



# GOOD SPORT

**THE RIVIERA 5400 SPORT YACHT COMBINES THE AUSTRALIAN  
BUILDER'S PASSION FOR STURDY SEAKEEPING  
WITH SOME DELUXE — DARE WE SAY EUROPEAN? — TOUCHES.**

BY KEVIN KOENIG





## RIVIERA HAS ALWAYS TAKEN CARE TO SET ITSELF APART.

Sometimes quite literally. This past spring, eschewing the Sanctuary Cove International Boat Show on Australia's Gold Coast, Riviera essentially threw its own mini boat show at its Coomera, Queensland, facility. It showed off, among other boats, the 5400 Sport Yacht that I tested shortly thereafter.

Not that anyone was complaining. The Riviera yard is one of the most impressive that I've come across, having visited top builders in America and Europe as well. The place goes high-low, mixing the fiberglass-dust-encrusted, unmistakably resin-scented feel of a boat factory with what's actually a lovely yacht club, replete with restau-

rant and rustic-yet-elegant outdoor dining area, smack on a sleepy stretch of the Coomera River.

As with most things in life, Riviera's boats are a true product of their environment. The 5400 Sport Yacht possesses a certain blend of glamorous luxury and steadfast sturdiness.

The yacht is undeniably well-built. Her deck, hull and bulkheads have been glassed to form one solid piece of ready-to-rumble structure. She's also hand-laid — a process that Riviera prefers for consistency and strength, and that goes far in producing a boat that is ready to do battle with the famously rough water that surrounds Australia



on all sides (or, for that matter, the Gulf Stream across the planet near Florida and the Bahamas).

Out on her home waters, I put the 5400's strength attributes to the test. The Coral Sea wasn't exactly strutting her stuff, but the rolling 2s and 3s were enough to get a feel for the boat's seakindliness. Her hull, with 14.8 degrees of deadrise at the transom, cut pleasingly through the swells. And when I hopped the 5400 through the not-insubstantial wake of a passing Riviera 52 Flybridge, the 5400's build process held true. She landed with a satisfying, solid-sounding *thunk*.

The boat's cruise speed is 23 knots (and 2,100 rpm). At that speed, the optional twin Volvo Penta IPS950s burn a respectable 51 gph, a number that

#### PLAY IT BACK

The boat's aft section is decidedly designed for fun. The swim platform is the perfect conduit to the sea, and it can become an extra entertaining area with a few chairs. An aft galley serves guests in the cockpit.

should help keep you from experiencing too much undue pain at the pump. With the hammer down, I coaxed the boat up to 33.1 knots. Though I would have enjoyed just a bit more kick from an acceleration standpoint, for a boat of this size and type, that top-end number is one Riviera should be proud of.

Sight lines are excellent from the electrically actuated Recaro helm seat, thanks to salon windows that provide nearly 360-degree views. What's more, my lines of sight were barely affected when I took the boat hard over both to port and to starboard in under two boat lengths, an attribute any attentive captain will appreciate.

One last thing I really enjoyed at the helm was the Volvo Penta Dynamic Positioning System,





300  
NAUTICAL MILES  
MAXIMUM CRUISING RANGE AT 26 KNOTS

REVIEWED > RIVIERA 5400 SPORT YACHT > Aussie ruggedness with an elegant touch.



LOA  
57'3"

MAX  
BEAM  
16'0"



which pinned us in place at the touch of a button, and which will be extremely helpful if you want to hold your position while waiting for a bridge or readying lines for docking.

As for those aforementioned luxurious touches, the boat is a bit different than the majority of other Australian builds I've seen, where utility and that uniquely Aussie "digger" mentality reign supreme. The Riviera 5400 skews a bit (gasp!) Euro. My test boat had exquisitely stitched leather, soft upholstery and light, caramel-colored oak wood throughout. The salon had plenty of seating, including a plush L-shaped settee to port that made a strong case against dining alfresco.

Another Euro-style feature is on deck, where a

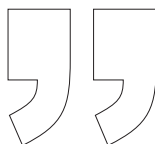
#### FORWARD THINKING

Recognizing an Australian trend toward posh boating lifestyles, Riviera loves to tout the 5400's foredeck sun pad for two. But the traditional Aussie touch here is the beefy guardrail that will keep people safe.

sun pad on the bow has enough room for two — or more, depending on how good of friends you are, I suppose. Some Riviera folks tout that sun pad as one of the boat's top selling points, which makes sense based on anecdotal evidence I heard from a potential buyer. He mentioned that the younger generation of upper-crust Australians seems to be shifting from the club-and-lounge scene to a more outdoor-centric partying philosophy. The trend is not to wile away the night in a booming disco surrounded by the madding crowd, but instead to grab some close friends and beverages, then fire up the boat and go find a secluded cove. If that sounds more European than Australian to you, maybe just give it a few years.



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Another highlight on the 5400 is the full-beam amidships master with island king berth. A chaise longue to starboard makes for an inviting place to relax, while twin cedar hanging lockers spearhead the stowage efforts — which are quite strong, showing that this boat was built for longer hauls and longer stays. Notably, the ensuite head has 6 feet 7 inches of headroom in the shower and enough space to soap up without feeling like a sardine. The forepeak VIP has similar amounts of stowage, while a third guest stateroom is an option — although some owners might turn that space into a lower lounge.

But of course, this is an Australian boat, so life on board is about more than kicking back in the lap of luxury. Nearly all Aussies are owner-operators, even

with a boat this size, and Riviera does 45 percent of its business domestically. As you might expect with a target audience that changes its own fuel filters, the 5400's engine room is top-notch. At 6 feet tall, I found headroom to spare and good access to all major systems, a 17.5 kW Cummins generator and four Racor fuel-water filters (a nice touch).

So perhaps Riviera has not gone totally Euro with this Sport Yacht, but the builder is certainly toeing the line, albeit with that particular Aussie brand of independence that just can't be stamped out. But hey, like I said, Riviera has always liked to get away from the crowd and do its own thing. ♥

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Riviera says the foredeck sun pad (shown at top left) is one of the 5400's biggest selling attributes. Note the flip-up headrests.