



The double-tiered cockpit with room to move may well be the highlight of the yacht's onboard spaces.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

WITH THE 575 SUV,
RIVIERA PUT
ITS MONEY WHERE ITS
MOUTH IS. SO
FAR, THINGS ARE
WORKING OUT JUST FINE.

BY KEVIN KOENIG

As a yachting writer, I see the term “SUV of the sea” kicked around from time to time in press releases, often promoting a rugged vessel that can supposedly do it all. Sometimes those press releases are correct. Sometimes they’re, well, less than correct. In the case of Riviera’s SUV series — a 445, 525 and 575 — the Australian builder put its reputation on the line by putting the metaphor

right in the name of the boat. It’s a brassy move, one the company backs up with a lot more than just talk.

I tested the 575 SUV off Australia’s Gold Coast in the notoriously rough-and-tumble Coral Sea after the model debuted at the Riviera Festival of Boating, an extravagant affair the builder hosts at its Coomera, Queensland, headquarters concurrently with the Sanctuary Cove International Boat Show. (How Australian to eschew one of your country’s marquee boat shows to do your own thing. “Cheeky,” I believe, is the correct colloquialism.)

Even the yacht’s lines hint at her aim. To my eye, Rivas have some of the most distinct exterior styling of any production builder’s yachts. All Riviera models seem to exude a mix of rakishness and graceful bulk. It’s hard to explain until you’ve seen one, and even harder to forget after you have.

The day I tested the 575 SUV, the Coral Sea was tossing about stubborn 3s and 4s in any which way it pleased. That’s what you want for a boat test, since the confused seas let you get a good feel for the hull design and quality of construction.

I ripped the express cruiser through the whitecaps at a 26-knot cruise at 2,100 rpm, burning an efficient 81 gph. At the wheel, I braced my knees and waited for a shudder or creak as she splashed through the bumps.



But none came. The hand-laid fiberglass hull was solid, both below the waterline and in its performance. The only thing I heard while careening across the ocean blue was the sound of the twin 1,000 hp Caterpillar 12.9s and the healthy *kerchunk* of the yacht landing softly in yet another trough.

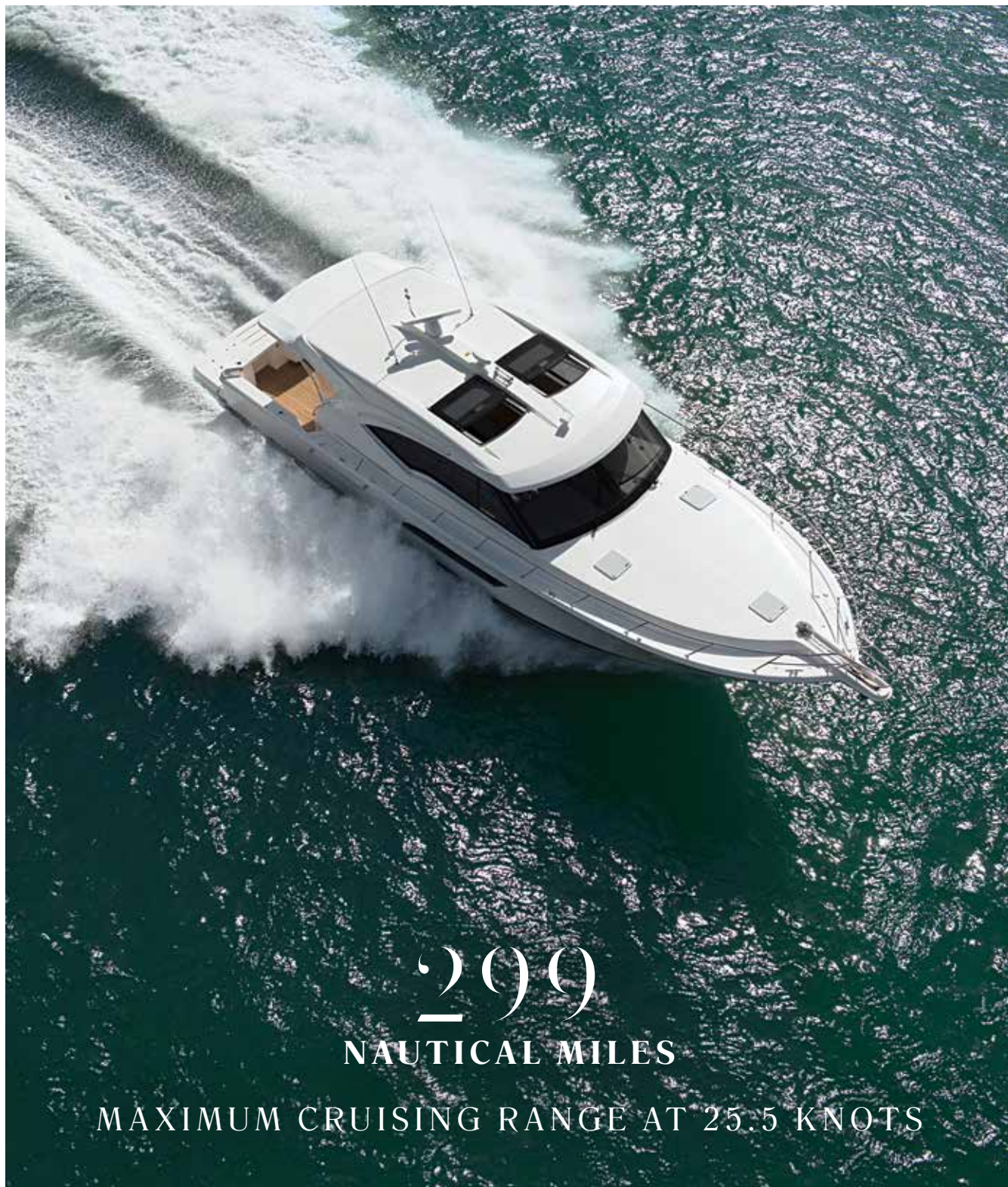
The yacht comes standard with Volvo Penta IPS 950s or can be outfitted with IPS 1200s, at 725 hp and 900 hp, respectively. So far, the Caterpillars have been the most popular, a trend that perhaps reflects the Aussie penchant for doing their own maintenance. Everybody Down Under is familiar with shafts, apparently, but pods are still a fairly new concept that might require a decid-

edly un-Australian trip to a boatyard for maintenance. But back to my time aboard. The yacht’s tracking was exceptional, especially in the ever-challenging, following seas on our return trip to the marina. Looking aft, all I saw was a straight line of white foam bobbing in our vessel’s wake. And she was easy to trim thanks to Humphree Interceptors that come standard.

Feeling confident at the wheel despite the seas, I pressed the throttles forward and felt that familiar, but still exhilarating, spurt of acceleration as she fired up to 30 knots. Not too shabby considering my 575 was fully loaded. I also slalomed her around

REST EASY

The Riviera 575 SUV’s master stateroom has an island king berth, big windows that provide lots of light, loads of stowage including a walk-in closet, and an en-suite head. She also has extra measures taken for sound attenuation, all so you can catch some well-earned z’s in peace.



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NAUTICAL MILES

MAXIMUM CRUISING RANGE AT 25.5 KNOTS

From this angle, you can see how so much natural light is able to enter the interior.

and through the swells, and she responded with aplomb, showing both grip and fluidity.

Sight lines at speed from the helm were optimal thanks to an oversize windshield. Hard over, she pirouetted nimbly, though I had to crouch to make sure I was clear to either side because the yacht did show some heel. It's nothing that I couldn't get used to, especially with the 575's plethora of strengths.

One of those strengths is her cockpit, an important entertainment space for the famously outdoor-loving Australians, and for anyone who likes to get out and enjoy the sea breeze. (I'm assuming this means you because, as a boater, it'd be weird if you didn't.) The double-tiered cockpit has a grill forward and to starboard with two Kenyon griddles and a sink, as well as a prep station. To port is a dining settee with L-shaped seating just below Riviera's trademark outward-opening salon window, which helps connect the cockpit to the interior. A door to starboard of that window opens fully so, with both of them flung open, the salon and cockpit are effectively conjoined into one indoor-outdoor entertainment space. The lower tier of the cockpit is open for fishing, which is in line with this yacht's all-purpose design. The transom has a livewell and tuna doors to either side. The doors act equally efficiently for anglers as they do for divers and swimmers. There's also a bench-style seat at the transom, so everyone has a place to sit.

Inside, the salon is plushly outfitted, if a bit smaller than the cockpit, falling in line with the SUV's outdoorsy vibe. The galley is aft and to port, near that aforementioned window, which makes food easy to serve to outdoor diners. An L-shaped dining settee is forward and to port for more formal dining. Across from that is a settee for lounging, and just abaft that, across from the galley, is a bar area with extra stowage below. The whole scheme creates a rounded-out salon that should fit most every need.

Below, the master is the main attraction. It's

LOA
60'8"
MAX
BEAM
16'10"



LOOKING GLASS

The 575 is available with the Glass Cockpit helm from Volvo Penta in conjunction with Garmin, a high-tech, easy-to-use package borrowed from the aeronautical industry that integrates all of the yacht's systems.

full-beam with windows to either side for natural light. A walk-in closet aft and to starboard provides excellent stowage as well as access to all the yacht's electrical systems, while aft and to port is the head with its, ahem, American-size shower. The placement of these two areas is no accident. By situating them abaft the bed, they provide extra sound insulation from the big, roaring Cats while underway.

For guests, the surprisingly roomy forepeak VIP also has natural light thanks to relatively large side windows and two overhead hatches. A third guest stateroom is on the starboard-side, and a Bosch washer/dryer is tucked neatly beneath the stairs, hinting that this yacht wasn't made simply for a day trip to the sandbar to throw some shrimp on the barbie and crack a few cold ones.

Because of Australia's geography, many Aussies need to cruise quite a long way to get somewhere they want to go. With the washer/dryer, stowage to spare, accommodations and efficient fuel burn, the 575 SUV is highly suited to doing things like making the near-1,000-mile jaunt from Sydney to the Whitsundays. The Whitsundays, if you're not familiar, are a cruising paradise off Australia's northeastern coast. They're essentially that country's Bahamas.

When I break down the Riviera 575 SUV to what its name purports it to be, here is what I get: Sporty? Yes. The performance numbers and maneuverability are there, as is the ability to toss off the lines in most any weather. Utility? Yes. She can take you just about anywhere, and with her entertainment spaces, accommodations and even her fishability, there's not much you can't do with this boat. If SUV means go just about anywhere and do just about anything, then the versatile 575 SUV is correctly named.

And that was exactly Riviera's intention. ♣

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