

BOATS

Grady-White 231 CE

The Grady-White 231 CE offers the capabilities of a shallow-water fishing machine along with family-friendly comforts.

By Randy Vance | Updated: February 6, 2025



The 231 CE boasts two expansive fore and aft casting platforms. *Courtesy Grady-White*

Hybrid bay boats may be the most popular new hull style today judging from the number of model introductions in the category and how many we see on the water. Grady-White nailed this niche with its Coastal Explorer series, which includes the 281 CE, 251 CE and now 231 CE. Yet in a market where hybrids are growing in size, why step down in length?

Perhaps it's to feed a hunger for a more nimble and more trailerable inshore fishing boat with exciting performance on less horsepower. So, how did Grady-White pull this off?



The console on the 231 CE offers plenty of space to flush-mount a pair of multifunction displays. Switches and controls are within easy reach of the helmsman. *Courtesy Grady-White*

Grady designers borrowed the console, lean bar and hardtop from the 251 CE. The 25-gallon livewell is built into the lean bar, just like the 251. The beam is a generous 8 feet, 6 inches, similar to the 251. And both boats feature 16 degrees of transom deadrise, Grady's SeaV2 variable deadrise hull, and a flats-fishable 16-inch draft.

Where exactly did Grady-White trim 2 feet to create the 231 CE? It's not readily apparent, as the 231 still boasts a spacious forward casting deck with a step up to it. The aft casting deck offers generous room. Yet this is where most of the length was clipped, leaving in its place a super-seaworthy vessel, comfortable on most flats and ideal for big bays. You will also see the 231 CE confidently fishing on offshore breaks and bottomfishing holes when weather allows.

Getting to the fish is fun and swift aboard the 231, thanks to a Yamaha 250 hp outboard with integrated power steering. It made our test boat a very nice handling package with a top speed of just under 49 mph. We liked the way the 231 CE held tight in turns and skimmed over doubled-up wakes, which represent some of the roughest turbulence boats encounter. Also impressive is the stability of the hull at rest or when under trolling-motor power. It settles gently under the shifting weight of the crew, making accurate casts to mangroves or dock pilings easy.

Even with the reduced aft deck, the 231 CE still provided plenty of room for Grady's patented swiveling seatbacks, which can be rotated inward or outward to give access to the swim platform. Once swiveled, the unique seatbacks can lock in place to drag aboard a big fish.



A 25-gallon livewell with a cover that seals tight to prevent splashing is integrated into the lean bar/seating module of the Grady-White 231 CE. *Courtesy Grady-White*

The transom accepts dual shallow-water anchor poles, something not all 23-foot bay or hybrid boats can boast. Rod storage is ample in the lean bar with four rocket launchers, and the hardtop boasts four more. Undergunwale storage includes two rod holders per side. Raw and freshwater hose bibs are conveniently located to wash the deck after making bait, rinse the tackle, or perhaps most likely, clear the sand from feet after exploring a remote beach.

Grady's reputation for a solid hull and ride is unassailable, and its commitment to safety is evident in the level flotation that renders the hull unsinkable. Hardware is top-notch, including durable polished stainless-steel cleats, hatch hinges, and a rugged and sleek stainless-steel rub rail. Grady's standard oyster-colored hull looks great, but there are four hull color options to make it your own, including Celestial

rugged and sleek stainless-steel rub rail. Grady's standard oyster-colored hull looks great, but there are four hull color options to make it your own, including Celestial Blue, Ocean Mist (a pale blue), Sea Glass (a pale green) and Coastal Fog, a classy grayish color with a touch of blue.

The wide console has plenty of space for dual navigation displays, and a compass is positioned for reading headings easily. An overhead electronics box is a good spot to park some gear or VHF radio. Inside the helm lies plenty of space to access the electronics connections and mount black boxes for the auto pilot, chirp sonar, or the popular black-box Icom VHF that puts only the mic on the dash, conserving space for a Yamaha engine display and stereo controller.

The console interior provides a surprisingly inviting changing room below with space for a pump-out head. And on the front of the console is a long seat with enough space to put your legs up and stretch out. The casting deck serves double duty: 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.



The aft casting deck incorporates seating with backrests that swivel outward when it is time to fish. Convenient storage resides under the seats. *Courtesy Grady-White*

You'll need to see your dealer's electronics installer for your choice of navigation and sonar equipment, but the 231 can easily accept a radome and side-scan sonar, which are essential to saltwater fishing today. Adding live sonar to a bow-mount trolling motor enhances the opportunity for angling success. For night vision, invert a Sionyx Nightwave night-vision dome under the hardtop and flip the picture in the software settings for your screen.

The 231 CE is ideal for redfish, trout, stripers and tarpon. In coastal states, we'd expect to see it double as a platform for freshwater stripers, or even largemouth bass for anglers looking for an inland change of pace. And when just chilling is on the agenda, the 231 Coastal Explorer definitely lives up to its name.

Specifications

Length:	22'7"
Beam:	8'6"
Draft:	1'4"
Weight:	3,720 lb. (dry without power)
Fuel:	70 gal.
Max HP:	300
Price:	Upon request