

Robalo R180 (2019-)

Brief Summary

The R180 is the smallest boat in the Robalo line of center consoles and she is intended to compete with low price-point boats in her size range. But unlike some other affordable boats, on the R180 we found lots of stainless steel and other details that are often omitted. She may not be quite the lowest-priced boat on the market but we do find the R180 to be a compelling tradeoff between price, features, and function.

Price

Base Price \$32495.00

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

- Aluminum framed acrylic windshield with SS grab rail
- Storage on top of the console with drains
- Aft jump seats with folding backrests & custom SS hardware
- Diamond Lustre non-skid surfaces
- Premium expanded and stain-resistant cockpit upholstery vinyl
- 15-gallon livewell in aft cockpit
- Bilge pump with automatic switch
- Three-step telescoping boarding ladder with handle concealed under a fiberglass hatch

Test Results

RPM	MPH	Knots	GPH	MPG	NMPG	STAT. MILE	NM	dBa
700	2.7	2.3	0.25	10.6	9.22	477	415	59
1000	3.8	3.3	0.5	7.6	6.61	342	297	62
1500	5.5	4.8	0.8	6.88	5.98	309	269	69

RPM	MPH	Knots	GPH	MPG	NMPG	STAT. MILE	NM	dBa
2000	6.8	5.9	1.35	5.04	4.38	227	197	76
2500	7.6	6.6	2.2	3.43	2.98	154	134	82
3000	8.9	7.7	3.6	2.47	2.15	111	97	88
3500	20.1	17.4	3.8	5.28	4.59	237	206	86
4000	25.5	22.1	4.9	5.19	4.52	234	203	88
4500	30	26	6.25	4.79	4.17	216	188	88
5000	33.9	29.4	7.45	4.54	3.95	204	178	86
5500	37.9	32.9	9.2	4.11	3.59	185	161	84
6000	41.1	35.7	10.4	3.95	3.43	178	154	82

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

[robal_180_chart.jpg](#)

Specifications

Length Overall	18' 4" 5.59 m
BEAM	8' 0" 2.44 m
Dry Weight	2,600 lbs. 1,179 kg w/engs
Tested Weight	
Draft	

Draft Up	11" 0.28 m
Draft Down	27" 0.69 m
Air Draft	
Deadrise/Transom	18 deg.
Max Headroom	open
Bridge Clearance	8' 0" 2.44 m w/ T-top
Weight Capacity	
Person Capacity	
Fuel Capacity	50 gal. 189 L
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	3.8 sec.
0 to 20	
Ratio	
Props	13.5 x 19 x 3
Load	2 persons, 3/4 fuel, no water, minimal gear
Climate	56 deg.; 35% humidity; wind: 0 mph; seas; calm

By Capt. Steve

Rebal R180 type unknown

The R180 has high freeboard that adds to the boat's feeling of security. She also has good handling characteristics and you can take her into skinny water.

A Boat on a Mission

With heavy competition in the 18' (5.49 m) center console market, Robalo seems to have come up with an interesting mix of design features that should make her appeal to the offshore angler who wants a decent-quality coastal fishing boat at an affordable price. Because she only draws 11" with the outboard up, with the addition of a trolling motor, you also have a flats boat.

Robalo R180 type unknown

The test R180 had the optional black color band that made the boat look really slick in our opinion.

Distinguishing Features

Let's take a look at what separates the R180 from the pack:

- **Not Lightweight.** The R180 measures in at 2,150 lbs. (1,179 kg) dry, without an engine. Most 18' center consoles weigh between 1,700-2,100 lbs. (771-952 kg), so that means the R180 is at the high end of the scale. This is a significant distinction because the price-point boats tend to be on the light side. It becomes evident that Robalo holds nothing back in the build quality of its entry-level center console.
- **High Freeboard.** As already noted, the Robalo 180 has a high freeboard, one of the highest in the industry no matter what price point. This is one of the main reasons that it weighs more than other boats in class. The R180 is also a bit beamier than a number of boats in class which also adds to weight and stability.
- **Reasonably Priced Options.** Here's an area where a builder typically makes up for the lower price. Many builders have expensive options, or option packages that create a margin that may not be in the base MSRP. Apparently, Robalo didn't get the memo as I find its optional extras to be quite reasonably priced.
- **Owned by a Publicly Traded Company.** Of the 50 or so center console brands on the market, the only other one owned by a publicly traded company making center consoles, that I can think of, is Brunswick. Marine Products Corporation is the parent of Robalo as well as Chaparral, one of the most respected names in sportboats. While there are no absolutes in this business, if I owned a Robalo I would feel a bit more secure with my investment knowing that there are some financial oversights of the builder. And, because Marine Products Corporation also makes sportboats there is bound to be

some positive cross-pollination of design and engineering ideas.

A Look at the Trailer

Before the test, I had the opportunity to take a look at the R180 while she was still out of the water and there were some features to take note of. She had an 18-degree deadrise which is pretty standard. She has single lifting strakes on each side of the keel and reverses chines that should add stability while casting on a drift. More interesting was the flat keel pad running along the bottom. This is part of what Robalo calls its “Hydro Lift” hull design that should give quicker planing times, a higher top speed, and a more docile turning characteristic. We'll see...

Robalo R180 type unknown

Notice the flat keel. While the test boat was equipped with the optional trim tabs, I never touched them. The aluminum trailer is standard.

Performance and Handling

On the water, I found the R180 to be a pleasure to operate. She was very responsive to the helm, and while we had a flat calm day to test in, it was easy to find wakes to carve through and the R180 performed quite well. Launching off waves, she held a nice even keel and made a gentle stern first reentry that kept me in control and comfortable. Even crossing the wake from the side had a stable feel. Doing hard-over “test captain” turns was equally comfortable but was met with a little ventilation; however, it's rare that you'd operate this way. Normal turns were a non-event.

Robalo R180 type unknown

When pushing through waves, the R180 throws water low and off to the sides. For that reason I failed at my attempts to soak the windscreen.

The Numbers

With the 115-hp Yamaha 4-stroke powering our test boat we reached a top speed at 6000 rpm of 41.1 mph. At that speed, we were burning just 10.4 gph for a range of 178 miles. Best cruise came in at 3500 rpm and 20.1 mph. At that speed, we were burning only 3.8 gph for a range of 237 miles. However, I found that the R180 felt most comfortable at 4000 rpm, and 25.5 mph. That's where my hand settled on the throttle more often than not, and since that speed generated only an additional 1.1 gph fuel burn at the cost of only 3 miles to the endurance, that's probably where you'll be cruising, too.

Robalo R180 type unknown

The short version of the R180 test results show a reasonable best cruise and a more comfortable higher speed cruise. Since there's such a small economic penalty you may find it more to your liking.

Thanks to the flat keel providing additional lift, we had a quick time to plane of 3.8 seconds. Acceleration was average with the 115-hp power plant as we reached 20 mph in 8.1 seconds and cruised through 30 mph in 12.1 seconds.

Features Walkthrough

Engine Choices.

Starting at the stern, the R180 doesn't come with a standard engine, per se, but the base price reflects the 115-hp Yamaha 4-stroke and a 150-hp Yamaha is a second option. I found the 115-hp to be perfectly adequate for the mission of this boat. I mean let's face it... You're not going to be heading to the canyons in this boat; you'll be sticking to coastal areas. A larger engine will get you there faster, but is it really what you want to do?

Rebalo R180 type unknown

We tested the R180 with 115 horses, but the boat will take up to 150. The larger engine weighs 62 lbs. more.

Stern

The stern of the R180 is pretty nicely laid out. There is a non-skid casting deck that runs across the whole stern, and it's wide enough for me to feel secure even in a light chop. As you step off the casting deck, you can lift up both sides to reveal jump seats. As I settled into one of these seats, I was pleased to see that the security of the leaning post was right within reach, and I was also able to brace my foot against the base for two points of security when the going gets rough. In the center of the two jump seats is a 15-gallon (56.78 L) livewell, colored blue and with round edges to reduce the shock to your live bait. A three-step reboarding ladder is to starboard.

Rebalo R180 type unknown

With the aft seatbacks flipped down you have a relatively large elevated casting deck. A livewell is in the center.

Rebalo R180 type unknown

You'll feel nice and secure in the jump seats. I could hang on and use my foot against the leaning post to brace myself for my mock ride through heavy seas. Bring it on!

Helm Area

The leaning post features optional powder-coated rails and a 72-quart (68.14 L) cooler with a ruler molded into the top. It's held securely in place with brackets and bungees, and the seat is high enough to allow you to access the cooler without having to remove it from its mounts. The leaning post is just the right distance from the helm and gives you enough room to stand behind the wheel and remain comfortable while still operating from the seated position. There's a footrest at the bottom of the post, but I'd also like to see a recessed footrest in the console. (I did find that there was room for it when looking inside the console itself.)

Rebalo R180 type unknown

Not only was there enough room to stand behind the helm but driving while sitting was quite comfy too.

The Console.

There's a large amount of stainless steel around this console for a boat trying to maintain its cost-effectiveness. The wheel is center mounted in the console and there's plenty of room to mount a 12" (30.5 cm) display in the center of the panel. Clutter is kept to a minimum thanks to the standard Yamaha digital multi-function gauges. At the top of the console, a compass is center-mounted with two small storage areas to either side that are rubber-matted and self-draining. To both sides of the console, you will find vertical rod storage.

Rebalo R180 type unknown

Notice how the windshield is framed by ss rails that form grab handles at both sides of the helm.

Inside the Console

I measured 23" (58.4 cm) from the console to the gunwale on each side. This is unusually wide clearance for an 18' boat. Around the front of the console is the usual seating that is found on nearly every center console on the planet. The front of the console swings open to reveal a storage area that was fitted with the optional Porta-Potti on our test boat. The compartment has ample artificial light and is large enough for sitting headroom only. None of the bulkheads are padded, but there's a clothes/lifejacket rack overhead and a grab handle on the inside bottom of the door. I would like to see a magnetic catch to hold the door in the open position. I can think of only a couple of other center consoles which have access doors in the forward quadrant of the console and this design has its advantages, particularly for portly anglers.

At the Bow

The bow area features, what is in effect, two casting areas. The lower casting deck has a hatch over the 25 1/2-gallon (96.5 L) fish box/cooler that drains overboard. You can also step up onto the forepeak to find a higher casting deck to use while in calm water. I felt completely secure standing on this elevated platform and all that was missing was the rod in my hands. In the center of the deck is an anchor locker that's fitted

with an anchor keeper to hold your Danforth securely in place.

Robalo R180 type unknown

With this fishbox/cooler closed, you have a secure casting area. Notice how the grab handles come well forward.

Robalo R180 type unknown

On a calm day, the full non-skid foredeck makes an elevated casting platform, perfect for cast netting. Notice the wide hatch to the anchor locker.

Options and Pricing

The Robalo R180 comes nicely equipped with the Yamaha 115-horsepower 4-stroke plus trailer for a base price of \$32,495. I use the term "nicely equipped" as you can pretty much take this boat fishing right from the dealership floor, but there are some notable options that I would consider.

Center consoles are not well known for the amount of shading they provide and for that reason, I would at least get a Bimini top and boot. If you want to get a little more extreme, and of course good looking, there's an aluminum T-top with canvas available. Whether you install electronics or not, a console cover is a must-have. Robalo offers a Garmin 740 GPS fishfinder with a 7" (17.8 cm) display.

In the utility category, a custom anchor is available. If you don't plan on using the upper deck at the bow for casting then you may want to consider the full-welded bow rail. The R180 can be pre-wired for a trolling motor which would make the dual battery charger a good idea. The boat only draws 11" with the outboard engine up, so with a trolling motor, you can venture onto the flats. (Make sure your trolling motor will reach the water.) Our test boat was equipped with the optional trim tabs but I never touched them.

Robalo R180 type unknown

The R180 is a boat that looks almost as good as it feels to be on.

Recommendations

I've seen a lot of center consoles over the years and they all start to blend together, but there are several features that make the Robalo R180 a standout in my mind. While she may not be the lowest-priced 18' CC boat on the market, she is quite reasonably priced and you get a lot of added value for \$2 to \$3k more, in my opinion.

What you are getting in addition to the clever design features, such as the front-opening center console, and the casting platforms both on the bow and the stern, is the hefty displacement and increased freeboard. Both of these aspects make this boat more offshore capable, to my mind.

Yet, performance is not encumbered because of the boat's 18-degree deadrise and her keel pad. Further, because of her minimum draft of 11", gear up, with the addition of a trolling motor, you can take her into skinny water just like a bay or flats boat. That added utility is another reason why I think this boat is a good investment.