

Grady-White 231 CE Coastal Explorer

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BY CAPT. JOHN N. RAGUSO

Making a big splash at the 2024 Miami Boat Show, Grady's latest member of the growing Coastal Explorer family, the 231 CE, checks off multiple boxes for fishing families that enjoy a variety of inshore water adventures.

FAMILY PEDIGREE

The new Grady-White 231 CE is the latest and most diminutive member of the growing Coastal Explorer fleet. Like her bigger sisters, the 251 CE and 281 CE, she offers a lot of fishing features onboard but is certainly not a one-trick pony when it comes to having a good time out on the water with family and friends.

I sat down with Grady's VP of Marketing, Shelley Tubaugh, at the Miami show and asked her where the new 231 CE fits into the Coastal Explorer lineup. According to Shelley, "The 231 CE answers the call for a premium quality inshore boat that's created with fishability and luxury on a highly-versatile, shallow draft running bottom. She still has the wave-cutting performance of Grady-White's proven SeaV2 hull in an easy-to-trailer size for endless options for family fishing and fun water sports activities. It's the smaller size that particularly makes the 231 CE stand apart from the 251 and 281 since she can get into the special skinny water fishing spots that her bigger sisters can't. Plus, you can easily trailer her to the quiet, hidden, shallow water back-bay spots that your kids and grandkids might want to explore that's far away from the usual weekend traffic."

MULTI-MISSION, WITH AN ELEGANT TOUCH

Having owned and operated a six-pack of Grady-White boats from 23 to 26 feet over the decades, I can state with a degree of certainty that the new 231 CE is consistent with the quality, design, and ergonomic functionality of those that have preceded her. All the right things are in all the

right places, and every square inch of space aboard is put to good use. The difference between this new Grady and my legacy boats from yesteryear is that the 231 CE offers some luxurious touches that were not typically on the menu of past models.

A unique standard convenience on the 231 CE are a pair of bow seat cushions positioned over the raised bench seats that feature electro-mechanically adjustable backrests, that can change their angle at the touch of a button. They lay down flat when it's time to gather a group in the bow to sit down and socialize but can easily transform the seat into a backrest when a pair of guests want to sit back, enjoy the ride, and catch some rays in the process. An optional casting platform center insert with cushion can be combined with an optional raised table mount to provide a convenient spot to serve lunch or to enjoy a frosty beverage while watching the sun go down.

From a fishing standpoint, the 231 CE doesn't disappoint with four flush-mount rodholders in the gunwales, a quartet of vertical rodholders split on either side aft of the aforementioned forward bench seat backrests, a trio of vertical rodholders installed in the transom well cap, plus an additional four rodholders set in the leaning post rocket

launcher. A 277-quart insulated fishbox is positioned under the raised bow seating on the centerline with an overboard gravity drain and doubles as a handy box to stow your water toys if fishing is not on the day's menu. The standard deluxe lean bar also includes lockable storage, knife and plier holder, plus a 25-gallon insulated raw water recirculating

livewell. Other notable standards include a four-speaker AM/FM stereo system with Wi-Fi and Bluetooth connectivity; a 29-quart insulated cooler under the forward console seat with cushion and backrest; a lockable head area under the console with indirect light, bulk storage, and a portable MSD; hydraulic tilt steering; hydraulic trim tabs; aft



SPECIFICATIONS

LENGTH	22 feet, 7 inches
BEAM	8 feet, 6 inches
COCKPIT DEPTH	20 inches
HULL DRAFT	16 inches
TRANSOM DEADRISE	16 degrees (SeaV2 progression)
WEIGHT	3,720 pound (dry, no power)
FUEL CAP	70 gallons
FRESHWATER CAP	10 gallons
MAX HP	250 HP, single outboard

boarding ladder; eight S/S drink holders; fresh water and raw water washdowns; and much more.

IMPRESSIVE PERFORMANCE

The 231 CE that I inspected at the Miami Boat Show was rigged with Yamaha's popular F250 4.2L V6 outboard. According to factory tests, this hull and outboard combination will hit a top speed just a hair short of 49 mph, spinning a 17-pitch SWSII 3-blade stainless steel SDS prop. Optimum cruising speed was 27.9 mph, clocked at a rather sedate 3500 rpm, where this Carolina girl sips fuel through a very thin straw, drinking only 7.8 gph to provide an impressive 3.58 mpg. Since most owners will probably want to push her a little bit faster when out and about, bumping up the throttle to 4,000 will clock 32.6 mph at 10.9 gph for a net of 2.99 mpg. For those folks that prefer traveling in the fast lane, dialing in 4500 rpm will hit 36.8 mph on the GPS

navigator while consuming 13.9 gph for a bottom line of 2.65 mpg. These are all impressive numbers, and if you are just tooling around the back bays, coastal inshore waters, inlets, and along the beach, you'd be hard-pressed to run out of fuel for your day's excursions with the 231 CE's 70-gallon fuel tank.

Even though the 231 CE's version of Grady-White's proven SeaV2 hull sports a modest 16-degree transom deadrise angle, the bow is designed with a sharper vee forward that softens gradually as it travels aft. Combine this with her substantial 3,720-pound displacement, and the 231 CE will have minimal issues taming an afternoon chop in the open bays when the wind picks up.

If you are looking for a trailerable 23-footer that is equal parts fishing machine and family beach buggy that's built to a higher standard, you should definitely take the new Grady-White 231 CE out for a test ride at a dealer near you. 🦞