

Riviera 40 Convertible

Australian survivor celebrates 20 years with a new sense of style

By *Eston Ellis*

At the next boat show, when anglers ask the people who sell Riviera sport-fishers what's new about their latest boat, they might be surprised by the answer: "Everything."



Over the past 20 years, Australian-built Riviera sportfishers have made quite a name for themselves on the West Coast. Built for serious anglers, these go-anywhere boats are solidly constructed to handle the roughest sea conditions — and they come outfitted with all the gear that offshore anglers demand.

Riviera's newest model, the 40 Convertible, has the serious construction and fishability of its predecessors — but there's something different about this one. It boasts sleeker lines and more style than past Rivieras. It has dark-tint windows, stainless steel-trimmed gunnels and a distinctive flared bow.

Everything about the 40 Convertible is new, from top to bottom — and it is a predictor of things to come from this well-regarded sportfishing boat builder.

They're Everywhere

Riviera has been building boats for 20 years, and has a network of 40 dealers in 22 countries. Today, you'll find Riviera sportfishers all over the world.

One reason boaters find these Aussie boats so appealing is their ruggedness. Equipped with two watertight bulkheads and a forward collision bulkhead, only commercial vessels are built with the strength of a Riviera, explained Craig Belden of Paul Albrecht Yacht Sales, who supplied our test boat.

Rivieras are built on hand-laid fiberglass hulls, with beefy stringers and closed-cell foam coring. Vinylester resins are used in the first layer, and the hull is further protected by two layers of epoxy barrier coat.

The first thing we noticed after stepping aboard the Riviera is how quiet the boat ran. One reason for that is the boat's solid construction, Belden said. We tested the 40 Convertible off Long Beach, California, with two people aboard and full fuel tanks. It was a winter day with light chop.

This particular boat was scheduled for a cruise to Ensenada, Mexico the next day. The meteorologist predicted several days of stormy weather, and he turned out to be right — but the boat made the Mexico cruise right on schedule and handled like a champ.

Our test boat was equipped with an optional pair of 485 hp Volvo Penta TAMD 7.4L diesels and Volvo Penta's Electronic Diesel Control (EDC) system. We particularly liked this helm data system, and the engines provided plenty of power with minimal movement of the throttle. We performed a variety of maneuvers, including hard turns and doughnuts. Handling was precise, turns were tight and spray was minimal — thanks to a flared bow that knocked spray right back into the water.

While our boat planed quickly — at around 9 knots — the bow never reared up during our test. We stayed on plane without pounding, even as we maneuvered to cruise through our own wake. During our speed run, we went from 0 to 20 knots in just 19 seconds. We cruised at around 25 knots (at 2,400 rpm), and we reached a top speed of 30 knots (at 2,600 rpm) — with full fuel and water tanks.

A View From the Bridge

The 40's flybridge is molded in one piece, except for the helm console, resulting in a solid, seamless and stable platform — and there's no future potential for gelcoat cracks, as you might expect from a bolt-on bridge. The bridge is protected by a fiberglass hardtop, which features a built-in spotlight.

The bridge is protected by a wrap-around Venturi windshield. At the helm, we had comfortable Pompanette helm and companion seats, ergonomically placed Volvo Penta instrumentation, Hynautic steering and Morse controls.

Visibility was excellent: From the flybridge, we could not only see everything on the water around the boat, we also could look out or down and see the entire exterior of the boat, including the sidedecks. That is a particularly useful feature when you're on the bridge and a whole group of anglers are reeling in fish just below you.

Like all Rivas, the 40 comes with all U.S.-branded gear, for reliability and easy repair. While the dash offered space for many of our onboard electronics, there was space for even more in an overhead console.

Options on our test boat helm included B & G Network displays, an Icom IC-M127 VHF radio, a Northstar 952X GPS, an additional Furuno GP-31 GPS, Furuno 64-mile radar, a Simrad Robertson AP22 autopilot and Furuno FCV-1200 LCD sonar.

Overhead, above the helm seat, an opening skylight hatch in the hardtop offered welcome ventilation.

A sink and a Norcold refrigerator were built into a console opposite the helm, abaft an additional seating area with under-seat storage compartments and a big, roomy forward locker.

Steps lead down to the 40's spacious cockpit, which is outfitted to please the most demanding sport angler. Besides its amenities, the cockpit's biggest attraction is its ability to drain itself quickly, should water come over the transom when you're backing down on a fish. There are no individual scuppers to clog: A deep, recessed channel along the entire perimeter of the cockpit sucks water away quickly.

Amenities are impressive, too: There's a big bait tank with a window, in-gunnel rod holders, pop-up stainless steel fender cleats, a washdown system, a hot and cold transom shower, a convenient opening transom door, a wide swim platform, a 110v freezer/chill box, big fish wells molded in under the cockpit sole and numerous storage compartments. Our boat had an optional cockpit control center, which also included controls for baitwell lighting, the livewell pump, and filling and draining the livewell.

Molded-in steps lead to the boat's wide sidedecks. Access is good all the way to the foredeck, where you'll find a Muir Cougar windlass and a chain locker with a freshwater and saltwater washdown system.



Adjacent to the cockpit's saloon door, there's a console with a sink and a Grohe faucet. The console front swings open to reveal a doorway to the engine room.

The gelcoated, finished compartment offers good access to the power-plants and associated gear, and has both 12v and 110v lighting. Inside, you'll also find a Fireboy automatic fire extinguishing system, a master battery control panel, a compressor for the cockpit freezer and an Onan 10 kW auxiliary generator. Engine room access is also available through the saloon sole, when extensive maintenance is required.

Inner Beauty

The saloon is roomy and attractively furnished with a pair of leather-upholstered settees. High-gloss varnished wood joinery, halogen lighting, Roman window blinds and wood grabrails overhead are standard.

There's an L-shaped settee (one that converts to a double berth is optional) to port and a second settee and table to starboard, adjacent to an electrical panel, a television/VCR combination, a glassware storage cabinet and a U-Line ice-maker.

A U-shaped galley opens to the saloon. Our boat's equipment included a Nova-Kool undercounter refrigerator/freezer, a two-burner Schott Ceran cooktop, a Sharp Carousel microwave oven, and a sink and waste bin molded into the Corian counter.



The guest stateroom, to starboard, offers three single berths, a hanging locker and a big overhead Bowmar hatch. On our test boat, a ComboMate 6000 washer/dryer was installed here.

Forward, the master stateroom has a queen-size berth with an innerspring mattress that swings up to reveal a huge under-berth storage compartment. Additional storage drawers are available, along with in-bulkhead storage compartments and a hanging locker that's as big as some home closets.

The master stateroom has its own entry to the boat's head, which is also accessible through the companionway. The head comes with a stall shower, a VacuFlush head, a Tankwatch system, a sink and a nicely arranged storage compartment.

A Cruisair air conditioning/reverse-cycle heating system keeps this boat comfortable whether you're soaking up sunshine in Cabo San Lucas or bundling up along the Inside Passage to Alaska.

While Riviera built this 40 Convertible for serious fishing, Belden said many boaters are using it for long-range cruising, too. With a convenient layout, economical performance and ample range for longer coastal passages, this boat can take you where you want to go in comfort — and style.



Riviera 40 Convertible Golden 2000

SPECIFICATIONS

LOA:	40 ft., 11 inches
Beam:	14 ft., 11 inches
Draft:	4 ft., 1 inch
Dry weight:	23,700 lbs.
Fuel capacity:	473 gallons
Water capacity:	122 gallons
Sleeps:	6 - 8 people
Props:	23 x 24C 4-blade Nibral
Maximum power:	Twin 535 hp Cummins diesels

PERFORMANCE SPECS

Top speed	30 knots
MPG @ 26.5 knots cruise	1.25
Fuel cost for 100 miles	\$136.00
Range @ 26.5 knots cruise	732 miles
Sound level @ cruise	75 dB

QUESTIONS FOR YOUR DEALER -

- * What additional sportfishing amenities should I add for my favorite fishing waters?
- * Can I add an automatic oil change system for the main engines and genset?

STANDARD EQUIPMENT -

List includes 16,000 Btu reverse-cycle air conditioning, 10 kW auxiliary generator, AM/FM CD stereo system, VacuFlush head, ball valves on all through-hull fittings.

OPTIONS ON TEST BOAT -

List includes ComboMate 6000 washer/dryer, opening windows in saloon, flybridge hardtop, 5 kW bow thruster, flybridge refrigerator, ice-maker, live bait tank, six rod holders on flybridge and cockpit controls.

CONSTRUCTION -

Hand-laid molded fiberglass hull, deck and flybridge; foam-cored decks and cabin top; Vinylester resin in first layer; watertight collision bulkhead forward; independent compartments throughout hull; isophthalic gelcoat; solid keel, chines and bottom.

COMPANY PROFILE -

TESTER'S OPINION:

"The 40 is definitely an eye-catching sportfisher — but apart from its appealing styling, this is a 'driver's boat.' At the ergonomically designed helm, every switch and lever is within easy reach, whether you're seated or standing. This Riviera gives you an incredible feeling of control, whether you're running straight ahead at wide open throttle, or backing down to go after that next big fish."

BUILDER:

THE RIVIERA GROUP; www.riviera.com.au.

DEALER:

RICHARD BOLAND YACHTS, Alameda, CA; (510) 521-6213. www.rivierayachts.com