

The model Chaparral brought to Sarasota, Fla., came equipped with Volvo Penta's 8.1-liter Gi mill that pumped 375 horses through a DuoProp drive. The engine and drive package, which was the right combination for the boat's extended V-plane hull, was good for a top speed of 57.3 mph at 4,600 rpm.

Acceleration was spunky for the breed, with the boat coming on plane in 3.7 seconds on its way to 52 mph in 15 seconds. Midrange acceleration wasn't as strong. The boat needed 5.6 seconds to go from 20 to 40 mph and 30 to 50 mph took 7.9 seconds. With the boat at a cruising speed of 45 mph, the big-block motor was turning about 3,800 rpm.

If the family plans to take advantage of the arch and do some wakeboarding, the motor should provide more than enough pop to get the boarder out of the water.

Our testers especially liked how the boat handled during slalom turns and turns at speed. The boat tracked well and never hopped, even on runs in the storm-churned waters of Sarasota Bay. It was, however, a little sensitive to wind but nothing unsettling. And one of our test drivers would have liked to see the steering a little tighter on the boat.

"We did some circle turns that were hard on the prop and it didn't want to break loose or slide around," said test driver John Tomlinson. "The boat handled all that really well."



From left: The helm was fairly simple and included a four-in-one gauge, and rocker switches lined up on the right. In the cockpit, the snap-in carpet was plush and durable, a \$580 option most buyers will want. Out on the swim platform the 225 SSi included a cooler, wash-down, stereo remote and a fold-down swim ladder.

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WORKMANSHIP

Over the years our test teams have consistently praised the quality of workmanship that Chaparral boats have displayed. This year was no different, even though the 255 SSi we inspected was one of the first boats off the production line.

Hullsides were nice and straight, and the stylish black gelcoat with vinyl graphics was well executed. The builder installed a stainless rubrail with a plastic extrusion to protect the work. Eight pull-up cleats were appropriately placed around the 25-footer.

A smart design feature, the swim platform covered the top of the drive. If you can't get to the helm to trim up the drive, the builder installed a remote on the platform.

A telescoping ladder was on the starboard side of the platform (another ladder was on the bow) and a stowage well included a shower for cleaning up. For those hanging out on the platform, a stereo remote was within easy reach.

Access to the cockpit was easy thanks to a center walk-through that was covered with nonskid. To get to the engine, a button at the dash raised the entire hatch, including the walk-through, rear seat base and cushions.

The motor was mounted with lag bolts in the stringer blocks with a standard transom mount. Wiring was loosely supported in typical production fashion and the bilge was finished with a white gelcoat.

Equipment in the engine compartment included a fire extinguishing system and an isolator for charging spare batteries. A water tank for the galley also was located there.

A handy amenity was the self-draining cockpit system, which dumped the water overboard.

INTERIOR

Our first thought studying the cockpit of the Chaparral was that it felt larger than a 26-foot, 5-inch boat. The builder installed a spacious U-shape rear bench and still found room to get in a small galley.

Located on the starboard side, the galley had a freshwater sink with a Corian countertop and stowage compartment beneath with a place for trash. The galley will come in handy when the dinette table is in place. A cooler was built in under a bench cushion on the port side.

Seats for the driver and observer were pedestal mounted. The throttle/shifter was located on the starboard gunwale, and placed just right for easy operation. Gauges were custom made from Faria. The 255 SSi also came with a depthfinder and a Ritchie compass.

Over to port there was a glove box and a grab handle for the passenger. Access to the cabin was through a sliding center door. The outer section of the door had steps built into it and the Taylor Made windshield opened in the center to provide access to the deck.

Chaparral loaded the cabin with features, including V-shape seating that came with a filler cushion that could sleep two. The highlight was the enclosed head with a pump-out porcelain toilet and a sink for washing up. Some clothes and shoes could be tucked away in the cedar-lined closet.

The cabin had a vinyl-paneled headliner that carried over onto the sides. Can lights were included and additional light came from a deck hatch and a pair of port holes.

"For this size of boat, this is one of the nicest cabins I've seen," said one of our testers.

OVERALL

Abundant features, ample performance and solid workmanship are several reasons why the 255 SSi could be a big seller for Chaparral in coming years.

See test results on next page.

TEST RESULTS



TEST CONDITIONS

Temperature	91 degrees
Humidity	56 percent
Wind speed	2 mph
Sea conditions	1' chop
Elevation	Sea Level

HULL INFORMATION

Deadrise at transom	22.5 degrees
Centerline	26'5"
Beam	8'6"
Hull weight	5,540 pounds

PRICING INFORMATION

Base retail	\$63,465
Price as tested	\$72,338

ENGINE & PROPELLER

Engine	Volvo Penta 8.1 Gi
Cylinder type	V-8
Cubic-inch displacement/horsepower	496/375
Lower-unit gear ratio	1.78:1
Propeller	DuoProp F6

OPTIONS ON TEST BOAT

Radar arch (\$4,024), pump-out porcelain head (\$813), wide-band gelcoat (\$679), cockpit carpet (\$581), convenience package (\$580), premium package (\$579), cockpit cover (\$557), transom shower (\$293), fire extinguishing system (\$251), battery dual crossover (\$187), wide-band sport graphic (\$187), anchor (\$69), sunbrella floor runners (\$69) and deck hatch cover (\$54).

ACCELERATION

3 seconds	21 mph
5 seconds	30 mph
10 seconds	45 mph
15 seconds	52 mph

MIDRANGE ACCELERATION

20-40 mph	5.6 seconds
30-50 mph	7.9 seconds

RPM VS. MPH

1000	6 mph
1500	8 mph
2000	14 mph
2500	26 mph
3000	34 mph
3500	40 mph
4000	47 mph
4500	55 mph

TOP SPEED AT RPM

Radar	57.3 mph at 4600
GPS	56.2 mph

PLANING

Time to plane	3.7 seconds
Minimum planing speed	19 mph

FUEL ECONOMY

At 25 mph	NA
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FUEL CAPACITY

80 gallons

TEST CONDUCTED AT

Sarasota, Fla.

MANUFACTURER

Chaparral Boats, Dept. PB, P.O. Drawer 928, 300 Industrial Park Blvd., Nashville, GA 31639, 229-686-7481, www.chaparralboats.com.