

RIVIERA'S NEW 43 OPEN FLYBRIDGE COMBINES FLYBRIDGE  
AND SPORTS YACHT FEATURES IN A BREAKTHROUGH  
CROSSOVER DESIGN, WRITES ANTHONY TWIBILL

# SUPER FLY







Riviera's new 43 Open Flybridge is the latest evolution of the brand's flybridge line, mating offshore fishing traditions with the modern comforts and technologies demanded by a new breed of owners more interested in fishing for fun than for fins.

The renewed Riviera team has been a busy bunch during the last year or two. Not content with reinventing the business and tweaking existing models, the yard has been on a concerted campaign of product development. The Riviera brand, which enjoys iconic status in Australia, owes thanks to its loyal supporters for helping it emerge from a period of receivership and administration this year. Now the company is rewarding those who kept the faith with a bevy of innovations that maximise space, features and fun.

On a mild late winter's day, I took the latest 43 Open Flybridge model for a delightfully smooth sea trial from Riviera Pittwater's base at Newport in Sydney's Northern Beaches, cruising south to Sydney Harbour by sunset. The striking silvery-grey hull, reflective of Aston Martin's Quantum Silver, was stunning in the afternoon sun as I stepped aboard the traditionally teak-laid aft cockpit.

While the characteristic Riviera flybridge lines remain in the 43, what most stands out from Riv's previous 40-footers are the large, tinted hull windows affording great views from the full-beam cabin. Topped off by a stylish hardtop on the open flybridge, the new 43 presents a sporting profile and a modern take on the classic flybridge cruiser.

The Riviera 43 Open Flybridge was an immediate hit when it was launched earlier this year at Sanctuary Cove boat show, with Riv taking nine orders during the show. This was followed by a further four during the Sydney show in August, bringing total orders to 19.

One reason for the 43's popularity is its twin Volvo IPS propulsion package. Although Riviera do offer Volvo IPS drives as an option on their current 51 Flybridge model, it was the case of an existing design being modified for a space-saving pod drive installation. Designed from day one with IPS drives, the new 43 makes full use of the space advantages.

The success of this new model is vital to Riviera; the mid-market has always been the company's sweet spot, with a history of impressive sales for its 40- to 50-foot flybridge cruisers. When developing new models, designers must look carefully at what was successful with previous models while also looking ahead to best accommodate the latest trends in technology and changing owner preferences. Such is the nature of evolution versus revolution, and the new 43 Riviera appears to have the balance just right.

"The external lines and look of this model are unmistakably Riviera," says design manager Neil McCabe. "Inside though there is a totally new design and feel. This model recognises that the way



**THE KEY TO THE 43 FLYBRIDGE IS THE CHOICE OF IPS AS THE STANDARD PROPULSION PACKAGE. THE WHOLE BOAT HAS BEEN DESIGNED AROUND THEM**

**HIDDEN POWER**  
IPS drives enable the engines to be mounted further aft and Riviera has tucked them neatly away under the aft deck. The casual observer would never even know they are there.





**CABIN FERVOUR**  
Above: the full-beam master cabin has a lounge which can be configured to accommodate more berths. Top left: typical Riviera quality in the main saloon. Below left: the forward master cabin with queen-size bed and cedar robe.

one very large open space, further developing Riviera's efforts in recent models to adopt a single-level lifestyle where the lines between indoor and outdoor living are blurred. From the forward galley, located to port beneath the large three-piece windshield, it's only half a step up to the large lounge-dining area. From there the space flows directly to the aft deck, via a sliding glass door and hopper window that all but disappear from view when opened.

On the aft deck a folding table and director's chairs can be set up for afternoon lunch or sunset drinks opposite the barbecue integrated into the transom.

There's another comfortable rear facing lounge beneath the hopper window to the saloon, and opposite that an open-tread 'stair ladder' leading up to the flybridge. The design answers Riv's intention to open up rather than compartmentalise the space aboard, and should better serve how owners congregate and spend time with family and friends.

A final key feature is the flybridge itself, which also points to a design that favours recreational boating rather than long offshore passage making or serious fishing. The 43's flybridge offers almost uninterrupted 360-degree vision thanks to a new structural hardtop canopy supported by stylish curved stainless steel struts. Clears surround the deck for weather protection when needed. Riviera have made the most of the space by positioning the vessel's single helmstation fully aft, and the flybridge is as large and well arranged as any I have seen on a boat this size. Two full-length lounges are arranged in an L-shape ahead of the skipper, complemented by a separate lounge to port and the obligatory bar and fridge. Many an owner and their guests will be happy to stay up here all day.

The helmstation itself is practical and

docking maneuverability by joystick, effortless acceleration and higher cruise speeds (per horsepower) than shaft driven alternatives, plus more neutral cruise attitude, improved fuel efficiency and quieter operation. All of these aspects helped to make our test cruise down the Sydney coastline a joy; the seas were smooth, the ride solid, and the entire trip simply effortless.

Secondly, there is the space. The fully aft location of the Volvo Penta engines (which are located directly beneath the cockpit floor) and IPS pod drives has allowed Riviera to devote a good deal more room to accommodation. In addition to the spacious master double in the bow, a large full-beam cabin amidships also features a lounge that can be rearranged to accommodate as many as four. Add to that the options for sleeping on the saloon lounges (or indeed on the flybridge under the stars), and you have a yacht with considerably more sleeping space than other vessels in its class.

The forward master cabin features a queen-size double bed, with a cedar-lined hanging robe, extensive storage and ensuite bathroom. The aft, full-beam cabin has large port windows with optional portholes either side for natural light and cross ventilation. A large skylight under the forward saloon windscreen provides additional light to this vast cabin; a neat idea, which greatly improves what could otherwise be a claustrophobic space given the relatively low ceiling height.

Third, the main deck of the boat is

people use their boat is changing. A flybridge boat is not just used for fishing; they're extensively used for entertaining and longer-term cruising too. Our owners are changing the way they boat and our new designs reflect this transition."

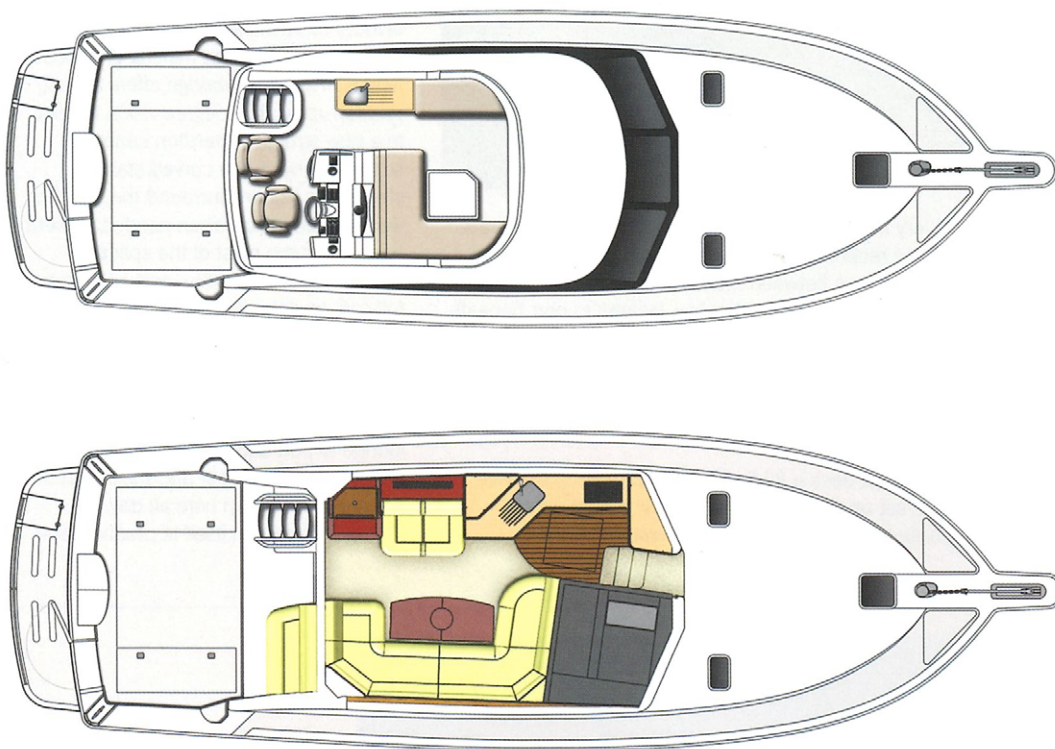
The 43 has been designed as the vanguard of Riviera's flybridge line, and with a 53 Enclosed Flybridge due to launch in 2011 the bigger brothers in the new-look fleet are not far behind. The key to the 43 Flybridge is the choice of IPS as the standard propulsion package. The whole boat has been designed around them. The performance characteristics of Volvo Penta IPS and other pod drive propulsion systems are by now well known:

## THE FULLY AFT LOCATION OF THE VOLVO PENTA ENGINES AND IPS POD DRIVES HAS ALLOWED RIVIERA TO DEVOTE A GOOD DEAL MORE ROOM TO ACCOMMODATION





## THE COMPOSITE LAMINATE HULL MAKES GOOD USE OF WEIGHT WHERE IT IS NEEDED MOST, DELIVERING A SOLID FEEL AND SOFT RIDE OFFSHORE



unmistakably premium. The Euro-style set up features swivel driver and passenger chairs and is moulded in an attractive silver-grey finish. It's a pleasure to use, with all controls well positioned and easily at hand. The large, rubber backed, stainless steel Edison wheel offers great feel and feedback for the skipper. A suite of Raymarine navigation electronics and radios dominates the fascia, which is backed by a curved upholstered sunshade. Volvo Penta IPS power and gear levers (starboard of the wheel) and IPS docking joystick to port all work in a logical, uncluttered arrangement. There's also a Volvo Penta digital engine management computer readout, Muir auto anchor, controls for the stereo and, in a nice

touch, integrated cup holders. It's the 'helm with the lot' for recreational cruising skippers, who will find driving this boat a breeze compared to older flybridge designs.

On the propulsion side twin counter-rotating, three-bladed forward facing propellers drive ahead of the IPS pods in turbulence-free water to deliver a powerful and smooth ride, with a pleasantly neutral cruising attitude for a flybridge. The boat cruises most comfortably at a relatively high 26 to 28 knots, with a top speed of around 30 knots when you open it right up. A more moderate cruise of 20 knots around 3,000 rpm consumes just over 100 litres an hour.

At typical cruising speeds, Riviera reports the 43 Open Flybridge has a range of around 340 nautical miles from its 1,800 litre tank of diesel. But if you pull back the power to a trolling speed of around eight knots, total fuel burn is as little as 25 litres per hour, providing a theoretical range closer to 500 nautical miles between fills. So for long, lazy days of cruising you can operate the new 43 very efficiently indeed.

My short sea trial aboard the Riviera 43 was most uneventful, offering no challenges in terms of high seas or heavy weather. Had it been otherwise I am sure I would have had the confidence of knowing that beneath all the glossy cabinetry and upholstered luxury I was riding a solid and seaworthy hull with a first-class build process. The hull and deck construction is solid hand-laid fibreglass below the waterline as well as in the core materials in the hull topsides and superstructure. The composite laminate hull makes good use of weight where it is needed most, delivering a solid feel and soft ride offshore.

These days the choice of flybridge or sports cruiser is not as clear cut as it once was; the crossover of so many great design features from one genre inevitably ends up in the specifications for the next generation of either. In the case of the new Riv 43 Open Flybridge with IPS, the blend offers truly the best of both worlds. Those who like their cruising comforts and spritely performance will be satisfied, while still being able to enjoy that greatest attraction of flybridge cruisers – the ability to look down on the world from above, sight the far horizon, chase a school of tuna or just follow the sun with partner by your side and drink in hand. Spend a little time aboard Riviera's latest design, and you'll agree that a flying bridge is indeed that much closer to heaven. ○

LOA	14.46 m (47' 5 ft)
BEAM	4.57 m (15' ft)
DRAFT	1.13 m (3' 8" ft)
DRY WEIGHT	14,200 kg
FUEL CAPACITY	1,800 litre
WATER CAPACITY	460 litre
HOLDING TANK CAPACITY	151 litre
SLEEPING CAPACITY	6-7 persons
ENGINES	Volvo IPS 2 x 320 kW (435 hp) each
GENERATOR	Onan 9.5 kW (13 hp)
PRICE AS TESTED	\$1,005,813