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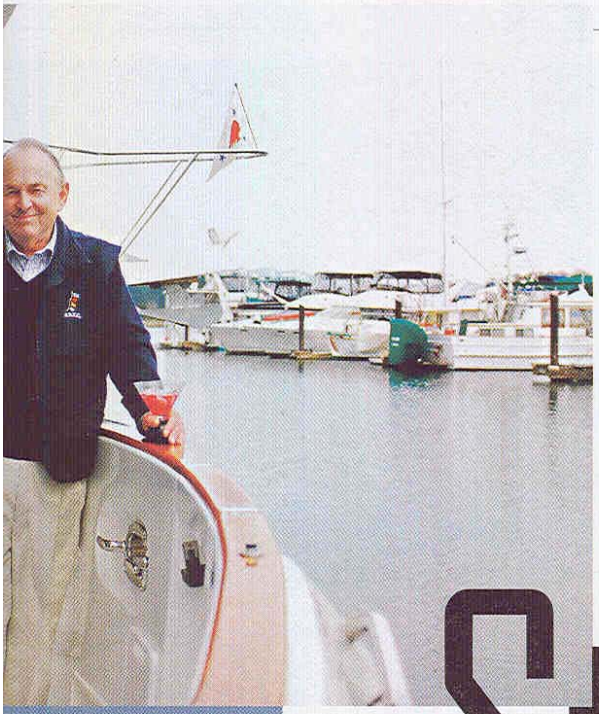
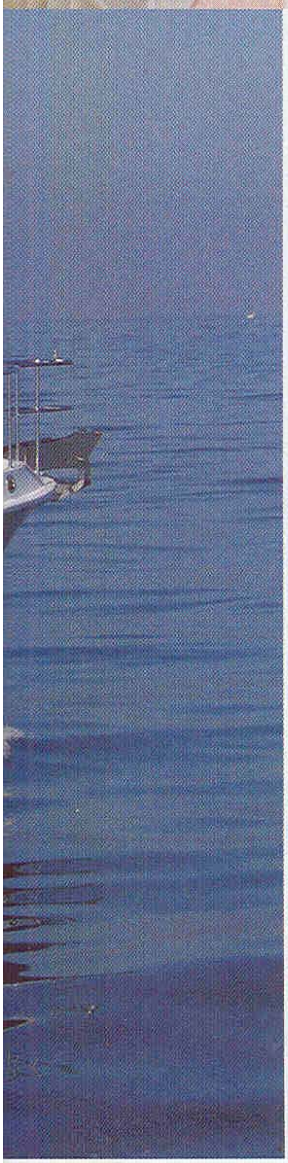
Nordhavn 43

LOA: 43'
Beam: 14'10"
Draft: 4'11"
Disp.: 54,540 lbs.
Fuel: 1,200 gals.
Water: 300 gals.
Power: (1) 165 hp Lugger L1066T
Contact: Pacific Asian Enterprises
nordhavn.com
Price: $645,000





Sea Stories

How do three popular trawler brands stack up as true cruising boats? To find out, we asked owners.

BY JEANNE CRAIG

Earl and Louise Kari: Nordhavn 43

Earl Kari grew up on the coast of Washington, the son and grandson of commercial fishermen. He spent his youth beside his family in the cockpit, and years later he worked aboard similar rigs to put himself through college. "As a child, I knew nothing but full-displacement boats, so I've always admired trawlers," says Earl, 73. "For years, I thought I wanted a wooden design, until I saw a Nordhavn. Structurally, I don't think another production fiberglass builder can make a boat like this."

Earl and his wife, Louise, bought a new Nordhavn 43 in April 2007, about 17 years after they saw the company's first model, a 46. Back then, the Karis weren't shopping for a boat. They were busy with the commercial fishing rig they'd bought after Earl retired from his job at the Anchorage, Alaska, office of the Environmental Protection Agency. Yet that Nordhavn impressed the Karis so much they kept track of the company over the years. They sold their fishing boat when they moved from Alaska to La Conner, Washington, in 2001. They then spent a few years exploring places like the San Juan Islands in a 37-foot Pacific Trawler, but soon it was time to trade up.

A displacement hull was a top priority for this couple. "Having come from the commercial side, that impresses me," says Earl. "Because you can't be too safe." A heavy boat was also key, even if the extra weight came at the expense of speed. (Their boat cruises at 7 knots.) Nordhavn doesn't shy away from heavy materials. Its hulls are solid glass and interiors are designed with surfaces like granite. An

BIG FANS. *Louise and Earl Kari (above) bought a Nordhavn 43 (left) after years of admiring this boat brand.*

"over-designed" trawler was important to Earl. "What you see on the outside is one thing," he says. "I'm more impressed with what's on the inside. Look at things like the steering assembly on the 43, or the wiring. This is the boat of a lifetime because it can last a lifetime."

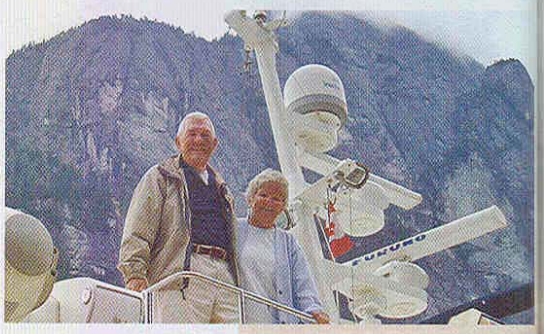
The Karis are happiest with the way their boat, *Serenity*, handles in rough seas. The Nordhavn's mettle was tested the day Earl took delivery. His shakedown cruise was a run north from the Nordhavn offices in Dana Point, California, to La Conner in April. "That trip is not for the faint of heart, not that early in the season," says Larry Gieselman of Nordhavn, who sold the Karis their boat. Yet Earl called Gieselman during that run to tell him he was having the time of his life — in 25-knot winds and breaking seas.

Those conditions turned Earl into a big fan of stabilizers, which he'd never used before; he'd had paravanes on previous boats. "We had 10- to 12-foot swells, and we were on the throttle for 8 to 10 hours at a time, but the boat didn't roll," he says. That bumpy run also taught him the value of the Nordhavn's big pilothouse windows. "I've shrunk to 5 feet 7 inches, yet visibility is excellent," Earl says. "I don't have to look over anything."

Last summer, Earl and Louise cruised to Ketchikan, Alaska. On that trip, they discovered their boat offers exceptional livability (they really like the master stateroom amidships), and boasts heavy-duty ground tackle. "That's important for us when we're cruising up north," says Earl. "We may go to the dock just three times over a two-month period."

Next November, they plan to cruise to La Paz, Mexico, with family, taking two or three passengers at a time. Says Earl, "One of my cruising goals is to give my children and grandchildren the joy of being on the water."

Will and Nancy Brown: Grand Banks 47 Heritage CL



It's a whole different boat as far as performance goes," says Will Brown of his new Grand Banks. He and his wife, Nancy, are no strangers to the brand — the 47 Heritage CL is their fourth model from this builder — but this design can do 21 knots at top end, which is quite a clip compared to the 8-knot speed of their previous boat, a Grand Banks 49. "In most ways, I prefer it," says Will. "The old boat was bigger and heavier, and it had stabilizers. This one doesn't have those. We thought that would be a problem, but the hull is such that it doesn't rock nearly as much."

Grand Banks collaborated with Sparkman & Stephens on the 47. The hull shape is more of a modified-V planing hull than a semi-displacement design, but it retains the near full-length keel that protects the running gear and aids tracking. The Browns' boat is powered by a pair of Caterpillar electronic engines that provide a cruising speed near 18 knots. In the old boat, it would take the Browns six hours to get over to the Great Bahama Bank from their home in Hobe Sound, Florida. Now, they can make the run in three hours. "We want to be able to pick a good day and just get there," says Will.

"It's a different boat as far as performance goes, and I prefer it," says Will Brown of his Grand Banks 47.

The Browns have been cruising to the Bahamas for the past 15 years. They typically spend two months there, much of that time at some of their favorite anchorages in the lower Exumas. They'll go back again this summer, on the new 47, *Growler*, which they took delivery of in November 2007. Although faster than the 49, their 47 is quite a bit smaller, so they'll have to get more creative with the available stowage space and get comfortable with two staterooms rather than three. But the Browns were ready to scale down in size. "We don't cruise with five or six people anymore," Will says. "We'll take one or two now, so this is fine."

One of the features they like most on the 47 is the layout of the staterooms: one is forward and one is aft; they are separated by the salon and galley. It reminded them of the arrangement on the Grand Banks 42 Classic, one of the most popular models the company ever