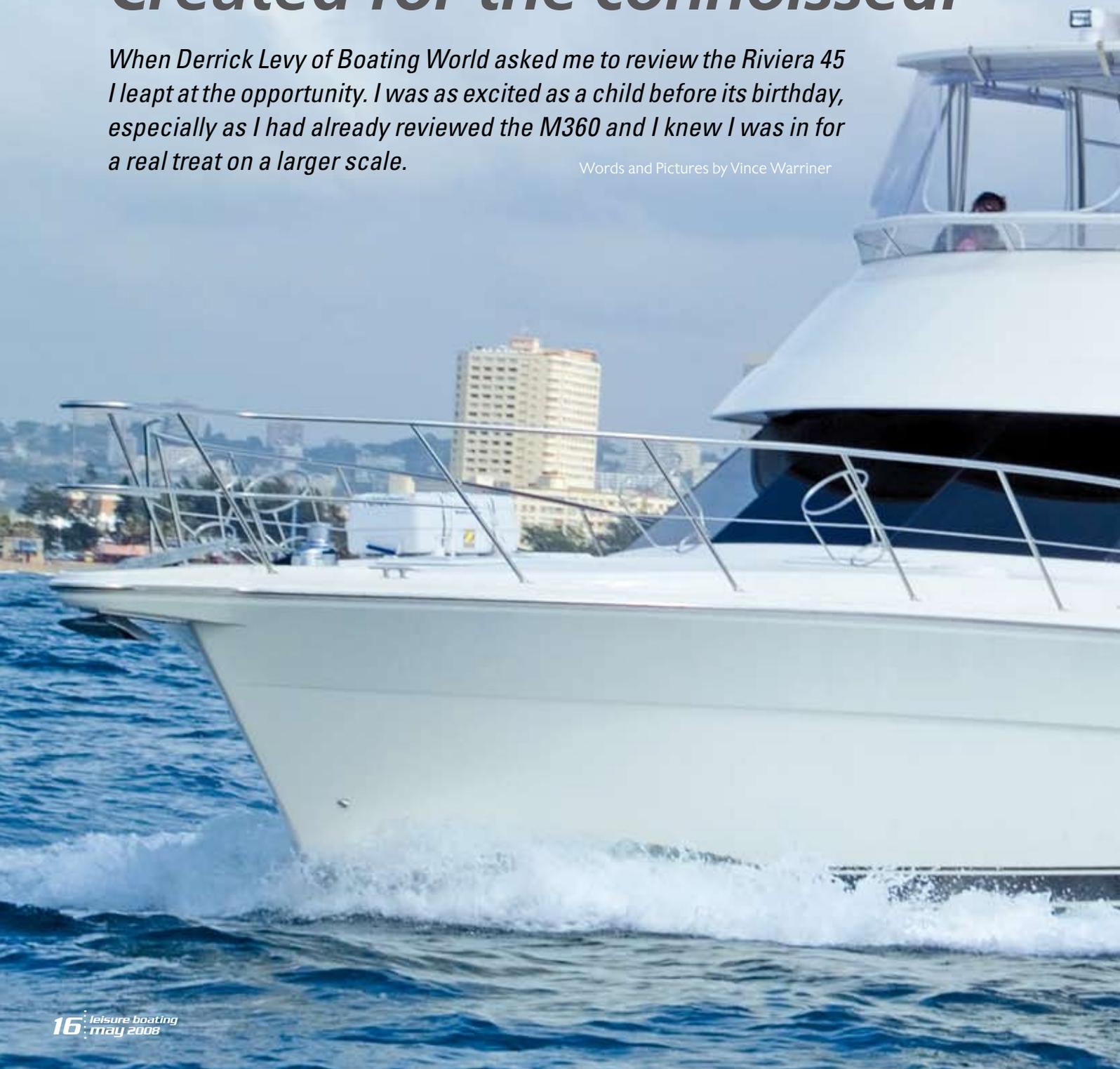


RIVIERA 45 OPEN FLYBRIDGE

Created for the connoisseur

When Derrick Levy of Boating World asked me to review the Riviera 45 I leapt at the opportunity. I was as excited as a child before its birthday, especially as I had already reviewed the M360 and I knew I was in for a real treat on a larger scale.

Words and Pictures by Vince Warriner





Duncan Maple, the company's in-house skipper, met me at the entrance to the walk-on moorings at Durban's Point Yacht Club. He had secured an exclusive spot in front of the Marina area for the Riviera 45, and there she floated, resplendent on the water and sparkling in the early morning sunshine. Also coming along for the ride was a potential customer and his family from Port Shepstone, and their excitement was tangible.

Conditions for test

Considering it had rained overnight, the day dawned not too badly, and although it was overcast, the sun shone through from time to time. There was a very light south easterly wind so the sea was relatively calm with a half metre swell that grew to 1.5 m when we headed out into the Indian Ocean.

General impression

The lines of the 45 are stately to say the least. From the flared high bow with its long sweeping bow rail curving down to the aft deck complete with swim platform to the eye-catching, practical flybridge above, you have one impressively big boat. In fact she is 15.62 m long (including swim platform and bow roller) with a beam of 4.80 m. The minute you set foot on the teak deck, you know you have stepped onto a luxuriously safe craft offering a world of adventure and possibilities.

Launching

Having been shipped from the factory in Australia to Richards Bay, it had been Duncan's task to bring her down the coast to Durban, so he'd launched her before. For this review it took only 20 minutes to untie the covers, switch on the air conditioner, start the engine, remove mooring lines and bring in the fenders. Using a bow thruster controlled from the helm (this is a must for a boat of this size in congested mooring space where skilful manoeuvring is required) we were soon on our way. 



Extended bowsprit with anchor, chain and electric winch. A good spot for privacy.

Deck layout

No single feature makes the 45 such a remarkable boat, it's a combination of many, but I'll cover as many as space will allow. On the deck, an anchor locker with a rope and chain divider houses a 27 kg anchor which is accessed from around the walkway sides or from hatches on deck. An anchor winch easily operated by up-and-down foot switches is powered from the helm. There is a wash-down tap next to the anchor locker.



State-of-the-art electronics, including controls and autopilot, in the high helm station.

The moulded non-skid gelcoat deck surfaces are enhanced by gleaming 316 stainless steel fittings including the bow rail, bow roller, eight cleats, two fairleads aft and two pop-up cleats for fenders. There are three deck hatches allowing light into the cabins and four fender-holders fitted to the bow rail. Port and starboard rails above the cockpit window offer safe passage to the forward deck, and the surrounding rub rail in white PVC also has an attractive stainless steel insert for additional strength.

Saloon and galley

The saloon is striking in its spaciousness. Headroom is generous and the layout with its contemporary fittings and furnishings is well planned. The combination of large, uniquely-shaped tinted windows, handcrafted timberwork and rich leather seating invites you to sit down, enjoy the view and indulge yourself in stylish relaxation. To add to your comfort two 10 000 BTU air conditioning (and heating) units are available at the flick of a switch. What a welcome relief this was from Durban's muggy humidity.

The beautifully rich brown Amtico flooring throughout delights the eye and complements the high-gloss cherry wood tables, cupboards and drawers, which open up to endless hidden surprises from a fridge and freezer, storage for glasses, mugs and liquor bottles to switch boxes, rubbish bins, and importantly, the dishwasher.

There is even a neat spot for storing fishing rods. The overall ambience is one of sheer luxury yet absolute practicality.

To top it all you can relax on the L-shaped couch and watch a movie on the 32" LCD screen or pop your iPod into the compatible five-speaker sound system. What a blast! Or maybe you'd prefer a game of cards at the table which folds into different sizes.



Entertainers' delight in the spacious cherry wood-finished saloon featuring 32" LCD screen and fold-out table.

A major feature is the hinged hopper window between the aft deck and the saloon, and even with the saloon door open there is no engine noise (nor are there fumes), thanks to the underwater exhaust system.

Cockpit

This is the place to be on a beautiful day! A fighting chair (with removeable cushions) with rod holders for big gamefish like marlin or sailfish is the main feature here. Stairs to the flybridge feature moulded teak treads, a stainless steel handrail and a lockable hatch. There is a refrigerated cooler box port side with top-loading lid and gas strut.

Engine room access is via a lockable cockpit floor hatch. A 170-litre fish hatch lies to one side of the fighting chair and a 170-litre storage bin to the other. There is a live-bait well at the transom and the transom door opens onto the large swim platform. Rod holders are conveniently positioned, as is the stainless steel flybridge rail with its six stainless steel rod holders.

“even with the saloon door open there is no engine noise”

Cabins

The three cabins are well-appointed with quality finishes, and natural lighting is a feature throughout. Storage space is at a premium and there are plenty of drawers and lockers for keeping non-essentials out of sight. The two bathrooms are practical with inlaid porcelain sinks, frameless shower doors and Vacuflush toilets.

The cabins have air conditioning, and the high-quality Amtico wooden flooring further enhances the overall appeal. Both the port and master staterooms feature 15" LCD TVs and 12-volt DVD players.

The cabins sleep six and the master cabin features a queen-sized bed. ➤



Comfortable fighting chair with removeable cushions, rod holders and foot rest – to haul in “the big one”



Relax in the air conditioned, luxury stateroom with natural lighting from the hatch above.

The drawers and lockers are cedar wood-lined to repel insects, and give off that lovely, spicy cedar aroma.

Flybridge/helm

Two pristine white helm seats at the impressive helm catch the eye, and the controls are easily within arm's length. An amazing array of electronic equipment is displayed on the high helm station and features two 12" Raymarine sonar display units. There is a compass and an electronic engine control unit with twin lever gear and throttle, a VHF radio, an Edson steering wheel and a safety monitoring panel for bilge pumps, sump pumps, navigation lights, engine room lights and the high-water alarm.

The view forward from the helm gives one the impression of being on a large ship. The L-shaped seating area in the flybridge comfortably seats eight

people, and features a table that lowers to make room for a prime-positioned sunbed for those inclined to stretch out and soak up the sun. A handy bar fridge keeps refreshments nearby.

Motors

The Riviera 45 comes with different engine options. The craft we reviewed has the best possible choice with Twin Caterpillar diesel C12 motors, each producing 715 HP. These motors are capable of pushing the boat to speeds in excess of 35 knots depending on water conditions. The fuel capacity is 2 300-litres and the optional extra tank offers 1 000-litres, perfect for long-range fishing and cruising.

Handling

It really was an experience to sit in the helm seat up on the flybridge and survey the world around me. It gave me a feeling

of power, and power she certainly has! The Cat engines were very responsive and on thrusting open the throttles we were planing in seconds, and the trim tabs ensured a soft, dry ride.

The steering (hydraulic) was very positive and the boat was easy to turn both port and starboard. While the wheel is stylishly fashioned from stainless steel, it is rubberised on the inside for added grip.

Cruising at 21 knots we felt very safe and secure, thanks to the hull design with its solid fibreglass keel and chines. At 16 knots we could have trolled for barracuda or gamefish with ease, and we reduced the speed to four knots, which is ideal for snoek fishing. At each of these speeds the response of the boat to the throttles was extremely smooth and positive.

We backed the boat up as though we had a marlin on the line and considering the wide beam there was very little splash coming up over the transom swim platform.

This boat is ideally suited to our harsh coastline and easily handles difficult conditions.

Conclusion

From start to finish, the Riviera is an exceptional craft and any discerning buyer will appreciate the attention to detail and its high-quality finishes.

Riviera, with 27 years of boat building experience, produces and distributes 330 luxury craft annually to over 30 countries. For further information contact Derrick Levy at: Boating World (031) 332 1987 or 082 881 2607

Email: derrick@boatingworld.co.za.



At a glance	
Length:	15.62 m
Beam:	4.80 m
Max draft:	1.19 m
Fuel capacity:	2 300 litres
Extra fuel tank:	1 000 litres
Water capacity:	500 litres
Sleeping capacity:	Six people