

JANUARY 2026

Lakeland BOATING

RIVIERA 4300 SPORTS EXPRESS

A yacht for all seasons.



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SPOTLIGHTS

Beneteau * Four Winns * MJM * Pursuit

BOAT TEST

By Capt. Tom Serio

Riviera 4300 Sports Express

A yacht for all
seasons — and reasons.

The first thing you must come to terms with when thinking of buying a yacht is the intentions for its use. Is the reason for the purchase to enhance family time, cruise to new destinations, expand your fishing range or just to add some adventure to your life? And where will this occur? In southern climates with seemingly endless summers or in a northern clime where the weather dictates your ability to get out?

This is where the recently introduced Riviera 4300 Sports Express (SE) comes into play. With a main deck that's enclosed on three sides, just add an aft curtain and you have a well-protected helm and social areas that can be controlled with AC and heat, allowing for passage on days most boats stay tied to the docks.

No matter your boating intentions, this is an easy yacht to operate and maintain, while offering high-end finishes, creature comforts and a functional layout. It's a humble concept from Riviera: Get on the boat and go, enjoy the time aboard and return to a simple cleanup. That's it.

From the depths

To access the lowest part of the 4300 SE, there's a main deck access hatch, making daily maintenance and system inspections easy. Fuel filters/separators, dipsticks and sea strainers are unobstructed. Fuel lines, engines and ancillary systems are open and visible. For an owner who has some mechanical prowess, this layout is a pleasure.

When you see how the 4300 SE not only responds to wheel inputs but also throttle commands and joystick movements, you can thank the pair of Volvo IPS 650 D6 engines producing 480 hp each. With a cruising rpm of 3500, a burn rate of 43.3 gph at 28.7 knots, you have a range of approximately 189 nm. Pulling back to 19 knots, the gph drops to 27.5 with a range of 199 nm. Wide open, these Volvos got just over 32 knots at 3770 rpm, a range of 184 nm and 50 gph. The point is, depending on your need for speed or desire to take a leisurely cruise to see the sights, these powerplants deliver efficiency, speed and range when needed.

I can attest that the figures I took during my testing match up very closely to those that are published by Riviera.

RIVIERA PHOTOS



Features abound

Riviera has considered all aspects of this yacht, from stem to stern, to be chock-full of features, adaptable to changing desires and versatile to fulfilling dreams. Regarding safety, well, these guys have you covered. You can't be anywhere in this boat without finding yourself within an arm's reach of a grabrail. Across the transom, along the side decks, recessed in the cabin ceiling, even a decorative rail down to the cabin, there's a place to hold on, if needed.

In your element

From the aft swim platform, access the alfresco electric BBQ grill station across the transom, with counters, sink and storage. Easily go from "sea to table" with your catch. Another cool feature is the sea deck, part of the hydraulic swim platform, that lowers into the water, creating a lounge area or swim out. It gives perfect access to water toys, too!

Riviera did not miss the storage opportunities here. To port is a deep storage locker, suitable for two stand-up paddleboards or other lengthy watercraft. On the starboard side is another locker under the steps, which can handle smaller toys, such as a sea bob, fishing or diving gear.

Up a few steps is the Sports Deck, which will be a favorite place to relax. Out of the elements thanks to the oversized hardtop, the deck includes an aft port corner L-settee and a forward starboard

L-settee. Riviera created a flip-out wood table with angled components to follow the dog-legged walkway. It folds up nicely, revealing cup holders and, yes, more grabrails. A nice touch is the drop-down TV from the ceiling — easily viewed from most seats and out of the way when needed.

At the conn

As expected, the helm is ergonomically designed for comfort and accessibility to monitors and switches. Dual Garmin multifunction displays do most of the work, with the ability to switch between multiple modes. Glare on the console is reduced thanks to the extended brow in the hardtop, wrapped dash and carbon fiber accents. Joystick, throttles and screen controller are well positioned on the right side. Twin bolstered helm seats with thick padding and diamond stitching are both comfy and stylish. There is plenty of room to stand with bolsters down, which is typically a tight fit on other yachts; the integrated footrest is a plus. Let's not forget about the sliding side windows and large sunroof, perfect for ventilation and cross breezes.

An option is the aft port docking station with a joystick in a hidden compartment. With visibility down the port side and transom, it really gives total control to the operator. It also makes docking and line handling a breeze.

With the helm to starboard, it creates ample

space along the port side for an entertainment center, with an ice maker, fridge drawer, sink and dedicated storage for glassware. Covers for the sink and trash bin create a spacious countertop to lay out a buffet meal.

Down deep

Expect nothing less on the 4300 SE down under. Finished in high-gloss wood doors and trim, along with Ultraleather walls and stone countertops, the area is spacious for socializing yet can be private when sleeping. Mid area is a large L-shape sofa with an ottoman, side windows and 77 inches of headroom.

Forward is the primary stateroom that adds to the roomy feel when opened, or can be closed off with sliding privacy walls and a recessed door. There's an additional sleeping area midship, with twin berths (single and double) for guests. The full head has a separate shower stall, keeping everything dry.

A galley to starboard has a microwave, sink, fridge drawers, cooktop, dishwasher and cabinets. Keep in mind, there are three food prep areas onboard.

To keep it all cool, Riviera has strategically placed the AC/heat vents, including at the helm, right behind the helm seats, two on the starboard side aft and across the forward window area. There's nothing better than going from the hot and humid outdoors to refreshing AC.

Up front features

Don't discount the bow lounge area. What looks like a huge sunpad is actually three individual loungers, each with flip-up backrests. In front is a forward-facing sofa, well-padded with a generously sized backrest. Recessing the anchor tackle and windlass in their own compartment adds to the sleek layout, walkaround capabilities and eliminates busting toes. There's a flip-out table nestled in the middle sofa seat, which comes in handy when needed.

Along the walkaround side decks, Riviera includes high gunwales capped with railings (27 inches high), adding to the safety component. The deep side decks also allow any onboard water to quickly move aft to the oversized drainage channel, shipping any blue water overboard quickly.

There's no need to walk all the way aft to get back to the cabin, as there's a portside pantograph deck door that brings you midship inside. I was surprised at how beefy the door is, and it is watertight. This is yet another benefit when running the yacht single-handed.

Keep in mind, the 4300 SE is an express model that offers copious amounts of interior space while maintaining a big yacht feel, thanks to the features found in every corner. If looking for a dayboat, weekender or extended cruiser, you have all the reasons now to check it out. Enjoy all your boating seasons! ♦

Riviera 4300 Sports Express

SPECIFICATIONS

LOA: 45'6"
Beam: 14'7"
Draft: 4'2"
Dry Weight: 34,167 lbs.
Fuel Capacity: 316 gals.
Water Capacity: 105 gals.
Power: 2 x Volvo Penta
D6 IPS 650 480 hp
Price: Contact dealer

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DEALERS

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Yacht Sales
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Onekama Marine
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Transom-accessed
storage areas
Sliding door for aft
access

Easily operated by
a single person



Side windows are
manually operated —
it would be nice if they
were electric