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Building on **LOVED**

THE NORDHAVN 63 WILL TAKE YOU PLACES THE CLASSIC 62 CAN'T GO.

BY PETER SWANSON

THE GREAT CANADIAN AUTHOR GEORGE FETHERLING COMPARES RUNNING AWAY on a tramp freighter to a religious pilgrimage, without the sacred destination. The author of *Running Away to Sea* writes that life aboard ship is “as much an escape from one place as a deliberate attempt to reach another.” One of the three great American fantasies, a freighter voyage lacks that soul-sucking downside, which, Fetherling says, dooms to failure those enthusiastic amateurs who engage in the other two — starting restaurants or bookstores. Quite the opposite, going to sea is liberating.

The builders of Nordhavn yachts get that. The vessels conceived on the drafting tables of Pacific Asian Enterprises have long been known for a gray, industrial look evocative of working trawlers. One model in particular, however, has addressed our freighter fantasies directly: the Nordhavn 62, with its aft superstructure and long foredeck. PAE has sold 38 N62s to ocean-roaming owners since the model's first launch in 1993.

An adventurous Scotsman named Nigel McLeod, whose grandfather had been a sea captain, was ready to trade up from his Nordhavn 47 and hankered for an N62. “It was the freighter look with that big sweep of the bow. I liked the aft pilothouse, and I really liked the layout when you walked on the boat,” McLeod says. “My son was turning 17, and he and I wanted to go down to the Caribbean. If we got fed up with that, we'd go through the Panama Canal to the Pacific.”

Only one problem: The next boat had to fit through a canal that leads to McLeod's “hurricane hole” of a berth at Hilton Head. The canal lock measures 20 feet wide, but is actually narrower because of its rubber fendering. The N62 has a beam of 19 feet, 10 inches. The Nordhavn 60, a more recent forward pilothouse design, was narrow enough to transit the lock, but McLeod was determined to have his freighter.

The design team of PAE partners Jim and Jeff Leishman brainstormed to find a solution, and the result offers us excellent insight into how the company develops new models. “We were doing all sorts of design gyrations to try to figure how we could get the 62 narrower, and it just got ridiculous,” Jeff Leishman says. “The 60 would fit, but he didn’t like the forward wheelhouse on the 60, so I thought, why don’t we just design an aft wheelhouse on that hull? He was interested so we drew something up, and that’s how it came about.” (The Nordhavn 60 was itself a customer-driven design. A buyer considering a Nordhavn 55 wanted more deck space, which meant stretching the hull.)

McLeod graciously allowed YACHTING on board for a sea trial of the new N63 with Nordhavn commissioning manager John Hoffman. Of course I’d seen the renderings before arriving at the company’s base in Stuart, Florida, but when I saw *Silver Spray* for the first time I was nonetheless taken aback. She shared basics with the 62 — aft house, sweeping foredeck — but *Silver Spray* was much less the gray lady, positively stylish by comparison. And stepping through a watertight ship’s door into the salon makes for a dramatic transition to airy, cherry-wood elegance.

The boys at Nordhavn have confessed: The 63’s updated styling, particularly the superstructure, is the product of an enlightened design philosophy that takes into account female sensibilities and acknowledges that most of today’s yacht purchases are his *and* her decisions. The workmanship throughout the 63 is finished to contemporary megayacht standards, a level of workmanship that Nordhavn has applied to all of its models, regardless of size, ever since PAE began building boats more than 70 feet in length.

The accompanying photos describe the salon better than words, but the galley has features deserving emphasis. Rather than, say, occupying a corner of the salon, the galley is a defined space of its own — an elongated U-shape on the same level as the salon — that’s big enough for two people to move around in, but arranged to still keep everything within easy reach of the cook. Above the sink and counter, a panoramic pass-through encourages a social connection between those preparing a meal and those waiting to be fed.

Three steps down finds you among the accommodations,

including two nearly equivalent staterooms with queen berths. *Silver Spray*’s master is just forward of amidships, with head and shower en suite and berth aligned athwartships. The guest stateroom is at the bow with en suite head and shower and is also accessible for day use. An alternative arrangement adds a third stateroom with a single berth but takes the second head out of the forward stateroom. These spaces are replete with drawers, shelves and lockers — too many to itemize.

Two compartments lie below. One is “wine cellar” stowage accessed through a hatch forward. The other, at the bottom of stairs, is a laundry room with a second freezer and bunks for two crew. Here too is a door to the engine room, which is also



Clockwise from above: With her superstructure aft, the N63’s expansive foredeck can accommodate a 17-foot RIB and davit. The cherry interior shows the attention to detail with which all Nordhavns are built. The master berth lies athwartships and just forward of amidships for a comfortable night’s sleep while on passage. The N63’s helm features a chair by Stidd and instruments by Furuno. The N63 at anchor in the Bahamas (opposite).

EXPLORE MORE

FOR A PHOTO GALLERY OF THE N63 AND HER PREDECESSOR, THE N62, GO TO YACHTINGMAGAZINE.COM.

RPM	KNOTS	GPH
1216	7.55	5.30
1314	8.10	6.70
1597	9.30	12.70
1706	9.50	14.85
1803	9.80	17.05

TEST CONDITIONS: Speeds were measured by GPS in the Straits of Florida off Juno Beach, Florida, with one-foot seas and 5- to 7-knot winds, with a 2/3 load of fuel, a full load of water and two people on board. Fuel consumption was measured by the electronic engine-monitoring system. Test conditions and performance numbers are provided by Nordhavn.



LOA: 62'6"
 LWL: 57'3"
 BEAM: 18'0"
 DRAFT: 6'8"
 DISPL: 130,000 lb
 FUEL: 2,500 gal.
 WATER: 600 gal.
 HOLDING: 120 gal.
 GRAY WATER: 110 gal.
 CONSTRUCTION: Fiberglass

DESIGN: PAE/Jeff Leishman
 GENERATOR: 1x Northern Lights 20 kW 240V
 BOW THRUSTER: Side-Power
 ENGINES: 1 x 330 hp John Deere 608TAFM diesel
 CRUISING SPEED: 8 to 9 knots
 RANGE: 3,000 miles
 BASE PRICE: \$1,850,000

The galley's proximity to the salon keeps the cook in the conversation.

accessed from the cockpit.

Opposite the galley to starboard, stairs lead to the N63's spacious pilothouse with doors port and starboard to the lounge deck and Portuguese bridge. There is an L-shape settee and navigation station to port and a helm chair to the right of center. Behind the settee is a watch cabin with a double berth and an adjacent head and shower. Add up the berths, and *Silver Spray* sleeps eight with room on settees for a few more.

One of the most useful features of the N63's "freighter" design is a foredeck that can handle a 17-foot RIB. A full-displacement vessel is a slow boat, and anyone who has ever cruised in one appreciates a fast tender, especially one big enough to carry the entire crew. To lift that tender over the side, the N63 comes equipped with a \$40,000 Steelhead ES telescoping davit with a lifting capacity of 1,500 pounds.

The beating heart of the N63 is a 330-horsepower John Deere engine, which, in the best Nordhavn tradition, is keel-cooled to enable a dry-stack exhaust. With capacity for nearly 2,500 gallons of diesel distributed among four tanks, she will have a range of at least 3,000 miles at approximately 7 knots. Though a "get home" second engine is optional on the N63, a prudent mariner will think long and hard before going to sea without one. *Silver Spray's* wing engine is a 65-horsepower Lugger diesel with a folding prop, capable of driving the vessel at 4 knots.

When I took the helm, Nordhavn's John Hoffman suggested I

take my hands off the wheel to see what would happen: nothing — *Silver Spray* tracked straight, as if on autopilot. Hoffman, who has delivered more than 50 Nordhavns, says the N63 is unique. "I don't know why it is, but she steers on a line," he says.

Of course, the Leishmans knew the N63 would be a better sea boat than the old 62. Like all recent Nordhavn designs, the 63 carries her beam aft with an underwater shape that flattens near the stern. Compare that with the sailboat-type lines of the N62 hull. "With fuller stern sections, you get a bigger lazarette and bigger load-carrying capacity. You get a better pitch motion," Jim Leishman says.

I couldn't help but wonder if the aft superstructure on top of those wide haunches had anything to do with the boat's fine tracking. For certain, motoryachts with their "sail area" aft swing less at anchor than boats with equivalent windage forward, but Leishman doubts windage is much of a factor under way.

At the risk of perpetuating the cultural stereotype that Scots are a frugal lot, the N63 had another factor in its favor. It cost less than a \$2.2 million Nordhavn 62. Built at Nordhavn's South Coast factory in Xiamen, China, the price tag for Hull No. 1 of the N63 was well under \$2 million. And despite the worldwide economic downturn, four more are being built as you read this — all because one adventurous, discriminating buyer needed to squeeze through a lock. □

Nordhavn, 949-496-4848; www.nordhavn.com