

# FISHABILITY



## Specifications

**LENGTH**  
27'7"

**BEAM**  
9'4"

**DRAFT**  
19" [engines up]

**FUEL**  
160 gal.

**WATER**  
18 gal.

**WEIGHT**  
5,650 lb.  
[w/o engines]

**MAX HP**  
600

**PRICE**  
Upon request

Grady-White  
gradywhite.com



**INTEGRATED HARDTOP**  
A wraparound windshield and hardtop seamlessly integrate with the center console.

**SINGLE OR TWIN YAMAHAS**  
The 281 CE is available with twin Yamaha F300s or a single 450 XTO outboard package.

**VERSATILE BOW AREA**  
The bow area easily transforms from a big casting deck to an expansive cushioned sun pad.

**FORWARD CONSOLE LOUNGE**  
The forward console features a lounge seat and a lot of insulated storage underneath.

**GRADY SEAV2 HULL**  
The 281 CE features Grady-White's SeaV2 hull for a smooth, stable ride in rough seas.

## Grady-White 281 Coastal Explorer

Grady-White's versatile new 281 Coastal Explorer will satisfy adventurous anglers with big expectations of their boat.

By Randy Vance

**A**ngler enthusiasm for boats designed for both inshore and offshore fishing is growing like Georgia cotton, and Grady-White's new 281 Coastal Explorer is feeding the frenzy. It checks every box for serious angling and family fun.

The 281 CE boasts a center line length of 27 feet, 7 inches, with a beam of 9 feet, 4 inches. It is designed to run nicely on a single Yamaha 450 XTO or dual F300s. Our test boat sported the latter, offering zero-to-30 mph acceleration under 5 seconds, impressive for a 6,500-pound boat. It posted a top speed in excess of 57 mph at 5,950 rpm.

I like the dual engines because you get better joystick response and all the Yamaha Helm Master EX capabilities. Yamaha's optional Full Maneuverability package is another worthwhile option that works best with multi-engine setups.

The 281's SeaV2 hull sports a 16-degree deadrise at the transom that provides outstanding at-rest stability and a smooth ride. Running into southeast winds, we found a comfortable speed at about 35 mph. The 281 CE drafts 19 inches, making backcountry fishing easy to accomplish.



The forward dining table can lower to create an expansive upholstered sun pad. Or remove the cushions and you have a spacious bow casting deck.



A portside door hinges downward at the touch of a button to haul aboard big fish or serve as a swim platform with a removable boarding ladder.



Full-width transom bench seating with pivoting backrests quickly converts to an abbreviated stern casting deck when it's time to start fishing.

Anglers will appreciate the dual shotgun rod holders and dual gunwale rod holders port and starboard. There is also a pair of rod holders forward. Our boat wasn't equipped with optional outriggers, but the hardtop is built with sturdy receptacles for them. Four rocket launchers in the hardtop and four in the back of the optional Elite leaning post keep other rods handy. Two rod hangers below the starboard gunwale stow rods, gaffs and boat hooks. We found tackle compartments below the rigging sink on the back of the leaning post, storage in the sides of it, and two more compartments on the front.

The 281 sports a 38-gallon livewell in the leaning post. Like all Grady tanks, this one has a unique water manifold molded into the side that distributes seawater from bottom to top, surrounding bait with a protective current that eliminates dead spots in the tank. A second 18-gallon well can double as another fish box, but we see tarpon anglers using it for crabs or shrimp.

The fish boxes are in the forward seating pods, and they drain overboard. But if you plan to fish for tuna (and there's no good reason you

shouldn't in this high-bow vessel), there's a double forward lounge with an insulated box underneath that drains overboard.

To slide a big fish aboard, an electrically operated portside door hinges downward and low enough to slide a beast into the cockpit. The aft cockpit offers a roomy casting deck. It also provides seating with a removable center seatback posted in shotgun rod holders, and convertible port and starboard cushions that swivel into a comfortable beam-to-beam position for riding. These convertible seatbacks also swing outward to create leaning bolsters and add stability when casting at the transom. The center seat cushion can be removed and stowed.

The foredeck provides a vast casting space by joining the forward console lounge with an optional forward casting deck using a half-moon-shaped removable deck insert.

Successful boatbuilders like Grady-White know that today's boating family won't confine itself to fishing. In fact, on some days, they might decide they don't want to fish at all. Grady-White kept this in mind when it designed the 281 CE. Sure, the 281 ramps

up your range and offshore confidence while keeping tarpon, snook and redfish easily approachable, but the family-fun platform can't be beat.

All these casting platforms double as luxury seating through a well-designed, lushly upholstered, thickly padded series of cushions. On the forward deck, two seatbacks raise with the touch of an electric switch. And the electrically operated portside boarding door mentioned earlier doubles as a swim platform, with reboarding made easy thanks to a stowable ladder.

With the cocktail table flat in the casting deck, the cushions complete a sun pad. An optional cushion on the

half-moon-shaped insert joins the forward console lounge to make this cushion more expansive. Getting up to the deck is easy thanks to molded-in steps to port and starboard.

The helm included two optional Elite captain's chairs with armrests and bolsters, adjustable to put the controls in easy reach. Roomy access below the console (with a porcelain toilet and sink) accommodates linebacker-size anglers.

Grady optionally pre-rigs the 281 CE for a bow trolling motor with a swivel bracket, a motor-shaft support, and three 12-volt batteries for a 36-volt motor. Your dealer will add the Minn Kota or Rhodan trolling motor and dual 10-foot Power-Poles—get those, you'll want them in the backcountry and bays.

The 281 Coastal Explorer brings all of Grady-White's best attributes together in a boat that opens doors to blue water without shutting doors to bays and backwaters. And it does so with impeccable construction, beautiful lines, and a track record of winning every customer-satisfaction award ever offered in the marine industry. ☺



**Fast 'n' Efficient**

With twin Yamaha 300s, the 281 Coastal Explorer achieves 2.3 mpg at 3,000 rpm, providing all the range most anglers will need.

RPM	MPH	GPH
3,000	27.8	12.2
3,500	33.8	15.8
4,000	39.3	22.3
4,500	43.6	28.6
5,000	48.5	36.5
5,500	53.4	47.1
5,950	57.4	53.8