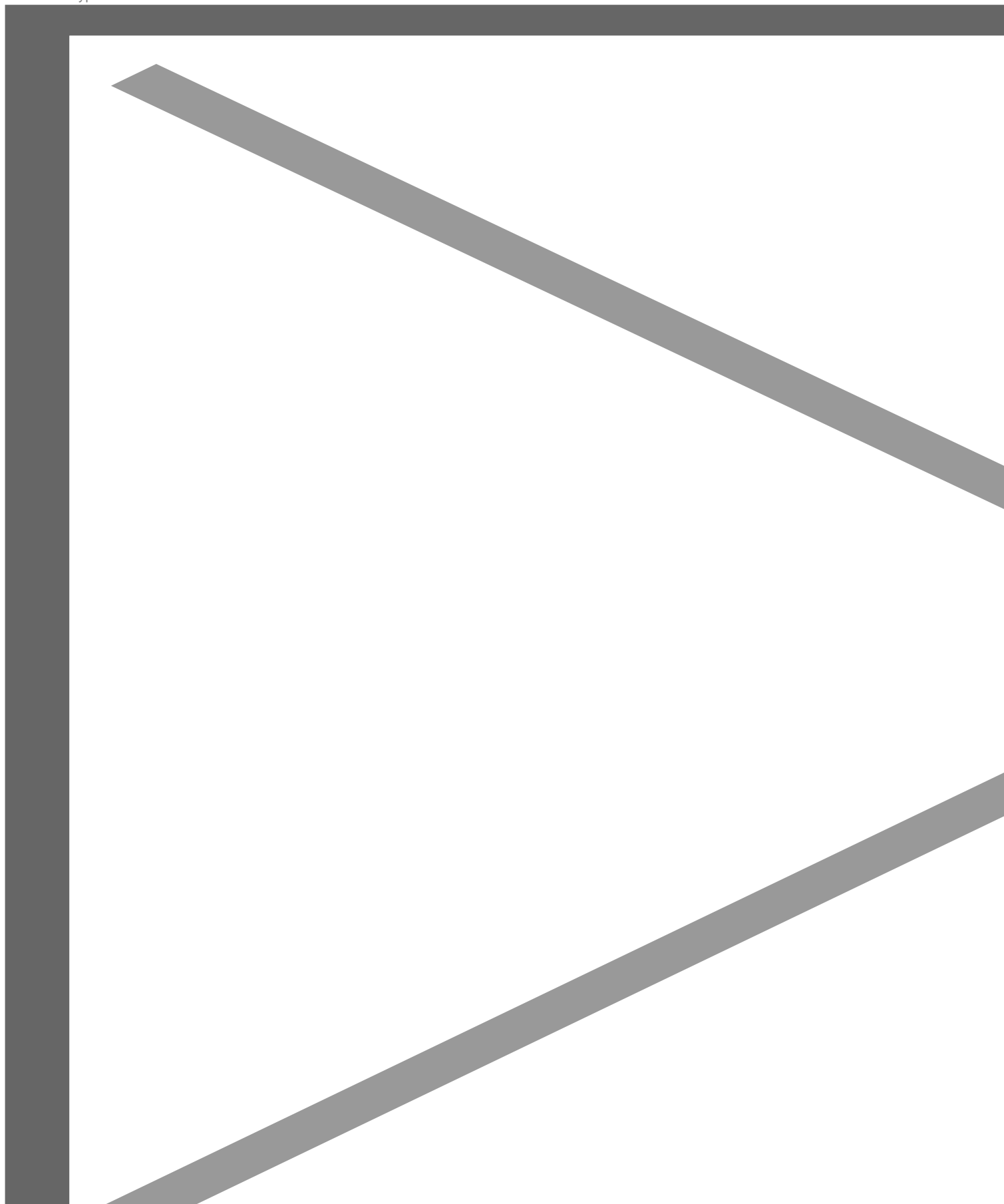


There's plenty of space for boarding and walking across the bow platform.

The Helm/Amidships. Moving aft, there are two captain's chairs amidships with space to pass in between. The seats swivel, adjust fore and aft and recline. Outboard of the port seat is a padded bolster with a cupholder. To starboard, the helm console has a 7" (17.78 cm) Garmin digital display in the center with accessory switches that illuminate when activated on each side. The Fusion stereo head is to the left of the upgraded steering wheel that's part of the Limited package. The throttle/shift control is in the usual position to starboard. There's storage in the console that's accessed through a hatch on the inboard side.

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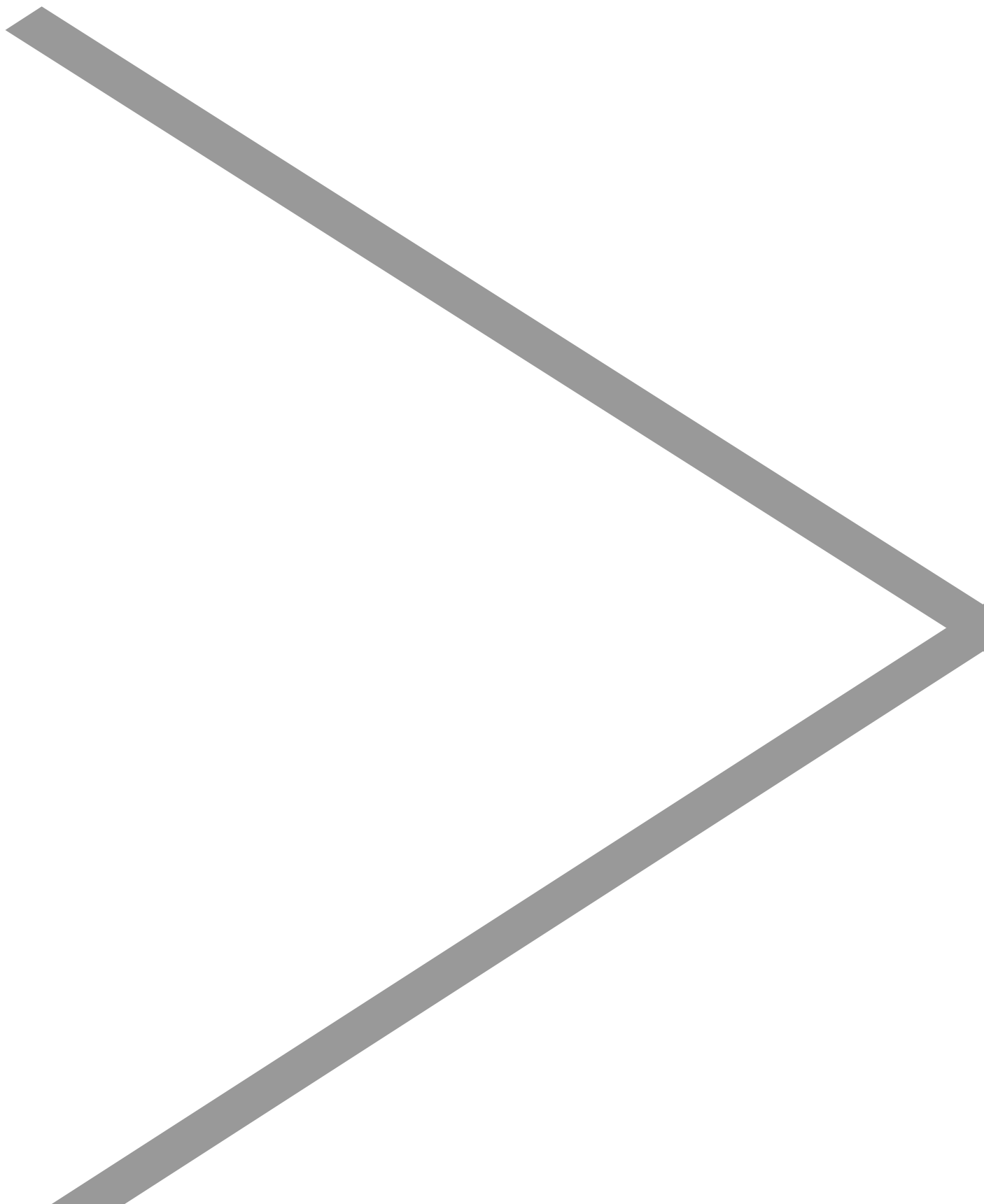
The individual captain's chairs are also upgrades for the 2021 model year and they are quite comfortable.



The acrylic windscreen did its job well enough that our test captain could keep his hat on while driving.

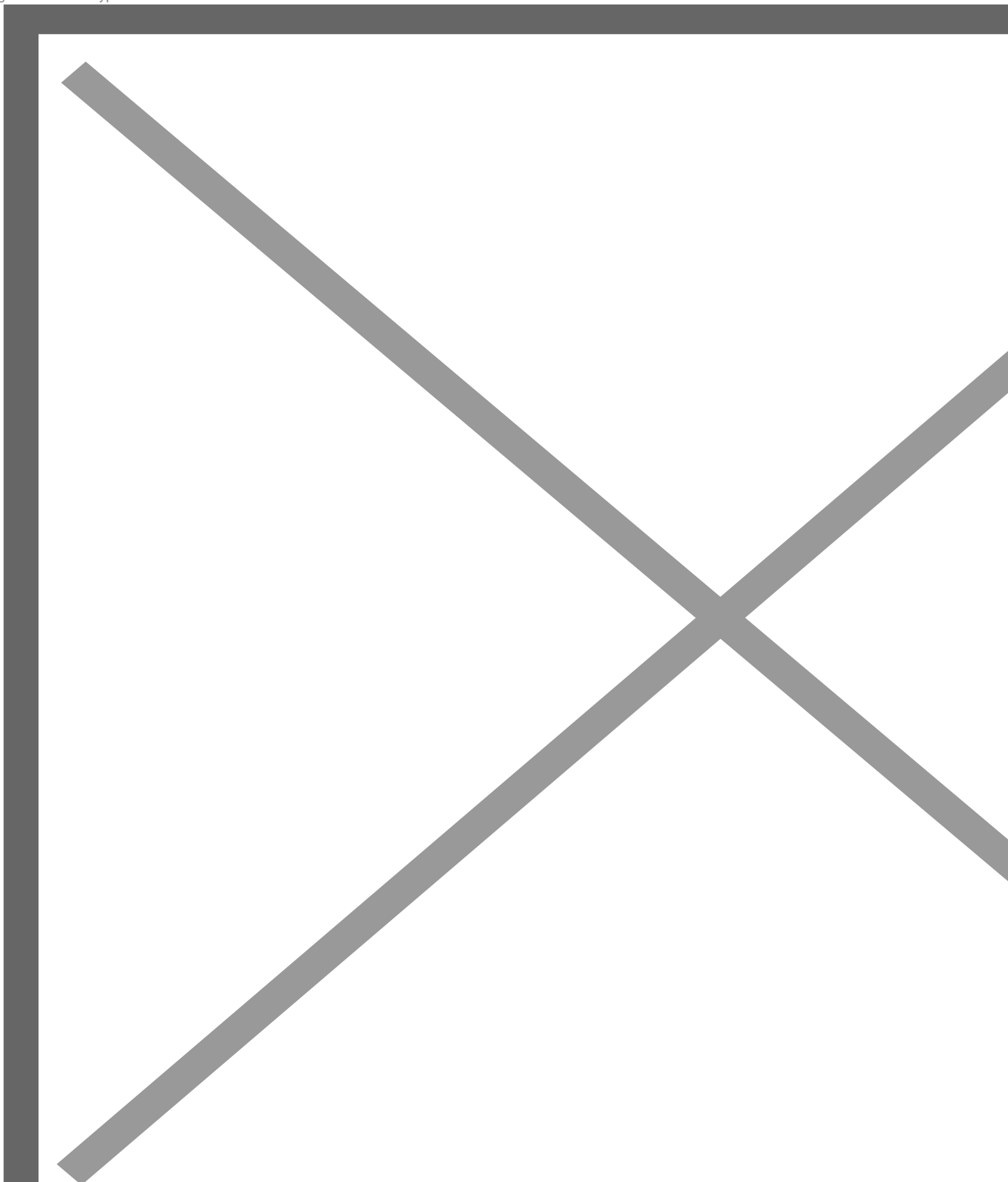
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All engine and course information is displayed on the Garmin screen that's cleanly integrated into the dash.



The Fusion stereo head and USB and 12-volt plugs are in easy reach to the left of the steering wheel.

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There's storage for larger items like a duffel bag or portable cooler in the base of the helm console.

The Stern. Aft, the Aurora LE RF VP's rear-facing lounges are designed chaise-style with angled backrests and they measure 44" (111.76 cm) long. The bottom cushions are hinged and open to access storage to port and the battery and switch to starboard. The headrests also lift up, revealing more storage capacity. The centrally-positioned stern gate opens inboard and the 35" (88.90 cm) swim platforms extend past the motor on each side. A four-step re-boarding ladder with extra-heavy-duty rails is to starboard, while in the center is an equally rugged stainless-steel ski tow bar. The engine mounts on a sealed pod that has an integral bilge pump.

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There's 39" (99.06 cm) of space between the rear seats, which leaves room to pass, even with the optional table in place.

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We don't often see a battery switch on an "entry-level" boat. The Aurora LE RF VP had one under the aft starboard bottom cushion.

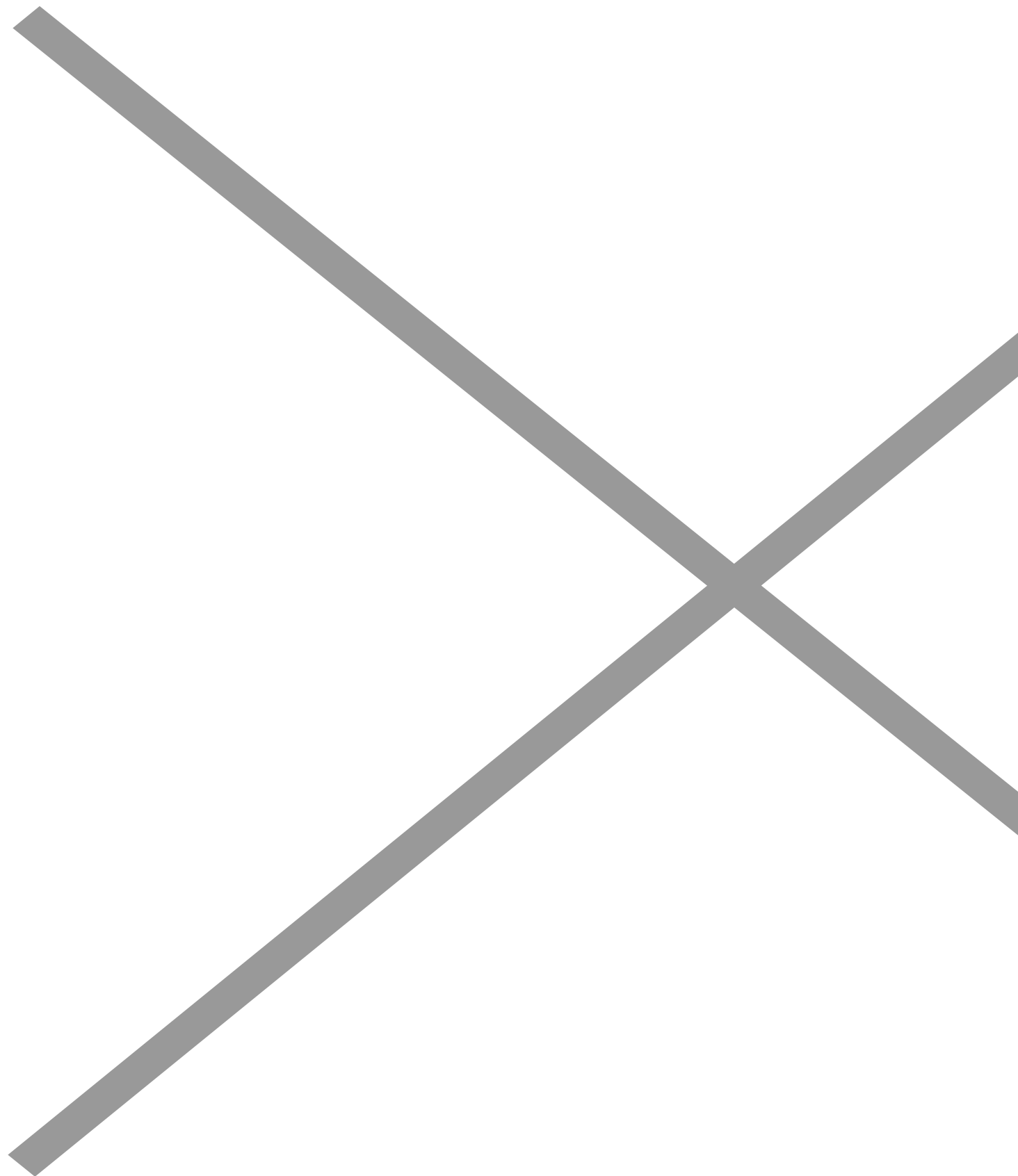
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Manitou added storage capacity in the backrest for each of the rear-facing lounges.

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Manitou says that its ski tow is suitable for tubing because it's through-bolted to the frame for the deck. Notice the heavy-duty rails for the boarding ladder to starboard.

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The outboard mounts to a sealed pod welded to the transom. The inspection provides access to the bilge pump inside.

Price

The manufacturer's suggested retail price is \$43,981 as tested with the following items:

- Limited package with Silver Luna flooring, gray mid-back helm and port captain's chairs, SL 24 logos, table, LED courtesy, navigation and docking lights, steering wheel upgrade and silver two-tone graphics
- Pre-rig for Mercury outboard
- Upgrade to Mercury 115 Pro XS EXLPT

Observations

Manitou made a concentrated effort to offer the Aurora LE RF VP as an affordable way for an owner to get the performance benefits of a triple-pontoon. She comes with one floorplan and three color combinations with a couple of upgrade packages. The boat has the features that have proven to be most popular on pontoon boats such as the rear-facing lounges and three boarding gates and the upholstery has an upscale feel and look.