

CHAPARRAL 204 SSi

BILL DOSTER



Test Drive

Test Engine: MerCruiser 5.0 L MPI (Alpha)

Test Prop: 3-blade, aluminum

Test Load: People (370 lb.); Fuel (51 gal.)

Top Speed: 52.7 MPH @ 5,100 RPM

Time to Plane: 3.3 sec.

Time to 30 MPH: 8.3 sec.

Min. Plane Speed: 18.5 MPH @ 2,400 RPM

RPM	MPH	SOUND LEVEL
Idle	3.7	62 db
1,000	5.7	63 db
1,500	7.1	68 db
2,000	8.6	73 db
2,500	21.3	78 db
3,000	29.4	80 db
3,500	34.5	83 db
4,000	40.8	89 db
4,500	45.0	91 db
5,000	51.8	94 db
5,100	52.7	94 db

We always look forward to our tests with Chaparral boats because we know what to expect, no matter the model. The all-new 204 SSi met our expectations: a fantastic-handling bowrider with great visibility.

Chaparral could easily make the 204 faster by changing the hull design. But that isn't a goal here. Whereas a boat built specifically for speed will have a smaller running surface, Chaparral's extended V plane runs all the way to the transom. Much of the outdrive is pulled forward into a bell-shaped recess. It helps center the boat's balance at low planing speeds and in turns. No 21-foot runabout handles any easier.

Even so, our test boat reached an

- Fires onto plane
- Deep and safe
- Great value bowrider

impressive 52.7 mph. For buyers looking to save some money, we'd suggest testing a 4.3-liter MPI engine, which would level the ride even more and tone down the sound. It would drop some clicks on the speedo, but the price would fall into the \$25,000 range.

A good deal is predicated on how long a boat will last. The deck on the 204 SSi is scuppered, so topside water drains to the bilge, while most storage areas are plumbed overboard. All foam in the seats is wrapped so it doesn't absorb water. These features

should prevent mildew and interior gelcoat blisters.

To keep the price down, Chaparral uses a five-piece windshield. The vertical frame supports do not hit sightlines and it's as stylish as a three- or one-piece unit. The helm has wood-grain accents and a full spread of gauges, including an hour meter. The seat itself has a flip-up bolster and is topped with high-quality 38-ounce vinyl.

Aft of the cockpit, an extended swim platform nicely hides the prop, and the molded platform has two wet-storage areas. We especially like the transom walk-through, which has a filler pad so no seating is lost. And, when anchored, the Euro-style sun pad provides a comfortable spot for guests to relax. Crafty designs like that actually make the Chaparral 204 SSi surpass our expectations. — *Robert Stephens*

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Stats

Length Overall: 21' 3.5"

Beam: 8' 4.5"

Dry Weight: 3,400 lb.

Seating/Weight Capacity: 10/1,375 lb.

Fuel Capacity: 51 gal.

Max HP: 320

MSRP (test boat): \$36,124

Notable Features

- Flip-up bolster and 38-ounce vinyl make for a high-end helm seat.
- Boarding ladder in the bow is a nice feature for a bowrider.
- Transom remotes for stereo and outdrive trim.
- Sound-dampening foam under engine hatch fits neatly into a recessed area.
- Fire Boy system in engine compartment is optional.
- Divided storage compartment for tools is under the sun pad.



The running performance and interior comforts of the 204 SSi are characteristics of higher-priced boats.

Go to boatinglifemag.com/boats/chaparral204ssi for Photo Gallery • Boat Comparison

Video on
the Web





MERCURY
MerCruiser

SSi

A Reflection Of Perfection

Talk about a picture perfect line of boats. Stretching from 18- to 28-feet, with a mix of bowriders and cuddy cabins, Chaparral's SSi Series is unlike any fleet of family sportboats you've ever seen. Stylish lines. Appointments galore. Unmatched quality. Featuring our Extended V-Plane running surface and a wide range of MerCruiser power options, our SSi Series reflects everything we've learned in almost 40 years of boat building. Chaparral's award-winning heritage always comes shining through. We are also in an elite group of boat builders that has attained internationally recognized ISO 9001:2000 status. We've also earned your approval with an NMMA Customer Satisfaction trophy. Finally, Chaparral has won 25 awards for product excellence and eight Boat of the Year trophies. Don't be surprised if our new 256 SSi is lucky number nine. Afterall, it's hard to beat perfection.



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