

Sea Ray 300 Select EX

AS SEEN IN
WORLD'S LARGEST POWERBOAT MAGAZINE
BOATING

Big Day

Moving up and moving out.

The phrase “size matters” is about as clichéd as it gets these days. I’d toss it next to its cousin “bigger is always better” in the “jumped the shark” dustbin. But in the world of bowriders, size does matter and bigger is better. Take the case of the Sea Ray 300 Select EX. It offers all the sportiness of a traditional runabout with enough space to throw a real party onboard.

The 300 Select EX is essentially the new, improved version of Sea Ray’s old 290 Select EX. There’s a lot to like about the 300 version, starting at the helm. The Mercury DTS system allows for smooth as silk transition from neutral to forward and throughout the acceleration range, with no awkward or jerky gear shifts. Note, too, the change from rocker to toggle switches, which Sea Ray says hold up better to weather and repeated use. At the helm of a big beamy bowrider, you don’t have to worry as much about things like wind chop and other boats’ wakes—think of an airplane handling turbulence. Again, size matters. The only advantage a smaller boat has is in trailering; with the 300 Select EX’s 9’8” beam, you’ll need to spring for a towing permit.

From bow to stern the 300 Select EX has features to enhance your comfort. On the transom, the cushioned seats on either side of the walkthrough provide lounging at anchor, a different arrangement than the typical sunpad found on competitors. The fully lined head is easy to clean and well appointed, with a standard vacuum-flush commode. The door has a folding hinge to keep it from banging open and closed. The ski locker hatch is a beefy double-finished component with gas struts to hold it up while you pull toys out of the cavernous compartment lined with grippy PVC diamond thread. Note the dedicated clips for docklines underneath the hatch. Want to spruce the boat up even more? Take a look at the optional extended swim platform, windlass, barbecue grill, and 12-volt refrigerator. —PETE MCDONALD

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	5.0	5.8	3.4	1.5	1.7	173	200	1	70	
1500	6.9	7.9	5.5	1.2	1.4	146	168	2	74	
2000	8.0	9.2	10.2	0.8	0.9	92	106	5	80	
2500	14.5	16.7	16.1	0.9	1.0	105	121	5	84	
3000	25.6	29.5	18.3	1.4	1.6	164	189	2	85	
3500	31.3	36.0	24.7	1.3	1.5	148	171	1	87	
4000	36.3	41.8	35.0	1.0	1.2	121	140	1	90	
4500	41.3	47.5	45.4	0.9	1.0	106	122	1	93	
4800	46.1	53.1	48.7	0.9	1.1	111	128	1	98	

Advertised fuel capacity 130 gallons. Range based on 90 percent of that figure. Performance measured with three persons aboard, three-fifths fuel, no water. Sound levels taken at helm, in dB-A.

LOA	29'6"
Beam	9'8"
Draft (max.)	3'0"
Displacement (lbs., approx.)	7,700
Transom deadrise	21°
Bridge clearance	9'0"
Max. cabin headroom	6'2"
Fuel capacity (gal.)	130
Water capacity (gal.)	24
Price (w/standard power)	\$128,118
Price (w/test power)	\$135,500

TEST BOAT POWER Twin 300-hp MerCruiser 350 MAG MPI V-8 Bravo One DTS gasoline stern drives with 350 cid, swinging 23"-pitch ss propsets through 2.00:1 reductions.

STANDARD EQUIPMENT (major items) Sunbrella cockpit canvas; ss ski-tow-eye; removable cooler; glovebox; electric engine hatch; vacuum-flush head w/20-gal. tank; freshwater shower; two 12v outlets; Clarion AM/FM/CD stereo w/MP3 port, cockpit remote, 6 speakers; high-water bilge alarm; compass; chart-plotter; horn; DTS throttle and binnacle control; SmartCraft gauges; power-assisted steering w/tilt wheel; dual battery switch; fire suppression system; 24-gal. freshwater system; hydraulic trim tabs.

STANDARD POWER Single 375-hp MerCruiser 496 Bravo Three gasoline stern drive.

OPTIONAL POWER Twin MerCruiser gasoline stern drives to 640 hp total or Yanmar diesel stern drives to 440 bhp total.

Monthly Payment \$776

(5.99% interest with 20% down on test boat power, tax not included; 20-year loan to qualified buyers estimated by Excel Credit)

High Points DTS throttle system eases standard operation. Passenger seating has an easy slide-and-lock system to allow for all configurations. The bow cushions flip out on powder-coated aluminum hinges that lock open for hands-free stowage access.

Low Points The aft cockpit drains are recessed under the engine hatch, which allows water to collect. The pie plate to access the head plumbing makes it awkward to reach inside. Carpeted stowage in the bow cockpit will get messy.

Toughest Competitor The Cobalt 302 (\$154,472 with twin 300-hp MerCruiser 350 MAG Bravo One gasoline stern drives) is a top-of-the-line dayboat. The Cobalt is heavier, by about 2,000 pounds, with a deeper V and wider beam, and holds 20 more gallons of fuel. It includes an engine compartment sunpad, flip-out cockpit table, and air compressor. The Sea Ray’s lighter weight makes it faster with less horsepower.

Contact Sea Ray Boats, Dept. B, 2600 Sea Ray Blvd, Knoxville, TN 37914, 800/772-6287, www.searay.com.