



▲ "Ride" Tech: Chaparral's Wide Tech design is evident from bow to stern and comes at a great price.

CHAPARRAL 196 SSI Wide Tech

WHAT WE THINK:

The moment we returned to the dock a year ago in Chaparral's first Wide Tech model, the 224 Sunesta, we named it one of the 10 best boats of 2008. Those Sunesta deck boats were so well received that Chaparral carried their unique Wide Tech qualities over to the SSI bowrider series for 2009. The new 196 SSI is the easiest of them to trailer, store and afford.

Onlookers at the public lake where we tested the 196 fixed their gazes on the forked bow. What they didn't take the time to notice is how the style up front bleeds through the entire boat. The molded-in swim platform, tower, interior lines, even the sharp angles in the windshield and instrument panel carry out a look all its own.

We had to spend an afternoon in the boat to understand that "looks" are only half the equation. The three-pronged bow widens the seating and

► **KEY NOTE:** Adding big vents to the in-floor storage area and scuppering the cockpit should help keep the boat dry, and also give it the durability needed for calm saltwater bays.

accommodates an anchor locker there — a bonus for a bowrider less than 20 feet. Storage compartments are deeper and the swim platform much larger than comparable models. Even the freeboard is higher than expected.

Away from the dock, we noted how the Extended V-Plane hull reaches economical running speeds with no bowrise. It also stays on plane at 16 mph, great for water sports, and at 3,000 rpm, it can stretch the fuel supply. Or just sit there adrift in the best-looking boat on the lake. — R.S.

TEST DRIVE

- **TEST ENGINE:** MERCURISER 4.3L (CARBURETED)
- **TEST PROP:** 20-PITCH ALUMINUM
- **TEST LOAD:** PEOPLE (300 LB.); FUEL (1.6 GAL.)
- **TOP SPEED:** 45.2 MPH @ 5,000 RPM
- **TIME TO PLANE:** 3.3 SEC.
- **TIME TO 30 MPH:** 8.1 SEC.
- **MINIMUM PLANING SPEED:** 15.5 MPH @ 2,600 RPM

VITAL STATS

- **LENGTH OVERALL:** 19'6" ■ **BEAM:** 8' ■ **DRY WEIGHT:** 3,000 LB. ■ **FUEL CAPACITY:** 32 GAL. ■ **MAXIMUM HP:** 225
- **MSRP (W/ MERCURISER 4.3L):** \$31,330



more online

See our full test report at boatinglife.com/boats09

STANDOUT FEATURES

- **In-floor storage and a deep compartment under the transom walkthrough will help boaters keep the cockpit tidy — a key quality for a sport boat under 20 feet.**
- **Molded-in cooler under the front bow cushion is ready for ice and drinks — it drains overboard.**
- **Side panels are designed with special lines to fit the overall theme and to give a one-of-a-kind look along the gunwales.**