Best Buys in Marine Power

TRAILER BOATS

AMERICA'S ONLY TRAILER BOATING MAGAZINE

FREE TOW GUIDE 48-Page Digest

7 Ways To Boost Your Towing Confidence

EXCLUSIVE! Chaparral's Hot New 196 Bowrider

We Reveal... Tow Vehicle of the Year

Fix Hull Scratches Like a Pro and Save

FEBRUARY 2000

www.trailerboats.com

U.S. $3.95 / CANADA $4.95
In the popular 19-foot bowrider category, most models look alike, but Chaparral’s 196 SSi is one that distinguishes itself.

If there is a more common boat than a 19-foot bowrider, I don’t know what it is. Many companies build such a model, and for good reason: It is one of the most popular family boats on the water today.

Since the competition in this size range is stiff, manufacturers go out of their way to differentiate their boats from others. Chaparral is one such company and the construction methods, features and attention to details applied to the 19-foot 196 SSi can serve as a primer on how to separate a product from run of the mill.

One of the most noticeable features is the molded innerliner. This gelcoated fiberglass structure features a non-skid diamondplate pattern. Its major advantage is easy cleanup when it is time to put the boat away. Snap-in carpeting can be installed for those who want a plusher look.

The molded innerliner forms a structural portion of the hull for greater strength and rigidity. The 196 gains additional strength from a precision-built fiberglass stringer system. This close-tolerance, grid-type system distributes stresses over a wider portion of the hull and reduces the possibility of hull distortion.

FULL-FEATURED 19-FOOTER

Let’s take a look at the features of the 196 SSi from stem to stern. In the forepeak is a roomy anchor locker under the hinged hatch cover. The playpen-style seating in the bow is divided into three sections. An insulated ice chest is nestled under the forward seat section, and the two side seat cushions provide access to storage compartments below.

A heavily framed windshield is divided into three sections that provide a racier look than windshields pieced together with five or more sections.

The driver’s console on the starboard side features a full complement of Teleflex stainless-bezeled gauges set in a dark woodgrained dash. A Humminbird digital depth-sounder with a matching bezel rounds out the instrumentation package. The lower dash contains lighted switches with individual circuit breakers. The wiring is as neat as we have seen on a boat of this size, with color-coded wiring, properly wrapped, routed and supported. A wrapped wiring harness runs from the helm to the engine.

A tilt steering wheel is padded for a soft, comfortable grip and a direct read-

The nicely padded back-to-back seats on the Chaparral 196 SSi recline to create loungers. They also fold down completely for sleeping. With Chaparral’s extended V-plane bottom, this bowrider offers an exceptionally smooth ride. Equipped with a 240 hp MerCruiser 5.0L EFI, the 196 achieved a top speed of 54.5 mph in our test.
Chaparral 196 SSi

A three-piece windshield and racy graphics give the 196 SSi sleek lines. The one-piece fiberglass innerliner makes cleanup easy. The jumpseat cushions can be raised to create a roomy sunlounge across the stern.

boat was fitted with a Kidde fire extinguishing system.

The integrated swimstep has a storage compartment on the port side and a foldaway ladder that stores in a compartment on the starboard side. The compartment lids use a reverse transfer mold technique that provides a slick gelcoat finish on the inside of each lid.

The innerliner features a wood-free floor, and the transom is built of a high-tech composite material for extended life. Construction of the hull is relatively straightforward. A premium polyester gelcoat is followed by a skin coat of mat to prevent cloth weave print through, and AME 4000 resin is used as a barrier coat to prevent blisters. The hull is then built up of alternate layers of 36-ounce woven roving and 2-ounce fiberglass mat until the desired lay-up schedule is achieved. Overlapping layers and extra reinforcing are used at the keel and chines for additional strength.

Balsa core is used in the deck mold to provide additional stiffness without adding excessive weight. The hull-to-deck joint is wood backed, and the heavy-duty vinyl rubrail provides outstanding gunwale protection. Through-hull fittings are chrome-plated brass, and less likely to break than the more commonly used plastic fittings. Throughbolted stainless steel hardware secures the deck fittings, including the stainless rails and cleats.

Upholstery is a heavy gauge, 40-ounce expanded vinyl over high-density, mildew resistant foam. Everything is triple stitched. Stitching is neat and tidy with straight and uniform seams and no loose threads. Stainless staples are used, and the seat backs are on a composite base. The carpet is 28-ounce and treated with ultraviolet, mildew and stain inhibitors.

SNAPPY PERFORMANCE

Our tests were conducted on a rainy day in Georgia that dictated the use of canvas. The canvas top was easy to set up and the stern curtain fit properly and kept us dry. Canvas options include a mooring cover, cockpit and bow covers, convertible top with backdrop and a Bimini top.

The test boat was fitted with a 5.0L MerCruiser with throttle body EFI and an Alpha 1 drive. This 305-cubic-inch engine pumps out 240 hp between 4400 and 4800 rpm.

Top speed was an impressive 54.5 miles per hour with a 19-inch-pitch aluminum prop. Most hulls with molded in
swimsteps have a shorter planing surface. Chaparral calls its hull design an “extended V-plane bottom.” This provides a full-length running surface to the end of the swimstep that improves riding qualities, and enhances planing time and tracking. The full-length bottom design also allows the engine to be set farther aft which increases cockpit space.

The Chaparral 196 SSI has a 20-degree

- A voluminous ski locker literally swallows wakeboards, kneeboards, skis and other gear.

- Plush, heavy-duty snap-in carpeting is available as an option on the Chaparral 196 SSI.

- The padded bow seating is divided into three sections, with storage compartments below the side cushions and an ice chest under the forward seats.
Chaparral 196 SSI

deadrise (at the transom) V-bottom design. There is nothing in the 20-degree deadrise that guarantees a good ride. Some V-bottom designs are good and some are not. The difference is in the details such as bow shape, strake size and length, chines and keel.

Chaparral has done its homework and the 196 SSI offers excellent riding qualities and impeccable handling in turns and hard maneuvers. The boat banks smartly into turns and comes around without a skip or bobble. Acceleration averaged 8.8 seconds from 0-to-30 mph—not the strongest we have measured, but more than adequate for most heavy-duty skiing and watersport chores.

Chaparral’s 196 SSI proved to be a well-constructed boat with excellent ride and handling characteristics. Quality materials and attention to detail make the Chaparral a standout in this size range, where competition abounds. There are less expensive 19-foot bowriders on the market, but few can match the overall value offered by this all-around performer.

---

**CHAPARRAL 196 SSI**

| Base Price (w/o trailer): | $22,142 |
| Price as Tested (w/o trailer): | $25,913 |
| Hull: | Fiberglass |
| Material: | 19° |
| Length: | 19° |
| Beam: | 8° |
| Deadrise at Transom: | 20 degrees |
| Draft (drive down): | 34° |
| Weight (with base engine): | 3,000 lbs. |
| Fuel Capacity: | 45 gals. |
| Standard Power: | 150 hp MerCruiser 4.3L Alpha 1 |
| Max. Horsepower: | 260 hp |

**Notable Standard Equipment:**
- Boarding ladder, four-bolt deck cleats, battery switch, three insulated ice chests, three-piece wrap-around windshield, convertible top
- JVC stereo, Sport Package (sun deck lid, rear bench seat, twin bucket seats and fire extinguishing system)
- Convenience Package (Ritchie compass, Hummingbird digital depth-sounder, tilt-wood-grain steering wheel), special classic graphics

**Engine as Tested:**
- Make: 5.0L EFI MerCruiser
- Propshaft Horsepower: 240 hp
- No. of Cylinders: V-8
- Displacement: 5 liters/305 cubic inches
- Weight: 938 lbs.
- Full Throttle RPM Range: 4,400-4,800
- Propeller: Mercury 14"x19" aluminum 3-blade
- Gear Ratio: 1.47:1

**Chaparral Boats**
- Dept. TBM
- P.O. Box Drawer 928
- Industrial Park Blvd.
- Nashville, GA 31639
- 912/886-7461
- www.chaparralboats.com

**TEST RESULTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Engine Speed (rpm)</th>
<th>0-30 mph:</th>
<th>30-60 mph:</th>
<th>60-90 mph:</th>
<th>90-120 mph:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1000</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1500</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2500</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3000</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3500**</td>
<td>32.9</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4000</td>
<td>37.9</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4500</td>
<td>46.8</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4900 (WOT)</td>
<td>54.5</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Range based on 90% fuel capacity

**Optimum cruising speed**

**Acceleration**
- 0-30 mph: 8.8 sec.

**dBa Measurements**
- Idle at Helm (750 rpm): 67 dB
- Idle at Transom (750 rpm): 70 dB
- Cruise at Helm (3500 rpm): 85 dB
- WOT at Helm (4900 rpm): 94 dB