

Salt Water

SPORTSMAN

OFFSHORE ISSUE!

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NorthCoast 280 CC

An unpretentious 28-foot center-console focused on big-water fishability.

By Alex Suescun

LENGTH: 28'

BEAM: 9'1"

DRAFT: 17"

DEADRISE: 24 degrees

FUEL: 182 gal.

WEIGHT: 4,800 lb.

MAX HP: 600

PRICE: Starting at \$145,755 with twin 200 hp motors

NORTHCOAST BOATS: northcoastboats.com



TOUTED BY THE BUILDER AS A CANYON RUNNER'S DREAM, NORTHCOAST'S REDESIGNED FLAGSHIP—THE 280 CC—IS BUILT WITH THE hardcore offshore angler in mind, endowed with the brawn to take on rough seas, and more than enough range to safely make it to the canyons and back.

▶▶ Its solid fiberglass bottom and FRP grid system translate into maximum rigidity and durability, while the deep-V design and 24 degrees of deadrise ensure the boat slices through waves with ease and instills confidence in any conditions. Meanwhile, the 17-inch draft enables crossing shallow bays to catch bait or reach spots difficult to access by most boats this size.

Frills would be out of character on a NorthCoast. Instead, aboard the 280 CC you'll find what any serious angler really needs, including ample storage, lots of space, and an integral transom for comfortable fishing. Mission-specific design, however, doesn't mean sacrificing functionality and efficiency in the selection of features that make fishing easier and more effective.

There's a dedicated anchor locker with windlass up front, low-profile bow rails that stretch aft to amidships, U-shaped forward seating with storage lockers to port and starboard, and a cavernous in-floor storage compartment between them.

The sturdy center console leaves room for a removable cooler in front, and features a forward seat with grab rails on both sides and a full windshield, easily enhanced with optional curtains should inclement weather demand extra protection.

At the helm, there's a Ritchie compass, hydraulic steering, dual switch panels, DC power plug, trim-tab switches, and sufficient real estate for a 16-inch multifunction display, plus stereo or VHF radio.

TEST CONDITIONS

WEATHER

Cloudy with rain

LOCATION

Grant-Valkaria, Florida

WIND

ENE 25 knots

SEA STATE

4- to 5-foot chop

TEST LOAD

Two adults,
50 gallons of fuel



1



2



3



4

① The functional bow area includes plenty of rod holders. ② The cockpit is all business, with a fishing-efficient layout. ③ A 16-inch MFD blends seamlessly into the helm station, with ample room left for digital gauges and other controls. ④ Rod holders along the aft edge of the T-top put tackle within arm's reach.

5-foot waves offered the ideal proving ground to put the NorthCoast through its paces, providing real-world insight into the boat's performance while also bearing testament to its seaworthiness.

Powered by a pair of Honda's new BF250s, the 280 CC displayed impressive hole shot, averaging 7.4 seconds from zero to 30 mph, including sample runs against the stiff wind. Midrange and top-end acceleration also proved stellar, helping the center-console surpass 53 mph in a jiffy.

Just as remarkable, however, was the ride. The boat seemed to jump from one wave to the next, smoothly riding the crests with both head and following seas, never pounding or slamming, and without any noticeable rattling.

Though hard to judge under the circumstances (clearly the wind had an effect), maneuverability appeared to be top-notch.

The head compartment, inside the console, comes equipped with a fresh-water washdown system and Sealand portable toilet with 29-gallon holding tank and macerator.

The cockpit has everything offshore fishing calls for: a sizable in-floor fish box with macerator, three oval live-wells (a 91-gallon in-floor to starboard, a 20-gallon on the center transom and a 25-gallon in back of the leaning-post-style helm seat, both lighted with clear lids and calming blue interiors), plus a bait-prep surface with rig and tool storage on the rim, and tackle trays on both sides of the helm seating.

A portside transom door helps bring large fish aboard and provides access to the integrated swim platform with boarding ladder, while raw- and fresh-water washdowns help keep the deck spick-and-span and the crew cool.

Rod storage aboard the 28-footer is generous. Aside from the eight flush-mount holders on the covering boards and transom, horizontal racks cradle three more rods on each gunwale,

and there's an in-floor locker to stow additional outfits.

The helm seating backrest has four rocket launchers, and five more line the aft edge of the T-top, which also includes an electronics box and mounting space for outriggers, a VHF antenna and a radome.

Close inspection completed, we took the 28-footer to the Indian River, just south of Melbourne, Florida, where we hoped to fit in a sea trial on the Intracoastal Waterway before the arrival of a brewing front.


But the instant we launched, dark clouds moved in, and we were pelted by 30 mph gusts that quickly churned waters to a froth.

The high winds and

Also noteworthy, little spray made it over the gunwales.

Back ashore, after jumping out of my foul-weather gear, I was still in awe of how well the 28-footer handled in such extreme conditions. Amazingly enough, there would be no need for a dentist or a chiropractor.

Coastal fishing enthusiasts looking for a moderately priced battlewagon tuned to the needs of nearshore and offshore angling owe it to themselves to give the NorthCoast 280 CC serious consideration. ☺



HONDA BF250S

PERFORMANCE

SPRINT 'R CRUISE
The NorthCoast tops 54 mph, and cruises at 35.6 mph for over 370 miles.

RPM	MPH	GPH
3,500	29.4	15.8
4,000	35.6	17.4
4,500	40.4	23.2
5,000	45.0	29.2
6,100	54.2	45.8