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**TO DRAW MORE STRIKES 14**

High-Tech Electronics  
**FOR SMALLER BOATS 26**

Presentation  
**MAKE YOUR BAITS IRRESISTIBLE 46**

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• **FOUNTAIN 38 SFC**  
• **PURSUIT C 280**  
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FEBRUARY 2009

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WE RECYCLE

# Happy Medium

Pursuit finds the right mix with its C 280 Center Console. BY CAPT. DAVE LEAR

REPEAT BUSINESS IS THE LIFEblood of the boating industry. Once customers buy a particular brand, every effort is made to cultivate long-term loyalty. Dealers do this by offering good customer service, while builders develop new models. And when those new models offer significant improvements over the predecessor, it's a winning combination for all involved.

Florida-based Pursuit Boats has followed this business plan for more than three decades. Without a lot of hype, it has consistently improved its lineup using the latest designs,

#### TEST CONDITIONS



LOCATION: Fort Pierce, Florida

WIND: Northeast, 20 knots

SEA STATE: Choppy

TEST LOAD: 200 gallons fuel, 50 gallons water, two adults

Speed measured by the author using a handheld

GPS. Fuel readings recorded from Yamaha Command Link gauges.

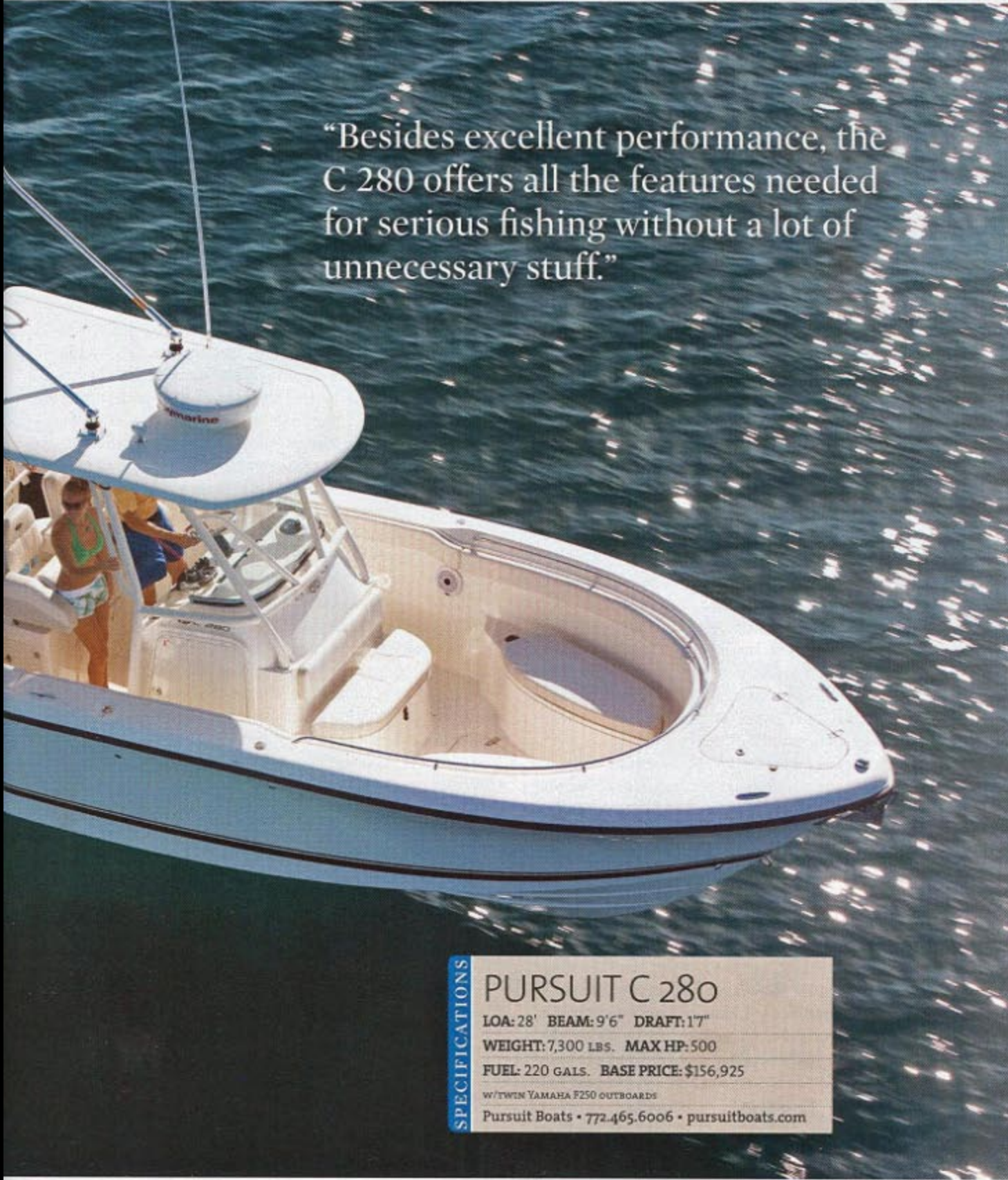
construction techniques and attention to detail that are the hallmark of a successful builder. The C 280, a brand-new model from the keel up, is a perfect example. With Pursuit engineer Eric Hess as my guide, I checked out this midsize center console recently on a blustery Indian River.

For starters, the C 280 has classic center console lines. Sporting a gradual sheer, integrated transom and gentle radiuses throughout, it has the look of a serious fish boat. It also offers performance to match the profile. Hess told me the design team went to great lengths to fine-tune the hull for optimum performance. Starting

with an aggressive stem, the running surface transitions to 24 degrees of deadrise at the transom. The spacious beam has wider chines aft, along with a transom step that was also shifted aft, away from the center of gravity. These characteristics allow a quick planing transition and improve midrange performance. Pursuit rigs all of its boats with dependable Yamaha outboards, and a pair of standard F250 four-strokes hung off the back of our test craft. That package proved to be an ideal combination for overall speed and fuel economy.

Since hazardous 10-foot seas offshore scuttled our plans to hunt for sailfish, we stayed inside the river instead. A strong Nor'easter turned the normally tranquil lagoon into a washboard chop and plunged water temperatures into the upper 50s. Hammering the digital throttles, the bow rose before quickly settling into a level attitude. Acceleration was responsive throughout the power curve. With power-





“Besides excellent performance, the C 280 offers all the features needed for serious fishing without a lot of unnecessary stuff.”

SPECIFICATIONS

PURSUIT C 280

LOA: 28' BEAM: 9'6" DRAFT: 17"

WEIGHT: 7,300 LBS. MAX HP: 500

FUEL: 220 GALS. BASE PRICE: \$156,925

W/TWIN YAMAHA F250 OUTBOARDS

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assisted hydraulic steering and good sightlines at the helm, driving was effortless during several high-speed maneuvers. The stern refused to squat in tight turns, but instead powered out nicely. Hess and I remained bone-dry regardless of course heading, and there was no noticeable list even when drifting in beam-to-seas. At 8,500-plus pounds of dry weight, this boat gives a solid ride befitting its rugged construction.

Besides excellent performance, this new model offers all the features needed for serious fishing without a lot of unnecessary stuff. In addition to its top-notch fit and finish, I always admired

Pursuit's integration throughout a model line. Incorporating changes made previously on larger center consoles, the C 280 has several noteworthy refinements, starting with the bow.

A stainless-steel plow anchor tucks under the nose for a clean, functional look. The hatch on the rope locker is finished inside, and a windlass with remote control is an option. Access is easy with the level centerline deck, and the low-profile handrail provides security. Raised locking storage compartments will rack extra rods and other gear. The optional forward casting platform adds still more fishing functionality. Hinged forward, it raises to open the deep deck compartment below. Buckets, fenders and other bulky gear can be stored here, plus there's access to the 20-gallon water and holding tanks housed inside.

Although the overall footprint of the console remains the same, new refinements add to the comfort level. A 140-quart cooler forward doubles as a seat, while greater interior height provides more room. A manual macerated head is standard, along with a sink. The console has a tempered-glass windshield, and the footrest is wider too. Convenience features like the Clarion stereo, dual 12-volt receptacles and iPod interface jack are built in.

The console was large enough to flush mount two Raymarine E120 displays on the test boat. The adjustable bolster-style helm seats are wide with heavy padding for comfort.

Our test boat came with the optional fiberglass hardtop, and I can't imagine ordering a boat this size without one. Besides adding more rod holders and shade, it includes easy access to life jackets overhead, abundant lighting, wrap-around weather enclosure and electronics box. An outrigger package is also available.

The fiberglass leaning post has built-in lockable storage with removable boxes and hanging lure bags. Pursuit was the first production builder to tint livewells blue to keep bait calm (others quickly followed suit), and that practice continues on this 52-gallon version. Fully insulated 29-gallon deck fish boxes straddle the leaning post outboard. Both have macerator pumps and gravity drains.

Like its larger siblings, the C 280 has a convenient bait prep station with molded tool/hook rack in the starboard corner of the transom. The sink is equipped with a freshwater sprayer. A locking compartment houses the battery switches and three Plano 4-24 storage boxes. On the transom centerline, a 45-gallon fish box is sandwiched by a rugged stowaway bench seat. Other than the coaming backrest, the seat is snag-free and stows easily. An acrylic transom door to port facilitates boarding and outboard maintenance.

In the cockpit deck, a systems compartment is another carryover from the larger models. It is well organized for easy maintenance on pumps, batteries, and fuel valves. As an extra benefit, the center stringer grid system channels any lingering bilge water away from components.

The C 280 is yet another example of a great-riding, functional fish boat from one of the top builders in its class. As long as Pursuit continues to upgrade with the same attention to detail and quality with future models, it'll have no trouble whatsoever keeping current customers in the fold — or adding new ones either. ~

## PERFORMANCE

RPM	MPH	GPH
4,000	34.0	20.1
4,500	38.8	26.2
5,000	45.4	31.5
5,500	49.1	40.0
6,000	51.8	45.7

W/ TWIN 250 HP YAMAHA FOUR-STROKES

