

Small Center Console Boats For Families/Everyday Boating

“Family boat” is a term fraught with peril, since different families have different expectations. Also, options and customizations allow boat buyers to make boats more closely match their boating goals. For our purposes, a small family center console measures 25 feet long or less and retains the fishing capability that the genre was founded upon. But, a family center console must prioritize seating and other comfort features as a matter of design, and as offered by the boatbuilder.

Grady-White 251 CE

Standard head, standard bow and transom seats and a patented hull design.



The 251 can more than hold its own in sloppy offshore conditions yet is still capable of sneaking into skinny flats and backwaters. Courtesy Grady-White

The 24'7" by 8'6" 251 Coastal Explorer offers the lower freeboard of an inshore boat, making access to the water easier, as well as granting the feeling of being open and part of the environment. Certainly, with locking rod storage, a big livewell and more, it fishes like a pro. And, its unique SeaV² hull can handle choppy open waters. But, it offers numerous features beyond these that make it a good multi-purpose boat. Included are a head area inside the console, bow and transom boarding ladders, a freshwater shower, bow seating with folding backrests, an aft bench, eight drink holders and more. Order the optional bow table, bow shade and ski arch to make the 251 CE a top tier angling-watersports-entertainer. Its beam width is trailerable without need of a permit.

What We Like:

- Bow boarding ladder makes beaching easy
- Freeboard offers easy fish landing but also lend a sporty feel when aboard

What Could Be Better?

- Low freeboard may give parents of small children pause