TRAWLER TEST: 4 OWNERS TELL ALL

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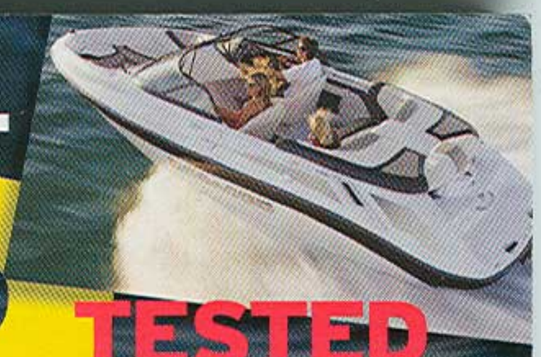

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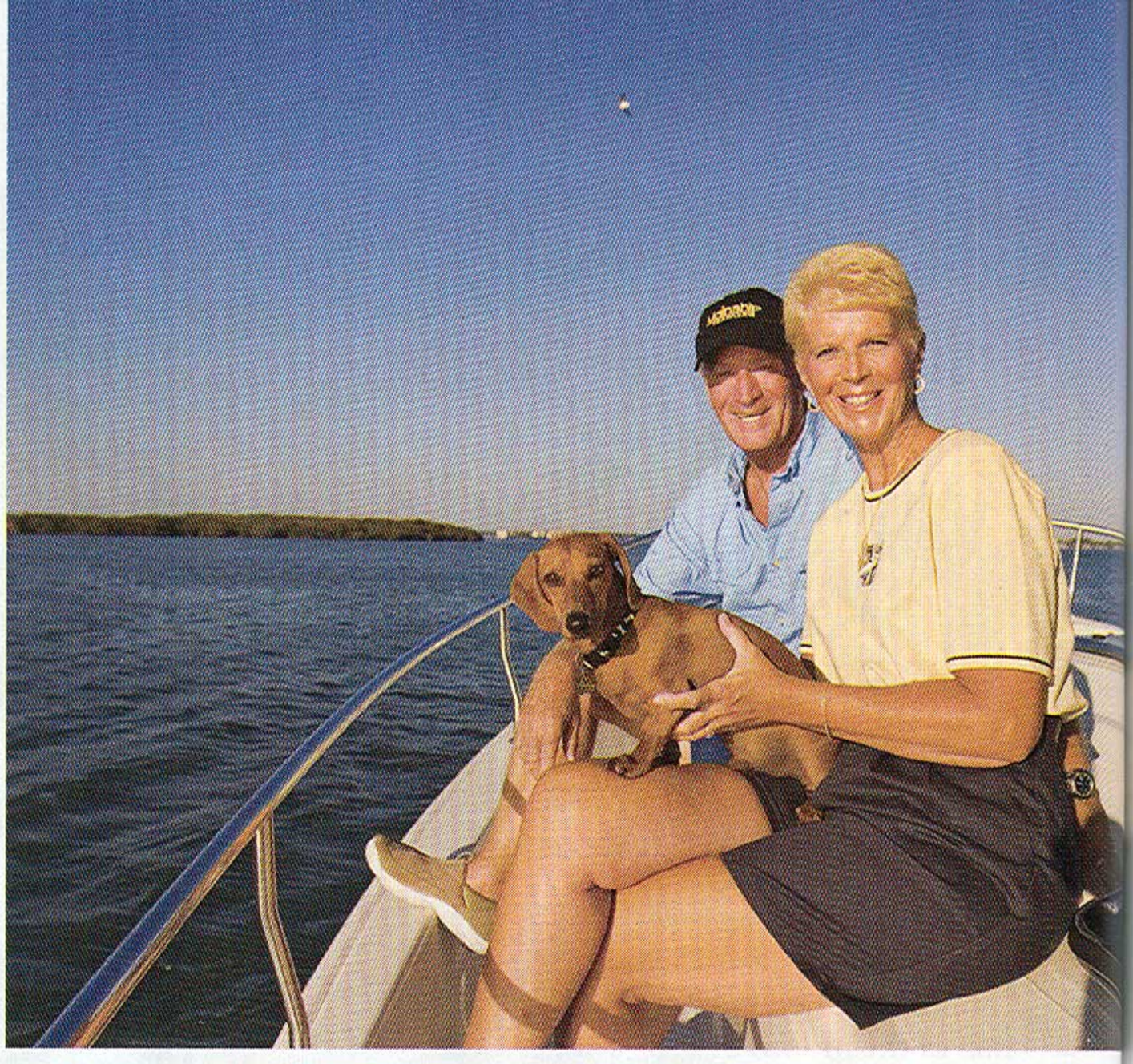
OWNER'S TEST

"WE SWITCHED TO THIS FAST TRAWLER TO CUT DOWN ON PASSAGE TIMES."



PHOTOS THIS PAGE BY BILL SCHILD

ROGER AND PAMELA SULLENDER: MAINSHIP 400

Roger Sullender used to cruise a powerboat on the Chesapeake Bay before he moved to Clearwater, Fla., where he met his wife, Pamela, who was a longtime sailor. He took up sailing and they bought a 49-footer. "We liked cruising for one or two weeks—you had to set aside that kind of time with a sailboat in order to get anywhere," says Roger. "But we switched to a fast trawler, in this case the Mainship 400, because it offered more speed, up to 20 knots, to cut down on passage times. There are days when we'd rather go slower, but having the choice is important for safety."

Before buying the 400, the Sullenders spoke with their friends who owned the same boat, although an older model. They even spent some time aboard. "The Mainship interested us at first because of the speed potential," says Roger. "A lot of the trawlers we looked at couldn't go much faster than our sailboat. The Mainship also met our criteria for size, layout and price. Nothing else came close for us."

The Sullenders were also impressed with the upper deck, which has an outdoor kitchen and extends all the way out over the aft cockpit for more living space. "It doubles the space you have to entertain with," says Roger. To preserve that space, they store their dinghy in davits on the transom.

The Sullenders conducted their sea trial on the Manatee River north of Tampa Bay, and decided that the 400 was the right combination of size, performance and price. "We wanted twin engines and a bowthruster for good handling, and the Mainship proved to be easy to control around the docks and on the water," says Roger, who had no problem getting used to a second diesel. "Learning how to handle a single-engine sailboat after coming out of a powerboat was much more difficult."

Their cruising plans for the future include a trip to Chesapeake Bay this summer to revisit some of Roger's favorite spots. "I used to keep my powerboat on the Sassafras River, in the north end of the Bay, and cruise down to Solomons Island and all along the shoreline in between. But the boat was smaller with less protection. The Mainship's lower helm and air conditioning will make a big difference."

PATRICK, SUSAN AND JONATHAN COONAN: NORDHAVN 43

Until they bought their Nordhavn 43 last fall, these residents of Sausalito, Calif., had never owned a powerboat, much less a trawler. As a family,

SPECIFICATIONS

Mainship 400
LOA: 41'4"
BEAM: 14'2"
DRAFT: 3'8"
FUEL: 300 gals.
ENGINES: (2) 240-hp Yanmar diesels
RANGE: NA
BASE PRICE: $334,560
www.mainship.com

SPECIFICATIONS

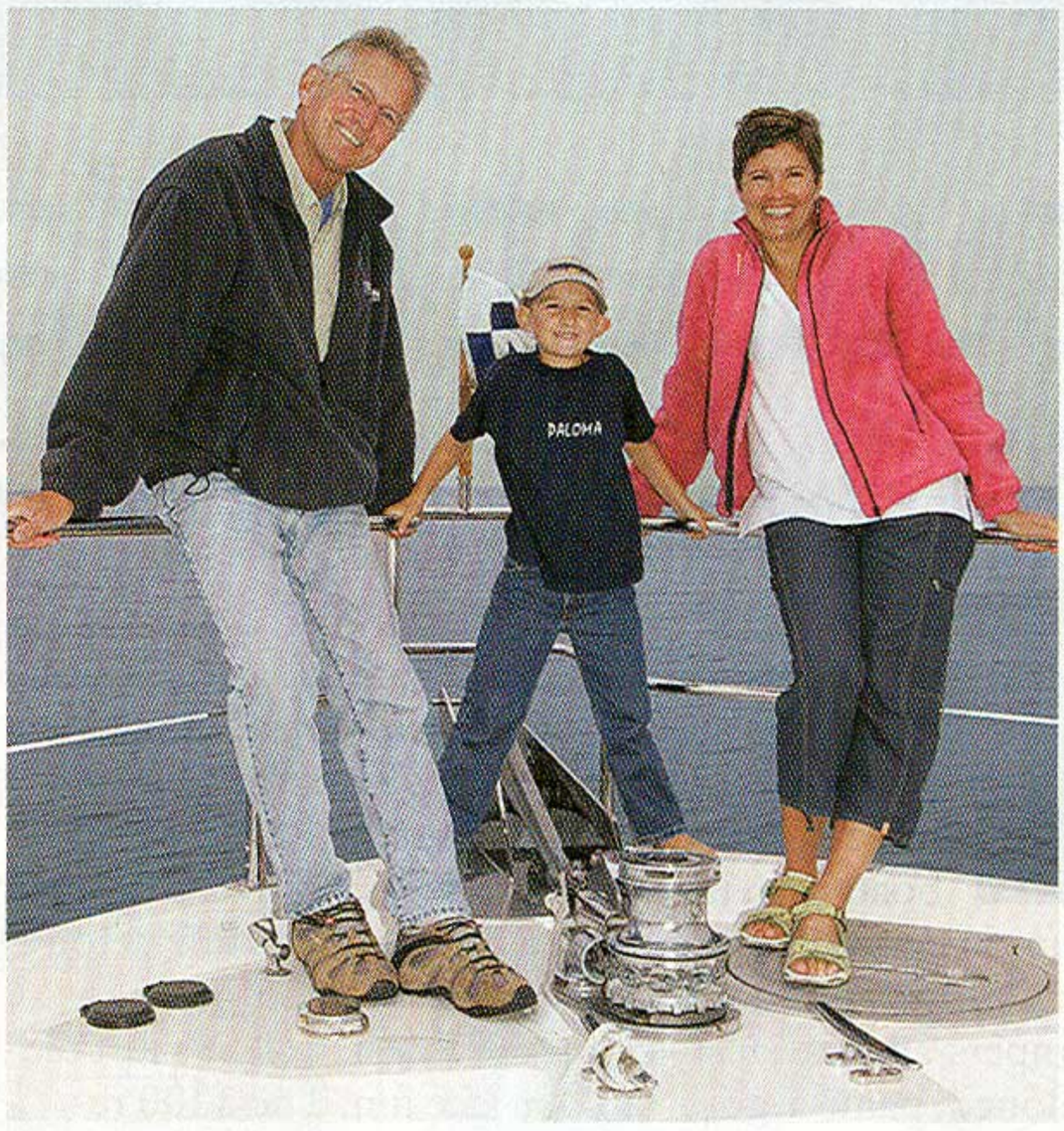
Nordhavn 43
LOA: 43'0"
BEAM: 14'11"
DRAFT: 4'11"
FUEL: 1,200 gals.
ENGINES: (1) 142-hp Lugger L668D diesel
RANGE: 3,360 nm/7 kts.
BASE PRICE: $456,000
www.nordhavn.com

they've chartered sailboats in Tonga, Tahiti, Australia and the Caribbean. And they've always wanted to cruise the West Coast, south to Mexico, and north to the Pacific Northwest.

"We thought at first about cruising the coast in a sailboat," Patrick says, "but because we were planning to travel with our young son, we rethought the sailboat and decided on power." Their priorities were safety, comfort and reliability, in that order. They started their boat search about five years ago, first with semidisplacement hulls, and then displacement boats. They weren't planning on crossing an ocean any time soon, but they liked the idea of having a boat that could do so in the future. They settled on the Nordhavn line.

> "OUR PRIORITIES WERE SAFETY, COMFORT AND RELIABILITY, IN THAT ORDER."

Patrick never sea-trialed the 43 before he placed his order, but felt good about the decision to buy the boat because he'd done so much research and talked to so many owners. "The first sea trial I had an opportunity to do was on hull number eight, on a delivery from Dana Point to San Francisco. It was truly a bash to windward. The boat stood up to the trip much better than some of the crew. I was convinced that the 43 would take us anywhere in comfort and safety."



Service was another important issue for the Coonans when they were shopping for a boat. "We wanted to be associated with a company that could take care of us down the road," says Patrick. "That's certainly been the case with Nordhavn." In April of this year, the Coonans returned from a six-month cruise in Mexico during which they home-schooled Jonathan. Says Patrick: "On that trip, when we needed a part or advice, Nordhavn really stepped up."

To learn more about each of these trawler models read "Motor Boating's" test reports online at www.motorboating.com

PHOTOS THIS PAGE BY TRACY FRANKEL