FORECAST: LIMITED VISIBILITY
HOW TO RUN SAFELY IN FOG

USED BOAT REVIEW:
SURFHUNTER 29

SOUNDINGS®

REAL BOATS, REAL BOATERS

TRAWLER TALES

FROM DOWN EAST MAINE TO THE INSIDE PASSAGE

PLUS: TRAILERABLE "TRAWLERS"

Nordhavn 40

GREEN HORSEPOWER:
NEW PROPANE OUTBOARD

INSIDE THE BUSIEST
COAST GUARD
COMMAND CENTER

June 2012

$5.95US $6.95CAN

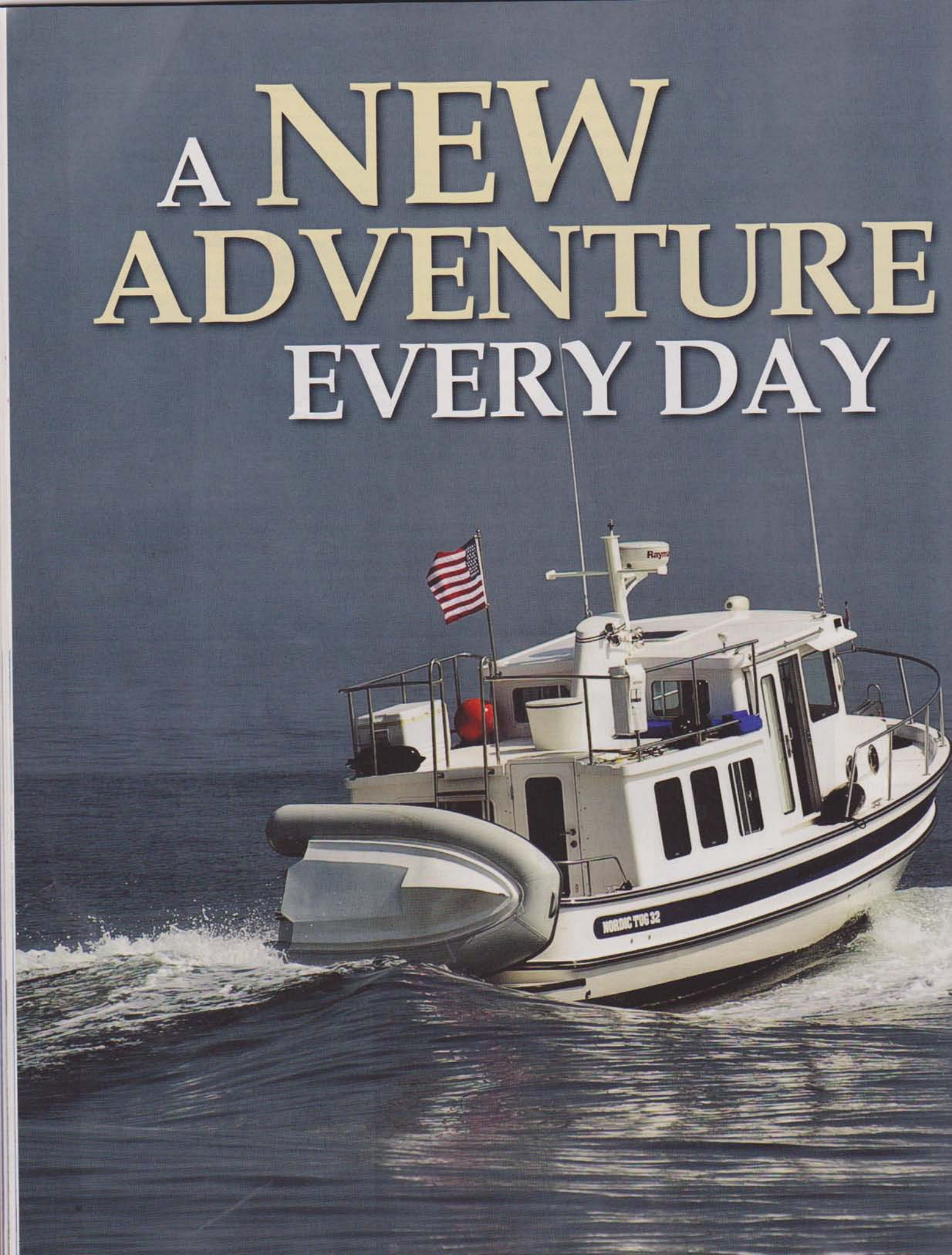
06

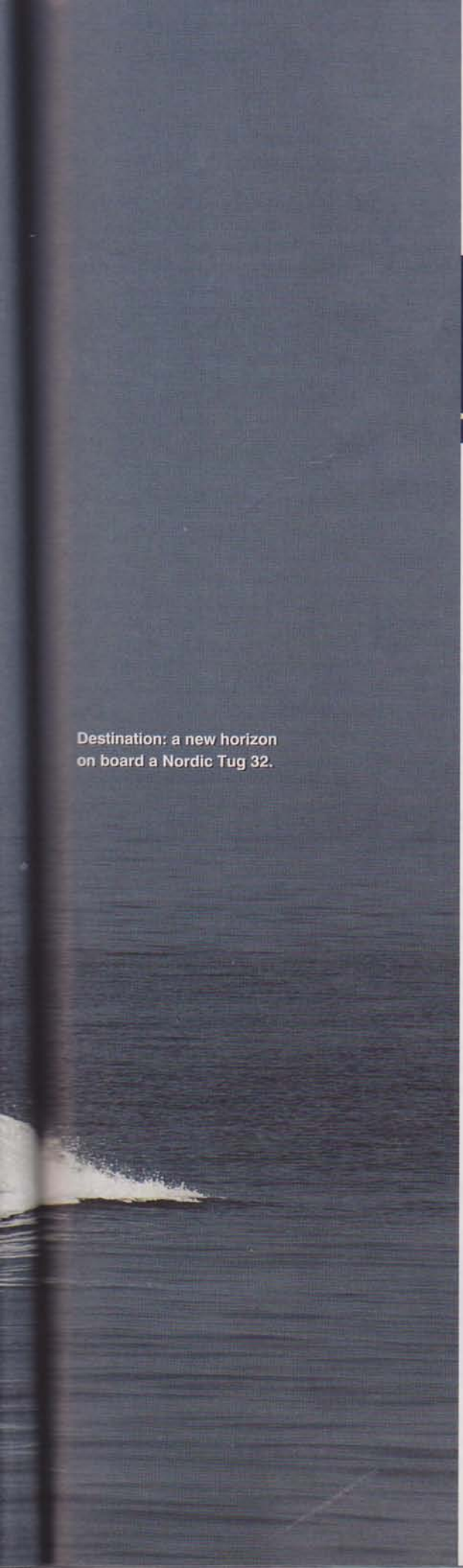
0 09281 02916 8

soundingsonline.com

DISPLAY UNTIL JUNE 11, 2012

A NEW ADVENTURE EVERY DAY





Destination: a new horizon on board a Nordic Tug 32.

PAUL TORTORA

GEOGRAPHY LESSONS
FROM THE TRAWLER CLAN

BY PETER SWANSON

Bob and Sharon Bond bought their Krogen 42 in 2007 and named her Big Run. They spent their first three summers on Chesapeake Bay, upgrading gear, repairing systems and, mostly, just learning about their boat, which they love.

Now retired, they cruise to the Bahamas to escape the Pennsylvania winter — and to further their education. In March, they learned one of their biggest lessons yet. They found themselves adrift in 6- to 8-foot seas in the Tongue of the Ocean off Andros Island after their transmission oil cooler ruptured. With no auxiliary propulsion, single-screw Big Run lay at the mercy of the ocean, and the Bonds had no one to call who could help. Eventually a brave Bahamian with a 26-foot Mako came to tow them back to port. By the time the boats reached safety at Nassau — 13 hours after the breakdown — the Mako was running on one engine and out of gas.

The Bond boating motto is, "Every day is an adventure. Every night is an event." Blogging about their recent ordeal, Bob Bond was phlegmatic: "another adventure right out of Hell's Playbook, the game-winning edition."

Later, in a Soundings interview, Bond says he and his wife were lucky to have been rescued so quickly. "Not bad, considering there is not any countrywide commercial tow assist in the Bahamas, as there is in the U.S.," he says. "You better have a mechanical and electrical background before you attempt your own Bahamas adventure. Preventive maintenance is a key factor to a great cruising experience anywhere, and don't forget about carrying all those spare parts."

Among the boat owners interviewed for this article, Bond was unusual in that he admitted his trawler, lacking twin engines or a "get home" wing engine, was less than ideally suited for the lonesome waters down island. Most boat owners are proud captives to the emotional and financial investment they have made — perhaps even a tad superstitious. They seem unwilling to reveal their boat's shortcomings. Their patterns of behavior, however, speak louder than words.

Every year, hundreds of Bahamas cruisers winter in George Town in the Exumas, but fewer than 15 percent are powerboaters. Bond and others believe the trawler population of Florida is loath to go that extra distance because most of their boats are single-screw and without a wing engine. And the fact that diesel averages about $1.50 more a gallon than it does stateside speaks to the frugal nature of the breed.

* * *

Retired in 2008, Marty Campanella and his wife, Deb, are now cruising the Caribbean. Their boat, Pelican Bay, also happens to be a single-screw Krogen 42, but with a 27-hp Yanmar offset on the starboard side with its own shaft and

continued on Page 59

a Max-Prop. Marty, a veteran East Coast cruiser, says most of the trawlers in the eastern Caribbean have wing engines.

Campanella, who is from Indiana, views the Bahamas the same way the Bonds view the Chesapeake — as a training ground. "Visiting the Bahamas was a good introduction to the Caribbean islands in that boat parts were in short supply, food was limited and just about everything costs more than the U.S.," he says. "We soon realized how pleased we were that we had stocked the boat with about two to three backup boat parts — whenever possible — and provisioned to an extreme before we left Florida. This planning not only helped us, but it also helped fellow boaters who needed parts we just happened to have on board."

Down-island cruising may be the strictest schoolmistress, but all owners interviewed for this article say they learned valuable lessons almost everywhere they went, whether visiting Down East Maine, doing the Intracoastal Waterway and Great Loop or transiting the Inside Passage of the Pacific Northwest.

* * *

Mac and Linda Lamay are former East Coast sailors who have not only made the change to a trawler, but also have dramatically changed venues. In 2007 they bought a Ranger Tug 25 at the Seattle Boat Show, and soon afterward Island Ranger was chugging up the Inside Passage to southeast Alaska. They've since done it a second time, taking three months to do the round trip.

As in the Bahamas, self-sufficiency is the coin of this northern realm. Unlike the Bahamas, the water is very deep, the tides extreme. "Anchoring can be challenging," Mac says. "We carried three anchor-and-rodes and could anchor in pretty deep water when we wanted. Stern ties are common in southern British Columbia. Since almost all locations utilize floating docks, the 20-plus-foot tide changes aren't as big a hassle as they might be. Of course, they make for interesting anchoring calculations."

The Ranger Tug is not an ocean passagemaker, but for the Lamays she's a fine choice for the mostly protected waters of the Inside Passage. Mac Lamay appreciates the diesel power, the factory-included electronics suite and big-boat comforts in a small package. What the R25 lacks for Inside Passage cruising is sufficient water tankage, given some of the distances between dockside taps. Thirty gallons wasn't enough, so the Lamays added a watermaker for the second trip and had plenty.

* * *

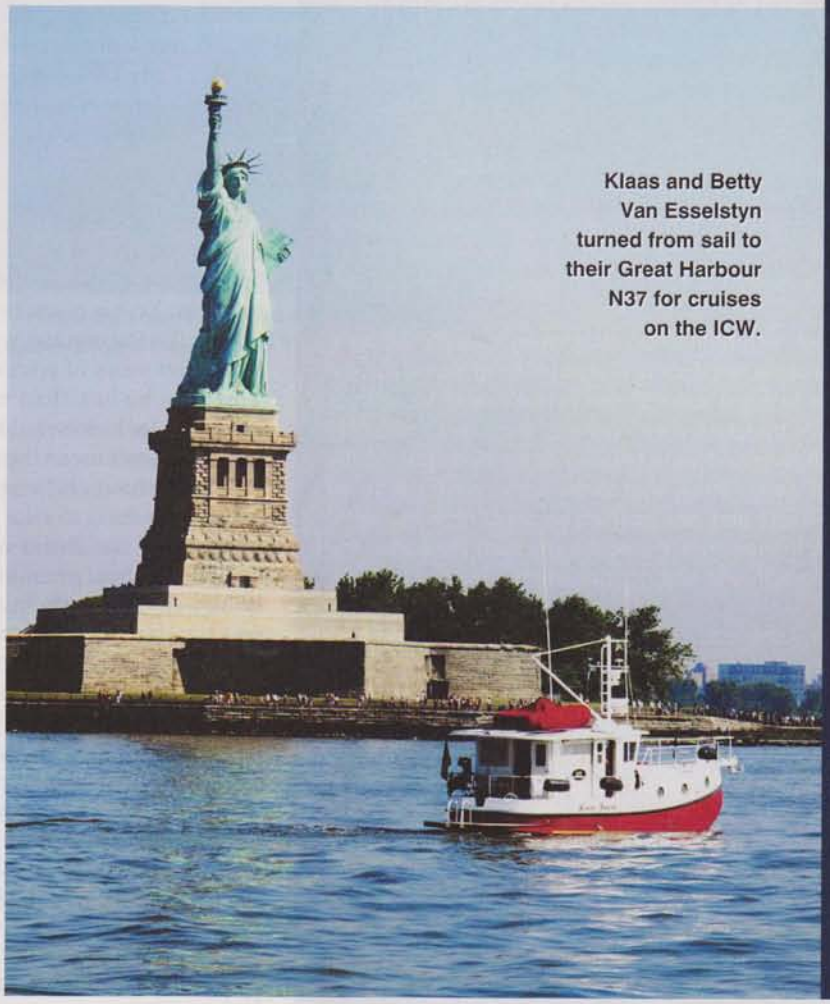
Klaus and Elizabeth Loehr sailed their Taswell 43 all along the East Coast and the Bahamas. They chartered boats in the Caribbean and French Polynesia. After taking delivery of their Nordhavn 40, Chinook, in 2001, the couple followed the Inside Passage to Alaska and have never looked back. At the time of this interview they were preparing for their 12th Inside Passage cruise. Seeing the Loehrs' photos is explanation enough — glaciers, whales, mountainscapes and a variety of big, freshly caught fish held in trophy pose.

Klaus Loehr admits there are challenges. "Open ocean crossings, narrows and tidal rapids, large tidal ranges and currents, occasional gales and storm lows, strong inflow and outflow winds at the inlets, fog and traffic to include mile-long log rafts." But he will never admit his Nordhavn is anything but perfect for the territory.

Coincidentally, the boat on this month's cover is another N40, caught in a summer squall at Cuttyhunk, Mass. Changeable weather is one of the challenges facing those who cruise New England in the summer. Excellent forecasting and communications aside, gale-force conditions can sneak up on you (see "About that cover shot — a gale-force friendship").

* * *

The boat on the cover is Commander, and her skipper is Barry Kallander, who cruises New England with his wife, grown children and friends. Kallander, who has also cruised the Pacific Northwest, says Maine is about as close to the experience of cruising Alaska as can be found on the East Coast. It is too good to miss.



Klaas and Betty Van Esselstyn turned from sail to their Great Harbour N37 for cruises on the ICW.

Checklist for your cruising destination

These lists are by no means complete, and Soundings encourages readers to e-mail additions, as well as the reasoning behind the suggestions.

Great Loop/ICW/ Chesapeake Bay

4 40-plus-gallon holding tank
- ✔ oversized fenders
- ✔ shoal draft
- ✔ 15-foot overhead clearance
- ✔ walkaround deck
- ✔ bow thruster
- ✔ mud anchor

Down East Maine

- ✔ radar
- ✔ good dinghy
- ✔ assortment of anchors
- ✔ warm clothing
- ✔ prop "spurs"
- ✔ programmable loud hailer

Inside Passage

- ✔ radar
- ✔ fishing gear and crab traps
- ✔ 500 feet of anchor line
- ✔ warm clothing
- ✔ cabin heater
- ✔ binoculars
- ✔ good dinghy
- ✔ good camera
- ✔ watermaker

Bahamas

- ✔ good dinghy
- ✔ several anchors
- ✔ complete spares kit
- ✔ stowage for provisions
- ✔ ample water and fuel tankage
- ✔ satellite weather
- ✔ shoal draft
- ✔ redundant propulsion
- ✔ polarized sunglasses
- ✔ snorkeling gear
- ✔ watermaker
- ✔ lots of cash

ABOUT THIS MONTH'S COVER SHOT:
A GALE-FORCE FRIENDSHIP

Capt. Barry Kallander, owner of Commander, a Nordhavn 40, tells the story behind the dramatic photograph of a summer squall off Cape Cod, Mass.

I spend most of my time cruising New England, including a trip to Maine each summer. I have been providing charters since I bought Commander in 2005, focused on trawler training, from marine systems to navigation to vessel operation. The Cuttyhunk photo was during an overnight charter for a family from Virginia (a husband, wife and two grown children).

The weather was foul, with thunderstorms moving through the area. We had tied to the end of the fish dock at Cuttyhunk temporarily, and the harbormaster asked us to move about 50 feet to make room for a larger vessel coming in. While the skies were ominous, the breeze was only 12 knots. We threw off lines and were backing to the dock just off the right frame of the shot. As we threw lines to the harbormaster, a squall suddenly came to 50 knots and was pushing us away from the dock. I called to pull in lines to maneuver the boat away from the docks and rocks evident in the background and get out into the fairway until the wind settled.

Coincidentally, Gavin Ashworth, a professional photographer and Nordhavn lover, was on his Sabre on a mooring. He was shooting the ominous sky and clouds from the safety of his saloon and began to snap pictures of Commander.

After the weather settled — about 15 minutes — we approached the dock and tied. Gavin came over in his tender and said, "I got an incredible picture of your boat coming off the dock." We since became good friends and dine together each summer at Cuttyhunk. Gavin kindly gave me rights to the photo, but it was his good timing that captured Commander as she veered off with 50 knots of wind on her port beam.

For information about chartering Commander, visit www.nordhavn.com *and click through "Resources" to the "Charters" page.*

Fog is prevalent during the Maine summer, particularly in July, but that's not the only downside. Kallander says a boat with active stabilizers, such as Commander, requires paying even more attention than usual to the mass of lobster pots encountered Down East, but that should not discourage anyone who is reasonably skilled in seamanship. "A pot warp on a stabilizer frees pretty easily by backing down and using a boathook," he says. "If you suspect you have picked up a line, come to a stop and inspect. If you aren't sure, a quick dip in the summer isn't too bad."

Kallander says he has never fouled his prop in Maine, but has picked up a "line or two" on the stabilizer. He says he was able to free them easily.

"There are two kinds of Maine cruisers," he says, "those that have picked up a line on their bottom and those that will."

* * *

Before choosing a Great Harbour N37 in 2006, Klaas and Betty Van Esselstyn had sailed the Caribbean aboard a 38-foot Fontaine Pajot catamaran. They like Moon Beam for the Intracoastal Waterway because of its shallow draft, large living area and big tanks, including 500 gallons of fuel, 300 gallons of water and 100 gallons of waste. It's not that the ICW is lacking in marinas; it's about flexibility. The ample tankage allows them to spend a couple of weeks at anchor before needing a pumpout and to bypass expensive fuel stops in favor of lower prices.

"The ICW is not the fast way to get anywhere," says Klaas Van Esselstyn, a retired Marine aviator. "If one wants to make time, go offshore. There are bridges, locks, canals and various other obstacles that slow one's travel. Traveling on the ICW also requires more attention for navigational hazards like tides, shoaling, markers and passing boats."

He says cruising the ICW has made him more familiar with Coast Guard regulations and reinforced the Power Squadron safety course he and Betty took. "It has also allowed me to use a lot of my experience as a military and airline pilot interpreting weather, drift and closure," Van Esselstyn says.

* * *

Ralph Yost comes from a maritime family that owned a New Jersey tugboat company. He took a different career path, but never lost the brine in his blood. Retired from the Federal Aviation Administration this year, Yost is going to do the Great Loop with his wife, Celeste, and Striper the Portuguese water dog aboard their DeFever 41, Say Goodbye. After years of cruising and racing sailboats along the East Coast, Yost says he has "had my share of beating my brains out in rough seas" and looks forward to the calm pace and flat waters of the Loop.

That doesn't mean the year-long circumnavigation of the East Coast will be without challenges. "Commercial traffic on the river systems is not something to take lightly," he says. "Be prepared to completely understand the Rules of the Road and how to communicate with commercial boat operators in order to ensure safe passages. Assumptions without communicating could be fatal. Last year we heard of one trawler that was swamped by a commercial tow, and the boat rolled over and sunk." (Search the archives at SoundingsOnline.com for "Moonstruck.")

Is his choice of a DeFever 41 the best possible Loop vessel? Not necessarily. "We did want to purchase a boat that we could do the Loop in, but we also wanted it for other travels, like to the Bahamas," Yost says, although less than 17 feet of air draft is essential for getting under bridges along the Loop. "We also wanted a boat in which our dog can be with us anywhere in the boat, including the flybridge," he says. "We wanted an aft cabin boat because we love to anchor out. We didn't want to have to sleep in the forward of the boat at anchor and constantly hear the waves slopping up against the hull, or any possible noise of the anchor chain when the boat swings."

GAVIN ASHWORTH

Yost "really wanted" a Lehman 120, but was willing to go with another good engine. "We wanted a boat that was easy to handle, economical to operate" — which meant it had to be single-screw — "was in relatively good condition, drew no more than 4 feet, had lots of house battery power, a good charging system, plenty of domestic water capacity and full walkaround gunwales."

* * *

Douglas Pohl is skipper of a 55-foot Duckworth custom steel trawler built in 2002. Grey Goose is Pohl's latest posting after a life as a professional mariner and fisherman, evidenced by his Coast Guard Ocean Master captain's license. He asked us to tell Soundings readers that he and "Admiral" Michelle Holbrook are looking for crew for his next voyage, a 10,000-nautical-mile voyage from Mobile, Ala., up the Eastern Seaboard, through Canada and westward across the Northwest Passage during the summer ice-free season, through the Bering Straits to Nome, Alaska, and then onward to Pohl's home port of Astoria, Ore.

Soundings asked Pohl about his experience cruising the Great Loop. Given his background and ambitions, one might expect that his time on the 5,000-mile route was unsatisfying, but Pohl insists that's not so. "The Erie Canal through New York and the Great Lakes were my favorites," he says. "I enjoyed returning to hundreds of years past on the Erie Canal, when small barges would be loaded with goods and pulled by horses along the canal. ... The towns along the canal provided some of the finest authentic meals with Old World charm — a father inspecting every plate cooked by his sons that he passed to his daughters who waited tables. The first taste took me back 30 years to Italy."

He continues: "The water quality has been reclaimed and sportsman fishing flourishes near Alaska salmon status. Catching an 18-pound brown trout in Kenosha was spectacular."

Is a boat destined for ice and the midnight sun perfect for the Great Loop? Pohl describes Grey Goose as an 80-percenter. "Grey Goose was a somewhat imperfect fit at 55 feet LOA and a 6-foot draft," he says. "It meant no opportunity to cruise Canada's Great Loop canal routes. Eighty percent is better than nothing at all. The mast was purposely fabricated to recline, allowing easy air draft under fixed bridges. One of the first items outfit was a washer and a dryer — separate units, not a combo tries-to-do-all washer-dryer. Keeping a smile on the admiral's face is at the top of the must-have list."

* * *

Fred Wehner, owner of a 24-foot American Tug called Tug 44, enjoys cruising the New York Canal system for the same reasons as Pohl. He loves the small-town events and the people he and his girlfriend, Kathy Tinbergen, meet along the way. "If a boater has a problem, the local folks will always help out," he says. "If you need a ride to the supermarket, someone will offer to take you. If you need a mechanic, they will find you one. If you're hungry, you'd be amazed how many folks will invite you home for dinner with them."

Wehner says he'll retire soon and maybe do the entire Great Loop.

* * *

Rounding out this story are insights from several people interviewed about particular cruising grounds. Each region has its own cachet — gin-clear waters in the Bahamas; spectacular wildlife and scenery along the Inside Passage; the islands and distinctive humor of Maine; the sociability, calm waters and changing scenery along the ICW and Great Loop. And although each has its challenges, we should want to explore them all.

In that vein, a modest suggestion to would-be trawler folk: Cruise the most challenging venues while young or at least early in your retired life. Go south to the islands or Mexico and north to Alaska and Maine.

As you become older — and perhaps more dependent on our health care system — set out on a circumnavigation, not of the world but of our American world. Do the Great Loop. Enjoy the Americana along the way and get acquainted with some of our nicest people. After that, well, there are always those bus tours of Civil War battlefields. ■

(From left) Douglas Pohl favors the Great Loop for cruising aboard his custom 55-foot steel trawler, Grey Goose; Mac and Linda Lamay morphed from East Coast sailors to Alaskan Inside Passage cruisers aboard their Ranger Tug 25.