

review

**Riviera  
78 Motor Yacht**

WORDS BY  
**KEVIN GREEN**  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY  
**KEVIN GREEN**  
AND **SUPPLIED**

# HIGH -LEVEL LIVING





Boosting a winning formula of ocean-ready motoryachts by adding some European flair is Riviera's strategy with the Australian company's largest hull to date, reports Kevin Green.



Striking new aesthetics from a collaboration between a European designer and the Riviera design group, plus a range of new smart systems, has the Riviera 78 MY pushing into superyacht territory, as I found out when taking the first hull to sea on Australia's Gold Coast.

The 78 MY tops the company's fleet of large flybridge yachts, following the release of the 72 model in 2018 and a raft of coupé models. Riviera has launched over 5,800 hulls during its 42 years of building.

Riviera focusses on the 39–78-foot (11.9–23.8m) market for premium level motor yachts. However, by extending the hull of the successful 72, it has arguably

also extended this focus. In addition, Riviera customers provided valuable input to the 78 MY, explained Brand and Communications Director Stephen Milne.

The attractions of a flybridge are several. Top among them for Pacific-based boats is commanding views of coral-strewn coastlines. The downside can be the motion offshore from this high vantage point, but you get three levels of living space at rest, where vessels generally spend most of their time. Riviera has extended the flybridge concept on this bluewater hull by creating a complete living space up top, which includes a vast aft deck. This creates the most striking change to the side profile because it extends the covered area of the main deck right to the transom.







## ABOARD THE 78 MY

On boarding the 78 MY, the words of Riviera owner Rodney Longhurst echoed in my head: “timeless and contemporary design.”

“Superyacht styling” was the next phrase that came to mind as I strode over the vast hydraulic teak swim platform and gazed into a tender garage big enough for a jetski – the tender can reside on the foredeck for offshore passages.

Alongside the garage was one of two entrances to the engine room – again, big boat styling. Two transom doors access the covered aft deck, where a sumptuous full-beam sofa in tough Mokum fabric sets the tone. Another L-shaped settee around the teak dining table creates a comfortable yet uncrowded area adjoining the saloon bulkhead. So, plenty of room for partying and enjoying cocktails from the wet bar.

Teak is ideal on bare feet when the sun beats down, so it’s welcome on the swim platform and also covers most of the walking spaces. Practicalities abound: powered capstans, large fairleads and heavy-duty cleats. Given this boat weighs more than 57 tons, and with its tall superstructure, has considerable windage, these are welcome features.

Walking along the side-decks to the bow reveals it is equally well-appointed, thanks to a spacious sunken entertaining area with seating for eight – at least when the optional tender is not in place. The hydraulic davit is capable of 550kg lifts.

Deep storage lockers can house all the cushions and backrests. The rode is attached to an 80kg Ultra anchor which sits below a stainless-steel, self-loading bow roller on the bowsprit connected by a swivel to 100 metres of 13mm galvanised chain stored in an anchor locker on the foredeck’s starboard side. A Muir windlass is controlled by a hand-held device on the bow or remotely from the flybridge.







**ABOVE** The 78MY capitalises on its generous internal volume, complemented by good design and high quality fixtures and fittings, to deliver a luxurious and stylish living spaces throughout the vessel.





### THREE HELM STATIONS

All navigation takes place from the flybridge, accessible by inside stairs closed off by a teak hatch. This large space has a separate lounge and alfresco dining area with the main helm station in the forward section and two remote helm stations outside. Three premium-quality leather seats address the console and tall windows provide grand views from the centred helm. Generous headroom and a sense of airiness is enhanced by opening the electric sunroof. The sturdy ceiling handrail is sensible given a tall boat like this will likely roll at sea.

In my experience, these are the kinds of details that differentiate Riviera from brands that emphasise style over practicality. While underway, I appreciated the handrails when moving around.

The skipper sits on the centreline of the vessel, so is able to judge both sides equally. Vision aft is good through the toughened glass door and cameras enhance the views aft at lower levels. The console is dominated by a row of three 24-inch Garmin Glass Bridge navigation screens – ideal for large format views of charts, radar, camera feeds and sonar. Engine and system management and monitoring is via a CZone digital switching system display and MAN screens.

Dual mode (normal and high) Twin Disc joystick-transmission is the key to stress-free slow-speed manoeuvring. Other essentials included windlass controls and fuel cut-offs nearby. Very much in the Australian tradition, the console layout is comprehensive, but not overly fussy.

The skipper can enjoy the night-time seclusion of a fold-out double bed secreted under the aft lounge, with a toilet nearby, or else stay in the separate crew quarters. Push-button stainless-steel-framed electric doors are used for both the main saloon and flybridge entrances – the extended flybridge creates a large

entertaining area, mostly covered, with movable seating aft, a covered lounge to starboard and a wet bar on the port side.

### LIVEABILITY

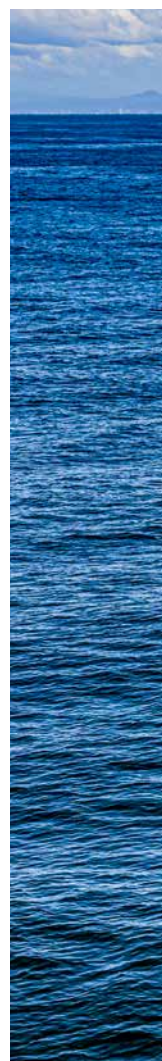
The relaxing saloon has atrium-style stairs forward bathed in natural light, which extends to the accommodation. The décor of gleaming teak contrasts with the black panelling, cushioned lounges in neutral tones on three sides, and wool carpeting. The colour palette sets a calming tone for this spacious area.

This factory-specified first hull was clearly built to show the variety of materials available, but works well. My only gripe was the white Ultra Leather-clad handrails that will quickly show grime and sun cream stains. Of course, owners will impose their own stamp, choosing from a profusion of materials and styles available. Practical features are typical of Riviera including a mid-ships side door, discreet cabinetry round the open plan layout and a wine cooler.

The comprehensively fitted out U-shaped galley at the rear has deep double sinks surrounded by worktops. There's a four-burner electric Miele cooktop with a large microwave convection oven and dishwasher, plus views aft to inspire the chef. Perishables go in the upright fridge and double-drawer freezers. Detail finishes include holders for glasses and crockery, while the washer and dryer, plus custom ironing board, are located in the aft crew quarters.

### FOUR LARGE CABINS

Descending the teak stairwell to the vessel's four cabins reveals a full-beam owner's suite aft with VIP suite forward and two guest cabins either side. Set low in the hull, the owner enjoys a king-sized bed with a sprung mattress against the aft bulkhead (insulated from engine room noise by the adjoining





**OPPOSITE** Vast swim platform and an oversize dinghy locker; Ample space for twin MAN V12 engines; A practical bow set up.

**ABOVE** Extended flybridge creates a complete living space, including an inviting upper deck.



**The relaxing saloon has atrium-style stairs forward bathed in natural light, which extends to the accommodation.**





crew quarters). A large walk-in wardrobe butts against the long vanity/desk to starboard while to port is a three-seater lounge with generous walk-around space at the foot of the bed. The forward bulkhead houses a TV and home theatre system with surround-sound speakers.

Airflow is good thanks to electronically alarmed opening portholes, while fixed hull windows provide natural light. The ensuite is stylish, yet practical, with a large, easy-clean shower cubicle, enclosed freshwater electric flush toilet and his-and-her sinks. A hull window with porthole gives ventilation and light.

The VIP suite takes advantage of the deep bow's volume and airiness, enhanced by sealed windows and twin opening skylights. It has a walk-around queen-sized bed with storage beneath and wardrobe space both sides, outboard cupboards with positive locking doors (an excellent Riviera feature) and a private ensuite bathroom.

The port cabin features twin single beds that slide together and a semi-ensuite, which is also the day head. Bedside tables with leather in-lays feature in both guest cabins, along with

cedar-lined hanging wardrobes and more storage outboard and under the beds. The starboard guest cabin cleverly puts the two single bunks at right angles, for privacy without compromising communication.

The crew quarters are self-contained with one (or two) bunks, a bathroom, microwave, washing machine, dryer – even a fold-away ironing board.

### PROVEN HULL

The 78 MY shares the same beam as the 72 and the same proven characteristics, so it's equally suitable for fast offshore runs or longer sea passages in displacement mode. The warped vee design uses a sharp entry for directional stability and flatter aft sections to 'get out of the hole' and planing. It retains some deadrise aft to add heeling stability.

The 72 hull has been extended to create the 78. It was tank-tested at the Wolfson Institute Unit for Marine Technology and Industrial Dynamics at the University of Southampton in England and built to CE standards – over 55% of the company's

**The 78 MY shares  
the same beam as the  
72 and the same proven  
characteristics...**







**ABOVE** The Twin Disc Express Joystick system, available at all three helms, provides stress-free low-speed control.

**LEFT** 22 knots is a comfortable cruising speed but 34 knots is achievable.

sales go overseas. Construction is hand-laid fibreglass with foam core topsides and solid fibreglass for the keel, longitudinals and other key structural areas.

The second entry to the engine room is from the crew quarters at the bottom of a dedicated staircase aft. Stepping through a heavy watertight door reveals a gleaming engine room with lots of space around twin MAN V12 2,000hp quad-turbo diesels. Power delivery is via Twin Disc remote-mounted Quickshift gearboxes and V-shafts, integrated with the Express Joystick System. V-shafts save space within the hull, but the trade-off is more weight aft, which is offset by a central/forward fuel tank. Aquamet 22 Sea Torque oil-filled shafts and Veem five-axis propellers keep mechanical noise to a minimum.

Backup systems include twin 29kW Onan generators, both AC and DC water pumps, plus manual over-rides for systems such as steering and the CZone CanBus house system. As this hull is eventually destined for America, it was wired for 110VAC.

Stabiliser options now include Humphree fins or the usual Seakeeper internal gyro model. This hull had the external Humphree fin stabilisers amidships. The Swedish company supplies fixed and rotating fins, with the latter fitted to the 78 MY. Rotation of 180 degrees fore and aft gives them the flexibility to cope with different sea state scenarios. Their black dome-shaped mechanisms are located on each side of the engine room and their deployment is graphically displayed at the steering console.

## GOLD COAST SAIL

Australia's La Niña summer was the first test for the new 78 MY. The vessel's large wiper blades were put to good use as skipper Dean guided us off the dock at Marina Mirage with judicious use of the Twin Disc joystick. This shallow and busy waterway is home to hordes of jet-skis, so I found the high vantage point of the flybridge ideal when I snuck into the skipper's chair to take control.

My first job was to find some swell, so we slowed at the Seaway to deploy the Humphree stabilisers. They quickly reduced the hull's rolling, self-adjusting automatically – clever stuff. Then I watched the screen as they weather-cocked when I throttled forward, thus reducing drag while still providing stability. This stability was most noticeable when banking into a long turn – they flattened the hull to the extent that even a full glass of G&T wouldn't have spilled. Impressive.

Even more impressive was the smoothness of the transmission as I shifted several times between forward and reverse. The big MANs were easily controlled and the Garmin screen soon showed 22 knots, the 78's ideal cruising speed (472 litres per hour fuel burn at 1,850rpm giving about 475 miles range). Clear views from the flybridge all around gave me the confidence to accelerate, accompanied by only the faintest whine from the turbos. Top speed was an impressive 34 knots.

Slow speed handling in reverse went predictably well as the Twin Disc joystick was pushed in the desired direction of travel, the fore and aft thrusters holding the tall hull against a stiff breeze. The boat went astern arrow straight.

Clearly even an amateur skipper – or a boating journalist – can master this mini-superyacht, which says a lot about the 78 MY. **BNZ**



## Riviera 78 Flybridge

**BASE PRICE**  
From AUD \$6.6million  
base boat  
(1,550hp engines)

**PRICE AS REVIEWED**  
POA

**DESIGN BY**  
Riviera/Luca Vallebona

**MANUFACTURED BY**  
Riviera Australia Pty  
rivieraaustralia.com  
www.rmarine.nz

### HIGHLIGHTS

Three levels of luxury living

Humphree fin stabilisers  
cope well with a  
variety of sea states

Premium fit-out

Smooth transmission and easy  
handling at low speeds

### SPECIFICATIONS

**loa** 24.82 m (81' 5"ft)  
**beam** 6.00m (19' 8"ft)  
**draft** 1.90m  
**displacement** (dry): 56,300 kg  
**engine** 2 x MAN V12-1550hp  
or 1,800hp or 2,000hp  
**fuel** 10,200 litres  
**water** 800 litres  
**holding tank** 651 litres  
**berths** 8 persons + 2 crew  
**cruising speed** 22 knots  
**max speed** 34 knots

### WATCH IT

