

DEAL? OR NO DEAL? FINANCING SECRETS

WORLD'S LARGEST POWERBOAT MAGAZINE

BOATING®

May 2009 | www.boatingmag.com

VOLUME 82 NO. 5

2010 PREVIEW

9 TESTS
GRADY-WHITE
MONTEREY
SEA RAY
PURSUIT
LUHRS
MORE!

\$4.99
U.K. £3.25

WORLD EXCLUSIVE!
Fountain 38 LX



Pursuit S280



Fair Catch

For the love of the game.

Some boats are built for comfort, others for speed. The Pursuit S280 center console? It does both surprisingly well. Its amenities and style hark back to the gentle age of picnic boats, but the speed and hardcore fishing gear declare this a no-nonsense bluewater rig.

With 24 degrees of deadrise at the transom, the S280 should offer rough-water performance. To test this we leapt 3' wakes from the many yachts on their way south for the winter. The S280 proved easy on passengers and gear. And thanks to the 9'6" beam, there's no tenderness such as that found in many narrower deep-V boats. It heels aggressively into fast turns, but sharp chines and strakes grab and prevent sliding even during emergency maneuvers.

For a rig displacing 7,042 pounds, the S280 is quick out of the hole—just over four seconds. It also accelerates well, hitting 30 mph in 9 seconds. Sure, with a top speed of 54 mph it's slower than a go-fast fishboat such as a Fountain, but still exceptional given S280's beam and heft. Fuel economy averaged 1.6 mpg at 4500 rpm and 39.8 mph.

A roll-out refrigerator under the leaning post, complete with wine rack, will likely help sell this boat to fishermen with families who like to climb aboard. The powder-coated hardtop stanchions run to the gunwales rather than the console, providing more shade and weather protection, as well as more room to walk around—although at the expense of being able to chase a fish around the gunwales. With its Plexiglas screens, the broad hardtop also encloses a huge area, which is great for chilly days. Families will also like the facing foldout couches in the cockpit. These swing out on massive chromed-steel frames, or when it's time to fish the couches can fold away flush.

There are touches of varnished teak trim throughout the cockpit and seating area. And a pushbutton anchor winch up front (\$1,085) allows the anchor to tuck neatly under the bow peak rather than in a pulpit. It's a clean, easy-to-use, good-looking system.

BOATING

Certified Test Results

rpm	SPEED			EFFICIENCY				OPERATION	
	knots	mph	gph	naut. mpg	stat. mpg	n. mi. range	s. mi. range	run angle	sound level
1000	5.2	6.0	2.3	2.3	2.6	449	517	0	68
1500	5.9	6.8	3.8	1.6	1.8	308	354	1	70
2000	6.7	7.7	6.1	1.1	1.3	217	250	2	71
2500	9.3	10.7	9.3	1.0	1.2	198	228	4	72
3000	12.4	14.3	11.8	1.1	1.2	209	240	5	75
3500	20.9	24.1	15.9	1.3	1.5	261	300	4	76
4000	28.1	32.3	20.2	1.4	1.6	275	317	3	79
4500	34.6	39.8	25.0	1.4	1.6	274	315	3	81
5000	39.4	45.3	30.5	1.3	1.5	256	294	2	82
5500	44.9	51.7	41.5	1.1	1.2	214	247	2	84
6000	46.9	54.0	44.5	1.1	1.2	209	240	2	87

Advertised fuel capacity 220 gallons. Range based on 90 percent of that figure. Performance measured with two persons aboard, three-quarters fuel, no water. Sound levels taken at helm, in dB-A.

LOA	28'0"	OPTIONAL POWER Twin outboards to 500 hp.
Beam	9'6"	
Draft (max.)	2'10"	TEST BOAT POWER Twin 250-hp Yamaha F250 V-6 gasoline outboards with 204.6 cid, swinging 15" x 21" SW5 II ss props through 2:1 reductions.
Displacement (lbs., approx.; w/o power)	7,042	
Transom deadrise	24°	
Bridge clearance	7'8"	STANDARD EQUIPMENT (major items) Hardtop; transom door; freshwater washdown; console head and sink; roll-out cockpit refrigerator; Clarion AM/FM/CD/MP3 stereo w/remotes; leaning post w/bolster seats and rocket launchers; tackle storage; coaming pads, hide-away boarding ladder.
Minimum cockpit depth	2'4"	
Max. headroom	6'2"	
Fuel capacity (gal.)	220	
Water capacity (gal.)	20	
Price (w/o power)	N/A	
Price (w/test power)	\$172,715	

STANDARD POWER None.

Monthly Payment \$1,030

(6.50% interest with 20% down on test boat power, tax not included, 20-year loan to qualified buyers estimated by Excel Credit)

High Points Lots of comforts including a pair of flip-down couches for cocktail hour and a great slide-out wine cooler. Neat, strong rigging belowdecks.

Low Points Some of its competitors can handle more horsepower. The gunwale-mount hardtop stanchions make it tough to chase a fish around the boat.

Toughest Competitor: Grady-White's 280 (\$158,325 powered like my tester and with a fiberglass T-top) carries the same length and beam but displaces 300 pounds less than the S280. It's rated for 600 hp, 100 more than the Pursuit. The Pursuit, on the other hand, is more stylish and luxurious.

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The console interior isn't spacious, but it provides standup headroom for 6-footers, a china vacuum-flush head and sink, a Clarion CD player, and easy access to console electronics. Pursuit engineers used good construction that you can't see belowdecks, too, including oversized hoses and doubled stainless-steel clamps on everything that goes through the hull. —FRANK SARGEANT