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BOAT REVIEW

Belle Belize

TEXT BY MARK ROTHFIELD



Cover Story



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D13 IPS1350 diesels (1000hp apiece) are the biggest that Volvo Penta makes for pods, and they deliver an impressive top speed of 34 knots.

BELIZE 66 SEDAN

The Belize 66 Sedan exudes old-school charm and stately elegance, combining state-of-the-art materials and technology with superb craftsmanship.

They say that time is money, but it's way more valuable than that. It's the 'extra' that turns the ordinary into extraordinary. It's what melds a gemstone, mellows a single-malt scotch and makes a Rolls-Royce shine above all others. It is also what sets the Belize 66 Sedan apart from other production motor yachts. Quite simply, this bespoke-built vessel doesn't cut corners – it embraces them.

It rounds these curves with a continuous length of teak that's hand-laminated, machined, sanded and varnished to perfection. Or it stitches them with upholstery thread that's the precise colour of the piping, which in turn matches the dashboard hue.

Its cleats and fairleads are custom-made, not off-the-shelf, as are the 60mm oval-shaped deck handrail, the timber steering wheel, and the luxurious helm seats, courtesy of the same factory as Ferrari's and Lamborghini's seats, using Italian leather selected by Belize.

Among the standard inclusions are crockery, glassware, cutlery, cookware, and stainless-steel appliances – including a sandwich press and kettle. That's so they can be properly and elegantly housed. Bedding, towels, robes and soft furnishings are also supplied as part of the six-star experience.

There's an obvious passion here, bordering on obsession, to build something unique and truly world-class. The irony, though, is that precious few of these essentially 'Australian' vessels get to grace our shores. They're manufactured by Riviera in a Taiwan-based plant for a global audience, with the brand having a particularly strong following in the USA.

Our test boat was actually destined for Denmark. The owner, a motorcycle racer, is stepping up from a 37-footer and went straight to the top shelf. With a young family, he plans to explore the majestic Scandinavian waterways.

Fortuitously, his vessel was being shipped via Queensland's Gold Coast, so we dropped everything, donned a surgical mask, and braved a Jetstar flight for a chance to experience this rare jewel.



Genteel appearance inside and out – view from the galley forward to the helm, and beyond through panoramic windows.

From bow to stern, everything aboard the Belize 66 Sedan is handcrafted and bespoke – even elegant tableware and kitchen appliances are ‘standard’ inclusions.

First impressions

The Belize 66 Sedan certainly is different, when first seen amidst an armada of more conventional white sports cruisers. And that’s not solely because its topsides and hardtop glistened in Rolls-Royce titanium silver, per the owner’s request.

‘Modern-day classic’ is an apt description, with state-of-the-art materials and technology meeting retrospective styling and old-school attention to detail.

The hull’s stem is relatively plumb and flows aft to a curvaceous transom, its sheerline being met by a window line that sweeps dramatically downwards from the hardtop, taking with it a strip of varnished teak trim.

Starting aft, the Belize has its own ‘beach’ in the form of a hydraulic boarding platform. It houses two ladders, one for swimming and another leading to the submerged platform when launching or retrieving the 3.6m RIB from its garage.

A dual-burner electric barbecues resides in the cockpit, with overhead LED lighting and inbuilt vents that draw the smoke through a stylish outlet in the side windows. The same fitting also vents bathroom steam from the master suite.

Moving forward along the sidedecks, there are continuous LED courtesy lights, and dual drains to shed water. There’s more LED lighting beneath the hardtop’s brow overhang – warm white inside, cool white outside.

Having a tender garage beneath the cockpit lets the foredeck be used for a U-shaped lounge surrounding a pedestal-mounted timber table that can drop to form a large sunpad or raise to serve as a lunch table.

The anchor sits snug in a hull recess rather than a sprit. Deckwash outlets in the roller cheeks can clean the chain with pressurised saltwater as it rises. The controls are all on the one hand-held remote that was specially made for Belize.

You can access the saloon through a portside pantograph door or seamlessly through the cockpit.

Inner SANCTUM

The U-shaped galley is aft, its twin sinks residing beneath an awning window for easy serving to the cockpit. The tap is no ordinary tap, but rather an optional Zip mixer that dispenses instant iced, boiling or sparkling water. Luckily, a watermaker comes as standard because you’ll be playing with this feature all day.





*Top speed of 34 knots
along with punchy mid-
range performance and
ease of handling.*

Is the 66 good? No...
it's UnBelizeable.

Also in the galley are Caesarstone benches, a premium-brand dishwasher, induction cooktop and microwave, while to port is an upright refrigerator with twin freezer drawers beneath. The pantry also makes clever use of under-bench space. Flooring is natural timber, rendered in a satin finish to which micro-balloon grip is applied singularly. They're individual boards that can be replaced singly if damaged.

As you step forward to the lounge, the headroom rises simultaneously to maintain the level of height, space and airiness. And because the starboard side table can be lifted for dining, the TV also raises electrically to remain in clear view of the L-shaped lounge.

There are three forward-facing pedestal helm seats, two for the portside console and one to starboard. A brace of automotive-like air-conditioning vents channel air directly to the occupants to offset the warmth of sun from the surrounding glass.

Fun fact: the windscreen happens to be the largest piece of curved glass that can be manufactured on a computerised bender.

A trio of Garmin Glass Cockpit screens greet the skipper. These talk with the Volvo Penta network and can be customised under Smart Mode. When anchoring, for instance, you might choose the contoured chart, radar, sonar and an anchoring camera, while in cruising mode, maybe radar, chart and engine-room camera.

As you step down to the accommodation deck, the forward VIP cabin has a full queen-sized berth, again with no cut corners, as the hull's upright stem, bow flare and topside height create ample volume. A twin-berth cabin is to port, with en suite access to the day head, and an enormous master cabin is nestled amidships. In the Grand Presidential layout, as tested, a full-beam bathroom resides immediately aft. Suffice to say, the ambience is peaceful, passive and comfortable.

BELIZE 66 SEDAN



Covered entertainer's cockpit is a luxurious alfresco dining and lounging space, with window to the galley.

A trio of Garmin Glass Cockpit screens greet the skipper.

Accessibility to electrical and plumbing componentry has also been thoroughly considered. The cedar-lined robes, for example, have removable inner hatches, and under each bathroom vanity you can access the valves.

Equally, the engine room is an engineer's nirvana, with multiple entry points for accessibility. All the chargers are in one location. Ditto the filtration system, with double Racor filters per engine as standard. Freshwater pumps sit together, as do the Sea Strainers. If you can reach them, you'll more likely check them.

Fuel draws from wing tanks and there's an additional 2000lt long-range tank beneath the floor.

It has primary and secondary transfer pumps for redundancy.

Interestingly, the engines are offset, with the portside block about a metre forward to allow its turbo to sit clear of the garage moulding. It alters the jackshaft length for the IPS3 drives, but doesn't affect hull trim or performance.

These are big boys, no mistaking it. Indeed, the D13 IPS1350 diesels (1000hp apiece) are the biggest that Volvo Penta makes for pods, and they deliver an impressive top speed of 34 knots (63km/h), along with punchy mid-range performance and ease of handling.

Quick and easy

Those genteel looks above the waterline are deceiving, for below there are hard chines, variable deadrise and an integrated keel, the hallmarks of a highly efficient sports hull developed by the Riviera design team and Steve Ford from 4D Designs.

The Belize can idle happily at 1100rpm for 8.5 knots (15.7km/h), burning just 70lt/h, before transforming into a big, playful runabout that gets planing in just seven seconds, with little bow lift, and reaching 30 knots (55.6km/h) in 15 seconds.

One feels fairly damn special at the timber wheel. The Belize runs quietly and offers a perfectly clear view through the windscreen. Auto trim takes care of the running angle and it turns handsomely, with fingertip control and not the slightest loss of speed. When berthing, the IPS drives take care of stern manoeuvrability and there's an additional electric



BELIZE 66 SEDAN



This bespoke-built vessel doesn't cut corners – it embraces them

Well-considered features and sumptuous furnishings feature throughout, including in the enormous master cabin.

bow thruster, joystick-controlled from both the main helm and cockpit berthing stations.

Fuel usage remains incredibly reasonable, particularly around the 2000rpm mark for 24 knots (44.5km/h) and 240lt/h total. Those figures were achieved with an almost full load and against the tide.

What's more remarkable is that the Belize is built to Category A, with the added structure and weight implied with that certification. To save weight, they've used infusion and high-tech composites in

certain areas and specified lithium batteries.

If we must talk money, the base price was quoted at \$4.999M, albeit dependent on currency rate. POA is more appropriate.

Expensive? Relatively. Good value? Yes, when you consider that thousands of man hours are invested into each build to meet the discerning demands of buyers who invariably can afford to get exactly what they want.

Is the 66 good? No ... it's UnBelizeable. ⚙

Design Name Belize 66 Sedan **Year Launched** 2020
Builder Riviera **Designer** Riviera & 4D Designs
LOA 21.12m **LOH** 19.42m **Beam** 5.45m **Displ (Loaded)** 35 tonne
Max Speed 32.6 knots **Construction** GRP
Fuel Cap 4500 litres **Water Cap** 700 litres **Engines** 2 x 1000hp Volvo Penta D13 IPS1350 **Drive Train** Shaft **MFD** 3 x Garmin
Price as reviewed \$NZ5.26 million + GST
Price from AUD\$4,999,000 **Contact** rivieraaustralia.com

FUEL & PERFORMANCE DATA

RPM	Knots	L/h	L/NM	Range(NM)
600	5.9	10	1.700	2300
1100	10.6	53	5.000	810
1300	12.0	82	6.900	580
1500	14.2	119	8.400	480
1700	17.2	161	9.400	430
1900	20.8	205	9.900	400
2100	24.8	269	11.000	360
2300	28.0	324	12.000	330
2400	31.1	343	12.000	330
2480	32.6	368	12.000	330

Range is calculated on 90% of the fuel capacity.

