

# Bennington 2275GS

By Craig Ritchie

Bennington's 2275 GS is a popular model among Canadian boaters who appreciate luxurious appointments in a mid-sized, two-log pontoon. It appeals to a wide variety of boaters who value its combination of performance and passenger capacity, so we were delighted to receive an opportunity to take a 2012 model for a test drive. While the 24-footer receives some minor updates for 2012, our sea trail also provided an opportunity to see how it performs with Mercury Marine's all-new 150-horsepower four-stroke – an exciting new engine that, on paper at least, seems to be tailor-made for this particular pontoon.

Like all models in Bennington's popular G series, the 2275 GS comes with a long list of standard features and an even longer option list, allowing the buyer to truly customize this pontoon and make it uniquely personalized. Approaching the boat from the dock, it's clear this boat is made to handle a family and friends. A pair of plushly upholstered L-shaped lounges forward provide loads of space to stretch out in comfort, with additional seating at a port-side L-shaped lounge amidships and a pair of pedestal-mount bucket seats toward the stern. Of course, there's also the G Series reclining Captain's chair, which just might be the best seat in the house. A teak, kidney-shaped table with

integral beverage holders mounts between the helm and that amidships lounge, while the twin pedestal seats to the rear sit within easy reach of the stern fishing station, with its livewell, cup holders and rod racks.

The full-length anodized skirting offers three locking entry gates – a 24-inch main gate at the bow with an attractive, raised nameplate, with additional entry gates located amidships to port, and to starboard at the stern. Our review boat – in brilliant crimson red with Java Blade graphics – came equipped with Bennington's new streamlined rail system, stainless corner castings, and Java docking lights.

With its stereo speakers, ample space to stretch out and luxurious lounge seating, the bow is the place to be for those interested in stretching out and enjoying the summer breeze. The upholstery throughout is buttery soft and plush to the touch. Add the similar effect of Bennington's high performance carpet underfoot and it's easy to nod off and find yourself having an unexpected, mid-day siesta.

The seat bases provide a substantial amount of dry storage space, and include a thoughtful toe kick allowance, canting inward at the base rather than flowing in a straight vertical path to the deck. This little indent is hardly noticeable onboard, but makes it almost impossible to

stub a toe. It's a thoughtful detail, and reflects the amount of time Bennington's designers actually spend out on the water, looking for ways to improve their product.

The fully-equipped helm is dominated by its custom teak tilt wheel with etched centre cap. Our review boat included the Sterling gauge package, with a combination speedometer and digital tach, a fuel gauge, a trim gauge, a series of rocker switches with dash-mount breakers, and a Sony GT series CD/MP3 player, driving four kicker speakers. The helm console is capped by a fluted, smoked acrylic windshield that works surprisingly well, in spite of its compact profile. Beneath, a foot rest with snap-in carpet provides a comfy spot to rest those toes. The forward side of the helm console features a neatly curved door that opens to reveal a cavernous storage locker. The previously mentioned reclining Captain's chair sits on a small elevated platform with a snap-in carpet, providing an improved line of sight even when the bow area is in use.

A comfy L-shaped lounge opposite the helm has a rear-facing seat back, making it the perfect place to spot a water skier or wakeboarder. An overhead Bimini top nicely shades this area, providing a place to escape the sun for a while. The forward-facing section of this



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**2)** Our review boat was equipped with Mercury Marine's brand-new 150-horsepower four-stroke outboard. The naturally-aspirated, four-cylinder 150 features a beefy 3.0 litre displacement, yet weighs in at just 455 pounds.

seat is slightly behind the helm, improving the driver's visibility yet still close enough as to not preclude normal conversation while underway. A privacy closure is located directly behind the seatback, providing a place to change into dry clothes after a swim.

The rear fishing station is well designed, with twin pedestal seats each within easy reach of the centrally-mounted console with its livewell, beverage holders, rod holders, vertical rod storage racks and integral measuring station (to 24 inches) to see if your catch is a new personal best. A ski mast pokes up right behind the console, and just ahead of the outboard. To starboard, step out the entry gate and a four-step curved boarding ladder makes it a cinch to pay the fish a personal visit. Because both fish and human swimmers will see this area thoroughly splashed, Bennington sensibly went with a durable vinyl floor covering here. The vinyl provides a secure, non-slip surface that dries quickly and is easily cleaned.

Our review boat came with standard 25-inch tubes, which allow a capacity of 12 passengers, while a 32-inch elliptical tube option increases capacity to 13. In either case, the pontoons are built from beefy .80 gauge aluminum. With its centre-mount 117 litre fuel tank, the 2275 GS will run a long way before needing a stop at the gas dock.

Bolted securely to the transom of our review boat was Mercury Marine's brand-new 150-horsepower four-stroke outboard. More accurately, it was a pre-production version of this exciting new engine, which was formally introduced to the boating industry at a trade show a few weeks later. The naturally-aspirated, four-cylinder 150 features a beefy

3.0 litre displacement, yet weighs in at just 455 pounds. Mercury says it's the lightest four-stroke 150 in the world, and only 24 pounds heavier than the company's popular 150 OptiMax two-stroke. Built with the pontoon market in mind, it offers what Mercury describes as the least transom well intrusion among current 150-horsepower four-strokes and a huge 4.9 inch gearcase housing that meets the requirements for 300-horsepower, even though it needs to manage only 150. A 60-amp alternator keeps all the electronics onboard chugging, while offering superior durability and fuel economy.

Sounds great on paper, but how does it drive?

Our sea trial took place on southern Michigan's Diamond Lake, a medium-sized waterway that was almost glass calm on a hot, humid August afternoon. Turning the key, movement among the dashboard instruments was the only indication that the new Mercury had sprung to life. Even standing at the stern, the engine idles so quietly it is virtually imperceptible. Nice.

After a short run at idle speed to acquaint myself with the controls, I pushed the throttle forward and the boat surged ahead smoothly, gliding gracefully over the water. Time to plane was a touch under three seconds with four of us aboard, and a half-tank of fuel. At wide open throttle and a touch of positive trim, the speedometer needle edged above the 40 mph mark, which is exceptional for a 24-foot pontoon pushed by a brand new, prototype 150. Dropping the throttle to about the halfway point, the boat cruised nicely at an indicated 20 mph and approximately 2,800 rpm. Steering was crisp, allowing us to easily cut tight S-patterns in the flat lake surface, the boat performing more like a deck boat than a pontoon.

By offering the unique combination of passenger capacity and a spirited ride, the Bennington 2275 GS is a fun boat to drive. A 150 represents maximum power for this model (or up to 250-horsepower with the optional ESP Performance Package) so Mercury's new 150 four-stroke suits it well.

Bennington owns a significant share of the highly competitive pontoon market, which says a lot about the quality of the product and the company's understanding of what customers really want. Little wonder the 2275 GS remains such a popular model among Canadian boaters. 🇨🇦

## BENNINGTON 2275 GS

LOA:	24' 1"
Beam:	8' 6"
Tubes:	2 x 25"
Passenger Capacity:	12
Fuel Capacity:	117L / 31 US gal
Weight:	2,244 lbs.
Power (max):	150 hp
Power (as reviewed):	Mercury 150 FourStroke
Price (base):	\$ 26,862
Price (as reviewed):	\$ 32,152

*Quoted setup may not be exactly as depicted in photos. Prices are subject to currency fluctuations and do not include freight, DPI or additional optional equipment.*

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