

Addictive Bass Boats



NOTABLE FEATURES

- Tackle storage center is adjustable to handle extra tackle boxes and has individual slots for rods.
- A stainless-steel grab handle, stainless trim around the throttle and stainless trim around rubber nonskid surfaces raised the bling factor to a classy, functional level.
- The bow console holds a GPS/bottom finder and trim switch.
- Rod hatch is propped up by gas shocks.
- Latches and hinges are durable and highly polished.



PHOTOS: COURTESY RANGER (2); RANDY VANCE

Broad casting decks and dedicated tackle storage make the Z520 Comanche a superb fisher.

➤ RANGER Z520 COMANCHE

By Randy Vance

We tested the FLW-wrapped Castrol Z520 Comanche on a cool, windy day just 48 hours before it became one of the stars at the FLW event on Lake Toho near Kissimmee, Florida. We were surprised that they allowed even an experienced boating editor to take it away from the corral of spiffy new Z520s before this important competition.

So, tournament ready, this one had four batteries, an onboard charger, a trolling motor, a jack plate and a full tank of gas. Most speed tests are done with a minimal gear load, but this one pegged the GPS at nearly 75 mph. We

did break 75 mph after one person was dropped off at the dock.

A performance bass boat can be picky about prop and engine setup, and when we saw a 24-inch Raker wouldn't get this one past 72 mph, we stepped up to a 25-inch Raker. Suddenly, the boat was like a baby, happy to have candy in its fist. It hit every rpm notch with an easygoing attitude that made the speed a pleasure to drive. Upwind, downwind, in the chop and with it, the Comanche did exactly what we asked.

Even in turns at moderate speeds, the Comanche pulled around without chine tripping. Steady as a rock to the last mile per hour, we enjoyed the speed and its ability to remain stable

crossing wakes.

Ranger's hulls are all foam-filled for level, upright flotation, even if swamped. But the construction technique also bends the boat for a one-piece solid feel.

Our test showed that the Ranger Z520 Comanche performs well with the Evinrude E-Tec 250 HO. Other Z520 engine options are a Yamaha 250 or a Mercury OptiMax 250. This past fall, at a different site and under different conditions, the Yamaha version reached a top speed of 71 mph.

On the bow, we liked the recessed pedal for the trolling motor. We also liked the easy access to batteries, charger and fuel tanks in the bilge. Also

noted was a reboarding ladder that was easily deployable from the water. Falling overboard during a full day of stand-up fishing isn't unheard of, and we appreciated the nod to safety. Sporty rails at the transom look like trim but they assist in reboarding.

If you buy a boat from the outside in, the Comanche is hard to pass up because it's trimmed with durable, polished stainless steel. Even the latches are jewel quality and tough, too. All of it ideally accents the metal-flake gelcoat. The plush, pile carpet with padding to

ease the back and legs was functional, not just snazzy.

Ranger packages the Z520 with a custom trailer sporting fiberglass-flared fenders and matching metal-flake accents.

If you want a downside, you'll have to take a peek at yourself.

At a Glance

Performance with bling. The Z520 has a fast, gutsy ride and a snazzy look. The helm has a full array of instrumentation plus a cool, contoured seat.

RANGER Z520 COMANCHE

VITAL STATS	TEST DRIVE
<p>n LENGTH OVERALL: 20'9"</p> <p>n BEAM: 7'11" n DRY WEIGHT (LESS MOTOR): 1,850 LB. n LOAD CAPACITY (PEOPLE, GEAR, MOTOR): 1,650 LB. n FUEL CAPACITY: 48 GAL. n MAXIMUM HP: 250 n MSRP (W/ EVINRUDE E-TEC 250 HO): \$60,440</p>	<p>n TEST ENGINE: EVINRUDE E-TEC 250 HO n TEST PROP: 25" RAKER</p> <p>n TEST LOAD: PEOPLE (400 LB.): FUEL (53 GAL.) n TOP SPEED: 74.5 MPH @ 5,500 RPM n TIME TO 30 MPH: 7.1 SEC. n TIME TO 50 MPH: 13.7 SEC. n MINIMUM PLANING SPEED: 20.4 MPH @ 2,100 RPM</p>

MORE ON THIS BOAT: Circle #134 on p. 99

more online

- See the full power range.
- Get the complete acceleration data.
- Compare with other bass boats.

Go to: boatinglife.com/boats and select Ranger Z520 Comanche.