

Chaparral Sunesta 244 Xtreme



Way more than a wicked wakeboard boat.

BY DAVE MULL

You may not feel the pressing need for a boat with eight speakers, a subwoofer, halogen lights and a side graphic that is actually meant to look like a tattoo, but your children might love it. And if you're looking to find a boat for your kids to wakeboard behind that also has some creature comforts parents can appreciate, the Sunesta 244 Xtreme from Chaparral is, well, as the young 'uns say, pretty rad.

On a nasty February morning, I took a thorough walkthrough of the boat at Pier 33 in St. Joseph, Michigan. It was a day on which a sea trial would have rivaled an episode of *Deadliest Catch* for high seas discomfort. A run down the St. Joe River would have been nice, but this boat had ample features worth talking about as it sat on the custom-matched trailer. Tighe Curran, general manager of the dealership, and Bill Devitt, sales associate, explained how the boat represents a complete redesign of Chaparral's Sunesta series.

Although past Sunestas were more "deck-boatish," with tri-hull-type bottoms not meant for comfortably running bigger water, the new models feature the company's patent-pending Wide Tech hull design. This is basically a deep-V with 20-degree deadrise and a flare that gives loads of interior room. From the top view, the bow and stern are reminiscent of the Batmobile, with that trident design incorporated into the graphics.

This attention-grabber is built specifically for watersports enthusiasts, with its tower, mirror and ballast tank amidships. Pump it full of water and the boat creates the kind of wake at 18 mph that wakeboarders crave to perform jumps and tricks. The arch holds four boards, and more (even skis) can fit in the massive storage compartment in the middle of the cockpit. The ski/wakeboard arch has a sleek gunboat look with four speakers and the halogen lamps.

Under the motorcover of our test boat lay a powerful Mercury 350 Mag MPI motor coupled with a Bravo Three outdrive with counter-rotating props. This combo takes the boat up to 51.3 mph, according to

company data. For wakeboarding, the speed-based Perfect Pass System stores preferences for different wakeboarders by name. If Jim likes to board at 18 mph, whereas Jessica prefers 19 mph, simply enter that into the system, and the throttle adjusts automatically.

When wakeboarding with I/Os, the prop can be too close to people at the back of the boat, so the driver must use common sense and have the drive in neutral whenever someone is back there. Otherwise the oversized platform keeps swimmers well away from these props.

The swim platform also features a sofa, stereo controls and a shower. Though the black rubber surface attached to the platform looks cool, it might get pretty hot under the sun.

But wait—there's more. There are gas fills into the 60-gallon tank on both sides of the boat. Both helm and passenger captain's chairs convert into stand-up bolsters. A storage area under the starboard-side wetbar boasts a removable cooler and trash can inside. Plenty of storage is found under the port-side sofa and the bow seats. Speaking of the bow, the boat has a hidden ladder and a built-in cooler up there. Keeping with the deckboat tradition, the bow floor isn't a step up—it's on the same level as the rest of the cockpit.

Don't worry: You're not having a midlife crisis if you buy a Sunesta 244—it's a prudent investment in a vessel designed to deliver serious family fun.

Specs

LOA.....	24'4"
Beam.....	8'6"
Draft.....	2'9"
Fuel capacity.....	60 gals.
Weight.....	4,700 lbs.
Base power.....	Volvo 5.0L DP (270 hp)
Base price.....	\$71,790
Power as tested.....	Mercury 5.7 350 Mag MPI w/Bravo 3 (300 hp)
Price as tested.....	\$92,173

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