

It's **sunlight,**
cameras
and a whole lot of
strange
ACTION at a
Trophy
photo shoot

getting the **shot**

STORY BY JENNIFER CHESAK | PHOTOS BY ROBERT GLOVER AND PAUL GRIFFIN





"LET ME GET THIS STRAIGHT,"

says Florida Keys fishing guide Sam Milazzo, casting shrimp at sunrise from a brand new Trophy 2401 Bay Boat. "You want me to catch a fish?" Seems like a reasonable request of a skilled fisherman.

"You want me to catch a fish," he repeats, surveying the scene, "with all these other boats circling around, him snorkeling right below and all of you talking?" Well, yeah. Either him or Barry Hoffman, another guide fishing the 2401—whoever hooks up would be fine. The fact of the matter is the cameras are ready and rolling. And if that cloud would just shift a little? It's blocking the nice light that was just making the hull pop.

OK, so maybe we—a group made up of Trophy marketing and creative folk—are asking a bit much. The whole lot of us, with our three-ring binders, shot lists and notebooks, have a good laugh as we reassess the situation. Sam's right, it's impossible to catch any skittish shallow-water species with the kind of commotion we are creating as we orchestrate a photo shoot of Trophy's three new Bay Boat models.

Sam and Barry maneuver on the casting platforms of the 2401 Bay Boat while a photo boat shuttles photographer Robert Glover around them. Videographer Mark Rackley is in the water, donning flippers and snorkel mask, while the new 2101 Bay Boat idles nearby with his assistants onboard. And the new 1901 Bay Boat, holding additional gear, trolls around in the distance. It's abundantly clear that if the fishing guides are going to catch anything, it will be Mark.

While a nice redfish on the end of a line would be ideal, we've got, well, bigger fish to fry. Over the next three days, we need to photograph each of the new Bay Boats in a variety of locations and in the right light, then capture detail shots of every feature from the anchor lockers to the livewells to battery boxes on each boat. Time to get moving. The sun's a giant grapefruit peeking over the horizon, but we're all-too aware that it's on a fast track to high noon, and it isn't stalling for us.

We locate a cut in a long swath of mangroves we had previously scouted that serves as the perfect spot to photograph the Bay Boats' remarkable shallow-water starts and smooth throttle response. Barry tells us that rumrunners had dug a ditch through a flat to sneak small boats through in order to escape the border patrol. We feel a bit like smugglers ourselves, with lookouts stationed on a Bay Boat at each end of the cut to prevent other vessels from entering while the third Bay Boat charges through for its glory shots.

In a MacGyver-esque move, Robert and his assistant, Paul Griffin, fasten a tripod to the bow of the 1901 so they can get a steady head-on running shot. "It's time for me to go on the jungle cruise," laughs Robert. He clicks frame after frame as fisherman Jerry Lee guns the 115-hp Mercury OptiMax, and the Bay Boat shoots through the channel. Suddenly, something moves in the tangle of mangrove roots. For a second we're tempted to cast a few lines and try to entice whatever it is with live shrimp. But our eyes adjust, and our amphibious friend, Mark, surfaces after having secured some underwater shots of the boat zipping by.

We've all been out on the boats since before dawn, and the creatures in the livewell are starting to look appetizing. The granola bars I've brought along aren't cutting it for Robert. "This looks healthy," he laughs, examining the ingredients list. "Am I gonna get sick from it? It doesn't have hot wing sauce on it."



Instead of swimming away from the predator, Mark swims over for a closer look.

The direct overhead light casts shadows and lines on the boats, so midday finds us back at the docks. This is the perfect time to set up a scrim—fabric used to stretch over the boat to manipulate the light and aid in getting detail shots. We stock the fishboxes with snapper and other fish we've bought, since the only thing we boated was a small bonnethead shark Barry hooked into and released. In all fairness, it should be noted that Sam also caught a small lizardfish—a catch that both guides agree wouldn't even be worthy of doing time in one of these Bay Boats' aerated livewells. "It might be useful if you're starving on 'Survivor,'" Barry jokes.

We set to work placing some props on the 2401 Bay Boat—rods in the rocket launchers, tackle and life vests in the bow storage lockers. Keeping everything clean is key. That means splashing down the 225-hp Mercury Verado FourStroke with a bottle of water and shining it like a senator's shoe. And so it goes as we tick through the shot list. Even with constant directions and questions being pelted at him like, "Did you shoot the helm?" Robert maintains his sense of humor. "I shot the helm out of it," he replies.

His statement rings true. One of the biggest misconceptions people have about a photo shoot, whether it's photographing boat models or supermodels,

is how long it takes to get it just right. Our evening plan on the last day is a sunset group shot of all three Bay Boats in a backcountry setting. We find our spot, and settle on a low-angle shot from beneath a high dock. Two marketing folks turned boat wranglers and our trusty guide Sam maneuver the three Bay Boats into position and then stick the engines.

We wedge the photo boat far under the dock, trying to find the correct angle for Robert, but no dice. He's gotta get wet. He climbs over the bow and finds himself nearly thigh-deep in muck. Mark is over the edge, too, flippers on, moving stealthily in the water. The rest of us climb on top of the dock to offer creative direction. In the clear water, we spot what appears to be a hammerhead lurking near the Bay Boats. Instead of swimming away from the predator, Mark, who has made a living out of filming such creatures for the Discovery Channel and shows like "Wildboyz" and "Jackass" (both the TV series and the movies), swims

over to the shark for a closer look. And Sam, always a fisherman, takes to trying to hook it.

With the Bay Boats in position it's time for the captains to get out of the shot. With no place to go, and not about to get in the water with Jaws, they have no choice but to duck down as flat as they can.

Ninety minutes later, having gotten what he needs, Robert finally puts his camera down. For the first time that evening, he takes in the sunset without his lens. "Will you look at that sky?" he says. I'm still scribbling furiously in my notebook. "Just look at that sky," he demands. I look up at vibrant strips of pink and violet layered over the calm cobalt water.

It's amazing, yes. But my awe is directed at Robert and Mark. In a few days I'll see the pictures of the stuff they've just shot come across my desk. The images will reveal three Bay Boats floating on glassy shallow waters at sunset, and no one will guess that a man was huddled on the floor of the 1901 conducting a conference call from his BlackBerry and that another was practically petting a shark beneath the water's surface. It will just be a scene as serene as this moment at dusk, with us all smiles, knowing we've met our goal. Now that's sublime.