

BEAUTY AND PURPOSE

THE RIVIERA 72 SPORTS MOTOR YACHT EXPANDS ON THE GOOD LOOKS AND NOTABLE PERFORMANCE OF ITS SMALLER SIBLING. BY BARRY THOMPSON



LOA: 78'3"
Beam: 19'8"
Draft: 6'1"
Displ: 103,617 lbs. (dry)
Fuel: 2,377 gal.
Water: 264 gal.
Top Speed: 34.8 knots
Standard Power: 2/1,800-hp MAN V12
Test Power: 2/1,900-hp MAN V12
Base Price: \$3,309,059



When conceptualizing the 72 Sports Motor Yacht, the criteria was for a vessel that offered the exhilaration of sports performance with the luxuries of a motoryacht. “During more than two years of development, our in-house design team conducted extensive consultations with highly experienced Riviera owners from around the world to create a motoryacht of great beauty and purpose,” says Riviera owner and chairman Rodney Longhurst. “When we spoke to owners seeking a new style of motoryacht, they said their dream was a bluewater yacht that combines speed with capabilities for sportfishing and other water sports, along with high bulwark sidedecks, a foredeck entertainment center, a fully enclosed flybridge with internal stairs, a covered mezzanine dining area and ultra-luxurious interiors.” The new 72 Sports Motor Yacht delivers on that brief.

Given the chance, if you saw both the new 72 and its sister (the 68) on the water, you might have a hard time picking out the differences between the two. While virtually the same boat, the 72 has been expanded in almost every way. The extra length is evident in the twin-level cockpit. Plus, with the extended hull, the fuel tank capacity has been increased from 2,245 gallons to 2,377.

The 72 has all the right attributes to be either a seriously comfortable, practical cruising boat or a dedicated sportfisherman. The cockpit is divided into two areas, each with its own distinct purpose: The aft deck for fishing and the upper deck for entertaining.

Three feet longer than the 68 in both overall and hull length, the 72 shares the same beam as her sibling. After all, both boats are from the same set of molds, but due to the extra length, the 72 is able to carry more fuel and water. It has different propulsion, too: Standard power for the 68 is a pair of 1,550-hp MAN V12 engines; the 72 gets 1,800-hp MAN V12s. However, both boats are available with the MAN V12 1,900-hp engines, a pair of which were in the 72 I tested.

When driving the 72, I was impressed by how intuitive everything was, and the effortless way the boat handled. Running across a slight chop with 10 knots of breeze, the 72 was smooth, vibration free and extremely quiet. The hull ran true and straight, and by pre-setting the Humphree Interceptors, we maintained an optimum running angle of around 4.3 degrees. At 18 knots (1600 rpm), I



The foredeck offers its own massive entertaining space; the salon features a fold-down TV to port; the amidships master stateroom in the Classic layout.

recorded a quiet 61 decibels at the flybridge; at 1900 rpm and 25 knots—an ideal cruise speed with an 80 percent load—decibels increased only to 65, which is the sound level of a typical conversation. Her maximum speed is close to 35 knots.

The hull was designed by Mulder Design in the Netherlands and tank-tested at the Wolfson Institute at the University of Southampton in England. Boats this size can sometimes be a handful to operate, but not the 72. And while I appreciate why some owners would choose to have a captain and maybe even crew aboard, for me, it was quickly evident that this is an owner-operator boat.

In the cabin, there's a contemporary, open salon and a U-shaped galley to port that features varnished walnut cabinetry, a four-burner induction cooktop, a large convection microwave oven and a dishwasher. The galley also offers exceptional refrigeration capacity with four drawer-style fridges and two freezers. It's a galley suitable for a MasterChef winner.

I loved the layout of the salon. I felt the same way about the enlarged cockpit and even the master stateroom, but when I entered the flybridge, I was in a different world. I don't like the phrase "state-of-the-art," but it's probably the best way to describe the helm station. Set into hand-stitched leather was a comprehensive engine and control system, complete with a Twin Disc electronic joystick system (EJS) and three 22-inch navigation screens. (You can have up to four.) At the helm was a Norsap seat for the driver and a port side companion seat.

Guests can relax on lounges along the entire starboard side of the bridge. A distinctive feature of this space is a fold-out double bed under the aft lounge. This will come in handy if you have a captain or some additional guests on board. A stainless-steel-framed glass door and awning window connect the flybridge with a large aft deck complete with a dedicated engine control station and an alfresco dining area with an L-shape lounge, wet bar and space for two stand-alone dining chairs.

As for the accommodations level, there are two layouts available—the three-cabin Presidential version and the four-cabin Classic, both with three heads. The Classic offers a massive amidships master stateroom with en suite along the starboard side. The Presidential features a larger full-beam master stateroom with en suite in the starboard forequarter. A private sitting area on the starboard side can serve as an open workstation, make-up bureau or breakfast retreat.

The master in both the Classic and Presidential options features a king-size bed and bedside tables with leather inlays. There are his-and-hers cedar-lined hanging wardrobes on either side of the stateroom. The VIP guest stateroom forward includes a walk-around queen-size bed and a private en suite. The port cabin aft of the guest stateroom features twin single beds, which can convert to a double as the inboard bed slides across.

The Classic layout includes an additional fourth guest cabin with full-sized pullman-style beds, a cedar-lined hanging wardrobe and a bedside table. The third and fourth cabins share a head located on the port side, forward of the twin cabin. With the Presidential layout, you give up the guest cabin to starboard in exchange for the larger master, but you get a dedicated crew cabin, complete with head/shower. (On the Classic this space is a storage and utility room.) Access is via a staircase from the port side of the salon, with



The portside helm station is steps away from the helm in the enclosed bridge, which can have up to four 22-inch nav screens.

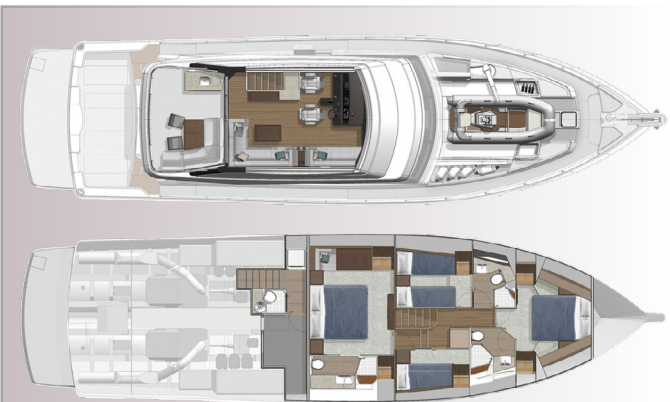


a watertight bulkhead door providing entry to the engine room. The spacious full-height engine room has eye-level engine systems monitors and remote controls. Systems and components are close at hand, so you don't have to be a contortionist to access them.

The extra length of the cockpit allows for more storage options, yet it's still a roomy space for relaxing and entertaining. A large grill is set forward in cabinetry located below an elevated mezzanine deck. The elevated alfresco mezzanine forward of the cockpit includes a dining area that's protected by the bridge overhang. A bar with two swivel stools is set below the awning window, creating additional informal seating in the mezzanine.

Riviera incorporated a sunken lounge area on the foredeck of the 72. It has seating for eight and the option for a bimini. The foredeck also includes a hydraulic crane and tender that are designed to fit atop the entertaining area. At one time, the foredeck was a mostly unused area; on this boat, it has been transformed into a functional workspace and relaxation area.

The 72 is a true sports motoryacht in every sense. It combines great accommodations and amenities with an enclosed flybridge, multiple entertaining areas and the raised mezzanine cockpit of a traditional motoryacht. Yet it also offers the speed and performance of a sports cruiser. In addition, the level of fit and finish and the engineering throughout the 72 is exceptional. It's a boat that looks very modern and comes with all the structural integrity that Riviera has been known to deliver. It's a boat for all generations. □



RPM	KNOTS	GPH	RANGE
900	9.3	10.6	2071
1000	11.2	21.4	1265
1200	11.9	38.9	713
1400	13.7	61.8	517
1600	19.8	77.7	621
1800	24.0	105.7	540
2000	27.7	134.5	483
2200	31.3	167.5	437
2330	34.8	180.2	460

TEST CONDITIONS: Temperature: 75°F; load: 1,150 gal. fuel, 132 gal. water. Speeds are two-way averages measured by a Garmin MFD. GPH measured with Garmin engine display. Range is based on 90 percent of advertised fuel capacity.