

Sea Ray 185 Bowrider

Brief Summary

The 185 BR is the quintessential bowrider design. Though her layout is traditional with twin jump seats in the cockpit, her styling and lines are very much contemporary.

Price

Base Price

Prices, features, designs, and equipment are subject to change. Please see your local dealer or visit the builder's website for the latest information available on this boat model.

Key Features

The most notable feature of the 185 is its choice of three seating plans: retro with twin back-to-back fold down lounges and jumpseats on either side of the engine box; semi-retro with one lounge and one pedestal helm seat; or contemporary with twin pedestal seats and an aft bench seat. Other key features include a huge insole locker for skis and boards, high-end burl dash, and integral (not bolted on) swim platform. See Detailed Info for more.

Test Results

| RPM | MPH | Knots | GPH | MPG | NMPG | STAT. MILE | NM | dBa |
|------|------|-------|-----|------|------|------------|-----|-----|
| 1000 | 5.2 | 4.5 | 1 | 5.42 | 4.71 | 127 | 110 | 77 |
| 1500 | 7.1 | 6.2 | 2.3 | 3.09 | 2.68 | 72 | 63 | 82 |
| 2000 | 9 | 7.8 | 3.5 | 2.56 | 2.22 | 60 | 52 | 81 |
| 2500 | 20.9 | 18.2 | 4.3 | 4.86 | 4.23 | 114 | 99 | 83 |
| 3000 | 27.7 | 24 | 5.7 | 4.85 | 4.22 | 114 | 99 | 85 |
| 3500 | 34.7 | 30.2 | 8.6 | 4.03 | 3.51 | 94 | 82 | 85 |

| RPM | MPH | Knots | GPH | MPG | NMPG | STAT. MILE | NM | dBa |
|------|------|-------|------|------|------|------------|----|-----|
| 4000 | 42 | 36.5 | 11.1 | 3.8 | 3.31 | 89 | 77 | 88 |
| 4500 | 45.6 | 39.6 | 14.5 | 3.14 | 2.73 | 74 | 64 | 95 |
| 4750 | 45.6 | 39.6 | 15.1 | 3.02 | 2.62 | 71 | 61 | 98 |

[View the test results in metric units](#)

[Searay 185 brochure.jpg](#)

Specifications

| | |
|------------------|-------------|
| Length Overall | 18' 6" |
| BEAM | 7' 6" |
| Dry Weight | 2,800 lbs. |
| Tested Weight | |
| Draft | 3' 1" (max) |
| Draft Up | |
| Draft Down | |
| Air Draft | |
| Deadrise/Transom | N/A |
| Max Headroom | open boat |
| Bridge Clearance | N/A |

| | |
|---------------------------------|---------|
| Weight Capacity | |
| Person Capacity | |
| Fuel Capacity | 26 gal. |
| Water Capacity | none |
| Length on Trailer | |
| Height on Trailer | |
| Trailer Weight | |
| Total Weight | |
| Aft Deck | |
| Salon Inside Width | |
| Salon Fore & Aft | |
| Salon Height | |
| Salon Volume | |
| Galley Volume | |
| Master SR Width | |
| Master SR fore & Aft | |
| Master SR Overhead | |

| | |
|------------------|--|
| Master SR Volume | |
| Eng. Room Volume | |

Acceleration Times & Conditions

| | |
|---------------|--|
| Time to Plane | 3.9 sec. |
| 0 to 20 | |
| Ratio | 1.5:1 |
| Props | 14x23 3-blade aluminum |
| Load | 1 person, 3/4 fuel, no water, min. gear |
| Climate | 91 deg., 45% humid., wind: 10 knots; seas: 1 foot chop |

A Class Act

Tested by Capt. Chris Kelly

Sea Ray's 185 BR is a sleek, sporty bowrider that has a well-built beefy feel that belies her surprising performance. Like most bowriders in this class, the 185 has forward-facing lounge seats in the bow for sunning or riding underway. Unlike the others, however, Sea Ray has molded in a unique recess in the fiberglass to accommodate your arm while gripping the grabrail at speed. And that's just one difference that sets the 185 apart.

Unique Features

The big difference is the boat's flexible seating plan. Years ago, the traditional bowrider had back-to-back fold-down lounges in the cockpit, with two more jump seats on either side of the engine box. That retro look is still available here (as you'll see in the video of our test boat), but in keeping with modern times that layout is an option. Standard is the more contemporary plan featuring two pedestal helm chairs forward of an aft benchseat for three. A second option is a combination of the two, where you get the jumpseats, the motorbox, and only one lounge plus pedestal seat. So the boat allows you to choose just the amount of "retro" that fits your needs.

Layout

Though the retro seating plan is traditional, I welcome the contemporary version as it involves much less fussing around on the owner's part. It was not particularly easy to lower the back-to-back lounges, or to lift the jump seats out from their bases and insert them on either side of the motorbox to create a big sunpad. In contrast, the contemporary layout already has a big sunpad in place atop the engine and the twin pedestal seats don't need to be moved. But as with all things boating, it comes down to a tradeoff—in this case, the number of seats and sunning areas you need. The traditional layout gives you three sunlounges in the cockpit, seating for six, and more usable floor space, while the contemporary layout gets you one big sunpad and seating for five. So in the end, the choice comes down to your needs and personal preference.

Swim Platform

In all cases, we found the integral—not add-on—swim platform plenty long to serve as a good staging area for skiers and boarders, and the three-rung stainless steel ladder makes it easy to get back into the boat. It's also easy to stow all your watertoys, thanks to a deep four-foot-long locker in the cockpit sole that's big enough to handle life jackets, skis, boards, and towlines, as well as fenders and docklines.

Engine Access

You'll need to make another choice of retro vs. contemporary when it comes to engine access, which is good in either case. On the retro version, the motorbox does extend slightly into the cockpit, and it's a two-part process to reach the engine. First, flip up the sunpad aft (easy to do thanks to gas-assist struts), then fold the engine box forward, which takes up even more room in the cockpit. On the contemporary version, however, you lift the sunpad with one hand and get direct access to the powerplant, which was the standard 190-hp MerCruiser 4.3L MCM carbureted version hitched to an Alpha One drive and 14x23 3-blade aluminum prop.

Performance

With the standard power package we got a top end speed of 45.6 mph—plenty for most applications—and an even more impressive hole shot of just 3.9 seconds which is an important consideration for skiing. Opting for the 220-hp 4.3 MPI might get you a bit more on the top end if you need it, but unless you're taking a few linebackers out waterskiing, the standard power should do the trick just fine.

No matter how you configure the boat, a quick tour at your dealer's showroom will reveal high-quality details like the gas-struts and the burl dash where some other builders give you bare poles and fiberglass. All in all the 185 BR is a class act with enough heft to show your passengers a smooth ride and a great time even in rough lake conditions.