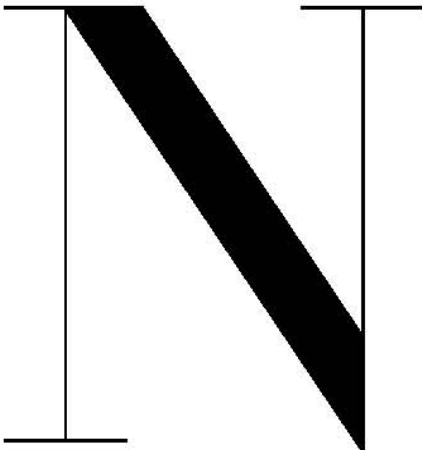




Riviera 4400

FAMILY VALUES

Offering an inventive solution to indoor/outdoor space, Riviera's sports yacht is incredibly family friendly. *By Craig Barnett Photos Courtesy of Riviera*



One dramatic feature is the large window and pillar-less door between the cockpit and saloon – both open for the two areas become one ...

‘No pain, no gain’ is a motto oft repeated when the blood, sweat and tears are flowing and, as any number of examples will show, those that survive the harshest of trials reap the biggest benefits. Nothing could be truer for Australia’s largest and most respected production boat building company – Riviera. Like the legendary offshore fishing hulls they produce, the company has ridden stormy waters and is emerging with confidence. After suffering the ignominy of receivership in 2009, the company has emerged stronger, with a more realistic stock inventory and new models due to arrive off the drawing board shortly.

Amongst the craft Riviera were displaying at the recent Miami International Boat Show was their 4400 Sport Yacht, a model we have yet to see here in the Arabian Gulf. Though more closely associated with sport-fishing yachts, the company’s motor cruisers have won a number of awards, and from our review of this model – justifiably so. Well designed and executed with high production values, its attraction lies in the level of equipment and well considered layout rather than flamboyant exterior lines. With her bottlenose bow, raised coachroof and compact sturdiness the Riviera 4400 doesn’t pretend to be flash or brash. Also, given the climate of the Arabian Gulf, open and flybridge craft with an abundance of outdoor space are traditionally more popular here. To our mind however the 4400 more accurately addresses the requirements of a market segment that require secure shaded areas – young families. From the high gunnels that surround the cockpit, high sturdy guardrails than lead to the foredeck and accommodation layout, the 4400 lends itself to family days out on the water. Most impressive however is the saloon that offers plenty of shade, but opens out to become a bright and breezy space. One dramatic feature is the large stainless-steel framed window and pillar-less door between the cockpit and



THE 4400'S ATTRACTION LIES IN THE LEVEL OF EQUIPMENT AND WELL CONSIDERED LAYOUT RATHER THAN FLAMBOYANT EXTERIOR LINES...

Well equipped with domestic labour saving devices, means more time enjoying your yacht

saloon – with both open the two areas become one. Add to this a huge retractable sunroof above the helm and large side windows and you have a saloon that protects from/opens to the elements as you wish. The saloon's feature list doesn't end there - it stretches on and on! A C-shaped leather banquette wraps around the dinette to port, with the 26" LCD TV dropping out of sight when not in use. To starboard is a fantastically well-appointed galley featuring plenty of work surface and cupboard space, along with a fridge, freezer, microwave oven, 2-plate hob, extractor fan, pull-out pantry and even a dishwasher. All the domestic labour saving devices one needs to ensure time on the water is spent having fun.

The helm, set unobtrusively to starboard offers all the requisite gadgets and gizmos, along with several extra Raymarine goodies like CCTV, radar and more. Both the helm and navigator are well provided for with deep leather seats and the sight of the stubby Volvo Penta joystick will be enough to warm the heart of any inexperienced boater considering this model. While the slow speed maneuverability advantages of Volvo Penta's IPS system have been well eulogized, it is worth pointing out that the pod manufacturers worked directly with Riviera on the design to optimise the propulsion/hull package. The result is a craft that runs flat, offers a fuel burn rate of

65 liters per hour/per engine when cruising at 29 knots, and little to no vibration. The compactness of the IPS system also translates to more space down below. A central companionway leads down to the accommodation deck, and here once again one finds 'family friendly' features. The en-suite family cabin for instance stretches to full beam amidships and offers an additional single berth to accompany the double – close enough to ensure younger passengers don't go 'exploring' during the night. The forward master V-cabin features a further queen-double berth, en-suite and wardrobe space – also including the quality AV system present in the master. Each of the en-suites features a shower and the same quality fit-and-finish evident throughout the rest of yacht.

The generous saloon and accommodation spaces do deliver a more compact cockpit, however once again it is well equipped with a deep comfortable aft-bench, a full wet bar with sink, solid surface bench-top, stainless steel refrigerator and an optional ice maker – a retractable bimini provides further shade. The high gunnels and a transom gate will keep the ankle-biters corralled in the cockpit, while an enormous storage locker, sweet-water showerhead, optional bbq, and vast bathing platform complete the aft section. The teak-lined bathing platform includes fittings for protective guardrails and a jet ski, which would require ticking the 'hydraulic platform' box on the options list.

Along with installing the IPS system, Riviera were determined that the 4400 SY incorporate cutting edge boat building techniques, so it's their first constructed by vacuum bagging vinylester resin around a Divinycell foam core. Using the precise amount of resin increases strength and saves weight - around one tonne over a typical hand-laid 44ft cruiser. This obviously translates into further fuel economy and improvements in performance.

In conclusion, the best way to describe the Riviera 4400 SY is 'deceiving'. The cleverly designed saloon offers as much connection with the elements as it does protection from them, the IPS drives ensure there's more space below than you would first believe, and she's far from a basic cruiser – the level of equipment aboard is first-rate. While the logjam of yachts exiting the Collins Avenue channel at the end of the Miami show was the perfect opportunity to demonstrate the slow speed handling of the 4400, our flight time home dictated we'll have to wait until one arrives in the region to provide you with more comprehensive performance statistics - we hope that won't be too long!

The helm is well appointed and the IPS joystick will warm the heart of those new to boating



Riviera 4400

LENGTH OVERALL
(INC. SWIM PLATFORM
& BOW ROLLER): 15.12 METRES
BEAM (INC. GUNWALE): 4.58 METRES
MAXIMUM DRAFT (INC. PROPS): 1.20 METRES
DRY WEIGHT: 12,500 KGS
FUEL CAPACITY: 1,500 LITRES
WATER CAPACITY: 460 LITRES
HOLDING TANK CAPACITY: 151 LITRES

SLEEPING CAPACITY: 5 PERSONS
STANDARD ENGINE TWIN VOLVO (IPS 600)
GENERATOR OUTPUT: 11.0 kW