

Riviera 45

Open Flybridge Convertible

An entertainer's sportfisher

Text by Tracey Whiteford





The name Riviera speaks for itself. Anyone who has owned or had the opportunity to cruise on one will be aware of the brand's aura of pure luxury, built to the highest quality industry standards. After spending time overseas, I became aware that *Riviera* is not just an Australian phenomenon, but also very popular in Florida. Why? Because the *Riviera* boat is designed for indulgence, while still remaining a practical cruiser. In particular, the *Riviera 45 Open Flybridge Convertible*, with its comfortable cabins and long-range fuel capacity, ensures that a trip to the outer islands of the Bahamas or anywhere in the world is an enjoyable experience.

For an in-depth knowledge of the *Riviera* products, I highly recommend experiencing firsthand the *Riviera* factory in Coomera, Queensland. This understanding is priceless when making a million dollar decision. My personal experience of the 45 will provide an insight into one of the latest off the *Riviera* production line, especially for those who didn't get the chance to see it themselves at Sanctuary Cove or Sydney boat shows.

As we walk down the rain-drenched dock on the Gold Coast, I'm concerned that the weather may put a damper on my experience. Much to the contrary – other than not being able to catch some rays, it is an enjoyably dry adventure. Boarding via the swim platform onto the teak deck, I feel a familiar feeling of excitement; the one that you get when you know you've just stepped onto a safe, solid boat and are facing an adventure full of possibilities. The minimalist layout of the aft deck is deceiving. Hatches are discreetly placed and smooth surfaces hide a live fish tank, sink and ice holder, leaving plenty of room to fish, prep for a dive/snorkel, or simply entertain. There is access to the bow on either side, with plenty of safety rail, and an option to have a tender

cradle and crane on the foredeck. The anchor, seawater washdown tap, stainless cleats and fairleads are all standard.

One of the first design features pointed out to me is the hinged hopper window on the aft deck, connecting to the saloon and allowing for an "al fresco" atmosphere. These windows are found on the 45 Flybridge, 56 Enclosed Flybridge and two Sport Yachts. For the skeptics out there, never fear that fumes will spoil the atmosphere in the saloon - an underwater exhaust system is fitted to reduce fumes and engine noise. The engines are precisely placed in their engine room liner below the hatch, which is cleverly positioned as you step into the interior. When you choose either the Caterpillar C9 / C12 or Cummins QSM11 engines, the engine room liner is set accordingly – a neat, compact space allowing easy access to and from.

My first sighting of the interior affords crisp, clean and modern lines. The 45 carries all the amenities we're unable to live without, even on a boat. The galley is equipped with a drawer fridge and freezer, stove-top, sink and rubbish drawer. Given a choice, I would have the local restaurant cook up my catch and not make a mess of the spotless countertops, but if you'd like to create your own masterpieces, the galley has everything you'll need. Attention to detail has been lavished on storage for glasses, coffee mugs and even the square liquor bottles have carved perspex homes within the drawers. There is plenty of room for six to dine in comfort at the expandable dining table. Afterwards, adjourn to the L-shaped couch opposite to relax and watch a home video of the day's activities.

The access to mechanical equipment spaces has been thoughtfully placed. The machinery room and bulk storage can be entered through the floor of the galley or via a door in the port cabin, allowing immediate

hands-on access to the water heater, air conditioning handlers, bilge pump, shower box, battery chargers, inverter and fresh water systems.

The three cabins are appointed with quality finishes and natural light is a feature throughout. Storage is always an issue on boats in the 45's size range, but this has been carefully addressed. The two bathrooms are comfortable and practical with porcelain inlaid sinks, frameless shower doors and Vacuflush toilets. Let's be realistic - we aren't on the boat to spend time in the cabins, but it will be a very comfortable sleep surrounded by cherry wood varnished walls.

The exciting part for me is up the teak stairs leading from the aft deck - the helm on the flybridge. On the way up, and in fact throughout the boat, there are sufficient railings and safety handles - offering great security when the engines are thrust to full speed. Once through the hatchway, the first thing I want to do is jump into one of the two white helm chairs. Spread out before them is an impressive array of electronics displayed on the high moulded helm station. Raymarine is the optimal choice for the electronics package, with room for two 12-inch display units, and everything at arm's reach. Once behind the wheel, I feel in charge of a very solid and sporty performance boat.

The view forward fools me into believing I'm on a yacht in the Med. The L-shaped lounge has a table that lowers to make room for a primely positioned sunbed. The bar fridge and extra day sofa allows an enjoyable ride for a group of eight without having to venture down the stairs.

The wet weather on this day is a good opportunity to test the clears, that were watertight the whole way. The only issue is the fogging which hinders our view; I will put that down to my two male companions' heavy breathing whilst in the flybridge! Air conditioning would fix this minor hitch. The boat in question does not have flybridge air con, but it can be arranged. Speaking of which, there is separate air con in the saloon, master stateroom (split to the ensuite) and a system split between the starboard and port cabins and second bathroom. This allows for lots of air, just not on the bridge.

The ocean is smooth with a big ground swell working its way to the beach; a good time to test the trim tabs and the renowned hull



SPECIFICATIONS:	
LOA	15.62m
Beam	4.80m
Draft	1.19m
Fuel capacity	2,300 litres
Water capacity	500 litres
Engines	Twin CAT C9 diesels
Engine Upgrades	Twin CAT C12 diesels or Cummins QSM11 diesels
Shaft Angle	11 degrees from the horizontal





design... yes, they ensure a soft, dry ride. Cruising at an enjoyable 21 knots, we have the opportunity to slow down to turn and chase a pod of dolphins. The steering is tight but I prefer that to turning the wheel in a full circle before the boat changes direction. The maximum speed with the C9 Caterpillar engines, rated at 423kw / 575hp each, is 30 knots and the fuel capacity is 2,300 litres. Returning to calmer waters, we very comfortably surf the waves back in and set the autopilot to glide us back to the marina.

From start to finish, the Riviera 45 Flybridge experience is one that I highly recommend to any boating enthusiast. This is a professional team that produces a high quality boat; and they're not resting on the laurels of their standard of work either. The concept and design team is constantly working on the next improvement and future enhancement. I am lucky enough to witness the first prototype for the resin infused hull design they are currently working on... watch this space, as there are some very exciting things to come from Riviera.

For more information, contact visit www.riviera.com.au to find your local dealer and arrange a personal inspection. ■

