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Vol. 30 No. 5

RRP \$10.95



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In a league of its own

Riviera continues to expand its flybridge range with a sophisticated, fully enclosed flybridge model that boasts a thoughtful layout, outstanding finish, and true bluewater credentials.



By Mark Rothfield

While the 'who' and 'what' can be summed up in four words – Riviera 57 Enclosed Flybridge – it's the 'where', 'why' and 'how' that most eloquently define the latest, and possibly greatest, contribution to Australian flybridge heritage.

From the moment I saw the new 57 straining at its tethers at Sydney International Boat Show, it was clear that a half-hour harbour jaunt simply wouldn't suffice. It had to be an offshore escape, as the birthright and destiny of this bluewater temptress is to journey endlessly from Sydney to Pittwater, or Brisbane to Tangalooma, Perth to Rottneest, Melbourne to the Prom ... anywhere from here to yonder.

The answer to 'why' came to me from an unlikely source: a child psychologist speaking in a musty school hall packed with anxious parents. "Stop!" he cried. "You're doing far too much ... and you're ruining your children!"

Could he be right, I wondered the next day, while whisking my teenage son from piano class to soccer training before the maths coach arrived? Yes, actually.

Perhaps more than ever, we need to stop and smell the rosé accompanying the lobster grilling on the starboard-side barbecue (in the 57's case) opposite a sheltered cockpit dinette. Riviera



appears to understand this better than most. Its customers buy the 'why', not merely the 'what', so the 57 Enclosed Flybridge exudes an inexorable aura of escapism. It cries "Stop!"

How shiny fibreglass achieves this feat I'm not quite sure, but there is a tangible sense of 'human engineering' in the 57's curves and pores. It's evident in the perceptibly proud stance of the bow, the organic lines of the bridge, and the way the hull dances across chop like poetry in ocean.

Let's start with the enclosed flybridge, which is an entirely new moulding. 'Enclosed' means just

that – a solid, four-sided haven that hermetically shields occupants from the elements. When the weather allows, a sliding sunroof, opening side and awning windows, plus a sliding aft door can transform the bridge into a relaxed indoor/outdoor entertaining setting.

The wheel resides on the centreline, with a protruding dashboard binnacle accommodating the throttles, switches and control pad for three 19in Garmin screens. A single passenger seat sits adjacent, there's a chaise lounge to port, and settee with table further aft.

The saloon (above) features an aft galley (left) and plenty of natural light.



Ergonomically, it works.
Aesthetically, it works, too ...

Ergonomically, it works. Aesthetically, it works, too, as judicious use of black prevents the structure from appearing top-heavy. The roof appears to levitate in the breeze.



The cockpit (above) with barbecue (right) is perfect for entertaining and relaxation.

We've known the hull as the Riviera 53, its running surfaces originally hewn in 2011 for triple pods (Volvo IPS600s generating 435hp). Since then, Volvo has relaxed its no-keel policy and introduced the IPS2-950 (725hp) and IPS3-1200 (900hp) engines to facilitate a twin installation.

The length hasn't been stretched. Riviera has merely moved with the ISO-times and specified the hull's moulded length of 56.4ft (17.2m) – with swimplatform and sprit, it nudges 61ft (18.5m).

They've added a shaft drive option in a globally conscious decision to satisfy clients in remote markets like Latin America, where shafts and Caterpillar diesels are coveted.

Riviera's engineers are currently relishing the prospect of fitting two turbo-supercharged Caterpillar C12.9 engines, which wield a whopping 1000hp each. The shaft angle is predicted to be 10 degrees and, as the pod powerplants are already set forward with jack shafts, there will be marginal difference in engine location.

Performance-wise, the hull topped out at 30 knots (55.56km/h) with triple 435hp plants, pulling 3600rpm. Despite extra weight, greater

windage, and the drag coefficient of the new keel, the 57 enters the sportsboat realm of 34.5 knots (63.9km/h) with twin 900hp Volvos peaking at 2360rpm. With a brief tailwind during our test, we saw 37 knots (68.5km/h) on the GPS ... I'm still shaking my head!

The 57 Enclosed Flybridge handles the power and pace imperiously. My noise counter showed just 70-odd decibels at cruise speed, which is equivalent to a car. Polite conversation flowed in the hushed tones of a library, not a pub.

The torque delivers great holeshoot and mid-range acceleration, while fuel burn is more than reasonable – just 180lt/h at 20 knots (37km/h) to give a range of 400nm. Worst-case scenario is 336lt/h flat-strap.

The hull showed nice attitude and is notably dry, thanks to the high freeboard and flared topsides. While the auto trim-assist feature wasn't fully tweaked, it did a reasonable job of keeping us on the straight and level.

TIME TO RELAX

Customer feedback has shown that when Riviera owners arrive at a destination, instant relaxation is

important. Accordingly, fixed furniture is a cockpit staple. Drop anchor, remove the covers, and start the party ...

The 57 also stacks up for longer cruises. Modern onboard management technology, such as C-Zone electronics and Volvo Penta's Glass Cockpit engine and navigation monitoring, puts everything at the skipper's fingertips.

Below: The forward VIP stateroom.

Bottom: The amidships master has plenty of space and boasts a full en suite.





Storage abounds, headroom and ventilation are exceptional throughout – even in the engine room – and the views from the saloon and full-beam master suite are unimpeded.

The galley is aft, where it's a no-brainer to service the cockpit, nor is it a great stretch to pass nibbles up to the flybridge. The main saloon table adjusts from dinner- to coffee-table height and also folds out to create a spare double guest bed. It's a nice place to rug up and enjoy a movie on the 48in LED television that rises electronically from the forward dash.

Below, there's a guest cabin to starboard with twin single berths, a forward VIP stateroom with access to the main head, and an amidships generous master that includes walk-in robe, king-

RIVIERA 57 ENCLOSED FLYBRIDGE	
LOA:	18.5m
Moulded length:	17.2m
Beam:	5.13m
Sleeping:	6 + 2
Fuel capacity:	4000lt
Water capacity:	750lt
Power (as tested):	Twin Volvo IPS 1200 DI3 850kW/900hp
Power (standard):	Twin Volvo IPS 950 (725hp)
Power (optional):	Twin Caterpillar C12.9s (1000hp) shaft drive
Price from:	\$2,167,500
Price as tested:	\$2,468,800
More information: Riviera Australia, tel: (07) 5502 5555. Web: riviera.com.au.	

Above: Weather-permitting, a sunroof, side and awning windows, and a sliding aft door can all be opened.



That's what 'Made in Australia' truly means

sized island bed, hanging locker, and en suite with separate shower cubicle.

The test boat's timberwork was a tastefully light and user-friendly, satin-finished oak-and-teak combo, but choices abound. To further future-proof the boat's maintenance, almost every locker has access ports to key hull areas.

Within the engine room, everything is so accessible, so clearly labelled, that your marine technicians will send you Christmas cards. The

battery bank alone is engineering *par excellence*. Overall attention to construction detail is similarly refined and craftsmanship is inherent throughout.

During sea trials, the construction guys apparently crawl through each and every boat to listen for rattles and creaks, even sitting on the toilets while running at sea! That's what 'Made in Australia' truly means.

Such commitment to quality helps explain the final 'why' – why buy the Riviera 57 Enclosed

Flybridge? It's a \$2,167,500 question, which puts the vessel squarely up against holiday homes and luxury European marques. Not a trivial amount, for certain.

Time-poor families will love its liveability, ease of operation and entertaining capabilities. Current Riviera owners will equally be tempted, with one of the first confirmed orders going to a couple who own a 53. They saw more headroom, more light, more sophistication, more everything. 

