

WHAT THE...? LAUNCH RAMP HEAD-SCRATCHERS

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STINGRAY
215LR SPORT DECK

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tested Stingray 215LR Sport Deck



Southern Stingray

Stingray 215LR Sport Deck

A growing trend, if you'll pardon the pun, is that when a boat builder comes up with a successful model, it will capitalize by coming out with a slightly larger model the next year. Stingray did the opposite, creating the 215LR in the image of its bigger bro, the very popular 235LR. But Stingray shrank the boat proportionally, so you'd be hard-pressed to point to a specific area and say, "Here's where they did it."

Unique Features

One design feature on the 215LR that separates it from other boats is the bow area. Successfully integrating an anchor and a bow ladder has baffled most builders, but under the wide, flat bow boarding platform is

BY ALAN JONES

Stingray's clever solution. The company put the ladder on slider rails, so it can be deployed without having to touch the anchor. You can even use the anchor and the ladder at the same time by tying the line off to one of the off-center bow cleats. But doesn't that create an uneven pull in rougher conditions? Bingo. That's why Stingray is one of the few manufacturers to also give you a center-line cleat, not mounted on top, but at the front of the bow. There, was that so difficult?

Some of Stingray's unique features are hidden from sight but are important nonetheless, such as 4-inch blower hoses for quicker evacuation of fumes and a 2-inch fuel hose that allows you to gas up without having to wait for fuel to settle as you

repeatedly click the pump handle for no apparent reason.

Performance

It's no secret that Stingray gets more speed out of its boats than any other mainstream builder, and usually not by a little. A quick check of three other popular boats similar to the 215LR powered by the same 270 hp Volvo Penta 5.0L GXi revealed how great that difference really is. The average top speed of the three was a respectable 47.7 mph. Only one boat was heavier (by 75 lbs.), with the lightest weighing 475 pounds less than the Stingray. All were at least 6 inches shorter. The top speed of the Stingray 215LR was an astonishing 55 mph with more than 400 pounds of boat-tester beef

STINGRAY 215LR SPORT DECK



SPECIFICATIONS

Length	21 ft., 11 in.
Beam	8 ft., 5 in.
Deadrise	19 degrees
Capacity	11 people
Dry Weight	3,705 lbs.
Fuel Capacity	47 gals.

PERFORMANCE

	mph	rpm	dBA
Peak	55.0	5200	91
Cruise	30.0	3000	78
Time to Plane			3.2 secs.
Time to 30 mph			7.6 secs.

POWER

Test	Volvo Penta 270 hp 5.0L GXi
Max hp	270
Cylinders	V-8
Displacement	5.0L
Weight w/outdrive	N/A
WOT Range	4600-5000 rpm
Base Price	w/Volvo Penta 5.0L GXi Alpha outdrive \$41,538

VALUE-ADDED STANDARD FEATURES

Bimini top, compass, LED cockpit lighting, windshield w/side vents, head compartment w/baby changing workspace

MUST-HAVE OPTIONS

Electric or hydraulic trim tabs, stainless steel hardware upgrade, digital depthfinder

BUILDER

Stingray, stingrayboats.com

Circle 16 on reader service card, page 33

FINANCING:

\$298/month w/15% down and 6% interest for 15 years

aboard. That's 7.3 mph faster, on average. Although the Stingray was 1 inch narrower and had at least 1 degree less deadrise than the comparables, there's no question that the main difference was the efficiency of the Z-Plane hull.

Basically, the ZP hull has strakes that act as horizontal planing faces when they're under water, but they don't create the associated turbulence, so the prop has cleaner water to bite into. This fact allows it to use a notched transom — like offshore racers — that allows the outdrive to be mounted higher for less drag. The lift of the Z-Plane hull got us out of the hole quickly, on plane in 3.2 seconds and to 30 mph in 7.6 seconds.

Handling

While some boats have a few speeds where the ride is optimal, we found the 215LR to ride well no matter what velocity we chose. At 30 mph, we achieved synchronicity with the tach that read 3000 rpm, and we moved across the water effortlessly and quietly, measuring only 78 decibels. According to Stingray test reports, it's also where the boat gets the best mileage, at 4.2 mpg.

When cruising in normal sea conditions, most drivers trim up the outdrive fairly high to reduce wetted surface and go faster. Unfortunately, it can make a boat's steering as ineffective as jumping up in a falling elevator. A floating piece of wood on Lake Robinson near Hartsville, S.C., where Stingrays are built, gave us a chance to practice our reflexes and test the ability of the Stingray to turn trimmed up. Both worked pretty well. You can carve very hard turns without any surprises with the 215LR. It only lost a little of its grip when the wheel reached the stop.

Best Uses

Although Stingrays are popular boats among recreational skiers because of their performance, this is the first year you can get one with a

wakeboard tower. This backswept curved aluminum tube tower (\$2,846) is well-anchored and is clean-looking without any knobs or racks. It is also designed so owners can use the standard Bimini top beneath it. For ski storage, there's a deep centerline locker that can be used when the standard snap-in carpet is deployed, thanks to a Velcro-secured flap that stays put.

The 215LR is well-suited for leisure cruising with twin bowrider seats that have perfectly placed grab handles for added security in the deep bow section. There's plenty of room for storage, and loading them up isn't a problem since you can remove the entire seat bottom to gain total access. To ensure a frosty beverage is always within leaning distance, there's a cooler in the step-down from the bow, a carry-on Igloo in the cockpit entertainment center and a large stern bin under the rearward-facing transom rumble seat.

Preferred Setup

Stingray gets you off to a good start, loading up your 215LR with a list of 27 value-added standard features that most builders call options. It's called the Convenience Package and has a value of \$4,389. Some of the more notable freebies are the 180-watt MB-Quart stereo, compass tilt steering with an Italian sports wheel, a cockpit table with dedicated storage in the engine compartment and hand-held showers at the bow and stern, which also helps keep the interior clean.

A great option for both of the standard flip-up bolster crew seats is adjustable-height pedestals (\$169). Another must-have option for the same price is the Porta Potti with dockside pumpout. For \$323, you can take total control of the stereo with bow and stern remote controls. And for added comfort, include the snap-in carpet (\$377) and filler cushions in the bow (\$269) and in the aft walk-through (\$289).

tested Stingray 215LR Sport Deck

Owner Feedback

Donald and Katharine Carek, Chapel Hill, N.C.

PURCHASED AT CHATLEE BOAT AND MARINE, SANFORD, N.C.

What we liked:

- Huge head compartment
- Easy-to-tow size
- Fantastic ride
- Quality of the fit and finish
- Easy to board from the stern or bow

What we would change:

I wish there was a flat spot in the dash where I could flush mount a VHF radio.

Why we bought it:

I'm in the Coast Guard Auxiliary and spend a lot of time on the water, so I get to see a lot of boats and knew what I wanted. One of the things I

like about the Stingray 215 LR is the huge head compartment, which was roomier than those on many larger boats. The 215 is really well built. There are no squeaks or banging, and there's great attention to detail as evidenced by items like the snaps on the cover that fit perfectly. It planes quickly and has a fantastic ride with great ergonomics for the driver and riders. My wife and I like to ski and go on night cruises on the Intracoastal. We



also trailer our boat a lot to places such as Clearwater, Fla., and we eventually hope to visit every lake in North Carolina as well as head to the Keys this summer. **BW**



IN BRIEF: FEATURES

- 1 Wide bow section has loads of legroom
- 2 Sporty Italian steering wheel comes standard
- 3 Bow walkthrough makes it easy to board
- 4 Cavernous head compartment even has baby changing area
- 5 Clever bow ladder arrangement allows anchor use
- 6 Pop-up hatch gives you more headroom when entering head compartment

