

Miles Fink is a man on his seventh straight Riviera. Kiwi by birth of a boatbuilding family, and for some three decades a successful Aussie entrepreneur in food processing equipment manufacturing, Fink is a self-made man who knows his boats and is the quintessential Riviera owner. Over some 16 years he has consecutively owned a Mariner 28, a pre-owned Riv 33, followed by a new 36, a 40, 47, 51 and now a Riviera 61 Series II Enclosed Flybridge – and in a remarkable coincidence hull number 007 of the latest model. In a long run of rising markets, not once has he lost money on moving up the Riviera product line, which has become for him a regular biennial habit until his most recent 51, which was part of the family for all of five years.

As a mark of respect for Miles' long-term support of Riviera, a more personalised approach was agreed to by the Coomera-based yard for his latest *Aquasition* with some custom modifications made to the new 61 series II – inside and out – to reflect his personal tastes. For Riviera, such personalisation is fitting for a customer whose brand loyalty surely makes him the number one ticket holder at the home grown Aussie boat builder.

The result, with its custom-cut forward hull windows, and gently sloping Portofino stern section mirroring the curves of the superstructure, has turned out to be one of the most visually attractive Riviera boats on the water, drawing in many a wide-eyed voyeur. Admiring aspirants in passing dinghies gaze glassy-eyed with wistful desire, mixing it with enviable fellow motor yachtsmen moored nearby, and even other Riviera owners who should spot it for what it is, can't help but drift by and enquire over the rail 'what is that magnificent boat!' I can imagine it happens; in fact I did it myself.

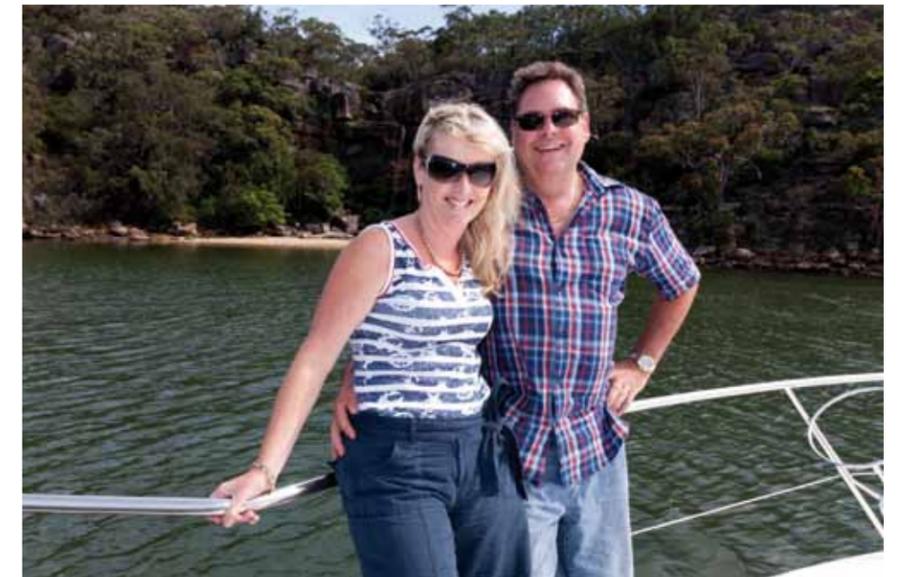
The exquisite silvery grey "Tungsten Silver" paintwork is striking in its own right, though together with the gleaming white, swept back superstructure of the enclosed flybridge and correspondingly swept transom sides ("Fink wings") capped off with gloss teak-topped gunnels, this particular Riviera 61 Series II takes on a whole new custom appeal.

Indeed, so familiar are Riviera's iconic flybridge production models, and such a difference do these few custom changes make to the lines of this classic Riviera flybridge, that the Finks' newly delivered 61 Series II has been assumed by some observers to be another brand altogether,



ANDREA FRANGOLINI

WHAT BOAT IS THAT? RIVIERA'S UBIQUITOUS FLYBRIDGE PRODUCTION CRUISERS ARE RECOGNISED ALL AROUND THE WORLD, THOUGH IT'S NOT EVERYDAY THAT YOU SEE A FACTORY CUSTOMISED SPECIAL, PARTICULARLY ONE AS STUNNING AS THIS. THEN AGAIN, NOT EVERY OWNER IS ON TO THEIR SEVENTH STRAIGHT RIV, WRITES ANTHONY TWIBILL.



perhaps a custom creation from beyond our shores, but who is sure?

For such a hard working, although clearly fun-loving perfectionist like Fink, surely by the seventh boat you would, after all, think you could get it just right... and in his new Riviera 61 007 he most certainly has! Although Miles has regrettably done away with the disco mirror ball from his previous Riviera 51, decoration for dancing the night away on the aft cockpit deck, he has in its place added a bar and pop-up drinks cabinet to their latest 61, showing this is one owner that is unabashedly a man who knows how to relax and entertain on the water – and he’s not afraid to show it. I asked him then about the extendable outrigger poles thrusting skyward, given he seems more inclined to fun than fishing. “Oh, they’re for hanging the party lights when we’re at anchor”, says Fink (seriously).

For Miles, and wife Cathy, who has extensively cruised all seven of their Riviera boats, this is far and away the best, and biggest, of their adventures in boat ownership. That, with hull 007 (emblazoned on the delivery plaque in the saloon) the Finks were able to incorporate their own special touches to this 61 Series II – all practical ideas and styling alterations that may well make it to the Riviera

production line – is to Miles and Cathy a great credit and the final decider for them in choosing yet another Riviera after searching the world over two years for their next motor yacht. To do so and still come home to Riv really does speak volumes about their experiences with the brand and relationship with the yard.

Like many self-made success stories, Fink knows what he wants – in work, life and boating. Unlike most, however, he has actually tried his own hand at commercial boatbuilding in past years, constructing some eight 20-foot fishing boats – the *Sea Lion* – fabricated in alloy plate and powered by Volvo inboards. Even today his major metal fabrication business has a small division, Pro Ali Marine, that manufactures commercial punts and work boats, mostly for oyster farmers and surveying, typically delivering a couple each month.

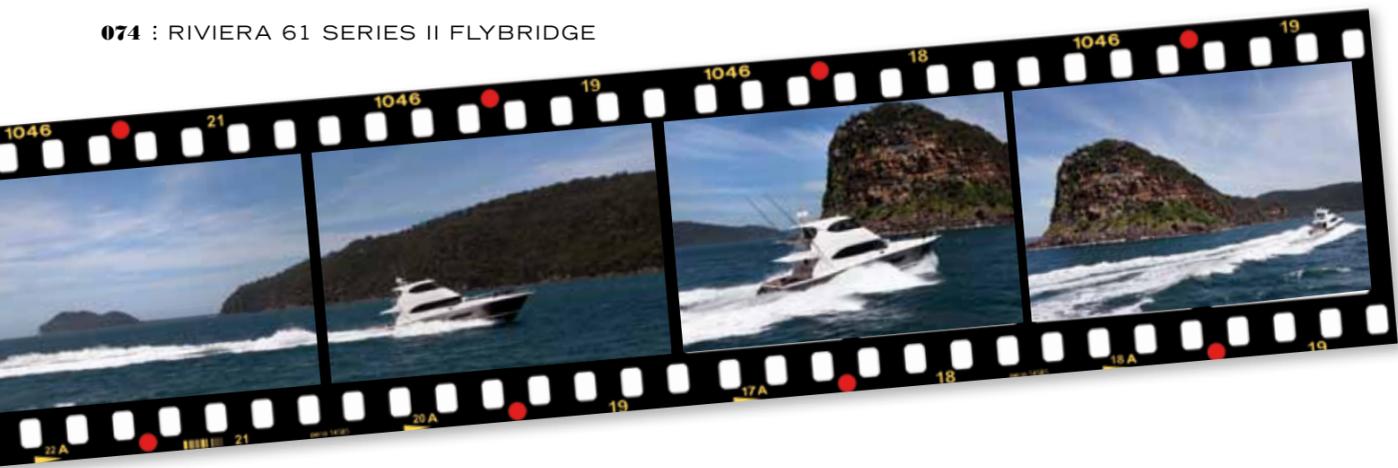
Coming as he does from a Kiwi boatbuilding family, and learning



SHEER PLEASURE
Above: The flowing lines of the Finks' customised 61 Series II with its Portofino stern 'wings' are divine. Above right: One more for the album; Cathy & Miles Fink, now onto their 7th straight Riviera. Left: Party Central; The alfresco cockpit featuring gleaming teak topped gunnels. Right: Fink wings; The huge barbecue and views of the swept back "Fink wings" as Riviera has christened them.

ANDREA FRANCOLINI





the aluminium and stainless steel fabrication trade, both much used in boat construction, from his bootstraps as a young metalworking apprentice in New Zealand, has given Miles an appreciation for and love of boatbuilding throughout his life. Fink senior was a boat builder in Hamilton and a boating artisan of sorts, working just across from the family home building 35-foot powerboats, meticulously crafted in timber. A perfectionist, his father's company R.L. Fink Boatbuilding, won a number of awards at the Auckland Boat Show in its day. Miles' brothers also learnt the trade from their Dad, and continue boatbuilding in New Zealand to this day, with the trailer boats of Tristram Marine a well-known and prolific Kiwi brand of runabouts from 16 to 28-foot.

Although for the aspiring young Miles back then during the eighties in Hamilton, New Zealand, a boatbuilding career was not on the cards. Upon turning 21 he headed west to Australia in search of the famed land of opportunity, met Cathy, raised an Aussie family on NSW's beautiful Central Coast and built a highly successful metal fabrication business, but saltwater has clearly always run through his veins.

So, when Riviera decided to launch a Series II of its large volume 61 Flybridge

model, for Miles Fink the genesis of an idea to create a semi-custom version of the new model for his next, and seventh, Riviera began to take shape.

The Riviera design team by then were tossing around various ideas to improve the boat's layout, performance and overall styling – resembling a slightly smaller version of the then flagship Riviera 70, it too now topped by the upcoming new 75 flybridge.

Already a great running boat, when the first ever 61 featuring a Frank Mulder designed hull was introduced to the boating public back in 2008, the regarded Aussie Captain Bob Jones described it as “the best running boat in the Riviera fleet”.

Now the 61 Series II offers a whole lot more capability, offshore and at anchor, and is available with either an enclosed or open flybridge.

Miles Fink has taken those changes one step further with his custom alterations for *Aquasition*.

Standard improvements for the Series II include a galley positioned centrally to the party, a cockpit that is more an extension of the living space inside, a master stateroom that benefits from light and fresh air from a large port side hull window, an enclosed flybridge that serves as a genuine sky lounge, as well

as refinements to the hull that further enhance the performance and seakeeping ability for the 40+ tonne boat.

The new galley is positioned aft, adjacent to the saloon bulkhead, and separated from the large sociable cockpit space by a hinged awning window and tinted glass door.

Forward of the galley, the Finks have specified a bar option with twin bar stools facing aft which makes the most of the view and natural social engagement, and an L-shaped lounge with convertible dinette table takes seating capacity in the saloon for six plus two. Together with the dinette located to starboard, there's seating for at least 12, all well positioned to view a large 40-inch TV mounted forward, to party or simply relax in air-conditioned comfort.

Opposite the galley is a bar area with icemaker and fridges set under raked flybridge stairs, with solid teak treads nested on flawlessly welded stainless steel supports that even a metalwork professional like Miles admires.

A slick feature of the saloon bar aboard *Aquasition* is an electric lift glassware cabinet, which retracts into the varnished cabinetry while underway, yet rises to the occasion at the touch of a button. Powered by a whisper quiet electric drive, the cabinet features LED backlit shelving and is sure to impress any guests aboard, with or without Mile's legendary mirror ball!

The party continues on the outside with the Series II taking a lead from the much larger Riviera 70, with the option of incorporating a social seating area into the aft cockpit, which is no longer the sole domain of the sports fisherman, or in the Finks' case, the perfect spot for that long lunch or evening dance beneath our southern stars!

So, the cockpit now doubles as an alfresco dining area, with optional opposing fore and aft facing mezzanine seating either side of a solid teak table (not optioned on this boat). The mezzanine also contains a fridge and storage space, and a huge barbecue centre with sink located centrally within the transom, which in another custom touch for *Aquasition* is topped by gleaming gloss teak.



PERFECT ATTITUDE
Above: Underway, passing picturesque Lion Island in Sydney's Pittwater, the new 61 Series II displays exquisite sea manners.
Left: Stairway to heaven; the gloss cabinetry, pop-up bar and flybridge stairs gleam together as though post-modern nautical art.

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Image supplied by Hanseatic Marine

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Overlooking the cockpit is a luxuriously appointed enclosed flybridge, featuring forward helm and aft docking station, essential for a boat of this size. An open flybridge version of the new 61 featuring an aft helm with a U-shaped lounge forward around a convertible table with a settee opposite is also available.

This enclosed flybridge version features a hinged window and glass door for security and all weather comfort. Wrap-around seating to port features folding arm rests with copious storage underneath and a drop down dinette table. To starboard there is a wet bar with bottle and glass storage and another flat screen TV is wall mounted above the bar, creating another great entertainment area aboard.

An upholstered forward helm station accommodates up to three 12-inch displays, which on *Aquasition* were all top spec Raymarine nav equipment. This boat featured Riviera's new Euro-styled helm wheel and to the immediate right lies the throttle quadrant for the optional MTU 10V 2000 M93 1,520 hp twin-turbo diesels, driving some 3,000 horses through Twin Disc Quickshift electronic boxes, as specifically chosen by Miles for this boat. It's clear that's a power decision Miles is thrilled to have made, as I watch him grinning from ear to ear as the smooth, quiet and virtually vibration-free engines spin up, appearing to effortlessly power this big rig to an impressive top speed of 37 knots and comfortable cruising at a high 34 knots!

From this lofty perch, with such little noise or fuss from the engine room far below, the acceleration and speed achieved by this boat from rest is all too easy to underestimate. It's very



impressive indeed and easy to appreciate how good a match the hull, engines and transmission are in this new installation selected for *Aquasition*.

The aft docking station is located to starboard of the external flybridge door with excellent visibility of the cockpit and aft quarters of the boat behind. There is also an option to upgrade to 'Palm Beach' single side mount engine control levers, which are a favourite with sport fishermen. Like the bigger Riv 70, to port an aft-facing lounge accommodates two people who can gaze in wonder at the thunderous wake of whitewater erupting from the stern when underway.

At day's end, the redesigned master cabin on the accommodation deck is much improved over the original 61, now featuring a massive horizontal port mounted in the hull. Comprising laminated safety glass and opening portholes handcrafted from stainless steel, the newly designed hull windows bring light and fresh air into the master cabin positioned to port and into one of

**UPSTAIRS
DOWNSTAIRS**
Top: Top Deck;
Commanding views
from the flybridge.
Above: Master cabin
with large hull port
bringing views, light
and fresh air.

two guest cabins to starboard, depending upon which cabin layout option is chosen by the owner. The master has its own ensuite, as expected, with shower cubicle, vacu-flush toilet, raised porcelain sink and solid surface bench top.

A VIP guest cabin is in the bow section, also featuring a queen size island bed and its own ensuite. The Finks have had custom 'eyebrow' windows added to *Aquasition* to better light the guest accommodations and to view the water lapping below. An optional three-cabin layout is available with extra space absorbed by the VIP guest cabin, to include a private lounge or a writing bureau. Regardless of optional layouts, a Miele washer and dryer are also included, either totally enclosed behind cabinetry or mounted below a bunk in the starboard aft cabin. A fabric lined companionway and stair link the accommodation space with the main saloon, an interior finish that has proven very popular on the 70 Flybridge, and is now incorporated on the new 61.

A most important user friendly addition for the Series II is Riviera's latest electronics technology including digital switching for all DC electrical components, using the proven C-Zone CAN bus system to create fingertip control of electronic functions. At the touch of a 10-inch LCD screen – positioned in a cabinet at the base of the flybridge steps – a multitude of pre-set functions can be activated. Whether you are at sea or in party mode at anchor, the C-Zone digital switching system presents a specific menu offering control of all necessary functions. C-Zone allows for manual override so owners can customise the system to suit their personal requirements.

Underway, the new 61 Series II is an even more seaworthy, capable long-range offshore vessel than its predecessor. During development Riviera's in-house naval architect Alan Dowd worked to further enhance running trim and performance, splitting the midship fuel tank to lower the rolling momentum at sea and at rest, and pared away weight from non-structural components – particularly in the upper decks – to ensure the new 61 is responsive and as fuel efficient as possible. I can attest that the hull retains its solid feel offshore, and cruises more confidently than ever, thanks to its significant displacement, solid hand-laid construction and deadrise of 12.5 degrees, and additionally Riviera has widened the planning strakes in the forward hull to further reduce spray when underway at sea.

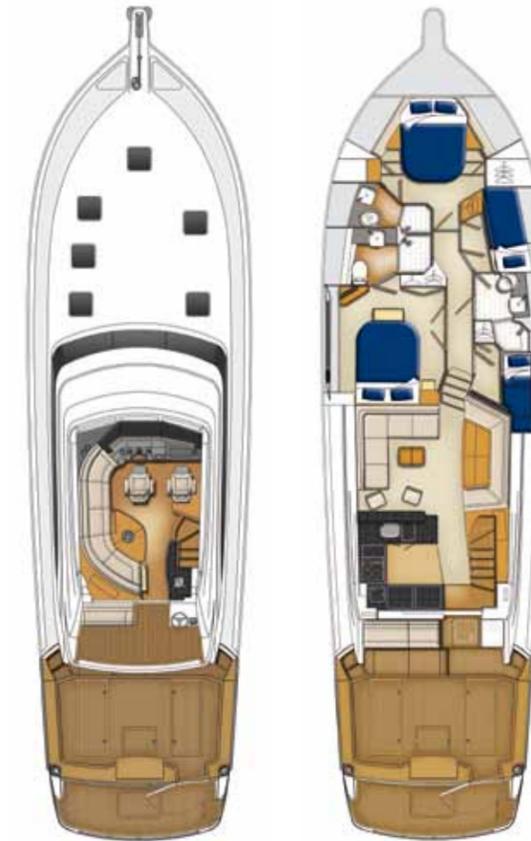
There is no doubt that Riviera has been long regarded for producing quality models, but the Queensland yard is most recognised for consistency, not

customisation, in the styling features of their boats. After all that's what you buy with the "Riv" brand.

So will we be seeing more custom Rivas? As management surely realise, *Aquasition* is an ideal showcase for Riviera of how a customer orientated focus and willingness to change can bring success in the ultra-competitive premium boating market. By so doing, Riviera can satisfy boat owners seeking custom alterations, albeit minor, to create their dream boat, without unduly upsetting either the boat's production or the brand's iconic appearance.

To my way of thinking, the ability to make these semi-custom changes can only broaden the appeal of the Riviera brand, both locally and in overseas markets. In many respects producing more customised versions of their larger production models, tweaking standard features for individual tastes, should see Riviera keep more "die-hard" Riv owners, who have perhaps been looking for something a little different, still cruising in the Aussie yard's local paddock. ○

www.riviera.com.au



UNDERWAY, THE NEW 61 SERIES II IS AN EVEN MORE SEAWORTHY, CAPABLE LONG-RANGE OFFSHORE VESSEL THAN ITS PREDECESSOR.

BUILDER	Riviera
COUNTRY OF BUILD	Australia
LENGTH OVERALL	19.63 metres / 64' 5"
LH TO ISO8666	18.60 metres / 61' 0"
BEAM	5.40 metres / 17' 9"
DRAFT	1.58 metres / 5' 2"
DRY WEIGHT	30,500 kgs / 67,200 lbs
FUEL CAPACITY	5,700 litres / 1,505 US gallons
WATER CAPACITY	1,000 litres / 264 US gallons
HOLDING TANK CAPACITY	273 litres
	72 US gallons
SLEEPING CAPACITY	7 persons
ENGINES (TESTED)	x 2 MTU 10V 2000 M93 twin-turbo diesels 1,520 hp each
ENGINES (STANDARD)	x 2 Caterpillar C32 turbo diesels 747 kW / 1,015 hp each
GENERATOR	Onan 22.5 kW / 30 hp
PRICE	From \$2.2 million



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