

BOAT REVIEW



RIVIERA

445 SUV 2016

By Pat Carson



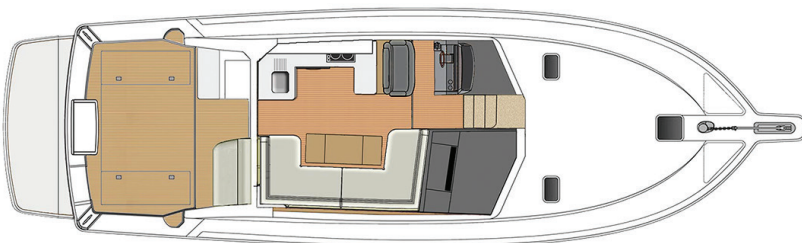
A Comfortable Cross-Over Yacht

Riviera introduced the first of the SUV series in 2013, and now have three models in this competitive segment. Our test platform this month was the smallest of the series, the 445; her larger siblings are the 525 and the 575. All of the SUV models come standard with Volvo IPS second generation propulsion, and have been heavily influenced by the now four year relationship between Volvo and Riviera engineers. Similar to the automotive market SUV or crossover vehicle, the Riviera SUV is a crossover yacht that is at home fishing, cruising, and entertaining.

In the cockpit we find tons of storage with large storage lockers on both sides of the transom, and two sole lockers, which on our test boat are configured as fish tanks,

but swallow up two large fenders each. At the aft food preparation station there is a large grill, and forward to port is another storage locker with solid surface counter top, refrigerator, and icemaker. Riviera has included the stern engine joystick in this area specifically designed to be accessible when needed, and out of the way when not. We had the opportunity to use this control while sterning into the berth, and it sure makes it easier for docking. I image that fishermen will find this convenient for backing down to land that big fish.

To starboard is seating for two with storage below, and in the center of the cockpit is the engine room day hatch. For full access to the engine room the entire aft section of the sole rises with an electric lift that exposes the smooth, white-finished engine room, and provides easy access to engines, generator, batteries, and all the other machinery. If you plan to make yours a fishing machine and add a fighting chair, Riviera planned ahead and installed the necessary backing plates in the cockpit sole for just that purpose.





With plenty of room for deck chairs and alfresco dining, the cockpit is as inviting as it is usable, and a perfect spot to watch the sunset with a glass of port and a fine cigar.

Like the competition in this yacht class, the 445 offers a wide, almost fully enclosed cockpit that

connects through a polished, stainless steel framed sliding door into the large saloon with the galley



The combined galley/saloon make for a large dining and food prep area with plenty of seating room for five. The U-shaped seating converts to a double berth should added guests want to stay over.



A modern, efficient galley with all of the expected appliances – convection microwave, drawer refrigerator/freezer, electric cooktop, stainless steel basin, and tons of overhead cabinet space.

to port, generous table seating to starboard, and the helm forward to port. Lock the slider open, and lift the gas cylinder assisted awning window, and the cockpit becomes part of the saloon.

The dinette seats five comfortably in the U-shaped lounge, and the table can be manually adjusted to several levels. If needed for guest sleeping, this area converts to a double berth. At the aft end of lounge area is the flat screen TV hidden away in a locker with an electric lift.

Standard equipment below the solid surface countertops consist of a polished stainless steel sink, convection microwave oven, a two burner electric cook top, and a pair of drawer style refrigerator/freezers. Above the counter there are several cabinets with the aft most being the power control and Mastervolt CZone control panel. Windows on both sides slide open to allow cross ventilation. Overhead there is a handrail running from the sliding entry door all the way to the companionway leading to the accommodations space. Nice touch, but expected from a blue water yacht builder.

Just forward of the galley on the port side is the helm with two leather chairs that adjust fore and aft, with fold-down arm rests, and a flip up bolster. Included is a dual level foot rest below the helm, and comfort for just about anyone whether standing or sitting is assured. With the integration of the Volvo engine controls and the Garmin glass bridge dual display, the helm is clean and uncluttered. Another sliding window along with an overhead hatch provide good ventilation, and if needed the air conditioning and window defogging vents are just forward.

Our test boat was equipped

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with the Mastervolt CZone touch screen system that controls entertainment, lighting, and climate control systems. The system is preprogrammed for three configurations of cruising, entertaining, or dockside. Shutting down the systems when leaving the boat, or to dim the lights for entertaining, requires just a single tap of one of several control panels located around the vessel.

Below Decks

Forward and down the companionway are the sleeping quarters. The master stateroom is forward most with an easily accessed centerline queen berth with storage drawers underneath. For ventilation there is an overhead hatch and long in-hull windows along each side. One big surprise is the headroom in this stateroom, enough for a six-footer to stand tall and not muss up the hair. Two hanging lockers, recessed LED lighting, and



Master stateroom has a centerline queen with storage underneath, two portlights, overhead hatch, hanging lockers, a private head with shower, all with incredible space for a 44-foot boat.



More surprises with the three single berths – access to the day head via a private entrance, and lots of storage.

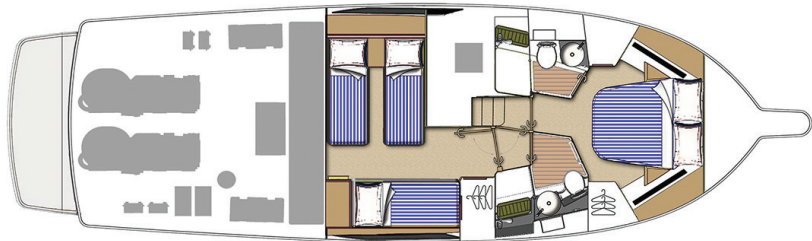


Kudos to the designers of the 445 helm – clean lines, switches and controls intuitively placed, and integrated Garmin glass bridge with Volvo IPS control.

private in-suite head, compete with porcelain fixtures and separate shower, round out the large master stateroom.

The 445 has rather unique guest berthing with three separate singles, two running athwart ship, which can be combined to one double and a third at the foot. The two in-hull windows provide great views and lots of light, and there are two opening ports that provide fresh air and cross ventilation. If that's not enough climate control, a dedicated heat/AC unit is also included.

The day head with shower has



similar high quality fixtures as the master, and is located forward and to starboard with private access from the guest stateroom.

Foredeck

Completing our tour on the foredeck, we find a sun pad with integrated pillows and stainless steel handrails for safety. The vertical windless is located up front in a molded bowsprit while the 150 feet of chain and line stow in separate anchor locker compartments. The foredeck is complete with windless foot switches, and a raw water wash-down bib.

Sea Trial

The hull of the 445 SUV is based on the highly successful 43 Open Flybridge Sportfisher, so my performance expectations were high, and Riviera did not disappoint. Idling from the Richard Boland docks in Alameda the 445 demonstrated rock-solid slow speed handling with almost no need for the IPS joystick. Just for fun, and to see how easy she was to maneuver, we took a side trip to the inner harbor in front of Scotts Restaurant at Jack London Square.

It was a crowded day in the estuary and the docks at JLS were

full, providing a great opportunity to test her close quarter maneuverability and use of the Volvo dynamic positioning system. No surprises as the DPS kept our SUV within a few feet of where we engaged the system. After a bit of showing off to the other boats cruising around looking for berthing, we headed back into the estuary picking our way through the mass of vessels not propelled by mechanical means, and past the no-wake zone.

Finally, past Bay Ship dry docks we brought our craft up to a leisurely cruising speed of twenty knots, navigating ferry wakes, tug prop wash, and the armada heading out of Alameda. Our first destination was the Yerba Buena Lighthouse for some stills and performance shots. We kept our leisurely pace while Richard in the camera boat maneuvered around us and

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took up station for photos at YBI.

With the camera boat a few hundred feet south of the light-house, we set up and made several high speed passes at our wide open speed of nearly 34 knots. The water in the area was quite choppy, but the 445 sliced through the four-foot chop as the Volvo's climbed easily to WOT. I quickly tired of trying to upset the SUV's composure with hard left and hard right turns, quick acceleration, and digging into beam seas so we headed across Hurricane Gulch to Angel Island. We found exactly the conditions I was hoping for there on the cool summer afternoon in San Francisco Bay with twenty-five knot winds and a strong ebb – rough! Adding a few ferry wakes in the mix, we had four- to five-foot short steep waves directly on the bow that would have made a lesser yacht turn around for home with her rudder between her chines. However, not us, we just went faster, and with a bit of effort we finally got some spray on the windshields and needed to acti-



This boat handles as well as she looks passing the camera boat with a wide open throttle at nearly 34 knots.



Entering the breakwater at the west basin of Pier 39, high winds and white caps followed us all the way in.

vate one of the three wipers.

We had to wait nearly five minutes for the camera boat after arriving at our destination. Again, we used the DPS system and maintained station with the winds still blowing 15+. Having enough of the calm waters of Raccoon Strait we decided to head back to the San

Francisco waterfront and took a direct line for fisherman's wharf. As expected, we encountered the full force of the westerly winds and ebb tide as we crossed west of Alcatraz. Keeping our speed at twenty knots, we tamed the snotty seas easily for the three mile run across the bay with all three pantograph wipers going on low speed.

After another ten minute delay waiting inside Pier 45 for the camera boat to catch up again, we idled around the fishing fleet and then headed to Pier 39 where we planned to secure the boat for the evening.

Prior to our sea trial and day of thrashing the SUV around the bay she had been sold. Thanks to the new owners they allowed us use the boat for this article and were along for the ride around San Francisco Bay. Having put some five hours additional ticks on the clocks, the



With the Volvo Dynamic Positioning System in the crowded harbor at Scotts, Jack London Square, we could effortlessly wait all day for dock space to open up.

owners were planning to spend their first night aboard and take in the sight and sounds of Pier 39. I cannot think of a better way to enjoy my first hours on a brand new yacht.

Measured performance with full fuel tanks and three persons onboard

Time to plane – less than 12 seconds

Max speed – 33.8 kts burning 44.1 GPH total and WOT of 3600 RPM

Best cruise speed – anywhere from 10.5 to 33 knots

Performance By The Numbers

1900 RPM 10.9 knots 10.5 GPH 1.0 MPG

– minimum plane speed

2000 RPM 10.6 knots 13.1 GPH 0.9 MPG

2400 RPM 16.9 knots 18.3 GPH 0.9 MPG

2600 RPM 19.7 knots 21.0 GPH 0.9 MPG

3000 RPM 25.2 knots 29.7 GPH 0.8 MPG

3200 RPM 28.8 knots 33.9 GPH 0.80 MPG

3600 RPM 33.8 knots 44.1 GPH 0.70 MPG – WOT

Based on my data, the fuel economy in nautical miles per gallon is nearly the same from her 11 knots minimum planning speed to wide open throttle speed of nearly 34 knots. The most efficient cruise RPM is 2600 making 19.7 knots. Volvo guidelines for continuous maximum operating RPM is 3000 and there is just a slight penalty in fuel consumption, but another 5 knots in cruise SOG.

2016 Riviera 445 SUV Specifications

LOA – 47' 05" with standard swim platform

Fuel – 528 gallons

Beam – 15'

Potable water – 122 gallons

Draft – 3' 08"

Black water – 40 gallons

Air Clearance – 10' 9" waterline to anchor light

Power – Twin Volvo IPS600

Displacement – approx. 30,000 lbs

Maximum measured speed – 34 kts

Manufactured on Australia's Gold Coast, Riviera has been building yachts since 1980. The 2016 445 SUV is the 5,000th yacht they have produced. Riviera is a world class builder of luxury motoryachts and well known for their blue water, sea-keeping ability, technology, and luxury. Other models in the SUV line in-

clude the 525 and the 575.

In the past few years I have had the opportunity to sea trial or deliver a half dozen of these mid 40 foot, high quality express cruisers with the open and airy floor plans that tie cockpit and galley together. Riviera has definitely raised the bar with their high quality craftsmanship, attention to detail, and superb fit and finish.

For more information about Riviera Yachts or to arrange for your own personal test ride contact Richard Boland Yachts in Alameda at 510-521-6213. Anyone exploring top-caliber options in the luxury express cruiser category should certainly include the Riviera 445 SUV among their comparisons. This boat will definitely impress, as Riviera carries on the tradition of building high performance yachts.

Finally, at the end of another hard day at the office and an additional five hours on the clocks, our SUV was put to bed at Pier 39 with her new owners planning their first night aboard. Please don't hesitate to contact me with your comments, letters, and questions at patcarson@yachtsmanmagazine.com, and have a fun and safe boating season. ⚓