

Riviera 505 SUV

ALL IN THE FAMILY

Being able to stand out in a glamorous range that includes four other SUV models takes something special, writes **Kevin Green**. Yet, he concludes, this middle sibling – the Riviera 505 SUV – does all this and more.





Top: The mezzanine cockpit offers shelter and the chance to sleep outdoors.

Above: The aft galley easily serves both saloon and aft deck.

Opposite: The bright, open-plan saloon includes a third lounge/dinette area forward.

Mezzanine is not a word often associated with motorboats, yet it's a clever design idea that Riviera has deployed in the creation of this 55-foot sportcruiser. Multi-purpose outdoor space gives further versatility to these types of boat, which attempt to be all things to all people. For instance, having enough torque to pull a water toy, yet with a decent range to make that coastal hop and a sturdy hull to do it in bumpy conditions are just some of the boxes this type of boat must tick.

With 40 years of production experience and 5,600 boats built, Riviera has a fairly good insight into how it's done. It also ensures the company's expertise in pod-

driven transmissions. Having built more than 1,000 Volvo IPS boats, the level of integration with hull shape means these cruisers are slippery and fast.

"The majority of our boats now are sports yachts, which reflects where the market is going," explains Director of Marketing Stephen Milne while we motor through the Gold Coast Broadwater on the 505 SUV.

Riviera knew they had to differentiate this model sufficiently from her smaller 395 and 445 and larger 545 and 575 siblings, so they created a completely new hull.

It is evident in the hull's higher topsides with sweeping sheerline and the elongated

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hull windows that deliver natural light to the three cabins. Fuller forward sections are another change, so instead of a bowsprit the entire rode is neatly integrated into the bow. Another change is the neatly vented exhausts, hidden by elongated exits at the stern quarters. However, it's clearly still a Riviera.

The aft cockpit is stepped to create a mezzanine layout below the fibreglass overhang. "We can also see people sleeping out here by simply unfolding the bench to create a two-person day or night bed," says Milne.

This is an all-weather area and this first hull – destined for the Great Lakes in the US – was fitted with clear plastics to seal this inner cockpit. Alternatively, sun worshippers can step beyond it to the outer cockpit where there's a barbecue and wet bar, or relax on the hydraulic swimming platform. Dual transom doors that fold back, along with movable handrails, give good versatility to the platform that can easily house a small tender.

Back in the mezzanine, diners have a folding teak table with Sunbrella fabric bench seating and that fold-out double ventilation. Twin opening skylights ensure good ventilation. Privacy comes from patterned side windows. There's teak underfoot in both cockpits, while alfresco diners can easily reach in through the large chromed window to the galley worktop. The mezzanine offers plenty of storage in sole and side lockers, as well as gearbox access aft and engine compartment access on the saloon step.

Our boat had the optional Volvo IPS joystick control hidden in a port-side recess – something we found ideal when manoeuvring in the tight Runaway Bay Marina as you



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can look along the topsides as you twist the joystick in the direction of travel. Nearby, a panel houses the main power switches.

Australians have a complex relationship with the sun, so our boats have to reflect this – something Riviera is expert at. Vertical bulkheads, big overhangs and ventilation are key points, and all are found on the 505 SUV.

Opening the sturdy chromed sliding door reveals the saloon with U-shaped galley to port. Another step takes you to the lounge, clearly demarcated from the galley. Here, the U-shaped, leather-clad dinette with another wide bench on starboard creates a convivial entertaining area. Usefully, the table unfolds and has swivels to suit the number seated. For cocktail hour, an Ottoman seat converts into a low table so your G&T is secured. The saloon is airy thanks to opening side windows and a large sunroof.

The galley shows a well-equipped cooking space with deep sink, two-ring electric hob, dishwasher and a microwave convection oven, although the appliances require the generator to run. On the plus side, there is energy-efficient, double-drawer refrigeration and, for the non-perishables, overhead lockers. What differentiates Riviera from other marques is the detailing. There are sturdy longitudinal handrails in the deckhead and strong stainless fixings on doors and cupboards. The joinery is done with absolute precision in high-gloss walnut.

Given that SUVs must also be drivers' boats, the 505 comes up trumps with its stylish helm. Twin leather Recaro bucket seats house skipper and co-skipper, sensibly shaded by Riviera's signature stylish visor that ensures the Garmin Glass Bridge instrumentation is daylight viewable.

There are twin 17-inch screens for navigation and another for the Volvo engine controls, plus the essential autopilot. Throttles and the IPS joystick are nearby, as are the Volvo vertical trim tab controls that offer auto or manual modes.

All other systems are managed by the CZone screen and digital bus controls. Fault finding is a major advantage with these systems, and any problems are shown on the screen. Software modes are used to quickly set the inside lighting to harbour or offshore.

AT A GLANCE

17.01m
Overall length

4.96m
Beam

25.7t
Displacement – fully laden

34.5kn
Maximum speed



Above: The full-beam master offers plenty of storage, including a walk-in closet. The well around the bed creates additional headroom.

Opposite: The foredeck's sun pad is ideal for sun worshippers and sundowners alike.

Traditionalists will appreciate the chunky buttons for repetitive controls such as wipers, lights, horn and so on. For entertainment, a television is set against the aft bulkhead of the saloon. In party mode, pump up the volume on the Fusion sound system that's piped throughout the 505.

A wide, central corridor beside the helm leads below to the three cabins. The higher topsides of this model ensure ample volume for the cabins and two bathrooms. Whereas the 525's Achilles heel was its lack of grand suite, the 505 has remedied this – the owner now enjoys a full-beam master cabin with spacious ensuite thanks to the compact IPS gearboxes creating space aft.

The forward VIP – which has a distinct airiness thanks to the high bow sheer – is also a force to be reckoned with thanks to vast overhead space, portlights, and a spacious ensuite that it shares with the third cabin.

That third cabin with its two bunks benefits from adult-sized mattresses and sweeping

windows, but only on the bottom bunk, where there's also an opening porthole. Other lower deck features include separate washer and dryer machines housed in ventilated cabinetry.

The master suite features a sunken floor around the queen-size island bed, although headroom on entry is limited. Yet there's still plenty to like: the chaise longue for instance, or the tall, cedar-lined cupboards, and the wall-mounted television.

Chilling out is comfortably done on the 505 thanks to piped air conditioning. Elongated windows with small opening portholes should minimise air conditioner usage, however, especially if the large hatch in the bathroom is opened. Yet another feature is the walk-in closet.

Another requirement for a successful SUV is usable deck space, so wide walkways on each side of the 505 are welcome, as are the stainless handrails that guide one to the bow. Here, again, the changes have been wrung to include an elevated bulkhead (to ensure headroom below) with shallow lockers around the double sun pads.

Given that fuss-free anchoring is a major part of this style of boat, Riviera has ensured that the rode is adequate for all conditions thanks to a deep locker that avoids chain build-ups. There's also an

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The high sheer at the bow gives the VIP cabin an airiness, so there's plenty to like on the 505.

oversized electric Muir windlass/capstan with manual override to control the quality Ultra anchor that's integrated into the bow. Equally good are the large cleats all round.

Hull construction continues in the well-proven, hand-laid laminated technique with solid GRP around the keel and other key underwater areas. Elsewhere, it's cored laminate on decks and cabin top to maximise insulation. The structure includes watertight collision bulkheads and wide longitudinals, while the outer skin is vinylester to prevent osmosis.

Engine access is via the aft cockpit with another hatch behind it for the optional Seakeeper 12 stabiliser. Climbing down the steps reveals a spacious engine room housing the optional twin Volvo D11 725HPs, with key service elements easily accessed.

The standard configuration is twin 600hp engines, but Riviera emphasises that either option will break 30 knots. The 55-foot hull is built around these engines and their forward-facing propellers, which some might argue leaves them open to damage from debris, although with so many having been built now it is clear that this is not an issue in reality.

The AGM batteries are sensibly placed above water level, as are switches and other components, while the bilges are modestly deep. Also slightly elevated is the 13kVA Onan generator that sits forward against the GRP fuel tanks, which are a clever way of putting weight inboard while also insulating the owner's cabin from the engine room. Wing tanks are used for water.

Sitting at the wheel, the 505 SUV propels me toward the misty skyline at Surfers Paradise. It isn't until some cardinal marks fly past that I realise we are doing 29 knots, such is the quiet and smooth ride afforded.

My only input has been to push the throttles as the vertical tabs automatically trim our bow down until retracting to minimise drag. Acres of window space also add to the effortless feel, inducing me to



throw the 505 into a tight turn after quickly glancing aft to check for other vessels.

This is the cruising speed for the 505, burning 232 litres per hour. I push the throttles down to check if the 505 really can break the 30-knot barrier – which it does with ease before maxing out at 34 knots.

Predictable handling such as gently heeling into turns is a Riviera trait, as is the solid feel of the hull as it slams into the wakes of

other vessels. Finally, slowing side-on to the stiff breeze, I manoeuvre us toward a mooring at South Stradbroke island with a few turns of the joystick – just to remind me how intuitive and impressive this technology is. In fact, the same can be said for the entire Riviera 505 SUV package. [O rivieraaustralia.com](http://rivieraaustralia.com)

SPECIFICATIONS ➔

Riviera 505 SUV



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MAIN DECK

Creative design generates five distinct dining/entertaining spaces; extended transom/swim platform and aft cockpit with wet bar and BBQ; mezzanine boasts dinette, lounge and pull-out day-bed. Open plan saloon has two large lounges, the forward one with high-gloss teak table. Bow area seating includes adjustable sunbed.



2

LOWER DECK

Full-beam master with queen berth has walk-in wardrobe, chaise longue, and especially roomy ensuite. VIP stateroom with queen berth forward also benefits from the 505's interior dimensions. Guest cabin offers generous Pullman berths. Elongated hull windows provide abundant light.



SPECIFICATIONS

Builder	Riviera Australia	Gearbox	Volvo Penta
Model	505 SUV	Speed (max)	34.5kn – Volvo Penta D11 IPS 950
Country of build	Australia	Speed (cruise)	27-28kn – Volvo Penta D11 IPS 950
Designer	Riviera Australia	Fuel capacity	3300 litres
Naval architect	In house	Range	390nm @ 2300rpm
Interior designer	Sarah Mathias, Riviera Australia	Freshwater capacity	460 litres
Year of build	2019	Blackwater capacity	151 litres
LOA (length overall)	17.01 metres	Generators (main)	Onan EQD
LWL (waterline length)	Molded hull length: 15.43 metres	Winches	Muir Electric Anchor Winch
Beam	4.96 metres	Anchoring systems	Stainless-steel plough anchor 35kg
Draft	1.35 metres	Navigation electronics	Volvo Penta Glass Bridge
Displacement (fully laden)	25.71 tonnes	Underwater lights	Lumitec
Classification	CE Category B	Owner berth	Full-beam queen with private ensuite
Hull construction	GRP	Guest berths	1 x VIP queen forward, 1 x guest with twin Pullman berths, shared ensuite entry
Superstructure	GRP	Maximum people on board	18
Engines	Standard 2 x Volvo Penta D8 IPS 800 (Optional D11 IPS 800)	Tenders	Customer choice
Output	1600hp	Standard warranties	Volvo Penta 5 year Limited Warranty + Riviera 1-year Boat Warranty + Riviera 5 year Structural Boat Warranty
Propellers	Volvo Penta	Price in Australian dollars (ex-factory)	AU\$1.59 million
Drive train	Volvo IPS POD Drive		
Stabilisation systems	Optional Seakeeper M9000		

34.5 knots

Speed (max)

27–28 knots

Speed (cruise)

3,300L

Fuel capacity

390nm

Range

6

Guests overnight