



FLAGSHIP FOR FARAWAY PLACES

BOOSTING A WINNING FORMULA OF OCEAN-READY SPORTS YACHTS BY ADDING SOME EUROPEAN FLAIR IS RIVIERA'S STRATEGY WITH ITS LARGEST HULL

STORY KEVIN GREEN PHOTOS KEVIN GREEN & SUPPLIED

Striking new aesthetics from a European design house and a range of new smart systems has the Riviera 78 Motoryacht pushing into superyacht territory, as I found out when taking the first hull to sea on the Gold Coast.

The launch of the 78 MY also coincided with the ten-year anniversary of Rodney Longhurst's ownership of this iconic

Australian builder, as he told me at the gala evening in mid-March which included ten of the upcoming owners. "It's been an amazing journey to get here and to launch the 78 MY, which moves the company into a whole new era."

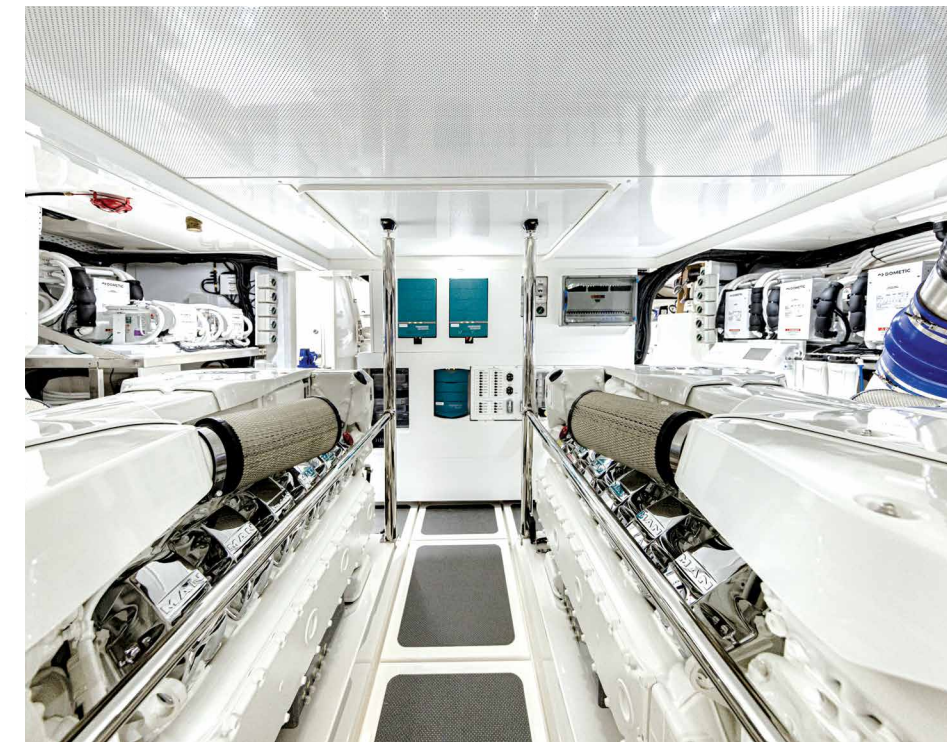
The 78 MY tops the company's fleet of large flybridge cruisers, following the release of the 72 model in 2018, and a raft of coupé models

that total about 5700 hulls launched during its 40 years of building. Riviera focuses on the 35–78ft market for premium level motor cruisers. However, by extending the hull of the successful 72, it has arguably extended this focus.

"We began by asking our customers of larger Riviervas what they would like in a slightly longer model, so they have provided valuable input into the 78 MY," explained Brand and Communications Director Stephen Milne.

The attractions of a flybridge are several, and top among them for Pacific based boats is commanding views of coral strewn coastlines. The downside can be the motion offshore from this high vantage point, but it gives you three levels of living space when at rest.

Riviera has extended the flybridge concept on this bluewater hull by creating a complete living space which includes a vast aft deck up top. This creates the most striking change to the side profile because it extends the covered area of the main deck right to the transom.



TOP TO BOTTOM:
More engine room space than usual on the 78 MY;
The covered aft deck includes a sumptuous full-beam sofa and another L-shaped one around the teak dining table



LEFT TO RIGHT: A large entertaining area is created by the extended flybridge; The 78 MY topsides are stylistically a departure for the brand but retain its proven offshore hull build



ABOARD THE 78 MY

Boarding the 78 MY, the words from Riviera CEO Rodney Longhurst about the “timeless and contemporary” design echoed in my head. ‘Superyacht styling’ was the next phrase that came to mind as I strode on the vast hydraulic teak swim platform and gazed into the dinghy garage which can hold a jet ski (the foredeck also has a davit to hoist the dinghy up there when offshore). Alongside the garage was one of two entrances to the engine room.

Two entrances are also on the transom to access the covered aft deck where a sumptuous full-beam sofa in tough Sunbrella fabric sets the tone. Another L-shaped one around the teak dining table creates a comfortable yet uncrowded area adjoining the

saloon bulkhead, so there is plenty of room for partying and enjoying cocktails made at the wet bar. Teak is ideal when the sun beats down on bare feet, so is welcome on the swim platform and most walking spaces on the 78 MY.

Practicalities also abound here with powered capstans, large fairleads, and equally generous cleating. Given this boat weighs more than 57 tonnes and will have substantial windage, these are welcome features.

Walking along the narrow sidedecks to the bow shows it to be equally well appointed, thanks to a spacious sunken entertaining area with seating for eight, or at least when an optional tender is not in place. It’s moved via a single hydraulic davit arm capable of 550kg lifts. Deep storage lockers can contain

all cushions and back rests for this area, while protected from the elements. The rode includes a quality 80kg Ultra anchor which sits below a stainless steel self-loading bow roller on the bowsprit and is connected via a swivel to 100m of 13mm galvanised chain, stored in an anchor locker on the starboard side of the foredeck. A high-quality Australian made Muir vertical anchor windlass/capstan is controlled through a hand-held device or remote control from the flybridge.

THREE HELM STATIONS

All navigation takes place in the flybridge, reached by the inside stairs, which can be enclosed by a teak hatch. This large space has a separate lounge and al fresco dining

area with navigation done at the forward section, along with two remote helm stations outside. Triple premium quality leather seats are alongside the console and tall windows give grand views from the centred helm. The generous headroom and airiness can be enhanced by opening the electronic sunroof, while a sturdy ceiling handrail guides you forward — necessary, given a high boat like this will invariably roll around at sea. These are the kind of details, I find, that differentiate Riviera from other brands keen on emphasising style over practicalities, and something I appreciated when walking around.

At the console the skipper is on the centre line of the vessel so can judge both sides equally and see aft via the toughened glass door (with cameras enhancing the lower views aft). The console is dominated by a row of three 24in Garmin Glass Bridge navigation

screens, ideal for large format views of charts, radar, cameras, and sonar. Engine and system monitoring is done from proprietary central screens (Czone digital system and Man screen). The Twin Disc joystick-transmission is the key instrument for slow manoeuvring, with two modes (normal and high), and other essentials included windlass controls and fuel cut-offs nearby as well. It’s comprehensive, yet not overly fussy — very much an Australian trait. Skippers can enjoy the night-time seclusion on the fold-out double bed secreted under the aft lounge with toilet nearby or the separate crew quarters. Label brand push-button chromed doors are used in both the main saloon and flybridge entrances. The extended flybridge creates a large entertaining area, mostly covered, with movable seating on its aft and covered lounge to starboard with wet bar on the port side.



LIVEABILITY

The saloon is devoted to relaxing with an atrium-style stairs forward bathed in natural light to the accommodation. The décor of gleaming teak contrasting with the black panelling, neutral coloured cushioned benches on three sides, and wool carpeting sets the calming tone of this spacious area. This factory specified first hull clearly has been built to show the variety of materials available, yet this alchemy gives a contemporary, maritime facade that should have wide appeal. My only gripe was the white Ultra Leather clad handrails that will in time show grime and sun cream stains. Of course, owners will impose their own style, chosen from the profusion of materials and options available.

Typical of Riviera are the practicalities

here: the mid-ships side door, and discrete cabinetry, including wine cooler, around the open plan layout. The U-shaped galley rear is extensively fitted with deep double sinks surrounded by worktops. There's a four-burner electric Miele stove with a large microwave convection oven and dishwasher, plus there are views aft to inspire the chef. Perishables go in the upright fridge and double-drawer freezers. Detail finishes include holders for glasses and crockery, while the washer and dryer plus custom ironing board are secreted in the aft crew quarters.

FOUR LARGE CABINS

Descending to the four cabins via the teak stairwell reveals a layout of full-beam owner's suite aft with VIP V-berth and two side

cabins. Set low in the hull, the owner enjoys a king-sized bed with sprung mattress against the aft bulkhead (which adjoins the crew quarters so is insulated from the engine room noise). A large walk-in wardrobe adjoins the long vanity desk on port. Starboard has a three seater lounge with generous walk-around space at the bed foot. The forward bulkhead houses a TV and home theatre system with surround sound speakers. Airflow feels good thanks to opening portholes (electronically wired) and fixed hull windows for natural light. The ensuite is stylish, yet practical with large shower cubicle easily wiped down, fresh water electric flush toilet and his/hers sinks. Again, natural light and air comes in via hatches.

The V-berth uses the deep bow for its volume and airiness, enhanced by the sealed

windows and double opening skylights. It has a walk-around queen-sized bed with storage beneath and wardrobe space each side, outboard cupboards with positive locking doors (an excellent Riviera feature) and a private ensuite. The port cabin has an ensuite which is also the day head, with twin single beds which slide together. A bedside table with leather inlays is a feature of both configurations and there is a cedar-lined hanging wardrobe and even more storage outboard and under the beds. The starboard guest cabin cleverly puts the two single bunks at right angles, allowing privacy and communication.

PROVEN HULL

The 78 MY has the same beam as the 72 and proven characteristics that make it suitable for offshore as well as meandering gently in displacement mode for those long sea crossings. The warped V design uses a sharp entry for directional stability and flatter aft sections to 'get out of the hole' for planing, while retaining some deadrise to add heeling stability.

The original hull of the 72 that has been extended to create 78, was tank tested at the Wolfson Institute Unit for Marine Technology and Industrial Dynamics at the University of Southampton in England. The hull is built to CE standards, obligatory given that over 50 per cent of the company's sales are overseas. Construction is hand-laid fibreglass with foam core topsides and solid fibreglass on the keel, longitudinals, and other key structural areas.



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: The open-plan saloon can be customised to individual tastes; Amid-ships, the owners suite is very comfortable; To the aft, the galley serves both inside and outside diners

The main entry to the engine room is from the crew quarters. These are at the bottom of their own staircase aft; self-contained with one (or two) bunks, bathroom, microwave, and the washing machine. Stepping through the heavy watertight door reveals a gleaming engine room with generous space around twin MAN V12 2000hp quad turbodiesels.



RIVIERA 78 MOTORYACHT

PRICE FROM

\$6.6 million base boat (1550hp engines)

GENERAL

MATERIAL Fibreglass

LENGTH 24.82m (81ft 5in)

BEAM 6m (19ft 8in)

DRAFT 1.9m (6ft 2in)

DISPLACEMENT (dry) 56,300kg

CAPACITIES

BERTHS 8 + 2 crew

FUEL 10,200L

WATER 800L

HOLDING TANK 651L

ENGINE

MAKE/MODEL 2 x MAN V12-1550hp

HP1550hp, 1800hp or 2000hp

DESIGNED BY Riviera/Luca Vallebona

SUPPLIED BY

Riviera Australia

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SEA TRIALS

Performance figures (factory supplied) 95 per cent tankage, 14 knot winds in mild seaway, 10 crew, 9180L fuel (90 per cent) range calculation

RPM	SPEED KNOTS	L/H TOTAL	RANGE (MILES)	COMMENTS
900	9.7	26	1,359	Displacement mode
1400	11.7	124	433	
1800	22.9	213.8	492	Cruising speed
2350	34.1	777.5	403	
Top speed				

** Data supplied by Fleming Yachts Australia and verified by the Author.
Range calculated leaving 10 per cent fuel in reserve.*



Power delivery to the V-shafts is via Twin Disc remote-mounted Quickshift gearboxes, integrated to the Express Joystick System. V-shafts reduce space for the drive train within the hull, but the downside is weight aft, which has to be compensated for by a central-forward fuel tank. Mechanical noise is minimised by the use of Aquamet 22 Sea Torque oil-filled shafts and Veem five-axis propellers.

Backup systems include twin 29kW Onan generators, both AC and DC water pumps and manual over-rides for systems such as steering and the digital Czone CanBus system for house systems. As this hull is eventually destined for America, it has 110AC. Stabiliser options now include Humphree fins or the usual Seakeeper internal model. Both have their merits, with the external fins being more vulnerable but lighter and requiring less power, while the Seakeeper requires



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: The helm position and ergonomics are comfortable and shaded; In the crew quarters is a washer and dryer; Accessing the anchor is easy; The Man 2000hp diesels use V-shafts to deliver smooth and quiet power

“THIS STABILITY WAS MOST NOTICEABLE UPON BANKING INTO A LONG TURN”



spinning up before use and underway is arguably less affective. This first hull had the external Humphree fin stabilisers midships. The Swedish company supplies fixed and rotating fins, with the latter fitted to the 78 MY. Their rotation, of 180 degrees fore and aft gives them the flexibility to be deployed according to scenarios. Their black domed shaped mechanisms are located on each side of the engine room and their deployment is graphically shown on screen at the steering console.

GOLD COAST SAIL

Australia's La Niña summer was the first test for the new 78 MY because the rain cascaded down, forcing me to seek shelter inside. The large wiper blades were required to safely allow skipper Dean to guide us off the dock at

Marina Mirage, with judicious use of the Twin Disc joystick. The shallow and busy seaway is home to hordes of jet skis, so the high vantage point of the flybridge on the 78 MY was ideal as I snuck into the skipper's chair to take control.

My first job was to find some swell, so we slowed at the Seaway to deploy the Humphree stabilisers. They automatically paddled to quickly reduce the hull's rolling, self-adjusting. Clever stuff. Then I watched the screen as they weather-cocked as I throttled forward, thus reducing drag while still adding stability. This stability was most noticeable upon banking into a long turn, whereby they flattened the hull to the extent that even a full glass of G&T wouldn't have spilt — impressive. Even more so, was the smooth transmission as I put the boat into forward and eventually reverse several times.

The powerful 2000hp Mans were so easily controlled that I found it remarkable when the Garmin screen showed 22 knots, the ideal cruising speed (472L/g fuel burn at 1850rpm giving about 475 miles range).

The clear views all around from the flybridge gave me the confidence to accelerate, with only the faintest whine from the quad turbos that pushed the hull to an impressive 34 knots. Slow handling, in reverse with a stiff breeze equally went predictably as the Twin Disc joystick was pushed in the desired direction of travel, the fore and aft thrusters holding the tall hull against the wind as it went arrow straight astern. So, even the amateur skipper, or boating journalist can master this mini-superyacht which says a lot about the 78 MY. Of course, you don't need to take my word for it. Head to H Pier and see for yourself! ●