

The 43 Open Flybridge is the smallest boat in the seven strong flybridge line up.

MULTITASKING

Six years after Riviera launched their first 43 Open Flybridge, Barry Thompson returned to the Gold Coast to see what had changed. Would it be de ja vu or was the latest 43 Open Flybridge a whole new deal.



WHEN the Riviera 43 Open Flybridge was launched back in 2010, it was hailed as being dramatically different from previous flybridge models. It embraced the latest trends in cruiser design and manufacturing and it was said that the boat typified and reinforced Riviera's commitment to the future.

The Riviera 43 had been transformed from the humble, open flybridge concept that the company were renowned for (full with aft bulkheads with a single cockpit door and galley forward) and turned it into

a genuine up-market family-orientated cruiser. It was a boat that you could still fish from but the big change was the open flow-through from the cockpit to the saloon, which while today is the norm, was back then a big change for Riviera.

Six years, new company owners and 51, 43 Open Flybridge boats later, this extremely popular model has evolved into a much-improved version of what, for its day was an outstandingly modern and pragmatic design.

When I turned up at Runaway Bay to go aboard the latest Riviera 43, I wasn't sure

what to expect. Riviera had told me that there had been a lot of developments over the years and that the latest edition was a very much different boat from the one this magazine had reviewed back in 2010. So what's changed in six years? Lots! In fact, inside it is now a very different boat.

GALLEY AFT

The main change has been the way the saloon has been configured, with the galley now moved aft from the original position forward on the port side. This has been replaced with a wet bar area

and breakfast bar with two removable bar stools. Certainly a better layout and far more practical. If you prefer to do your driving from inside sometimes, then this space can be configured with an internal helm instead. There is now a closer synergy between the food prep area and the cockpit and main dining areas.

The U-shape galley features a very generous size Corian benchtop with electric cooktop, trash bin, stainless steel sink and storage cabinets and drawers above and below. Under bench is a two drawer fridge/freezer and convection microwave oven. An F&P

dishwasher is optional.

Opposite and in the same position as previously, is the dining area with a folding table with an adjustable pedestal surrounded by a U-shape leather covered lounge. This also doubles as an extra berth for those extra guests. The saloon is festooned with LED overhead lighting and kept at the right temperature with a 16000 BTU air-con system. Commercial grade hard wearing flooring is used on the sole. A cool feature is the rod storage locker in the headlining and a recessed stainless handrail. There is an entertainment centre

with fold-up TV and Fusion stereo forward in the saloon.

TWO CABINS – TWO HEADS

The Riviera 43 FB maybe a two cabin boat, but the forward accommodation offers three-four dedicated berths. The aft cabin has three designated single berths, but you have the option of bringing the two inboard singles together to make a queen size bed. There isn't the height to offer the aft cabin as a full beam master.

The cabin is serviced by a two-way door to the day head which allows you to use it as



30 knots and loving it!

Take a look inside

a private ensuite or allows day head access with aft cabin privacy.

The plush master stateroom is located forward with an ensuite bathroom. Storage is provided in twin hanging lockers, overhead cabinets and in under bunk drawers. The queen size bed has easy walk-around and handy side tables.

OPEN FLYBRIDGE

It's a pleasant change to find an open flybridge boat of this size and as Riviera have found out, not everyone wants to be fully enclosed. The 43 Open Flybridge has a solid GRP hardtop on stainless steel supports with an opening hatch, grab rail and overhead lighting. This is then surrounded by removable Strataglass, so you can get the full effect of an entirely enclosed hardtop and also the weather protection when required.

Access is via a ladder from the cockpit, which features open treads, so the sightlines from inside are not impeded. I found the design of the ladder to be very user-friendly and easy to use. Nothing like the old stainless steps of the past.

Upstairs the helm is placed well aft, so the skipper has a clear view of the cockpit and all the 'corners' of the boat. The ergonomically designed aft helm features a full array of instruments and controls and this is one area that you can stamp your

signature on. The electronics package is owner's choice and in this particular boat the owner had gone for a full Garmin package, This included 2 Garmin 16" MFDs, autopilot, and open scan radar. If you are into serious sports fishing and want the very best systems for seeing what's under the boat, or plotting your routes, then the helm allows for a couple of extra large MFDs, flanked by all the rest of your nav and comm equipment.

Seating is provided with twin Pompanette helm chairs and suede-upholstered lounges port and starboard around a forward entertaining area complete with table. There is also a portside bar module which includes a sink, hot and cold water and a fridge.

COCKPIT COMFORT

From the minute you step onto the huge boarding platform, through the transom door with its lift-up bridge and into the cockpit you can't help but be impressed. With the stainless steel sliding door slid back and the hopper window raised, the whole boat takes on a new dimension. The unified flow from the transom to the forward windscreen is obvious and it works so well. There are no separate none connected areas, which is also all one level. To starboard forward is an aft facing lounge on the mezzanine level with drawers

underneath for storage and to port, at the base of the flybridge ladder is another fridge. Overhead a half rear awning adds a little extra shade when you are enjoying your evening cocktails. Drop in a couple of loose chairs and a table and you have the perfect place for alfresco dining.

The 'floating' cockpit sole, is mounted on a gas strut and lifts to provide all-around access to the twin Volvo Penta IPS engines. Incorporated in the hatch are a couple of moulded fish bins with pump-out facilities. Riviera has thought ahead for those into their sports fishing, with the teak cockpit sole reinforced with an alloy plate for a fighting chair. Steps either side lead through to the full side decks, with high stainless coaming rails giving added security when going forward.

POWER & PERFORMANCE

The Riviera 43 is based on a solid grp medium deadrise planing hull, the same as found under the 445 SUV. Nothing tricky, just a well-proven design concept that works well and is one of the reasons why this boat is still so popular. Owner's like the ride and handling, it's that simple. I had a couple of opportunities to run the Riviera 43, firstly in the calm waters on the Broadwater and then we punched out into a big sea running through the seaway.



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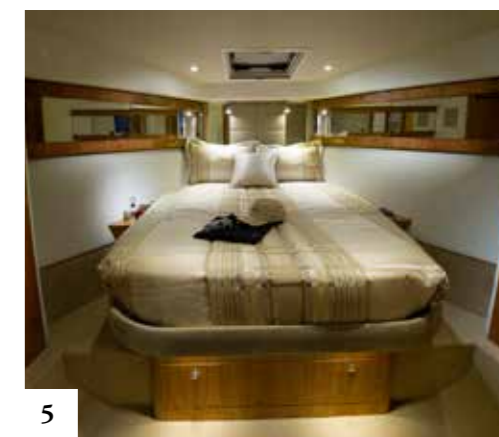
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1. Looking after through the saloon that opens unimpeded to the cockpit. 2. The U-shape galley features a very generous size Corian benchtop. 3. The aft cabin twin single berths can convert to a double. 4. The cockpit lends itself to fishing or entertaining. 5. The plush master stateroom is located forward with an ensuite bathroom.

Our particular boat was fitted with an optional Seakeeper (M5) gyro stabiliser which is installed forward in the engine room. I was keen to see just what difference it made to the boat, so the big swell coming straight into the seaway was an ideal test bed.

We ran from every angle, with the Seakeeper on and off and what a remarkable change in attitude. At speed or at rest, especially in the big side swells, when the Seakeeper was on, the Riviera 43 was a different boat. Super stable and rock and roll free.

When you are in a docking situation, the benefit of having then IPS system comes into play, with either the joystick allowing you to manoeuvre quickly in confined spaces, with the twin pods working in tandem to crab the boat sideways or spin within its length.

In the calm water, I managed to see around 30 knots on the GPS and it felt nice and cruisey at around anything from 20-26 knots, depending on the sea state. The economy figures show that at 3200 rpm @ 23.3 knots, the fuel consumption is 129 lph and gives a range of around 342nm. Interestingly the range doesn't change a lot at 3530rpm, with around 330 nm @ 29.4 knots.

It was very apparent that the owner of Riviera 43FB #51 was into his sports fishing with a pair of Relax outriggers and a centre rigger plus a Relax 130lb fighting chair fitted. At trolling speeds, the Volvo Penta IPS 600s are using less than 50 lph and give a range of close to 300nm.



The 'floating' cockpit sole lifts to provide all-around access to engines.

RIVIERA FAMILY

When Riviera say in their brochure that when you buy a Riviera, you are joining a family, they really mean it. With over 5000 boats on the water, it's no surprise that they have got a loyal following. At 14.16m, the 43 Open Flybridge is the smallest boat in the seven strong flybridge line. It is also only one of two open flybridge boats offer by Riviera. However while the trend has certainly gone to enclosed hardtops in the larger models, when it comes to boatS of this size, the open hardtop is still a great option.



The ergonomically designed aft helm features a full array of instruments and controls.

SPECIFICATIONS

Boat Design Name: Riviera 43FB IPS #51	Engine Controls: IPS with Joystick
Year Launched: 2015	Remote Eng Control:
Designer: Riviera	Lighting: Hella
Interior Designer: Riviera	Underwater Lights: Aqualuma
Builder: Riviera	Paint (Topsides):
LOA: 14.46m	Paint (Antifouling):
LOH: 13.61m	Hatches:
Beam: 4.57m	Wipers:
Draft: 1.13m	Windows:
Displacement (dry): 14,200 kgs	Porthole Hatches:
Max Speed: 29.4 knots	Heads:
Construction: GRP	Woodwork:
Fuel Capacity: 2100 litres	Liferaft:
Water Capacity: 460 litres	Davit Crane:
Engines Make/HP: Volvo Penta IPS600 x 2	Rise & Fall Platform:
Drive Train: Pod	Tender:
Propellers: Volvo Duoprop T2	Stainless Steel Fab:
Generator: Onan EQD 9.5 kw	Saloon Doors:
Inverter/Charger:	Trim Tabs:
Air Conditioning:	Helm Chairs:
Anchor Winch: Muir	Upholstery:
Anchor:	Searchlight:
Steering:	

ELECTRONICS

Autopilot:	Garmin Reactor IPS
MFD:	Garmin 7416 16" x 2
Radar:	Garmin GMR-HD2
VHF:	
Entertainment Sys:	Fusion Entertainment
Base Price of Boat:	\$AU
Price As Tested:	\$AU

PERFORMANCE DATA

RPM	Knots	LPH	NML	Range
1500	6.6	22	0.30	562
2000	7.5	49	0.15	289
2600	14.2	92	0.15	293
2800	17.5	105	0.17	316
3000	20.3	120	0.17	319
3200	23.3	129	0.18	342
3300	24.8	139	0.18	337
3400	26.2	144	0.18	342
3530	29.4	169	0.17	330

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