

BOATING

BOATS

Boat Test: 2024 Grady-White 231 Coastal Explorer

The Grady-White 231 Coastal Explorer is a versatile boat that is packed full of fun, comfort, and fishability.

By Randy Vance | August 31, 2024



The 231 CE serves up a solid, comfortable ride. *Courtesy Grady-White Boats*

Overview

Grady-White's newest version of its popular Coastal Explorer 251 CE and 281 CE series is the 231 CE; it's easy to trailer and dock, it's more affordable, and yet surprisingly it sacrifices little in terms of luxury and fishability. We were impressed by its versatility.



The wide console has plenty of space for dual navigation displays and a compass. *Courtesy Grady-White Boats*

Interior And Accessories

Grady borrowed the lean bar, console and hardtop from the 251 CE. The 231 CE's 25-gallon livewell is built into the lean bar, just as it is on the 251. We had to scratch our heads as we sussed out exactly where the features were trimmed in the shorter boat.

A reduced transom platform still offers plenty of elevated casting deck. The unique seatbacks from the 251 and 281 are still present. They swing aft or forward and lock into place for access to the boarding ladder or to drag a fish aboard.



Forward, there's an enormous sunning lounge for two or three people. *Courtesy Grady-White Boats*

The transom accepts dual Power-Poles. Rod storage is ample in the leaning bar with four rocket launchers, and there are four in the hardtop too. Undergunwale storage includes two rod holders per side. Raw-water and freshwater bibs are conveniently located to wash the deck, tackle and sandy feet—if the crew decides to go beach exploring.

The wide console has plenty of space for dual navigation displays and a compass. An overhead electronics box provides a good spot to park a VHF radio.



The console houses an unexpectedly, impressively inviting changing room below with a portable head. *Courtesy Grady-White Boats*

The console houses an unexpectedly, impressively inviting changing room below with a portable head. A long jump seat with enough space to put up your legs and stretch out is at the front of the helm. There's a step to the casting deck with generous space for two or more anglers, but when the cushions are in place and a cocktail table is arranged between the console lounge and casting deck, there's an enormous sunning lounge for two or three people.

Engine

Yamaha's 250 hp outboard with integrated power steering makes this a very nice handling package with a top speed of just under 49 mph. We liked the way it held tight in turns and skimmed over double-up wakes—some of the roughest turbulence that boats encounter. Stable at rest, it settles gently under the shifting weight of the crew. The 231 CE is packed with fun, comfort and fishability, which is not found in many other bay boats.



The 231 CE offers multiple casting platforms. *Courtesy Grady-White Boats*

How We Tested

- **Engine:** Yamaha 250 Four-Stroke
- **Drive/Prop:** Yamaha Saltwater Series II SDS 15.5" x 17" 3-blade stainless steel
- **Gear Ratio:** 1.75: 1 **Fuel Load:** 70 gal. **Crew Weight:** 400 lb.

High Points

- The deluxe console is standard, offering an integrated livewell, rod holders and a tackle center—a feature not available on the competition.
- The standard hardtop includes rod holders, overhead storage and an electronics box.
- Electrically operated seatbacks at the bow fold down for casting-deck space and don't require stowing.

Low Points

- While we like the swinging aft seatbacks, we wish there were a way to remove and stow them.
- Many inshore anglers prefer two livewells, a feature missing on the 231 CE.

Pricing And Specs

LOA:	22'7"
Beam:	8'6"
Draft:	1'4"
Displacement:	3,720 lb. (dry without power)
Transom Deadrise:	16 degrees
Bridge Clearance:	7'10"
Max Headroom:	NA
Fuel Capacity:	70 gal.
Max Horsepower:	250
Available Power:	Single outboard from Yamaha

Speed, Efficiency, Operation

SPEED			EFFICIENCY				OPERATION		
rpm	knots	mph	gph	naut. mpg	stat. mpg	n. mi. range	s. mi. range	angle	sound level
1000	4.4	5.1	1.4	3.2	3.6	199.4	229.5	1	1
1500	6.0	6.9	2.2	2.7	3.1	171.7	197.6	1	1
2000	7.0	8.0	3.7	1.9	2.2	118.4	136.2	1	1
2500	10.8	12.4	5.5	2.0	2.3	123.4	142.0	1	1
3000	19.7	22.7	6.3	3.1	3.6	197.3	227.0	1	1
3500	24.2	27.9	7.8	3.1	3.6	195.8	225.3	1	1
4000	28.3	32.6	10.9	2.6	3.0	163.7	188.4	1	1
4500	32.0	36.8	13.9	2.3	2.6	144.9	166.8	1	1
5000	35.5	40.9	18.0	2.0	2.3	124.4	143.2	1	1
5500	39.3	45.2	23.6	1.7	1.9	104.9	120.7	1	1
6000	42.4	48.8	25.6	1.7	1.9	104.4	120.1	1	1

MOST ECONOMICAL CRUISING SPEED

Grady-White 231 Coastal Explorer Certified Test Results *Boating Magazine*

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