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November 2019

GOING THE DISTANCE
RIVIERA 545 SUV

HOLIDAY
GIFT
GUIDE

PLUS: New innovations in power

ESCAPE the OUTBACK

Riviera's new 545 SUV is an Australian build that's versatile for cruisers everywhere.

By Arnie Hammerman



It wasn't hard to feel the exhilaration of boating Down Under as I cruised below the Sydney Harbour Bridge and glided by the Opera House. Taking a 20-mile run up north to Hawkesbury River and Pittwater, the outing was a perfect way to test Riviera's new 545 SUV bluewater sport yacht. I made the long journey to the Sydney International Boat Show to catch up with Riviera before the 545 SUV made her way across the oceans for her U.S. debut, and this day made the trip well worthwhile.

Rugged Yet Accommodating

Rivieras are designed to handle the open waters that surround Australia which make them suitable for most sea conditions. They are built with solid, hand-laid fiberglass hulls that have superior strength and include a vinyl ester outer layer and a watertight collision bulkhead forward. Closed-cell foam coring is used in the decks and cabin top to reduce weight aloft, and a substantial, three-stage process joins the deck with the hull for an impermeable connection. Structural components are made from glass reinforced plastic for additional strength and service life.

The first thing I noticed when I approached the 545 SUV was the aft cockpit and swim platform. Both are spacious with plenty of room for dining and entertaining. The mezzanine, with protection from the hardtop and a rear awning, boasts comfortable aft-facing seating with a top-loading freezer beneath and a folding teak table. An entertainment center to starboard opens to reveal twin electric barbecues and a sink, and an icemaker is installed below. A forward-facing transom settee adds more seating for guests to make a perfect entertainment space. There is lots of storage space, including a self-draining compartment large enough for an optional gyro stabilizer, and the engine room is easily accessible through a gas strut-assisted hatch.

A windowed livewell inside the transom sits next to the starboard aft door for easy access while fishing, and a port aft door also opens to the huge swim platform which provides safe boarding with stainless steel grab rails. But what's really



The well-designed interior offers plenty of light and space for entertaining.



nice is the platform has an optional hydraulic lift mechanism that lowers into the water to make it simple to launch a Jet Ski or tender as well as provide swimmers, divers, and snorkelers easy-off/easy-on access.

Comfortable and Functional

From the cockpit, take a step up through the tinted sliding glass door to a well-appointed, enclosed living area that features a centrally located aft galley, midship dining area, and forward helm station to port with a cocktail cabinet and salon seating to starboard. With the sliding door and the large bulkhead awning window above the aft galley counter open, the salon and cockpit combine for a sizable entertainment space.

The U-shaped galley is fully equipped with a deep, stainless steel sink, two-burner induction cooktop with range hood, convection oven/microwave, refrigerator, freezer, and plenty of storage. Riviera uses drawers extensively with generous counter space above. The drawers can be configured in different ways to match the owner's preference, including those that hold the fridges, freezer, and dishwasher.

Across from the galley is a beautifully designed cocktail cabinet with adequate glassware and bottle storage and refrigeration. A spacious counter offers ample room for mixing cocktails and serving appetizers.

Twin electric sunroofs provide plenty of natural light and with large side windows that slide open, the space fills with

fresh air. The L-shaped settee behind the helm seats four comfortably or three for dining at the flip-top table. To add a fourth, the center section of the starboard lounge pulls out to become an ottoman. In that space, the back cushion lifts to reveal a small wood table functional for a computer desk, dining, or for playing cards or a board game.

Twin captain seats with adjustable armrests at the helm are stylish and comfortably dressed in ultra-leather. They provide easy access to the wheel, throttles, joystick docking control, and instruments which include two Garmin glass bridge MFDs with GRID controller and integrated autopilot and a CZone monitoring system. The huge windshield offers a spectacular view forward for the captain and passenger. Standing adjacent to the helm at the top of the cabin stairs, the driver can easily reach the joystick and have good visibility fore and aft with plenty of headroom or choose to take advantage of the wing station in the cockpit.

Three luxurious staterooms below present comfortable accommodations with carpeted flooring and a lot of room to relax. A twin bunk cabin is to starboard at the bottom of the companionway steps and a queen VIP stateroom is in the bow with large windows, cedar-lined hanging lockers, and direct access to the day head that also opens to the corridor. The full-beam, midship master offers more than six feet of headroom and has plenty of drawer space and a nice settee for reading or relaxing. The space is carefully thought out with a long hull window and opening porthole as well as a centerline,



The master suite (finished with cherrywood) has ample storage and a cozy settee.

walkaround queen berth with storage underneath that faces a huge flat-screen TV on the bulkhead. Large cedar-lined hanging lockers and a well-appointed ensuite head with a shower that boasts a bench and convenient shelf are forward to port. This suite is an attractive highlight of the boat and differentiates this model from others. Owners looking for a large, comfortable cabin will find this a perfect fit.

A wonderful feature on the accommodation level that adds at-home convenience is the laundry closet with a full-size washer and dryer. Owners also have three options for cabinetry wood throughout the boat to match their preferences: cherrywood, gloss walnut, and satin oak finishes.

Powered Up

The Riviera 545 SUV delivers both speed and performance. Running reciprocal courses with twin 725-hp Volvo Penta D11 IPS 950s, speed topped at 33.6 knots. Sharp, high-speed turns under way are a lot of fun, and the 545 SUV gently leans into these turns with very little speed loss and clean acceleration when returned to center.

SPECIFICATIONS

LOA: 57' 9"

Beam: 16' 5"

Draft: 3' 8"

Dry Weight: 52,657 lbs.

Fuel/Water: 925/211 U.S. gals.

Power: 2x Volvo Penta D11 IPS 950 @ 725-hp

Cruise/Max Speed: 19/33.6 knots

Range: 496 nm @ cruise
(based on 90% of fuel capacity)

Price: \$1,622,600

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An Onan 13.5 kW/50 Hz generator keeps the lights on and the air cool. The sound shield makes it quiet and a freshwater-cooled system helps it run smoothly.

Riviera has a factory delivery program in which buyers can pick up their new boat at the factory in Coomera, Queensland near Brisbane. Owners can run down the coast from the factory south to Sydney, a few days journey, with stops along the way crossing river bars into places like Port Macquarie and Newcastle, which can make for a fun first cruise. Taking delivery in Australia is the experience of a lifetime, and after you enjoy a cruise Down Under, Riviera will ship your boat to your home port.

The Riviera 545 SUV is a welcome addition to this line of sporty yet rugged cruisers from this venerable Australian builder. She is rich with features and accommodations that make cruising safe, comfortable, and fun. Large cockpits and abundant amenities are packaged into a convenient single level to make the versatile SUV collection a popular choice among adventurers, weekend family cruisers, and the serious fisherman. The size, versatility, and performance of

the Riviera 545 SUV made me realize this boat is a winner no matter which continent you cruise. 🌊