

Chaparral 276 SSX



Block Party

Everybody's doing it.

Has the deckboat become obsolete? I don't mean to cast aspersions on an entire category of boat, but builders have increasingly found ways to design sporty runabouts that manage to pack in many deckboat amenities without resorting to a deck's cumbersome shape. It's like the transition of SUVs from the Jeep Wagoneer to the Porsche Cayenne. Chaparral Boats is following suit with its 276 SSX, an updated version of the SSI bowrider that's packed with more goodies than before.

Check out the sun island that sits over the engine compartment. Its backrest moves into three different positions—facing forward, looking aft, or lying flat. The substantial cockpit entertainment center to port has a full-length grabrail and faux-granite counters that, by the way, should be fiddled to keep stuff from sliding off.

The helm has doublewide seating with independent bolsters, so the captain and his helm mate can sit or stand according to their own preference. The portside console also has seating for two, so the captain gets plenty of company up front rather than being a solo chauffeur. But fear not: There's plenty of room behind the captain, too, with a six-person bench seat that wraps around the transom and starboard side. A cockpit table comes standard.

The bow cockpit has deckboat-like seating, with a nonslip beach platform and boarding ladder on the bow. The fully lined bow lockers beneath the forward seating have rubber mats to keep your gear from bouncing. There are fill-in cushions that turn the entire bow cockpit into a forward sunlounge.

The 276 SSX is a fun boat to drive. It passed the proverbial 50-mph mark with our test power and felt dialed in throughout the entire rpm range. At full throttle, the boat felt stable. Up to 38 mph, the boat performed comfortably in hard turns. And I was pleasantly surprised to note the lack of rattling components aboard, particularly on our test boat's radar arch. The

BOATING

Certified Test Results

rpm	SPEED			EFFICIENCY			OPERATION		
	knots	mph	gph	naut. mpg	stat. mpg	n. mi. range	s. mi. range	run angle	sound level
1000	5.5	6.3	1.9	2.9	3.3	272	313	1	76
1500	7.6	8.7	3.4	2.2	2.6	210	242	1	76
2000	9.2	10.6	6.6	1.4	1.6	132	152	4	83
2500	16.8	19.3	9.7	1.7	2.0	163	188	5	86
3000	24.4	28.1	11.8	2.1	2.4	196	225	3	84
3500	30.2	34.8	14.8	2.0	2.4	193	222	2	87
4000	34.8	40.1	18.6	1.9	2.2	177	204	2	88
4500	41.7	48.0	31.0	1.3	1.5	127	146	2	94
4900	44.0	50.6	33.9	1.3	1.5	123	141	2	97

Advertised fuel capacity 105 gallons. Range based on 90 percent of that figure. Performance measured with two persons aboard, three-quarters fuel, full water. Sound levels taken at upper helm, in dB-A.

LOA	28'10"
Beam	9'0"
Draft (max.)	2'11"
Displacement (lbs., approx.)	6,800
Transom deadrise	22°
Bridge clearance	7'6"
Max. cabin headroom	4'0"
Fuel capacity (gal.)	105
Water capacity (gal.)	13.5
Price (w/standard power)	\$73,696
Price (w/test power)	\$82,824
NMMA Certified	

OPTIONAL POWER Single gasoline stern drive to 525 hp.

TEST BOAT POWER Single 375-hp Volvo Penta 8.1 OSI XDP V-8 gasoline stern drive with 496 cid, swinging an F5 propset through a 1.78:1 reduction.

STANDARD EQUIPMENT (major items) Portable MSD; insulated ice chest; 12v plug; lockable glovebox; AM/FM/CD/Sirius satellite stereo w/6-month subscription; digital hourmeter; Garmin 172 GPS; mahogany tilt steering wheel; power steering; starboard windshield wiper; batteries w/switch and trays; electronic engine hatch; trim tabs; 2 telescoping 3-step swim ladders; Bimini top w/boot.

STANDARD POWER Single 280-hp Volvo Penta 5.7 Gi DP gasoline stern drive.

Monthly Payment \$621

(6.70% interest with 15% down on test boat power; tax not included; 15-year loan to qualified buyers estimated by Excel Credit)

High Points Excellent stability at wide open throttle. Face forward or aft or lie down for maximum tanning on the sun island. Radar arch didn't flex or sway at high speeds or in rough water.

Low Points The drain hose for the stowage tub under the starboard cockpit bench runs uphill to the scupper, which could lead to pooling. Counter on the cockpit entertainment center isn't fiddled. Head door shook at high speed.

Toughest Competitor The Sea Ray 270 Select EX (\$88,007 with a 375-hp MerCruiser 496 Bravo Three) is based on the same "cram as much deckboat space and amenities as possible into bowrider form" concept. It's another great choice with lots of standards, including a Navman 5500 chartplotter. However, the Sea Ray's power choices are limited to MerCruiser.

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head door did shake a bit at higher speeds. But overall, the boat held true to its runabout roots, even though it's encroaching into deckboat space. —PETE McDONALD