

# Grady-White 281 CE

[www.gradywhite.com](http://www.gradywhite.com)

BY CAPT. JOHN N. RAGUSO

Introduced earlier this season, the all-new Grady-White 281 CE takes their "Coastal Explorer" inshore angling and day cruising concept to new levels of comfort and performance. The 281 CE joins her smaller sibling the 251 CE to bring Grady quality and ergonomics to angling families that prefer to do their fishing and water-borne adventures in sight of land. Although she's designed to fish skinny waters, I would have no issues taking this Carolina girl out for a spin for near-offshore sport fishing opportunities.

## GET THE GRADY

Offering inshore anglers a seaworthy, overbuilt craft for this specific genre is not a new thing. A handful of other top-notch boat builders have been there and done that over the past few seasons. However, after filming a product review video at the Miami Boat Show with Grady-White's Vice President of Marketing, Shelley Tubaugh, it's my belief that the Grady engineers have definitely raised the bar for the competition in this niche market.

Starting aft and working forward, the triple wide aft bench seat features under-seat drop-in boxes port and starboard, swing-open walk-through backrests, an optional removable center backrest, plus an 18-gallon recirculating livewell set under the center section. Just outboard of the standard leaning post to the port side is Grady's unique "Sport Deck" which is an electro-mechanically folding platform that rises up and down at the touch of a button that makes getting on and off the boat at the beach or on the water a breeze. The deluxe lean bar features a cushioned backrest and split flip-up bolsters, complemented by a rigging station with a recessed freshwater shower, bait locker, four-rod rocket launcher and a 38-gallon livewell.

The helm area has the dash space to mount a pair of 16-inch big screen MFDs to handle all of your electronics needs for chart plotting, echo sounding, radar, night vision or whatever. Stepping down into the head area via a locking portside companionway in the console, there's bulk storage, a composite cherry and holly sole, plus an oversized marine head with electric flush, 10-gallon holding tank with macerator, overboard discharge and deck pump out.

Moving forward to the bow area, a huge fiberglass box set forward of the console can

be used both as a cushioned sun lounge, with a whopping 296-quart insulated cooler down below with overboard drain, or as part of the casting platform. The port and starboard bow seats feature 70-quart insulated coolers underneath, with convenient overboard gravity drains. Electrically controlled backrests turn the bench seating into a relaxing spot for cruising home after filling the coolers. A casting platform insert converts the entire bow area into a spacious forward casting deck. Other notable standards include a raw water washdown; horizontal rod racks under each gunwale; a quartet of flush-mount rodholders in the covering boards; a handy engine flush outlet; fiberglass T-Top with a four-rod rocket launcher; recessed tackle locker; stereo system with AM/FM tuner, Wi-Fi and Bluetooth capabilities; anchor windlass with remote switches; forward bolsters; and flush-mount pull-up cleats.

## GONE WITH THE WIND

The Grady-White 281 CE is strong and beefy where it counts below the water line, but she's also relatively spry with her 16-degree aft deadrise SeaV2 continuously variable vee hull. She can really run like the wind when it's time to hammer the throttle to catch the tide at your favorite fishing spot. Rigged with a single Yamaha XTO Offshore 450, this Grady will hit a top speed of 50 mph at 5,900 rpm spinning a 16-5/8 x 19 XTO SDS three-blade prop. Bringing it down to more realistic cruising speeds, she'll hit 26 mph at 3,500 rpm burning 11.6 gph for a net of 2.24 mpg; 32.4 mph at 4,000 rpm drinking 14.8 gph for a bottom line of 2.19 mpg; and 37.6 mph at 4,500 revs gulping 20.1 gph for a net of 1.87 mpg.

If you opt for the safety and redundancy of twin 300s,

top speed is boosted up to a breath-taking 57.4 mph at wide open throttle, hitting 29.1 mph/12.3 gph/2.37 mpg at 3,100 rpm; 33.8 mph/15.8 gph/2.14 mpg at 3,500 rpm; and 39.3 mph/22.3 gph/1.76 mpg at 4,000 revs. You can power this Grady into super-cruise if you must, and you will feel the exhilaration of having the wind blow through your hair at 43 to 57 plus mph; with the commensurate cost of reducing fuel economy to 1.52 to 1.07 mpg. The standard 160-gallon fuel tank will take the 281 CE a long way between fill-ups, especially if you have an easy hand on the throttle.

The 281 Coastal Explorer can wear many hats, bending rods and entertaining the family! 🐟

## SPECIFICATIONS

LENGTH	27 feet, 7 inches
BEAM	9 feet, 4 inches
DEADRISE AFT	16 degrees (SeaV2 progression)
DRAFT	19 inches (engines up)
WEIGHT	5,650 pounds (w/o power)
FUEL CAPACITY	160 gallons
WATER CAPACITY	18 gallons
MAX HP	600 HP (single O/B or twins)

