

SIZE MATTERS

THE BRAND-NEW CHAPARRAL 246
SSi AIMS TO BE THE RIGHT FIT



**PERFORMANCE
TESTED**

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» CHAPARRAL 246 SSi



SPECIFICATIONS

Length (w/swim platform)	24 ft., 11 in.
Beam	8 ft., 6 in.
Capacity	12 people
Dry weight	4,956 lbs.
Fuel capacity	72 gals.
Maximum power	425 hp
Deadrise (@ transom)	22°

▶ The 246 SSi is an impressive boat without the addition of a single option, but there are a number of customizations to consider. If you just want to up the look and feel in terms of luxury, you can opt for the Convenience and Premium packages.

The Convenience Package includes a compass, a digital depth indicator and a mahogany steering wheel with a cover. The Premium Package includes a transom stereo remote, a transom power tilt, docking lights and a number of stainless steel amenities, including pull-up cleats, a bow scuff plate and cupholders.

If you want to spruce up the head a bit you can opt for the VacuFlush head with a holding tank, a polished stainless steel sink with countertops and cabinets. We can honestly admit that we've seen heads

on larger cruisers that weren't as nice as this one when it's all decked out.

If you want to pick up a point or two in top end you can consider the optional Corsa Quick & Quiet thru-hull exhaust, which will also be a delight to those who like to let it rumble from time to time.

Watersports enthusiasts will be interested in the optional wakeboard tower, racks and speakers with a microphone and amp.

You can see Chaparral has you covered with just about every conceivable option, and it's all stuff that should be optional. But even though you might not absolutely need something, it's nice to know you can have it if you want it.

By Go Boating Test Team
 Chaparral works on the premise that there is a boat for everybody, and everybody deserves to own a boat.

This helps explain why the builder recently added three new craft to its already extensive SSi sportboat lineup. The addition of the 246, 275 and 276 increases the number of sportboats available from Chaparral up to 16, and that's not counting the company's six deckboat and seven cruiser offerings.

The brand-new 246 SSi is right in the middle of Chaparral's sportboat line, and it's a great example of how Chaparral approaches the mid-sized to large run-about category.

The first thing to know is that with Chaparral you're getting an upscale product. It's going to cost a little more than the high-volume low-price brands, but it's also going to feel better in the water, have a better fit and finish and stand up to abuse longer. So in the end it's money well spent.

In the case of the 246 SSi, you're looking at what we consider to be the beginning of the larger end of the runabout market. In most cases, larger means more of everything, including a barrage of flashy features that some people can take or leave. With the 264, however, you'll notice that the base-model boat is similar in terms of standards and options to most of Chaparral's other SSi craft — and it's up to you to outfit it with the options you think are important.

Don't take this to mean that the base-model 246 is in any way lacking — nothing could be further from the truth. The standard amenities are more than adequate for most tastes, and the quality of all the standard features is a cut above what you'd find on many other brands.

For example, the twin Dura-Flex bucket seats are designed to absorb the shock of running through rough seas while also offering lumbar support. The seats also have flip-up bolsters, built-in headrests and stainless steel mechanisms for long life and durability.

Storage is also top notch with carpeted areas under hinged seats in the bow and a glassed-in cooler with a drain in the forward center of the bow. Both sides of the sunpad open like a pair of wings to reveal large glassed-in storage areas with drains — more than enough room for all your



drinks, snacks and food. And, if you want to have a picnic ashore, there's even a standard carry-on cooler with dedicated storage under the rear port bench seat.

Passenger seating in the cockpit is roomy and comfortable with a large U-shaped wrap-around lounge — and a small center section comes out for convenient access to the walk-through transom. At the transom you'll find a large extended swim platform with a top-folding boarding ladder (and there's another one at the bow to make shore landings easier).

Because this is a larger bowrider, Chaparral had plenty of room to build in a refreshment center and a large enclosed head. The refreshment center, located behind the driver's chair, has a polished stainless steel sink and pressurized faucet as well as an integrated cooler under the countertop.

The head, located in the port console, comes standard with a Porta Potti and an opening portlight as well as interior lighting. Because it's so roomy, the head can also double as a changing room.

PERFORMANCE

Conditions for our test of the 246 SSi were fair, although we did have some wind-blown chop to contend with. We had two people aboard and a light load of fuel at about an eighth of a tank (about 9 gallons or 56 pounds). For power we had a 280 hp 5.7 Gi Volvo Penta with a DP-S drive spinning a three-blade stainless steel F4 prop set. Considering you can go as high as 425 hp with this craft, we were getting only a modest taste of what the 246 SSi is capable of.

We pulled out of the hole and onto plane in 3.4 seconds and our 0- to 30-mph time was 6.7 seconds. These are good acceleration results, which points to an

enhanced watersports experience.

At wide-open throttle we posted a top speed of 47.3 mph at 5,000 rpm, which is right where this engine likes to hum. Top-speed range should be about 117 miles — and the sound level was 90 dBA at top speed.

Our most efficient cruising speed was 26.1 mph at 3,000 rpm, which will yield about 214 miles of cruising range. The sound level at cruising was only 82 dBA, which is excellent and is a testament to how Chaparral builds boats.

With this engine we found the 246 offered a smooth and solid ride that was still fun to get a little heavy-handed on the throttle with. There's no concern about making aggressive maneuvers at speed, but you'll want more power if you're really looking for face-peeling performance. Most of all we just liked to cruise at about 30 mph while opening it up to power through a hard turn here and there. Even though there was some chop, the 22-degree deadrise (at the transom) hull cut through like the chop didn't exist.

OVERALL

The beauty of the 246 SSi is that it is going to be just the right craft for some boaters. There will be those people who don't want something smaller and don't want something larger — they just want a boat that will fit them like a glove. And if that glove is a little tight here or loose there, they can just move up or down to the next SSi, which might just make all the difference in the world.

With a base price of \$48,819 (with a 250 hp MerCruiser), the 246 SSi offers an upscale experience at a price that is consistent with this level of quality. You can certainly get a 25-foot bowrider for less, but it won't be as good as the 246 — not even close. **GO**

PERFORMANCE & PRICING CHAPARRAL 246 SSI

PERFORMANCE

	MPH	RPM	MPG	RANGE	\$/MILE*	DBA
PEAK	47.3	5,000	1.80	117	1.30	90
CRUISE	26.1	3,000	3.30	214	.70	82
TIME TO PLANE						3.4 seconds
0-30 MPH ACCELERATION						6.7 seconds

-Fuel consumption measured with Floscan digital fuel-flow meter; range based on 90% of total fuel capacity.

*Assuming a fuel price of \$2.33/gallon

POWER

TEST	5.7 Gi Volvo Penta
HP	280
PROP	F4 stainless steel
WOT LIMIT	5,000 rpm
STANDARD	5.7L MerCruiser
HP	250
PROP	4-blade aluminum
WOT RANGE	4,400-4,800 rpm

Craft available with MerCruiser and Volvo Penta stern drives ranging from 250 to 425 hp

LOAD

	PEOPLE	FUEL (GALS./LBS.)	MISC.
TEST	2	9/56	15 lbs.
TYPICAL	7-8	72/451	145 lbs.

BASE PRICE

WITH TEST POWER	\$52,446*
WITH STANDARD POWER	\$48,819*

*Price can vary depending on options and location — price does not include trailer

FINANCING

\$424/month for 15 years*

*Assuming a final price of \$55,500 with a 15% down payment and a fixed interest rate of 7.0% — does not include sales tax

FIVE NOTABLE OPTIONS

Head cabinet w/countertop, sink and faucet (\$609), snap-in carpet, (\$461), bow filler cushions (\$183), VacuFlush head w/holding tank, china bowl and level indicator (\$1,021), wakeboard tower (\$2,850)

FIVE NOTABLE STANDARDS

Extended fiberglass swim platform w/boarding ladder, satellite-ready premium sound system (w/AM/FM CD, remote control and free six-month Sirius subscription), color-coordinated Bimini top w/boot, power steering, refreshment center (w/sink, pressurized faucet, ice chest and storage)

BUILDER

Chaparral Boats, Inc., P.O. Drawer 928, Industrial Park Blvd., Nashville, GA 31639; (229) 686-7481; www.chaparralboats.com

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