



2000 AWARDS for PRODUCT EXCELLENCE

CHAPARRAL 230 SSi

PRODUCTION RUNABOUT OF THE YEAR

NO DOUBT ABOUT IT—THE PRODUCTION RUN-about category is the most competitive division of our Awards for Product Excellence Program. Year to year, it attracts the most entries. Moreover, it is arguably the most competitive segment of the entire powerboat market.

Chaparral knows what it takes to win, both at our Performance Trials and in the marketplace. That's why the sporty 22'10"-long, 8'6"-wide 230 SSi is our choice for Production Runabout of the Year.

These days, so many production runabouts can top 50 mph that it's almost expected. For the 230 SSi we tested, the manufacturer opted for small-block power; a MerCruiser 350 Magnum MPI with a twin-propeller Bravo Three drive to be precise. The 300-hp V-8 turned out to be a great choice for the boat, as it ran 54.5 mph at 4900 rpm. Time to plane was 5.2 seconds. Given the small-block motor, mid-range acceleration was strong as the boat ran from 20 to 40 mph in 6.8 seconds.

But the highlight of the 230 SSi's performance was its handling. Light and nimble yet solid and true, the bow rider stayed hooked up in abrupt slalom turns at speeds up to 40 mph, and carved sweet circle turns at cruising and full speeds. The boat tracked precisely—whether accelerating, decelerating or merely idling along, it didn't wander from course.

For a production-built boat, the workmanship of the 230 SSi was strong, starting with its two-tone gelcoat with vinyl tape accents. Behind the 25 mils of gelcoat were AME 4000 resin, alternating layers of fiberglass chop and 24-ounce woven roving, spray core and balsa coring. The boat's integrated stringer system was bonded to the hull.

Under the manual engine hatch, we found that, typical for the breed, the engine was lag-bolted to the stringer blocks. Less than typical and pleasantly surprising was the wiring, protected in conduit, logically routed and well supported.

Where the 230 SSi impressed us most, however, was in its bountiful interior amenities, starting with swiveling bucket seats for the driver and co-pilot, an L-shaped cockpit lounge, an entertainment center and a transom walk-through behind the driver's bucket, and a plush

open-bow seating area.

Like 50-mph capability, a port-side head locker in the co-pilot's console is almost *de rigueur* for 23' bow riders these days. The locker in the 230 SSi was actually large enough to accommodate adults. In the driver's console to starboard, there was a generous stowage locker that housed a table and pedestal meant to be set up in front of the L-shaped lounge aft.

Still another thoughtful touch was the bi-fold door that folded into a molded recess on the port side of the walk-through. When extended and latched in place, the door closed off the walk-through and eliminated the wind-tunnel effect.

Chaparral's designers engineered all these goodies and more into a sharp-running, reasonably priced 23-footer that never felt or looked cheap, without making the boat feel cramped. Everything was thought-out, all space was well used. That makes the 230 SSi a real winner in our ultra-competitive book. 🏆

Centerline	22'10"
Beam	8'6"
Weight as tested	4,185 pounds
PRICE AS TESTED	\$39,334
ENGINE	MerCruiser 350 Magnum MPI
Cubic -inch displacement/horsepower	350/300
PROPELLERS	Bravo Three 15 1/4" x 28" and 13 3/4" x 28"
ACCELERATION Zero to 15 seconds	4.8mph
TOP SPEED AT RPM Stalker Radar	54.5 mph at 4900
MANUFACTURER: Chaparral Boats, P.O. Drawer 928, Nashville, GA 31639, (912) 686-7481, www.chaparralboats.com.	



FOR THE PERFORMANCE REPORT ON THE CHAPARRAL 230 SSi, SEE "SMART THINKING," JANUARY 2000, PAGE 60.

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