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review

Riviera 505 SUV

WORDS BY
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PHOTOGRAPHY BY
SUPPLIED

Grand designs

Australia's Riviera Marine prides itself on manufacturing boaters' boats – capable, stylish, well-built motor yachts it can sell to the world.



A

household name among Australia's boating fraternity, building a strong export market has always been one of Riviera's goals, but especially under current owner Rodney Longhurst's watch.

In recent years the company has released a steady stream of new models, boosting exports to the USA, Europe, the Middle East, Asia-Pacific and New Zealand.

The new 505 SUV is the latest model to leave Riviera's Coomera facility. It is destined to be a star player, here in New Zealand where Riviera enjoys a healthy market share, and in markets around the world. Although relatively small in terms of numbers of boats sold, New Zealand remains an important market for Riviera, with high per capita sales and a loyal Riviera customer base.

Boating NZ caught up with hull number one at Runaway Bay on Queensland's Gold Coast just before Christmas. As the first marine journalist to step aboard the new model, I got the full rundown from Riviera PR and marketing guru Stephen Milne during our run up and down the Broadwater.

NEWEST SUV

The 505 is an addition to Riviera's popular SUV line-up of sedan-style models, which combine the wide-open cockpit of the company's flybridge models with the single-level living and alfresco entertaining style of its Sport Yacht range. The 505 adds a mezzanine to the deck plan, bringing another dimension of comfort and versatility, and a huge foredeck sun lounger with adjustable backrests offers yet another relaxation option.

The 505 SUV offers a good-sized cockpit, low to the water, and an extra-large, hydraulic boarding platform with space for a jet-ski or tender, accessed via two outward opening transom doors. The platform submerges 400mm below the surface, so deploying and retrieving water toys is a breeze. Stainless-steel u-bars are optional.

The self-draining cockpit's lower level is designed for watersports of every kind, while the upper level mezzanine with its comfortable seating lends itself to wining and dining, relaxing and escaping the sun.

Separating the lower level and mezzanine, an aft-facing





electric BBQ, wet bar, icemaker and a large freezer are tucked away inside moulded cabinets. The cockpit proper features a large inbuilt transom live bait tank, a hot and cold freshwater cockpit shower, saltwater wash-down and storage in transom lockers and under the cockpit's optional teak sole. There's a pump-out fish bin locker under the floor and all the hatches, including those providing access to the pod drives, have gas struts and heavy-duty lockdowns.

A cockpit joystick helm station on the port side gives ultimate docking control – with Volvo Penta's IPS, there's no need for bow or stern thrusters – and there's a Garmin cockpit camera, which is useful when driving from inside.

The mezzanine is a real focus for the 505. A teak table on the port side can be lowered while lounging seats either side both convert to daybeds. A Euro awning with clears is available to completely enclose the whole cockpit should the weather become inclement. Overhead, an electric sunroof opens to the sky, while a large awning window on gas stays and a massive stainless-steel and glass sliding door ensures excellent communion between the aft galley/saloon and the entertaining zone of the mezzanine cockpit.

Hardwearing Sunbrella fabrics are used for many of the outside seat covers and wall panels. Fusion stereo speakers pump out the tunes and LED spot and flood lighting provides illumination at night.





ABOVE LEFT The stylish saloon is spacious and flooded with light. The sliding roof panel is a great feature.

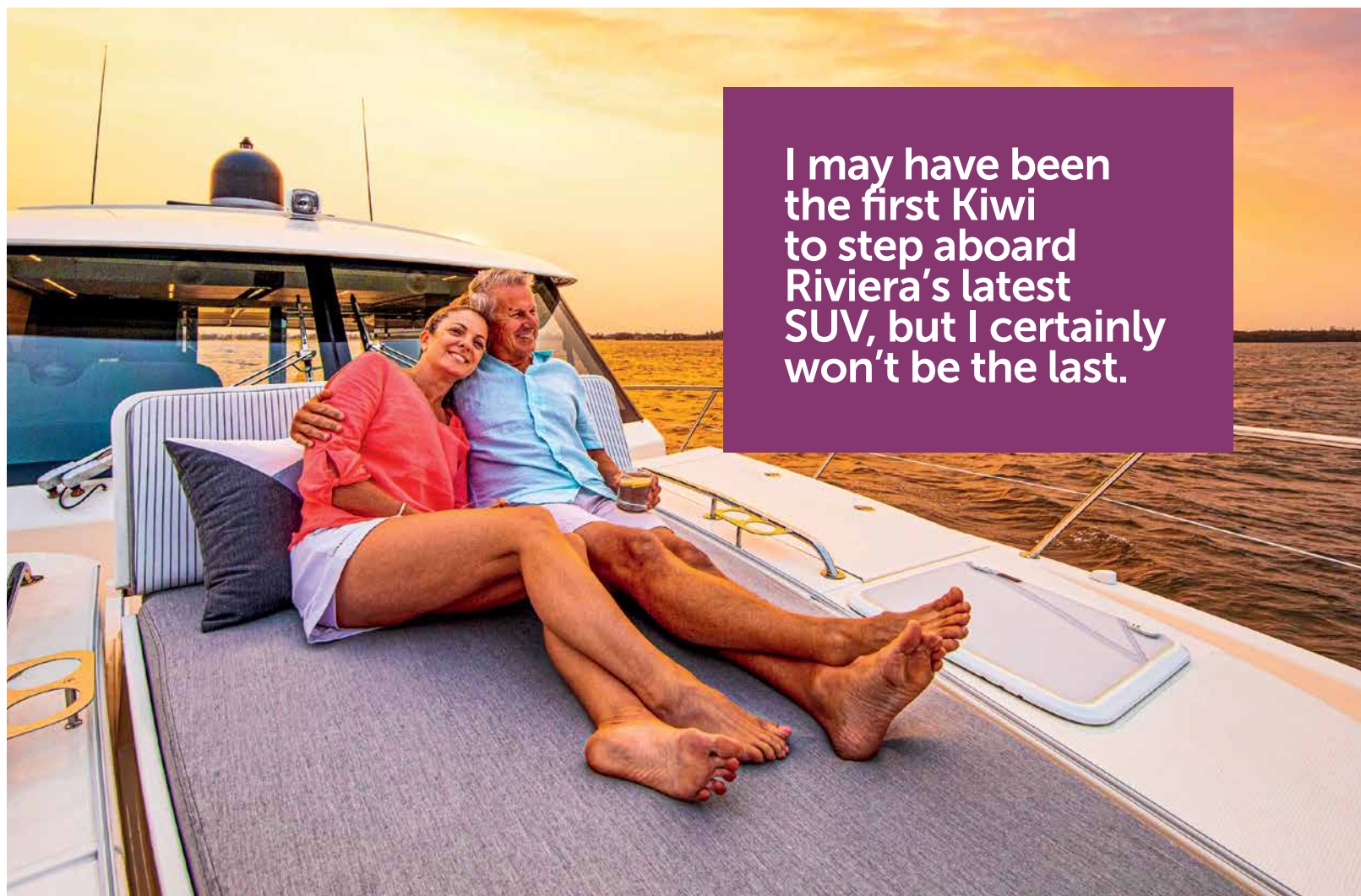
ABOVE The interior uses premium materials and luxury finishes. A full-beam master suite pampers owners and there's plenty of room for guests. A fully-featured electronics suite graces the helm and the vessel has C-Zone digital switching.

LIGHT AND AIR

Step inside the 505's spacious, light-filled saloon and it's hard not to be impressed by the choice of materials and the builder's attention to detail. The overall effect is luxurious, but also modern in a very stylish way. As is usual with Riviera, the galley is aft.

U-shaped with stone counters and a two-hob in-bench electric cooktop, it offers plenty of storage, including overhead cabinets, a two-drawer fridge, dishwasher and a one-drawer freezer opposite, all discreetly hidden behind gloss walnut panelling. Plenty of USB and 110/230V outlets feature throughout the vessel.

The saloon has a very social layout with L-shaped seating around the saloon table on the port side, raised on a low platform to take best advantage of views through the oversize windows and a second L-shaped seating area with



I may have been the first Kiwi to step aboard Riviera's latest SUV, but I certainly won't be the last.



convertible occasional table/ottoman on the starboard side under the wall-mounted flat-screen TV. A Fusion stereo system features four speakers and a sub-woofer in the saloon, plus two speakers in the mezzanine. Bluetooth and Airplay are standard, as is a remote control.

As well the sliding door and awning window aft, the Riviera 505 SUV's saloon has sliding side windows and a huge electrically-operated sunroof. Between them they achieve unrivalled access to light and air, really bringing the outside in. Of course, when it's not so pleasant outside, closing them renders the saloon snug and warm.

Step down through the wide companionway, past the stacked washing machine and dryer hidden behind a gloss walnut door, and there's a luxurious stateroom in the bow. Featuring an island berth with plenty of storage in drawers under the bed, in gloss walnut cabinets and in hanging lockers, it has overhead hatches to let in light and air. The bow cabin shares the well-appointed bathroom, accessed via its own door semi-ensuite style, with the other guest cabin to starboard. It features two large single berths one above the other.

The full-beam owners' suite occupies the space under the saloon. Furnished with its own upscale bathroom, a decadent chaise longue, a walk-in 'robe and heaps of well-designed

ABOVE Luxury extends to the sunbed on the foredeck.

TOP RIGHT A tidy, light-filled engine room with good access to all of the vessel's systems.

RIGHT The mezzanine is a natural social hub.

BELOW The 505 offers plenty of relaxation options.





storage in drawers and cedar-lined lockers, it looks like it was somehow transported from a much larger vessel.

The queen-sized island berth is oriented fore and aft, providing easy access to both sides of the bed, while (alarmed) ports provide fresh air. Everywhere you look in the 505, the quality of the workmanship and the materials used meets Riviera's usual high standards.

Each cabin's air-conditioning can be individually controlled and, with C-Zone as standard, programmable operational modes for all the vessel's systems can be implemented from the helm, the C-Zone master panel just inside the saloon or a control panel in the owners' cabin. Wool carpet is used in the sleeping accommodation and timber-look vinyl flooring in high traffic areas.

Under the mezzanine hatch a ladder leads down to the spacious, clean white, flow-coated engine room housing a couple of 725hp Volvo Penta IPS950 engines, a Cummins Onan 13kW generator, water heater, charger-inverter, batteries, A/C and fuel systems, an automatic fire suppression system. Fuel tanks are GRP, batteries are maintenance-free and all hoses are double-clamped. The engineering looks flawless.

This vessel, bound for Miami, is fitted with an optional Seakeeper II gyro-stabiliser, which ensures comfort in most sea conditions, both at rest and underway.

Although the 505 sits somewhere nearer the smaller end of Riviera's SUV range, it feels like a bigger boat. That's because, says Milne, lots of big boat thinking went into its design. Thinking like higher gunwales and a wide, flared hull, walkaround side decks, big hull windows, a full-beam owners' cabin and storage everywhere. But most of all, the big boat feel is created by the 505's clever layout and the ability to open it up and allow fresh air



and light inside.

For the 505 SUV, Riviera have integrated the Ultra anchor into the bowsprit, with easy access to the snubber. The anchor well is on the port side while the locker to starboard contains the remote for the Muir winch, washdown and salt and freshwater outlets. A couple of big wet lockers either side of the sunlounger are ideal for storing fenders and the like.

IN CONTROL

High gunwales mean the helm position is quite elevated, affording excellent all-round vision. A pair of sculpted, Recaro leather seats with lifting armrests are particularly supportive and comfortable. The helm console with its textured, carbon-look fascia has ample room for large MFDs, in this case two 15-inch Garmins, shaded by 'eyebrows' that wrap around the top of the console. Divided into three horizontal zones, each angled differently, the fascia looks clean and uncluttered: multifunctional electronic gauges display lots of different data, so you don't need many of them.

Throttle, joystick and autopilot controls fall nicely to hand beside the window on the starboard side and a couple of large wipers with integrated window washers keep the windscreen clear.

There was no need of wipers for our run on the Broadwater. The water was flat, of course, despite a stiff breeze, but there was no prospect of rain. The IPS 950 package is a premium option for this model – twin 600hp IPS 800 drives are standard – but the upgrade gives the 505 SUV a sporty feel with brisk acceleration, a higher cruising speed and a maximum speed of just under 34 knots.

Trim tabs are of the interrupter type and

in auto mode they worked perfectly on the day, adjusting the boat's attitude for optimal performance. Once on the plane the 505 SUV rides nicely level, so forward vision is good, and climbing onto the plane takes very little time. Bow lift is nicely controlled.

With four adults aboard and half a load of fuel and water, we saw an indicated top speed of 35 knots down tide; cruising at 30 knots is perfectly relaxed, burning 206lph at 2200rpm according to Volvo's instruments. At 2130rpm – 75% engine load – we saw 26.6 knots and 193 litres per hour total fuel consumption. Inside the boat, progress was not only swift, but quiet – even more so with doors and windows closed.

OCEAN READY

Riviera market its SUV range as 'ocean-ready'. The 505 SUV has a solid hand-laid moulded GRP hull, keel and chines with cored decks and hull topsides. Top-quality isophthalic gel-coats and vinylester resins are used, there's a collision bulkhead forward and independent compartments throughout the hull, foam-filled where possible for sound dampening, buoyancy and strength. Each boat is sold with a five-year warranty covering the hull, engines and electronics.

With a fresh and appealing layout finished to a high standard, it's not surprising the new 505 SUV was well received at its Miami International Boat Show debut in February. I may have been the first Kiwi to step aboard Riviera's latest SUV, but I certainly won't be the last. I'm guessing the first New Zealand-bound 505 SUV is already under construction. **BNZ**



Riviera 505 SUV

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PRICE AS TESTED
NZ\$2,280,000 (no gyro)

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HIGHLIGHTS

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Large, luxurious
master suite surprises
for a vessel of this size.

Sporty performance
combined with stylish
lines, fine build quality
and a great layout.

SPECIFICATIONS

loa 17.01m
hull length 15.43m
beam 4.96m
weight 21,800kg dry
construction Hand-laid GRP,
cored topsides and decks
engines 2 x Volvo Penta D11
IPS950 725hp
fuel 3300 litres
water 460 litres
waste water 151 litres
cruising speed 20-30 knots
max speed 33.8 knots

