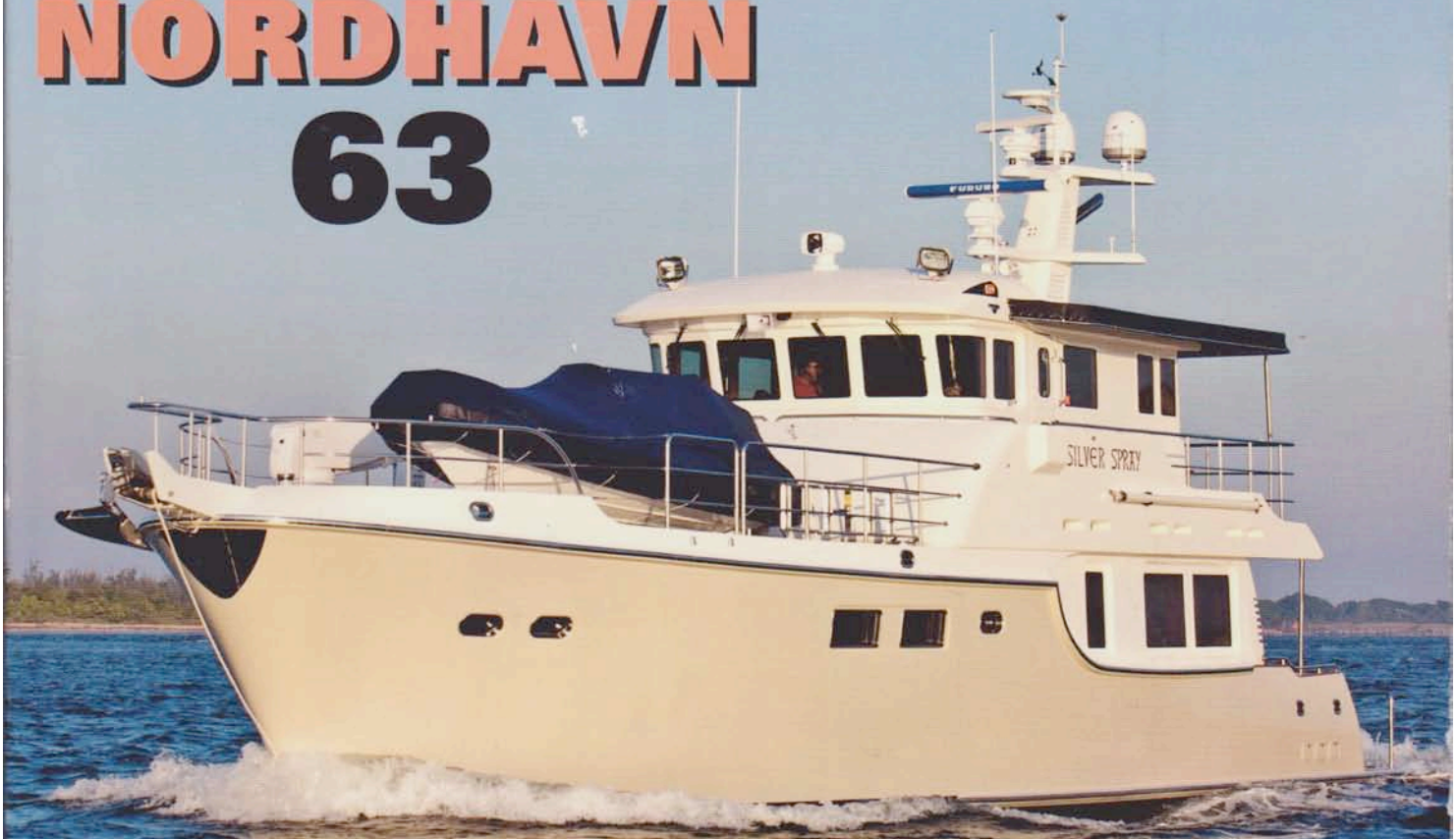
HORIZON EP69 • ZF MARINE FACTORY TOUR

PassageMaker

The Trawler & Ocean Motorboat Magazine

CLASSIC CIRCUMNAVIGATOR NORDHAVN 63



TOLLYCRAFT REFIT

CRUISE PLANNER: NORTHERN LAKE HURON

JOURNEY OF THE HEART: A FAMILY EXPLORES LIFE ABOARD

MARCH 2012
$5.99US $7.99CAN
03
0 09281 01700 4
Display until March 26, 2012
passagemaker.com

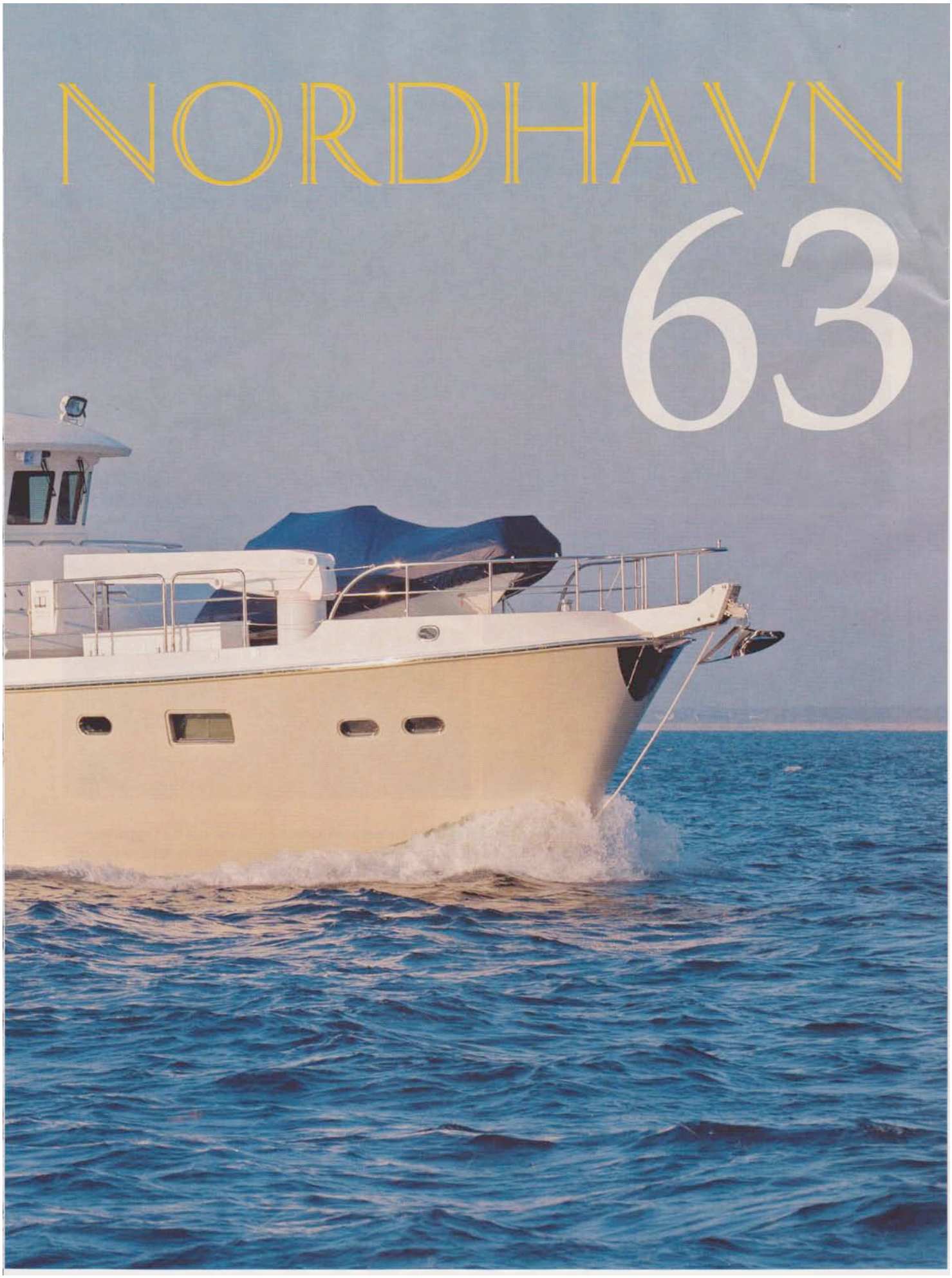
Story By Chris Caswell
Photography Courtesy Of Nordhavn

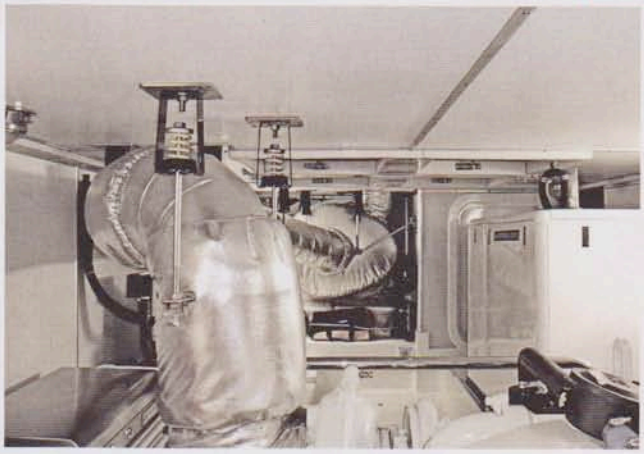
THERE ARE, IN THE BOATING WORLD, CERTAIN MILESTONES THAT CHANGED EVERYTHING. The first fiberglass boat, of course, was one. But there were more subtle ones, as well. Hobie Alter made the catamaran a household word, and now they're in the America's Cup. A tubby little double-ender called a Westsail shifted the sailing world from racing around buoys to dreaming of sunsets over Bora Bora.

And, of course, the Nordhavn introduced the world to long-distance power cruising. OK, OK, the purists will say that it was Robert Beebe who pioneered the passagemaking motoryacht (in his book, *Voyaging Under Power*) as a better alternative to cruising under sail, but hey, he didn't build them by the hundreds like Nordhavn.

NORDHAVN

63





Chris Caswell

Chris Caswell

Top: This view compressed the engine room, which is large enough to allow walk-around service on all sides of the Lugger main engine. Wing tanks for the fuel, with protected sight glasses, are on each side. Above left: How can you not love exhaust supports that include springs to absorb the usual rattle and shake? The ceramic/fiber insulating exhaust blanket is an unseen piece of artwork. Above right: The fuel manifolding is well labeled and intuitive, with protective through-bulkhead washers and heat shields under the fuel filters.

No, in a century, boating journalists will look back and say, "Yep, the ripples when that first Nordhavn 46 was launched in 1989 became a tidal wave of serious ocean-cruising motoryachts." In the two-plus decades since then, Nordhavn has continually refined the concept, drawing on new technology and creative ideas to produce a series of yachts that are truly small ships, capable of long ocean voyages almost as easily as you'd run to the corner store.

Turnkey adventuring has arrived.

Which brings us to the Nordhavn 63, latest iteration in the line, and what is clearly going to be the dream yacht for many experienced skippers. The 63 draws upon a long and distinguished series of other Nordhavns (see sidebar for lineage) but, in essence, she starts with Jeff Leishman's seakindly hull from the Nordhavn 55, with the waterline stretched to over 57 feet. The Nordhavn 62 contributed the aft wheelhouse. The new 63 would clearly please Bob Beebe, whose precepts of "tough, seaworthy, and simple" are met, but in a far more comfortable (and luxurious) vessel than his *Passagemaker.*

The result is, quite simply, a spectacular cruising yacht that can easily be handled by a couple, which is exactly what the owners of *Silver Spray*, the first of the 63s, had in mind.

Top: Looking forward, the saloon has large windows and comfortable seating, including a three-piece table for easy entry. Overhead handrails add security, and every nook is used for stowage or bookshelves. Above: The athwartship galley is open to the saloon so the chef isn't left out of the conversation, and has ample granite counters with appliances underneath.

The skipper's "office" is ship-like, with triple monitors, forward-raked tempered glass windshields, and a large dedicated navigation table (left) with flat chart storage.

The salty look is attractive, but more important, the aft wheelhouse puts the crew in a comfortable (and dry) location in big seas, it creates an immense flush foredeck, and that, in turn, allows for spacious accommodations.

A famous yachtsman once gave the designer of his new yacht a simple charter: "Drinks six, eats four, sleeps two." The Nordhavn 63 follows that same "less is more" philosophy, at least when it comes to guests.

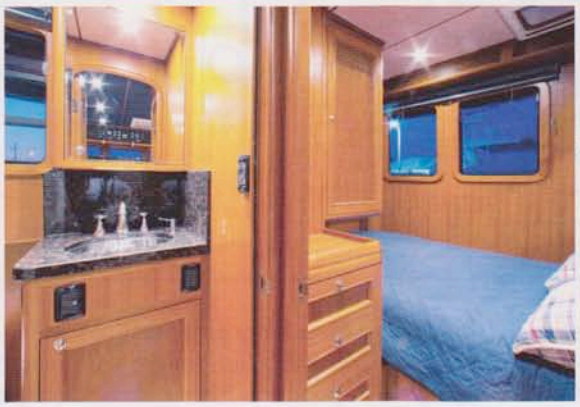
THE TOUR

The master stateroom is a liveaboard suite, while the guest cabin forward is of a size that would be called the master on most yachts. There is a single-berthed crew cabin tucked near the engine room, and there is also a self-contained captain's cabin just aft of the pilothouse, complete with head and shower.

This arrangement is perfect for the owners of *Silver Spray*. They wanted a transoceanic yacht that could be easily handled by a couple, yet have room to carry guests or kids when needed and even a captain (or a pilot, if in strange waters).

At a glance, the Nordhavn 63 bears more than a passing resemblance to North Sea fishing trawlers, with her superstructure set well aft and the high bows clearly intended to shoulder aside big seas. Round bottomed, full keeled, and without the bulbous bow found on the N62, there is none of the "slap-and-bang" found on a chined vessel in a seaway. The motion is comfortably predictable and gentle, though stabilizers are needed both under way and at rest (a Beebe-esque flopperstopper at anchor).

Experienced skippers will likely pass by the gorgeous cherry interior with its raised panel styling (from the Nordhavn 75 Yachtfisher) and beeline for the engine room. But have someone nearby who knows CPR, because it is, in a word, magnificent.



Top: Access to the pilothouse is safe with this inside staircase that has sturdy stainless steel rails and properly spaced treads. Above left: The captain's cabin behind the pilothouse is a perfect place for the off-watch to catch a nap, and by separating the head and shower, creates a day head for guests. Above right: The queen berth in the master stateroom is surrounded by bureaus, nightstands with drawers, hanging lockers, and the ubiquitous bookshelves.

A VERY HOLY PLACE

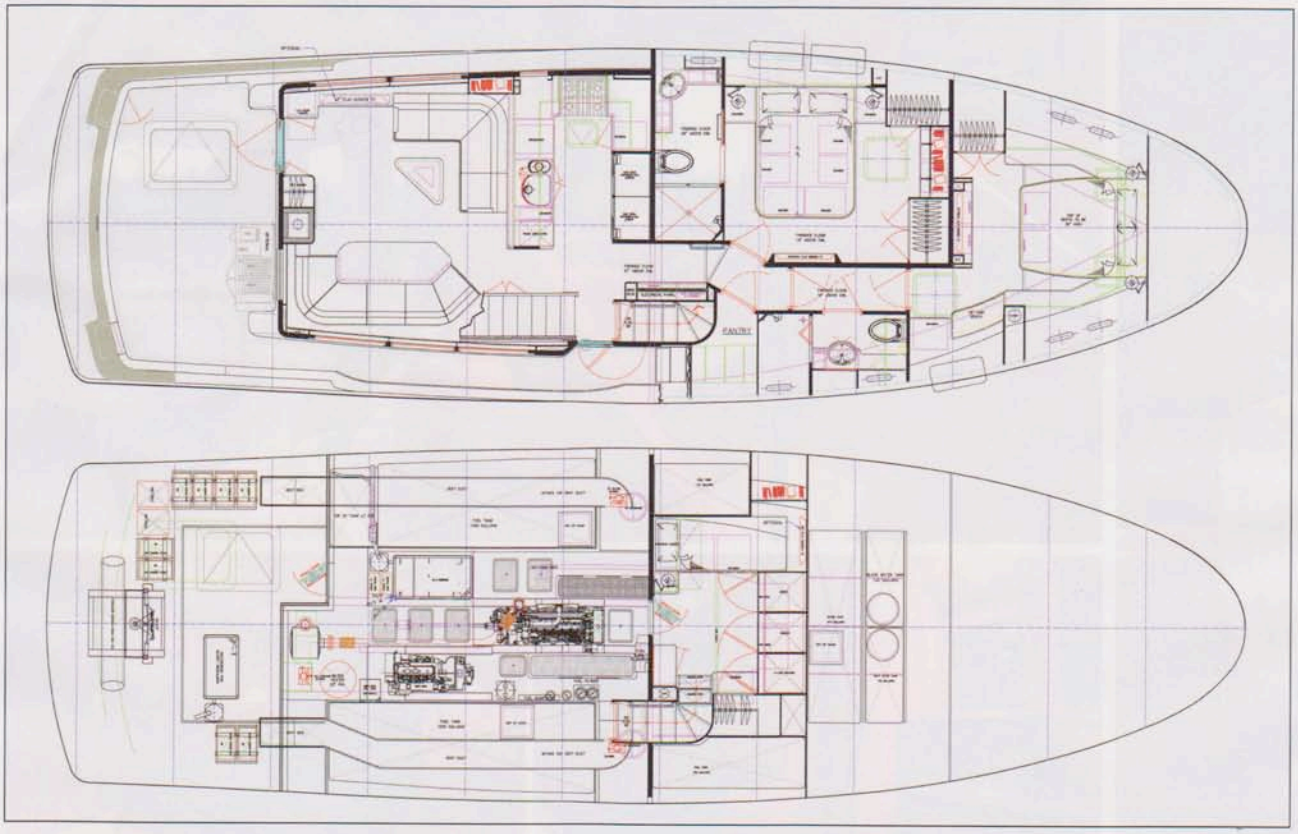
An entirely new engine room mold was created for the 63 which gives 6 feet 2 inches of headroom, meaning you can *walk* around all sides of the single Lugger 340hp turbocharged and aftercooled diesel. All sides. Wow!

An option on *Silver Spray* is the wing engine, a 65hp Lugger with a Gori folding prop, which not only provides "get-home" power at 4 knots in case of problems with the main engine, but it also backs up the hydraulic systems that include ABT TRAC stabilizers, Maxwell anchor windlass, ABT bow and stern thrusters, a pump for the chain wash, and an immense emergency bilge pump.

The engine room is impeccably finished, with ample protective stainless steel rails around moving or hot systems and an aggressive, but easily-cleaned, nonskid sole. The ceramic/fiber insulating exhaust blanket is impeccably crafted, and a rarely seen piece of artwork. The Lugger has a dry-stack exhaust that vents 21 feet above the waterline, and the engine is cooled via a Fernstrum keel cooler. The wing engine plus the two Northern Lights gensets (20kW and 9kW) are all wet exhaust. The ventilation system was fabricated by Nordhavn using Multifan components, with two forward intake fans and an after extraction fan that combine to keep the engine room at a pleasant temperature even while under way.

Four fiberglass fuel tanks carry a total of 2,500 gallons, with a centerline aluminum day tank that is gravity fed from the center and wing tanks.

The wing engine is more than just for emergency use, since it also has a hydraulic power take-off to power the many systems. Not only does this provide ample hydraulic pressure for the simultaneous use of stabilizers, bow and stern thrusters, and Maxwell anchor windlass,



Courtesy of Nordhavn

but it keeps the wing engine well-exercised and ready for emergency use. In the case of *Silver Spray*, the main engine had 200 hours and the wing engine had 50 hours at the time of our test.

All the plumbing and electrical in the engine room was tidy and seamanlike, with thick washers for protection when passing through panels, padded clamps for securing, and an intuitive layout of the various manifolding that makes sense even at first glance.

There are two entries to the engine room: one is via a cockpit hatch into the immense lazarette and then through a watertight door; while the other is down an inside stairwell opposite the galley. This allows dockside "dirty" service via the lazarette, but safe access through the inner stairs while at sea.

These inner stairs lead to a utility room/crew cabin with a single berth outboard to port and a temporary pipe berth over a hidden Bosch washer and dryer, plus a large freezer. There's no head, but a sink makes washing up after the engine room easy.

A LOOK INSIDE

The pilothouse is the next most important area for the cruising skipper, and this seems to have been purloined from a much larger yacht. The helm is slightly offset to starboard, with a Stidd pedestal chair behind a simple black dash with room for three large monitors. At the skipper's right elbow is a counter with computer keyboard, and the port side has a to-die-for dedicated nav table with chart drawer and swing-out seat. Guests get a ringside seat in the raised, L-shaped settee.

Over the windshield is a secondary panel for additional electronics and monitors, although it's a bit high (headroom here is 6 feet 11 inches), for easy reaching/reading.

The forward-raked windshield is 12mm tempered glass from South Coast Marine, and a pair of Diamond Sea Glaze staggered wing doors lead to the Portuguese bridge that adds protection from large seas. Concealed in the coaming of the Portuguese bridge are optional wing controls, plus a 30-gallon gasoline fuel tank for refilling the tender.

Just aft of the pilothouse is a captain's cabin, which, in the absence of a full-time crew, is perfect for short-handed cruisers so the off-watch can catch 40 winks but remain handy to the bridge. The head for the cabin has a separate door, so it serves as a convenient day head for the pilothouse.

Entry to the saloon from the cockpit is through a watertight Dutch door, and the saloon is arranged for casual entertaining, with an L-shaped settee to port facing a banquette with cocktail table. As a reader, I liked that every spare space has been turned into bookshelves complete with sea rails.

The galley is open to the saloon behind a wide granite counter with double sink and under-counter dishwasher.

I'd prefer a bit more backsplash, but hey, I'm messy. The forward bulkhead is devoted to refrigerator/freezer doors and drawers, and the galley extends across the passageway to include drawers opposite and a walk-in pantry just forward.

The master suite, just two steps below saloon level, is clearly for liveaboard comfort, with an athwartship queen berth, built-in bureaus and hanging lockers, and more of the ever-present bookshelves. The joinerwork throughout is impeccable, and the raised-panel style gives a classic yacht look. The en-suite head is just aft of the master, with a full stand-up shower.

Forward is the VIP cabin, and the central passage is cleverly configured with dual doors. Close the aft door, and the VIP stateroom and large head with shower become an en-suite private cabin. Close the forward door, and it provides privacy in the VIP while allowing the head to become a day head.

Either way, the VIP cabin is amply sized with a raised queen berth and a settee to make it a private getaway. Of particular note is the "basement" under this cabin: a huge storage area that holds the watermaker, provides access to the bow thruster, and depending upon your preferences, could be an immense wine cellar or hold enough stores for a long voyage.

A COMMANDING RIDE

Under way, the Nordhavn 63 is nothing if not delightful. Though her keel gives her superb tracking at all sea angles, she is a surprisingly nimble 64 tons when you spin the Hynautic steering (about seven turns lock to lock). Our sea trial never had any challenging conditions, as evidenced by the stabilizers barely flippering away, but with nearly 11.25 short tons of ballast, she feels sidewalk-solid. With experience in lumpy seas on her smaller sisterships, I feel comfortable saying that she is very seakindly.

But if it's a fast yacht that you want, look elsewhere. During our sea trial, we checked our speeds in three directions: upwind, downwind, and crosswind. And each time, we came up with 9.8 knots at 1803 rpm. I don't really think she would exceed 9.8 knots in free fall, but if you plan to sail into harm's way, know that you can always do 9.8 knots.

When you back off the throttle a bit, you quickly enter the passagemaking range, with just shy of 8 knots giving you a 3,000nm range. That speed also puts less than a 50-percent load on the Lugger.

Certainly a testament to the superb build quality of Nordhavn, the owners of *Silver Spray* (on their second Nordhavn) weren't willing to wait around for the usual commissioning process that double-checks everything when the yacht arrives from the yard.

Instead, they set off immediately and put 200 hours and 1,100 miles on their new yacht, mostly in the Bahamas. When they finally returned for the commissioning, the punch list consisted of just 14 items, most of which the owner had fixed himself. Enough said about build quality.

If there is any single feature of the Nordhavn 63 that I don't love, it's this: I don't own her. A truly wonderful yacht for the experienced skipper, for anyone planning ocean voyages, for short-handed cruisers.

For anyone who loves great yachts.

Visit this issue's Web Extras at www.passagemaker.com to read about the lineage of the Nordhavn 63.

NORDHAVN 63

LOA	62' 6"
LWL	57' 3"
BEAM	18'
DRAFT	6' 8"
DISPLACEMENT	143,000 lb.
BRIDGE CLEARANCE	29'7" (top of anchor light)
FUEL	2,500 gal.
WATER	600 gal.
HOLDING TANK	120 gal.
GRAY WATER	110 gal.
GENERATOR(S)	Northern Lights 20kW (standard) and 9kW (optional)
ENGINE(S)	Lugger 1276 340hp diesel (tested) John Deere 1690 725hp diesel (standard)
WING ENGINE	Lugger L-944-D 65hp (tested) John Deere 4045 80hp (optional)
MAXIMUM SPEED	9.8 knots
CRUISE SPEED	8 knots
RANGE AT CRUISE SPEED	3,000nm
DESIGNER	Jeff Leishman
BUILDER	Nordhavn Yachts
PRICE AS TESTED	$1.85 million

For more information:
Nordhavn
P.O. Box 874
Dana Point, CA 92629
949.496.4848
www.nordhavn.com