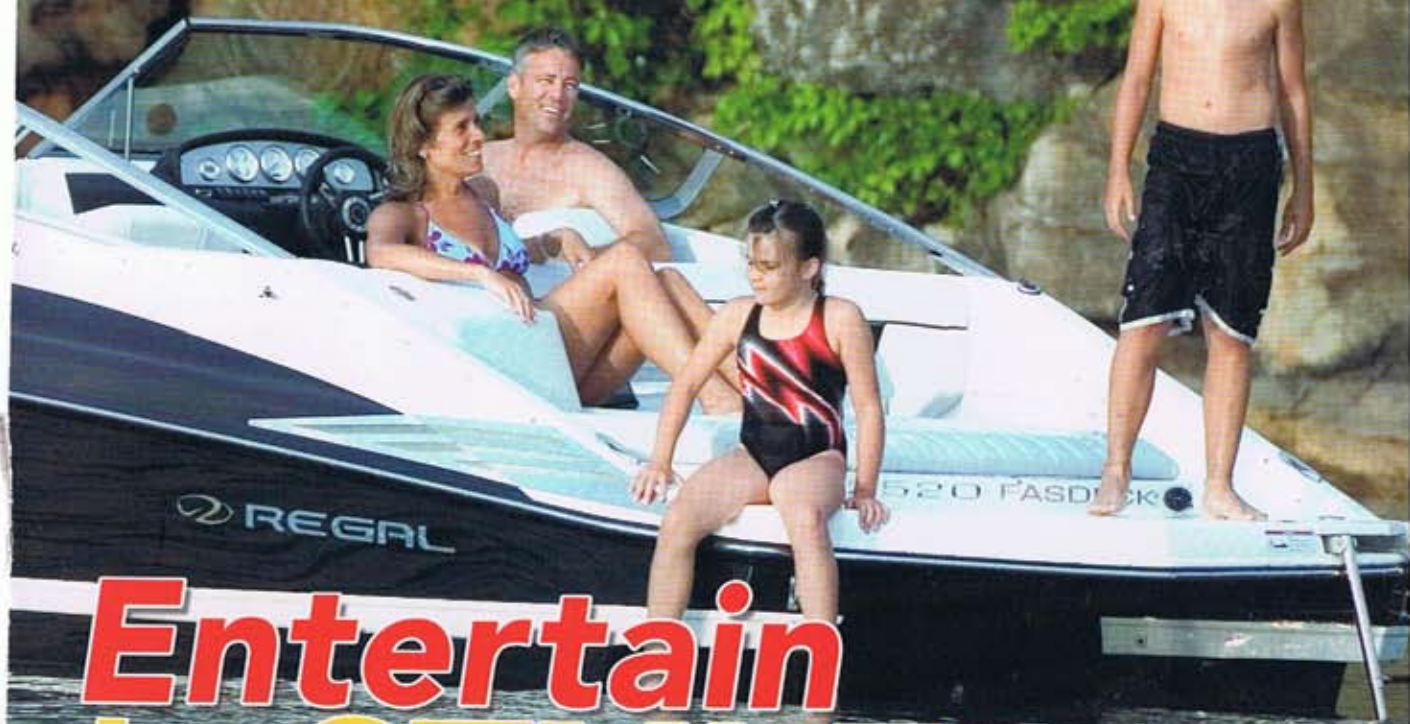


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# impressions | Ebbtide

By Ryan McNally



## Beautiful Day

Ebbtide's new 224 SE combines quality and performance in an affordable package to ensure tons of on-water fun.

It's a beautiful Tennessee day, but there's nary a boat on the horizon since you have the good fortune of boating on a weekday. As you cut the engine and kick back, you can hear the splash-splash of water hitting the hull. It's so peaceful, you can easily imagine catching a snooze on the roomy sunpad. But alas, there's "work" to be done.

In this case, the "work" at hand involves testing Ebbtide's new 224 SE Bow Rider, the biggest bowrider in the company's SE (Special Edition) line. Ebbtide bills the SE line as "the best value in boating," and the 224 SE's base price of \$28,663 with a 225-hp, 5.0L MerCruiser is impressive. So, what do you get for the money?

Your inspection process begins at the swim platform, which extends the boat's overall length from 21 feet 6 inches to 23 feet 2 inches. The platform is roomy and features a four-step

boarding ladder. If you plan on spending time in the water swimming or enjoying watersports, you'll dig it. Also notable is the cooler on the starboard side of the swim platform.

Next up is that "quick release" Sunlounger you were eyeballing earlier. It delivers a generous amount of sunbathing room in proportion to the boat's size, and will be great for catching some rays during a lazy day on the water such as this one. Part of the sunpad flips up to reveal a carpet walk through to the cockpit. It's nicely designed, although you can't angle this part for additional sunbathing comfort like on some more expensive models. The main section of the sunpad lifts up for engine access, and there's good storage space and maneuverability here.

The stern seat runs straight across, and most of it lifts up for storage. There's a pedestal right in front of this

seat for a table that will fit nicely — if a bit snugly — amidst the stern seat, passenger chair and captain's chair. Dinner for five, anyone?

There's webbed storage on either side between the stern seat and passenger/captain's chairs, and a glove box on the passenger side for additional storage for small items. The center ski/wakeboard locker delivers good room, and you get even more storage in the passenger and captain's consoles, though the lack of a changing room or head is a consideration.

Settling into the captain's chair, notable features include tilt steering and a full wraparound windshield. Both the driver and passenger seats are adjustable, flip-up models. Visibility is good at the helm, which isn't particularly flashy but is nicely laid out. Acceleration is solid, as you run from 0 to 30 mph in 7.7 seconds.



Powered by the optional 260-hp, 5.0L MerCruiser MPI, the 224 SE hits a top speed of 52.8 as the scenery along J. Percy Priest Lake rushes by. This man-made lake, located in North Central Tennessee, is named for Percy Priest, who represented Tennessee in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1941 until 1956 and served as the House majority whip from 1949 to 1953. Whipping the 224 through some hard turns, the boat scores high marks. It handles well, feeling solid at wide-open throttle (though the 99-decibel reading is a little loud) and maneuvering nicely. Digging into harder turns at higher speeds results in minor cavitation, which is perfectly normal.

Bringing the boat back down to a quiet idle (62 decibels), you head to the bow. There's room to stretch out, which is



great, and the seating configuration is somewhat rounded, allowing for more-comfortable face-to-face seating than you'd typically see on a bowrider of this size. As expected, storage under the bow seats is modest, but the insulated cooler with drain under the portside bow seat is a nice addition. Anchor storage rounds out this section of the boat.

For a value-priced model, the 224 SE looks great, with appealing graphics and considerably more standard stainless-steel features than you'd expect (the optional midship pull-up cleats and stainless-steel bow scuff plate on the test boat will run you \$145 and \$220, respectively). The JBL sound system with four speakers rocks out impressively throughout the test run.

Ebbtide lists the 224 SE as having a seating capacity of 11, and while that number may be pushing it a little, there's certainly room for at least seven to hang out comfortably. Add in the test boat's optional bimini top and boot (\$585), bow and cockpit covers (\$725), and snap-in cockpit carpet (\$600), and you've got yourself a nice boat for just \$30,938 that should bring you plenty of enjoyment — even when you're out on a weekend with no “work” on the agenda. 🦋

For more boat tests, visit [www.boatingworld.com](http://www.boatingworld.com).



## THE VERDICT

The 224 SE is a great value, delivering strong styling, performance and accoutrements for a reasonable price. The sunpad and swim platform give you plenty of room for lounging on a hot day. You won't find many head-turning innovations here, but you get a solid boat that delivers a lot of opportunities for fun without breaking the bank.

### Ebbtide 224 SE Bow Rider

**LOA** 23'2"  
**Beam** 8'6"  
**Weight** 3,475 lbs.  
**Fuel** 45 gal.  
**Top Speed** 52.8 mph  
 (w/260-hp, 5.0L MerCruiser MPI)  
**0-30 mph** 7.7 seconds  
**Decibels @ Idle** 62 dB-A  
**Decibels @ 30 mph** 91 dB-A  
**Decibels @ WOT** 99 dB-A  
**Base Price** \$28,663  
 (w/220-hp, 5.0L MerCruiser)  
**Price As Tested** \$30,938  
 (w/260-hp, 5.0L MerCruiser MPI)  
**Hull Warranty** Lifetime Limited

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