Cruising in company proves addictive

Couple who got a taste of it in Nordhavn Rally now are recruiting for their own Med Bound 2007

By Jason Fell
STAFF WRITER

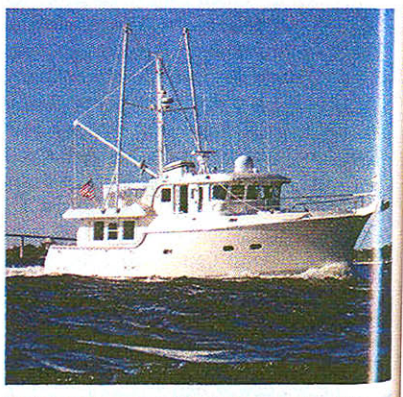
Crossing the Atlantic in the company of fellow cruisers is how Milt Baker wants to spend next summer. That's why he and his wife, Judy, are organizing Med Bound 2007, a rally that will take a fleet of long-range passagemakers from Florida to Gibraltar via Bermuda and the Azores.

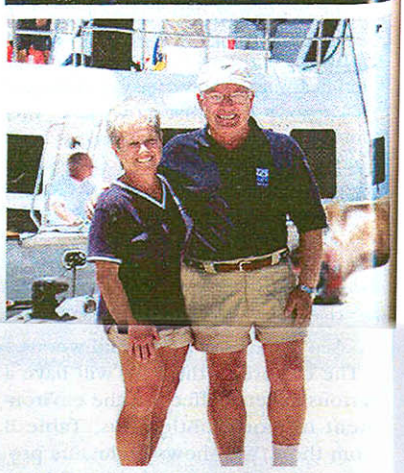
"As a member of the organizing committee for the 2004 Nordhavn Atlantic Rally ... I had a terrific time and learned a lot, and the rally whetted my appetite and Judy's to cross to the Med in our own Nordhavn," says Baker, who is 66, in an e-mail to Soundings.

The Bakers came up with the idea for Med Bound 2007 after purchasing their Nordhavn 47, Bluewater, in September 2005. (The Bakers are the founders of Bluewater Books and Charts in their hometown of Fort Lauderdale, Fla. — hence the boat's name. They sold the business in 2000.) They had always dreamed of cruising the Med and wanted to replicate the experience of cruising in company during the NAR. The cruise will be open to Nordhavn owners as well as owners of other oceangoing cruisers.

"We're really interested in the camaraderie of having other boats along on the trip," Baker says.

The 2004 NAR, organized by Pacific Asian Enterprises — the Dana Point, Calif., builder of Nordhavn trawlers — saw a fleet of 18 passagemakers (mostly Nordhavns) cross the Atlantic from Fort Lauderdale, making stops in Bermuda and the Azores





Organizers Milt and Judy Baker are doing the rally in their Nordhavn 47, Bluewater.

before finishing more than 40 days later in the Straits of Gibraltar. PAE had physicians on board a number of the boats in case of medical emergencies, and mechanics were on lead and chase vessels to provide technical support for en-route repairs.

Unlike the NAR, Med Bound 2007 is not sponsored by PAE, so Nordhavn professionals won't be on hand in case boats require repairs. "Most Nordhavn captains are pretty handy," says Baker. "We learn our yacht systems one breakdown at a time."

Med Bound 2007 is scheduled to launch May 15 from Fort Lauderdale. From there, Bluewater and the other boats will steam northeast to Bermuda, where the cruisers will spend a

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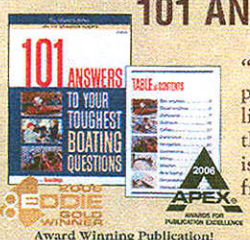

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week. The fleet then will make its way to Horta in the Azores for another layover of about a week. Baker hopes to wrap up the 3,800-mile rally in Gibraltar in late June. The Bakers then plan to spend the next three summers cruising the Mediterranean.

Baker hopes to round up at least 10 boats to participate in Med Bound 2007. "I am hopeful we'll have up to a dozen boats participating, but I'd certainly be pleased with fewer than that," he says. "It looks like we'll have a number of boats making just the leg to Bermuda, then splitting off to New England, so we may have two distinct groups."

"If Milt Baker provides the same superior organizational skills and enthusiasm to Med Bound that he brought to the NAR, it should prove to be a very enjoyable voyage for all who participate," says Jim Leishman, PAE vice president.

For more information call (954) 610-5193 or visit *groups.yahoo.com/group/MedBound2007*. ■

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