

Lakeland BOATING

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RIVIERA 645 SUV

This yacht ticks a lot of boxes. **p. 30**

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A serious long-range cruiser. **p. 34**

100 YEARS OF WATERSKIING
In 1922, an 18-year-old daredevil invented the sport of waterskiing. One hundred years later, we're still having fun on the water! **p. 38**

CRUISING THE BENJAMINS
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SPOTLIGHTS
FOUR WINNS ★ INVICTUS
PRESTIGE ★ TIDEWATER

BOAT TEST



Riviera 645 SUV

More can be better.

BY ARNIE HAMMERMAN

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The new Riviera 645 SUV is big and bold, with the types of versatile spaces that allow for a host of entertaining options while also working perfectly as a family or couple's cruiser. I'm a fan of the SUV series because they simply tick a lot of boxes. Their single-level living areas work well and keep everyone together when the boat is underway. The helmsperson (which is often me) is not tucked away on a flybridge while everyone else lounges in the salon or makes lunch in the galley.

Like the popular kitchen/great room in nearly every modern house, this layout has tremendous adaptability. The Riviera's living areas are stylish and comfortable, and the scale of the spaces is impressive. The beauty of the layout is that accommodation spaces can be easily connected or separated. Entertaining and gathering areas can be adjusted to work best for different types and sizes of onboard groups and activities, both indoors and out.

Sit back and relax

The cockpit is nearly 100 square feet and is suited for fishing, although I personally prefer it as a dance floor, cocktail lounge (wetbar included), place to barbecue with the built-in grill, or perhaps a spot to enjoy a good cigar. Buyers can choose transom seating or a windowed, lighted livewell. Twin transom doors connect the cockpit to a large swim platform with a standard hydraulic lift that raises and lowers for tender launching or to create a wading area. A Williams 395 Jet Tender that the owner of my test boat chose was not yet onboard. I like the idea of slightly lowering the platform and setting up a folding table and chairs under the warm sunshine for lunch or some bubbly with your feet caressed by the water.

Another great outdoor area is at the bow. Side decks with protected bulwarks and sturdy rails lead forward, and optional teak decks look and feel great. The port side has both a watertight door into the salon/galley and a pathway that cuts through into the bow lounge for easier access. Aside from abundant storage, an anchor locker with washdown, a MUIR vertical windlass, a recessed anchor and ground tackle, the foredeck is adorned with a comfortable lounge. This is not just a sunpad, although there is room to sunbathe. The deck is recessed ahead of the broad three-paneled windshield to accommodate a Sunbrella cushioned lounge complete with a removable table and a Fusion Apollo SRX400 stereo. An awning on carbon fiber poles provides relief when needed. At anchor or when Med moored, I picture quiet times here enjoying the breeze, separated from activities in the cabin or dockside. Yet this bow lounge easily connects to the rest of the boat and creates a great overflow area for larger parties.

The mezzanine, or "alfresco deck" in Australian, is both inside and outside. Perched a few steps up from the cockpit, this is not a fishing mezzanine, it's like the deck on your house, with comfortable seating, a folding teak table with integral bottle/glass holders, an ice maker, a stereo and a 32-inch fold-down flat-screen. It's covered by the coach top overhead and can be enclosed with Strataglass panels for separation, and can even be air conditioned. Or open the overhead sunroof and aft panels, pop up the window, slide the cabin door, and you have a vast amount of connected space.

Inside the cabin, glossed walnut nicely contrasts the solid surface synthetic "pearl quartz" countertops that waterfall over the edges. The galley has abundant drawer-style fridges and freezers, and a long island counter ideal for meal prep and serving. A Miele three-burner electric cooktop, a combo microwave/convection oven and a deep stainless sink with a garbage disposal provide function.

An L-shaped upholstered lounge with an ottoman faces the galley where a large flat-screen is housed on the island.

Another option is to have the TV on a lift behind the helm, but on our test boat that cabinet is a brilliant glass display case. Riviera-embossed martini and wine glasses all neatly seated for protection underway are showcased here. The salon is the "Newport" option, which adds a clever bar with a removable stool, additional drawer fridges, bottle storage, sink and serving counters. I like how this allows you to separate the bar from galley food prep and serving. The entire salon/galley/bar connects easily through the side door to the bow lounge and aft to the mezzanine and cockpit; or close the doors, drop the motorized roller blinds and watch a movie in climate-controlled privacy.

The helm station is accessed via a step from the salon and features three large electrically adjustable bucket seats that slide and recline. The centerline helm seat has great visibility forward and the triple Garmin MFD screens are within easy reach, as are most controls. USB chargers and VHF remote handset connection are set in a nice recessed pocket by the two companion seats, but I'd like to see them closer to the helm or perhaps a wireless charging pad for the helmsman's phone. Throttles are ergonomically placed but are to the left of the helm seat, which can take getting used to. The Twin Disc joystick uses variable control of transmissions and thrusters for smooth and impressive maneuverability. Cockpit wing stations on both sides make docking easy.

Nimble performance

Now underway, we put the Riviera 645 SUV through her paces. Running the boat is really a joy as she handles well, taking tight, controlled turns without losing much speed. There is a light chop and some nearby boats so I try to pound through their wakes, but the Riviera is completely unfazed, slicing through any wave we can find without any rattle or fuss. We all marvel that a boat this size can handle like a runabout despite some serious accommodations. With optional MAN 1,550-hp V12s we hit a peak speed of 41.2 mph — amazing for a boat with a dry weight of 88,119 pounds. The Riviera 645 SUV accelerates smoothly, transitioning easily onto plane. Cruising at 2150 RPM, we travel 35.4 mph at 128 GPH yielding a range of 428 miles. The helm configuration gives us good visibility, and ample seating keeps everyone connected.

The accommodation deck is spacious even on this four-cabin layout. A VIP forward has its own ensuite head. The side cabin twin berths that cross each other are 6 feet, 5 inches long, suitable for adults. Another guest cabin has side-by-side twin beds, which can push together into a double, and a connecting head that also exits to the foyer for general use. The owner's cabin runs full beam with a king island berth and large hull windows providing natural light. The ensuite head has a large separate shower with a convenient bench. A door from the head leads to a hidden utility/crew room with a washer, a dryer, storage, an optional bunk, and head and engine room access.

The Riviera 645 SUV delivers on its premise of connected living while also providing owners and guests the space to spread out. It's also remarkably nimble and easy to handle for a boat with this size and quality of accommodations onboard. If you like the SUV concept and want more of it, the flagship 645 SUV delivers. ★

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RIVIERA 645 SUV

» SPECIFICATIONS

LOA: 69'8"
Beam: 19'1"
Draft: 5'4"
Dry Weight: 88,119 lbs.
Fuel Capacity: 1,717 gals.
Water Capacity: 198 gals.
Power (as tested): 2 x MAN V12 1,550-hp w/ V-Drives
MSRP: Contact dealer
RIVIERAUSA.COM

» DEALERS

Bay Marine
BAYMARINE.NET
Onekama Marine
ONEKAMAMARINE.COM
Lake Michigan Yacht Sales
LAKEMICHIGANYACHTSALES.COM
Horizon Marina
HORIZONMARINA.COM



Unique mezzanine lounge provides indoor/outdoor feel. Foredeck lounge with seating, table and awning. Full-beam owner's cabin and large ensuite head. Living spaces work together. Salon, galley, helm, mezzanine and foredeck easily connect.



Centerline helm means you're most likely using wing stations for docking. Throttles to the left of the helm seat take a little getting used to. If the utility room is used as a crew cabin, access is through the engine room.



Watch the video at [LAKELANDBOATING.COM](https://www.lakelandboating.com)!

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