Riviera has high expectations for their latest 45 Flybridge Convertible and with good reason. Australia's largest luxury boatbuilder has even further refined the quintessential Flybridge cruiser with a host of design improvements sure to entice more owners into the Riviera Club.

By Anthony Twikill
Photography by Riviera
Australians have a can-do attitude admired throughout the world. And it is no different in the competitive luxury boatbuilding market with Australian yards competing with a multitude of imported marques for the hearts, minds and wallets of new boat buyers.

Such intense competition brings about innovation from local designers who constantly strive to outdo each others’ latest efforts. In the case of iconic luxury brand Riviera, that quest continues to deliver a refreshing array of new ideas in boating.

The new Riviera 45 Open Flybridge Convertible is one of their latest achievements. Launched at the Sanctuary Cove Boat Show in May, the 45 is a large volume, three cabin, two bathroom boat designed to add an attractive mid-range choice to the Riviera flybridge product offerings. Its LOA of 51.3ft (15.62m), hull length of 48.3ft (14.7m) and beam of 15.9ft (4.8m) places it closest in size to the highly successful Riviera 47 Series II. The 45 is a brand new design and incorporates many of the acclaimed innovations of the more recent Riviera 56 Enclosed Flybridge and the Riviera 4700 Sport Yacht.

I can comfortably predict that within a year this new Riviera 45 Open Flybridge will become the company’s largest selling vessel. Why? Because Australians are buying larger and more expensive boats especially designed for our typically Australian lifestyle. Tipping the scales right on the magic number of one million dollars, a typically optioned Riviera 45 Open Flybridge is very well priced: around $200,000 less than its bigger sister, the 47 Series II and up to $1.2 million less than the revolutionary 56 Enclosed Flybridge from which the new 45 derives many of its innovative features.

These new features are designed to embrace alfresco entertainment and onboard dining and more ideally suit how Australians use their boats. It is right on the money for an extremely capable, mid-range flybridge cruiser comfortably entertaining and accommodating a family of up to six or alternatively two or three cruising couples.

Not so many years ago, Riviera’s success story was the then contemporary-styled 40 and more recently the slightly larger 42. Now, they have both been superseded by the new 41 and 45 Open Flybridge Convertible models, providing a wider spread of size, capability and cost. Riviera’s largest selling boat last year was the 47 and the demand for larger models continues to dominate the sales charts of the boating industry. So, the introduction of the 45 will considerably bolster the mid-range of Riviera’s line-up.

So, what’s so special about this new boat?

The most important innovations in Riviera’s 45 Open Flybridge include a brand new planing hull with improved running surfaces and chines to provide an even drier, softer ride than the Rivieras of old have previously been known for. The hull, designed in consultation with regarded European designer Frank Mulder, incorporates semi-tunnels for the props and a QL trim tab system which works in conjunction with the tunnels at their mid-point to create turbulence and natural uplift, reducing typical trim tab drag and increasing overall efficiency of the hull.

A totally redesigned flybridge with a minimalist helm is set way aft and is a considerable innovation of the new 45. Unusually, the helm position is set to the port side with the companion chair in the centre position, set well back to provide easy access for the driver.

In front of the mid-back Pommellette helm and companion chairs, the helm station supports up to two 12 inch electronics display panels (Raymarine C120s in this case), Muir auto anchor winch, ST’ 60 autopilot, Icon radio, Sidepower bowthruster and even a Cafe engine
“THE 45 OPEN FLYBRIDGE IS RIGHT ON THE MONEY FOR AN EXTREMELY CAPABLE, MID-RANGE FLYBRIDGE CRUISER COMFORTABLY ENTERTAINING AND ACCOMMODATING A FAMILY OF UP TO SIX OR ALTERNATIVELY TWO OR THREE CRUISING COUPLES.”

room extinguisher system. The centrepiece is a gleaming stainless steel Edson wheel (with good rubber grip at its rear to prevent slippage) and comprehensive electronic engine monitoring systems. The review boat (hull #001) was fitted with standard CAT C9 575hp turbo diesels and CAT electronic gearboxes, the polished stainless controls of which looked a treat with the Edson wheel. Small touches, but all important and money well spent in an area of the boat where skippers spend most of their time. In too many boats I come across, too little thought is given to the controls that fall immediately at hand. There is nothing like a first class helm wheel, gleaming throttles and extensive electronics array to make a skipper feel he’s king of the hill.

With the standard C9s engaged and throttles full forward, the 45 climbed swiftly and smoothly onto the plane. Top speed from the GPS was 29 knots at a shade over 2500 rpm and the boat cruised comfortably at 20 knots with 2000 rpm. The boat sits evenly at cruise with little trim required at least when lightly loaded and turns are progressive with little heeling and no surprises.

Optional engine choices include Cummins QSM11 660hp or CAT C12 715hp powerplants producing a top end of around 34 knots.

Situated the helm aft provides room directly ahead for a large L-shaped lounge, typically white vinyl, but in this review boat optionally upholstered in soft Alcantera, surrounding a large drinks table, which can convert to a day bed. A single lounge and fridge / sink unit is opposite to starboard.

The plan of the flybridge layout for the 45 is very different due to a new, fully-moulded external staircase situated on the starboard side, featuring teak treads which are both attractive and provide good grip. This is a major departure from the typical vertical ladder situated to port on other models and is perhaps the most important of all new aspects of this boat’s design. It is an excellent compromise between an external vertical ladder which can be hard to climb and potentially hazardous for older owners and young children alike, or an internal staircase which takes up valuable room in the saloon.

Also notable on the 45 is the introduction of a classy, polished chrome hopper window in the saloon aft bulkhead, similar but narrower when compared to the chrome hopper windows of the 56 Flybridge and the 4700 Sport Yacht which also feature them. The window frame on gas struts hinges against the ceiling, opening the saloon to the cockpit, a wonderful addition to the overall ambience of the boat. The main door is likewise framed in a gleaming chrome finish, improving the visual appeal and first
impressions upon stepping on board. Beneath the hopper window is a large refrigerated cool box, so drinks are always close at hand without having to head inside to the wet bar or galley fridges.

Exterior styling of the boat has been enhanced with revised flybridge-style lines, a new low-profile hardtop and port holes in the hull amidships, ventilating the port and starboard guest cabins, also similar in style but smaller compared to the hull windows of the 56 Enclosed Flybridge model. Another subtle styling cue is engine room air vents in the hull; typically Riviera but now fully integrated in the hull for a cleaner look while also reducing routine maintenance.

Inside the boat, the saloon is a comfortable haven from the salt air and sea. It is an open-plan design with a natural flow between the L-lounge along the aft bulkhead and port side and opposite the raised dining arrangement for six, with a cleverly crafted pop-out extension table, located to starboard, adjacent the wet bar and glass storage. The well-equipped galley is down just a single step, so whoever is wearing the chef’s hat always feels part of the action.

I was surprised to see Antico mock timber floors spanning the entire saloon and galley level, with carpet only introduced on the accommodation deck below. In this respect, a far more practical flooring option than fine wool carpets while trading-off the more luxurious, intimate surrounds of carpeting throughout the saloon which is standard.

The saloon interior is well finished with an appropriate balance of practicality and luxury. The décor features a light-hued gloss cherrywood for interior walls and all cabinetry, cream leather lounges and matching trim and headliner with sensible centre-set ceiling grab rail.

The boat also features integrated ducted air-conditioning with outlets discreetly placed behind a black mesh trim line above the saloon window surrounds which house roman blinds that drop to cover the tinted surrounding windows.

The saloon entertainment system includes a Clarion AM/FM radio, CD/DVD player with iPod interface, four internal speakers and remote for the two outdoor speakers in the cockpit. There is a separate Clarion system on the flybridge so you can conceivably have two parties running at once, or watch a DVD in the saloon on the large flat screen TV, while others listen to music upstairs. A great arrangement and for enthusiasts you can also optionally upgrade the specification to a BOSE home theatre system.

Forward to port is a fair-sized galley with large bench tops and three Italian-made Vitirfrigo fridge/freezer draws and a draw dishwasher. Each draw is securely closed with confidence-inspiring latches. There’s nothing tumbling out of these fridges when underway. And there is plenty of equally well-secured storage space. There is also a twin element Fisher & Paykel Ceran electric cooktop and a convection microwave, plus sink under integrated bench covers.

Head down a couple of carpeted stairs and you will find a three cabin layout including a large master stateroom forward with walk-around queen bed and ensuite bathroom. There is also a two bunk cabin to starboard and to port a twin berth cabin with an optional infill to convert to a double bed. The second bathroom is located in the aft quarter of the accommodation deck and typically serves as the day head. Each bathroom features solid surface benchtops moulded as a complete waterproof unit. Each is also air-conditioned, features a stylish frameless door to the shower, and Vacuflush toilets. We all know that in every home, the kitchen and bathrooms are most important and this should be no less the case when on board a boat.

Another innovation for the 45 Flybridge is the introduction of a dedicated machinery room amidships, housing many of the important systems on board. Usually found only on much larger boats, the machinery room improves access within the engine room by removing many of the ancillary systems to a space forward of the midships fuel tank. These include the water heater, air-conditioning handlers and compressors, bilge pump, shower box and pump, battery chargers, inverter and fresh water
system manifolds. Access to the machinery room is via the galley floor or a noise-insulated door in the port cabin.

Various technological advances are also evident on board from 24 volt power, super quiet Onan generator, AC-DC inverter so you can operate onboard entertainment systems at night without the generator running and even Hella Marine LCD low voltage nav lights. All of these innovative details come about through the application of the latest design technology with the entire boat designed using 3D CAD computer modelling and manufacturing to ensure quality and consistency of production. But none of these brilliant innovations in boating could come about without a Riviera hallmark, a dedicated focus on customer service and satisfaction through modern day application of the old adage, prevention rather than cure. Riviera's focus is on getting it right the first time and if that makes for more enjoyable, trouble-free boating and model after model of new and improved boats such as the 45 Open Flybridge, I’m all for it.

For further information contact R Marine or visit www.riviera.com.au.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16.62m 51' 3&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.7m 48' 3&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.8m 15' 9&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.19m 3' 11&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17,850 kg 39,400 lbs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dry weight:

- 17,850 kg (39,400 lbs)

Construction:

- Standard engines x 2: Caterpillar C9
- 423kW / 575hp each
- 2300 litres
- 500 litres
- $1,009,950 | PRICE AS TESTED |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRICE INCLUDES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Typical options on Riviera 45 review boat (#001) including:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- Bowthruster & Long-range fuel tank (1000 litres)
- Foam fill under forward floor
- Davit on forward deck
- Front windsreen cover
- Teak laid cockpit floor, side steps and saloon entry step
- Rod holders to flybridge rail and cockpit coaming
- Half rear awning to cockpit & Tackle locker above cockpit cool box
- Flybridge clears and rail covers (one-piece Strataglass)
- Alcantara upholstery to flybridge lounges (white vinyl is standard)
- Flybridge carpet & Refrigerator in flybridge wet bar
- Electronics package to flybridge helm
- Antico flooring to saloon area with upgraded carpet to lower deck accommodations (carpet throughout is standard)
- 32" LCD TV in saloon, mounted on forward dash
- Dishwasher in galley & Washer/dryer combination in accommodation companionway with pantry above
- Soft furnishings package fabric upgrade, bathware package, galleyware package, décor package

ENGINE UPGRADE OPTIONS

- Twin Cummins QSM11 turbo diesel engines (492kw/660hp) - $37,281
- Twin Caterpillar C12 turbo diesel engines (526kw/715hp) - $50,139

---

92 | ocean