Natural Progression

Riviera 45

The galley uses drawers for much of the storage.

The Riviera 45 offers a full stairway to the flybridge.
The Riviera 45 flybridge convertible, released mid 2007, is a very well equipped, highly detailed and functionally designed, 3 cabin/2 bathroom mid range cruiser, which with twin 575hp diesels, has a starting price around A$899,500. The boat is beautifully finished, with moulded components locking together to provide a totally integrated and functional unit.

Latest 3D CAD computer modelling software was used for the entire design process on this model, finally guiding the highly sophisticated five axis router in cutting the plugs for all the moulds. While computer aided design and moulding is not new, the Riviera 45 is a good example of the precise moulding and detailing that is now possible, producing an exact fit of all major moulded components comprising hull, deck and superstructure, to the more detailed items such as flush deck hatches and drains, cockpit mouldings and internal liners.

More recently, Riviera introduced resin transfer moulding (RTM) technology for many of the minor moulded components, and added a computer controlled, multi directional robotic arm spray booth for the automatic painting of all joinery items, and each of these has played a big part in the development and construction of the 45 flybridge. More recently, the RTM technology has been extended to include much of the hull and deck moulding of the new 4400 sport yacht – a new model that sensationally debuted at the Sydney Boat Show.

RTM technology enables the manufacture of lighter, thinner, and lower profiled moulded components for components such as deck hatches, swim platforms, flybridge and hardtop panels. The result is not just a saving in weight (and importantly a lower overhead weight and profile on the flybridge), but has resulted in hatches that are so much lighter and easier to lift and swing open, without any loss in strength.

TOP: THE FLYBRIDGE HAS A LOT OF SPACE FOR GUESTS.
The computer controlled robotic arm spray heads, operating inside a fully inside a fully enclosed and controlled space where foreign particles cannot blemish a finish and where all emissions from the process are filtered and cleaned, guarantees a consistently high quality in the finish, and an even application of paint to all surfaces, including edges and corners.

The high gloss lacquered finish applied to the cherrywood joinery throughout the 45 — and for that matter all of the models now rolling out of the Riviera factory — are testimony to the consistent quality that is now achieved via this expensive but efficient piece of equipment.

Boat #1
The Riviera 45 reviewed here is Boat no. 1, and I've always been hesitant in reviewing a first off production model. Invariably there may be thing or two that is not quite right; maybe something that has not come together as planned, and as the dealer or manufacturer will usually says "will be corrected on the next boat off the line." If there is such an issue with the Riviera 45 then I didn't find it!

Is the Riviera 45 just another flybridge convertible in this competitive market? Well, no . . . not really. The incorporation of external moulded flybridge stairs without any detrimental encroachment into cockpit and saloon space, and the separation of the engines from all the other machinery, creating separate engine and machinery rooms, are two aspects that help this 45 flybridge stand out in a crowd.

The moulded stair case is a critical design element. With an interior that is planned more around a cruising and a live aboard lifestyle rather than fishing, this boat is going to target the "baby boomers" and with the flybridge as the only helm station (though a lower helm station is as option but this tightens up the flexibility of the open saloon design that is conveyed via the boat on review), the provision of a safe and easy to use staircase to that upper level is a huge plus.

Market research told Riviera that many buyers are put off flybridge convertibles where the flybridge access is via a ladder. This research showed that women in particular are not confident when it comes to using a ladder — some having never ventured to the flybridge because of that reason.

Though the stairs on the 45 are still reasonably steep, the fact that they are a single enclosed moulding (no open treads as for a ladder); the teak lining provides a full sized non-slip step tread each time; and there is a sturdy stainless steel handrail each side, they make access to and from the flybridge so much more safer, more secure, comfortable and easy to use.

Little cockpit and saloon space is lost to these stairs. The saloon is planned in such a way that the main electrical board and bar back are tucked back into the aft quarter, fitting in under the stair so that there is virtually no floor or otherwise practical space lost. Outside, by keeping the base of the stairs to almost the same depth of space occupied by the moulded refrigeration and sink console that sits against the aft bulkhead, and the raised step and flush engine room deck hatch, the cockpit does not seem to sacrifice any of its usable space.

Side steps that lead up to the walk-round decks, also have no intrusion into the cockpit layout, providing a quick, easy and comfortable step from cockpit to the side decks.
THE PORT SIDE GUEST CABIN.

With the helm console pushed aft and offset to the port side, the flybridge has a lot of space for guests, with a deep L-shaped lounge that can seat up to six people, wrapping around a sensible sized, smart looking moulded table which includes recessed drink holders, and being on a high/low pedestal can be converted to a day bed. On the starboard side, a sun lounge sits forward of the wet bar. The hardtop is standard and with a solid and well designed integrated stainless steel support and bracing system, there was no vibration and certainly no rattle when the boat was underway. The full set of clears are a $5,000 option – but essential with the single flybridge station – and Riviera put a lot of design hours into these clears especially around the profile of the forward screen, the leading edge of the hardtop and integration of the rope track for the clears, all to ensure an effective “water proofness” of the clears that would stand up under the most severe of conditions.

Fishable Cockpit

For years, flybridge convertibles had been regarded as a sports or game fishing boat, adaptable to cruising and family boating, and many boats were never really used for that full on fishing role. The Riviera 45 now turns that around as this is a superb cruising boat that can be adapted to sports fishing.

The cockpit is very “fishable” – if there is such a word – and with substantial cockpit refrigeration and underfloor storage bins, an effective self draining cockpit and neatly moulded toe recesses under the flush side storage lockers, plus an optional live bait tank, this boat is more than capable of being adapted to a more serious sports fishing role.

But, with the spacious entertaining capacity of the flybridge; the generous space of the rear cockpit and the direct access onto the flush aft boarding platform, all overshadowed by the superb (near) single level, open planned saloon and galley layout, this is a cruising boat first and foremost.

Start with the hinge-up hopper window in the saloon aft bulkhead which opens the saloon to the cockpit al-fresco style. It may not be to the same degree as the Riviera sports yacht concept, but it does create a more open design that helps integrate the internal and external spaces.

The open planned saloon sees the galley pushed forward and just a single step down and this leaves a huge living area comprising two L-shaped lounges. The galley uses drawers for much of the storage as well drawer style fridge/freezer (and optional dishwasher) – again all the result of customer feedback.

The bar includes a fridge/freezer while the entertainment system comprises AM/FM radio, CD/DVD player with iPod Interface, amplifier four speakers and subwoofer (plus two speakers and remote to the cockpit!), with a range of options for LCD TVs in the saloon, main stateroom and port cabin.

Below deck is a three cabin/two bathroom layout consisting of a master stateroom forward, a bunk cabin to the starboard and a twin berth cabin to the port that tucks back in under the galley.

These twin berths have an infill that converts this to a second double bed.

The engine room, solely dedicated to the main engines, is accessed externally via a deck hatch at the entry into the saloon, while the separate machinery room, positioned between the midship fuel tanks and the twin berth cabins, is accessed via a floor hatch in the galley.

This machinery room is dedicated to the ancillary items such as air conditioning units, water heater, bilge pump, shower box and pump, battery changers, inverter and fresh water manifolds and still leaving room for some bulky goods storage. This leaves the main engine room, though be it a lot smaller that would otherwise be expected, free of all the other equipment and giving a cleaner and clearer space in which to service and maintain the engines.

The moulded liner in the engine room enables this area to be more easily cleaned as well.

Standard engines are a pair of 575hp Caterpillar C9 diesels with options available for 660hp Cummins QSM11 and 715hp Caterpillar C175. Each of these options add from A$37,000 to over A$80,000 to the base price.

The C9 Cats are adequate for a cruising role, providing a top speed of just under 30 knots (this will probably drop to about 27 to 28 knots for a fully laden boat) and a cruise speed of 20 to 23 knots at 2000 – 2200 rpm, which can be easily maintained in some of the rougher offshore conditions with wind driven swells.

The Frank Mulder designed hull incorporates the usual prop tunnels and wide chines now being used on the new Riviera models, and these certainly appear to be effective in providing a good smooth flat ride, with excellent transition for such a big boat, from displacement to planing mode.

Overall, this is an exceptionally well thought out boat that is exquisitely detailed and finished. It has a good performance from the base engines with a price that does not put it out of reach.

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**TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS**

Design: Riviera Group

Builder: Riviera Group

Designer: Riviera/Frank Mulder

Interior Designer: Riviera

Year Launched: 2007

LOA: 15.62m

LWL: 14.07m

Beam: 4.8m

Draft: 1.13m

Displacement: 17,850kg

Max Speed: 30 knots

Cruise Speed: 20 to 23 knots

Fuel: 2300 litres

Water: 500 litres

Construction: GRP and, cored deck and flybridge

Engines: 2 x Caterpillar C9

HP: 575hp each

Gearboxes: Twin Disc Quick Shift M6 S61A

Propellers: Tohobridge nitril 24 x 25 x 4 blade 0.68 BAR

Drive Train: Duplex 2205 1.75 inch stainless steel

Generator: Onan EOD 11kw

Anchor Winch: Muir

Steering: Edson

Air Conditioning: Cruise-Air

 davit crane: ABC 110

Trim Tabs: Electric Q

ELECTRONICS

Autopilot: Raymarine

GPS/Plotter: Raymarine

Depth Sounder: Raymarine

Base Price: A$1,199,485

Reviewed Price: A$1,609,950

Contact: www.riviera.com.au