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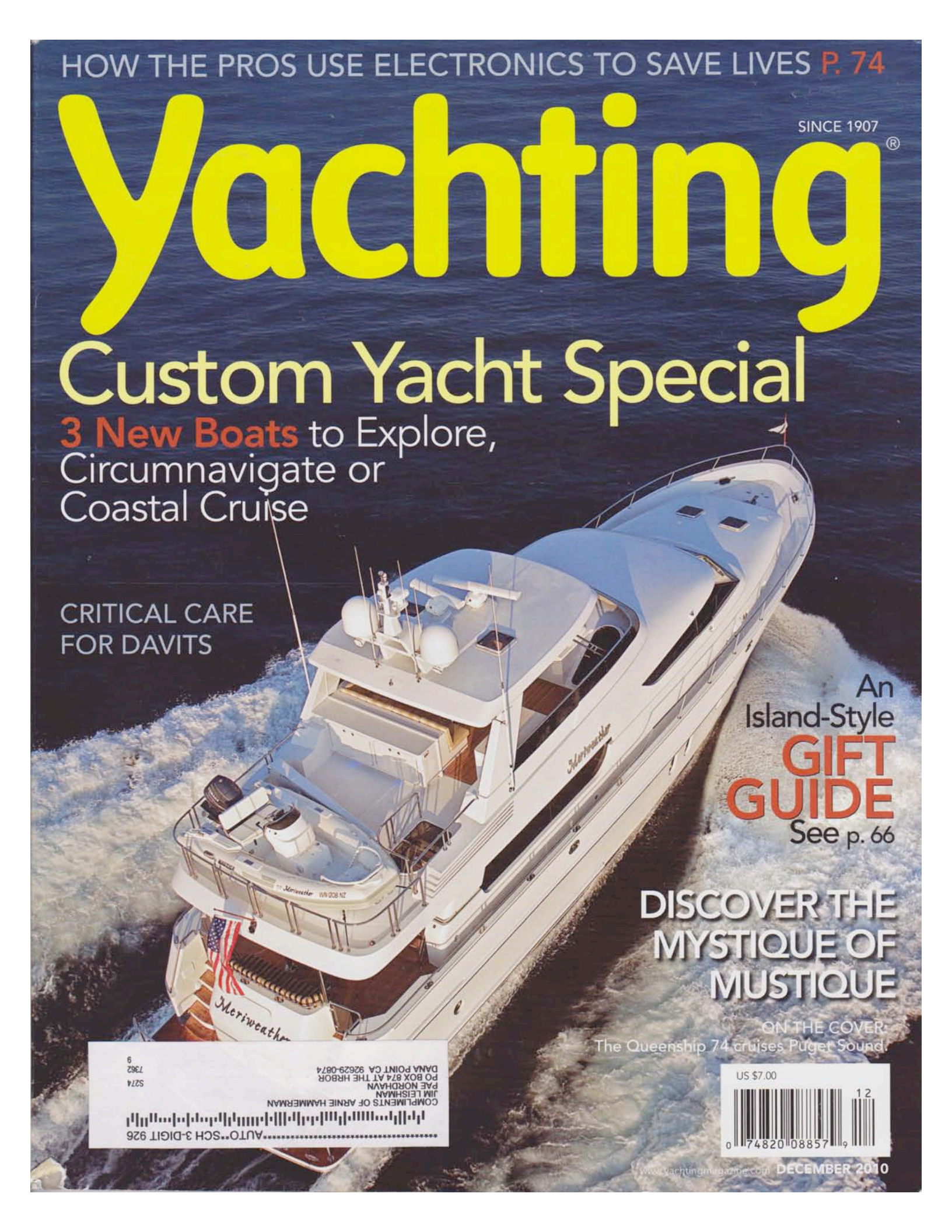

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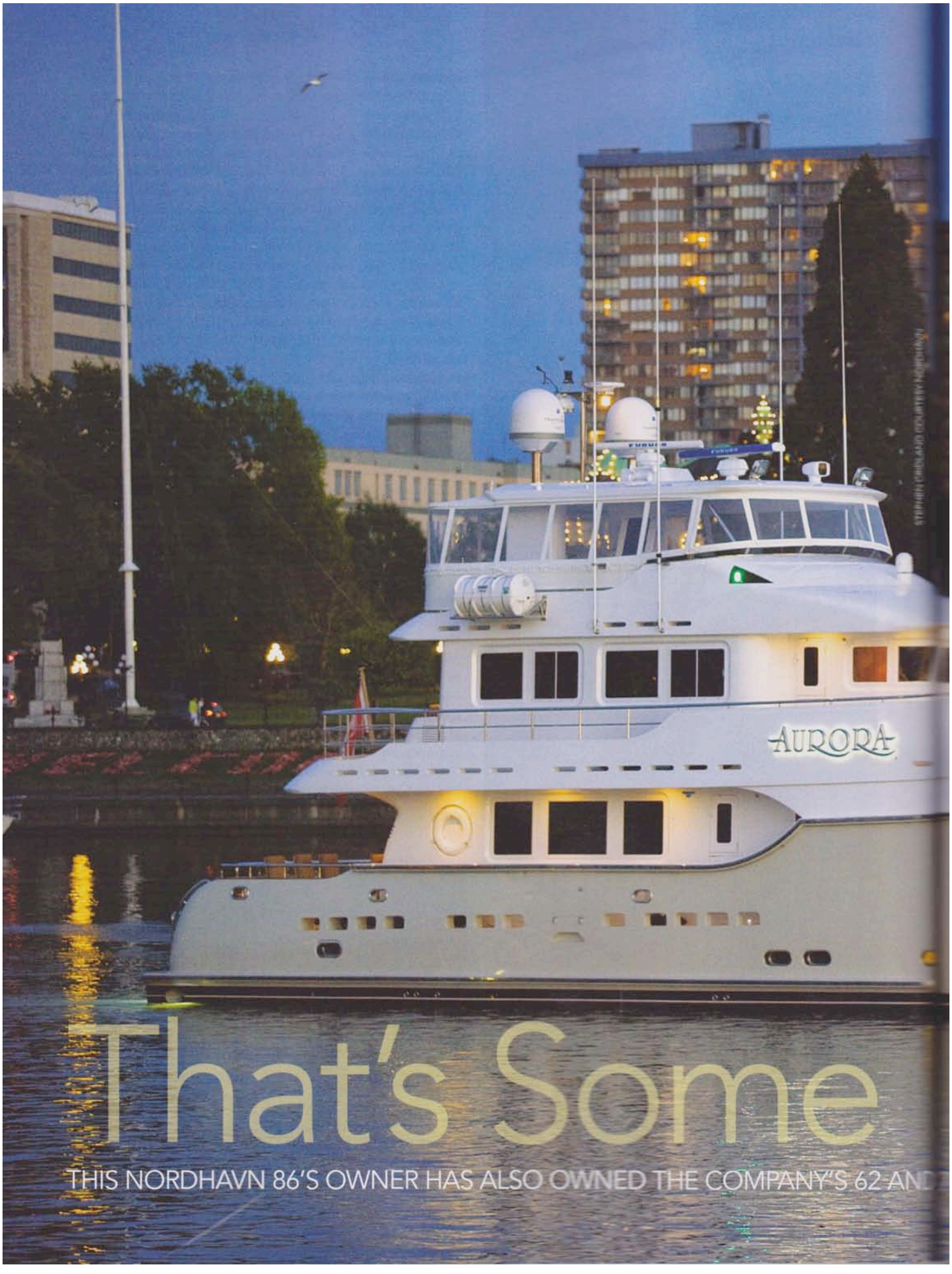
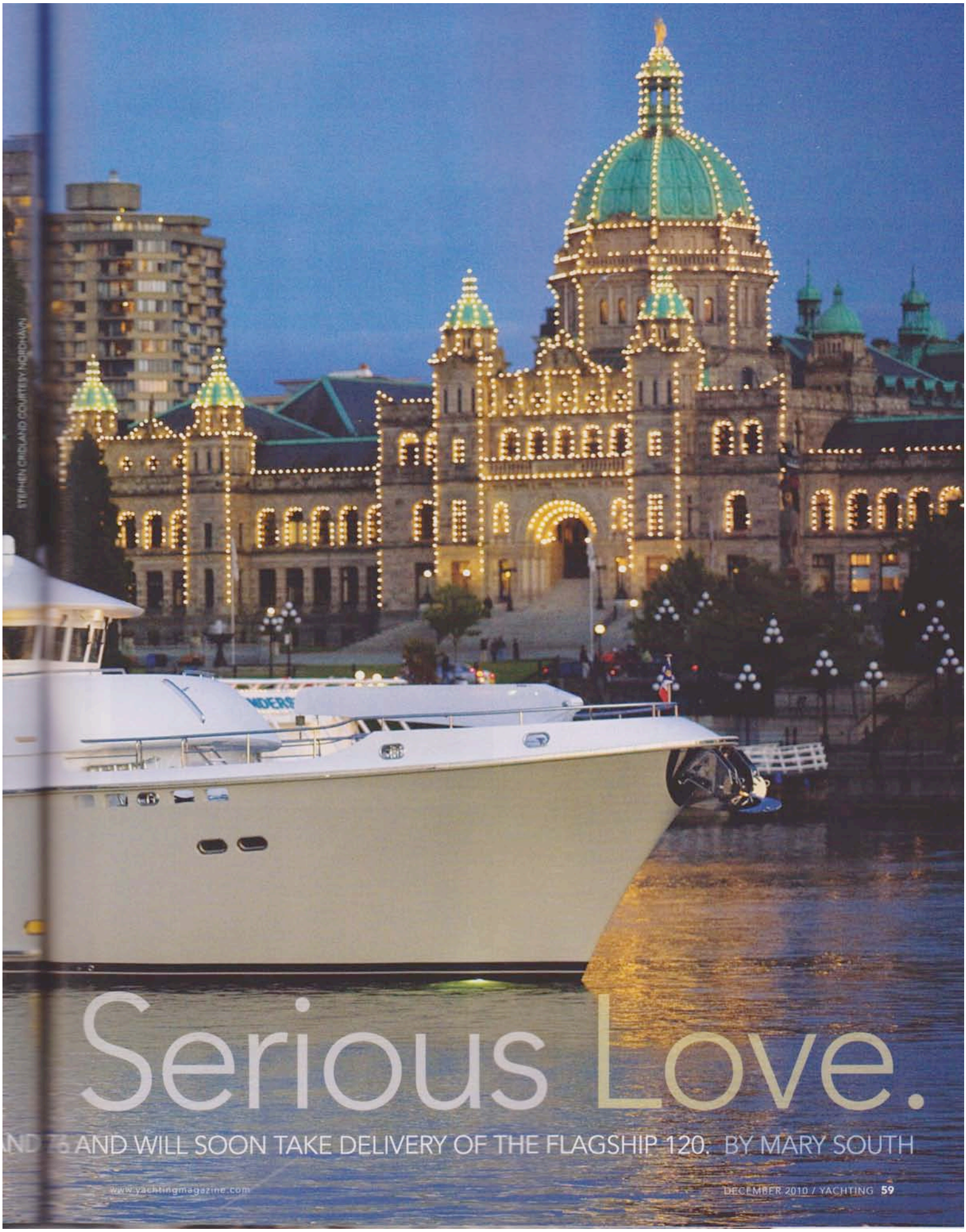


That's Some

THIS NORDHAVN 86'S OWNER HAS ALSO OWNED THE COMPANY'S 62 AND



STEPHEN CRIDLAND COURTESY NORDHAVN

Serious Love.

AND WILL SOON TAKE DELIVERY OF THE FLAGSHIP 120. BY MARY SOUTH

This is a love story, of sorts, and one with a happy ending, but as Shakespeare said, the course of true love never did run smooth.

Bob Conconi was 32 when he got his first boat, a 28-foot lapstrake mahogany runabout with twin gas Chryslers. His second boat was a 42-foot aluminum trawler. But 10 years ago, Conconi's third boat was his first Nordhavn, a 62.

He loved his 62 but eventually wanted to move up to a larger boat. So, Conconi's fourth boat was also a Nordhavn, this time a 76.

The terms of his deal with PAE, Nordhavn's parent company, included delivery of his new 76 from Dana Point, California, to Vancouver, British Columbia, where Conconi lived with his wife and kids. Nordhavn subbed out the delivery of the 76 to a very experienced former employee, and somewhere, somehow, in the middle of Bodega Bay, California — the exact details are fuzzy, or perhaps Conconi is just too nice to dwell on them — his brand spankin' new Nordhavn 76 collided with the bow of a freighter. The damage was extensive.

It gets worse. PAE's insurance didn't cover the collision damage. Conconi rushed to Bodega Bay, and had his new boat brought in for repairs. And that might have been the sad end of the romance. "Sorry. Not our boat, not our problem."

But Nordhavn wanted to make it right. They worked out a deal in which the 76 was made better than new for another buyer and Conconi moved up to a Nordhavn 86.

It's a good story, right?

It's not over yet.

Last year, after the world economic crisis had caused all kinds of deals to collapse, the original agreement on Nordhavn's first 120, which represented a huge step up and a serious investment for the company, fell to pieces. The buyer backed out and Nordhavn was left all dressed up with no place to go.

Enter Bob Conconi.

"We were at the Ft. Lauderdale show with him," said Trever Smith, the 120's project manager, "and trying to it work out." Conconi had expressed some interest in eventually moving up to a 120, and Nordhavn knew he was a creative guy who was always open to a good deal, so they were trying to talk him into hull number one. "But we were afraid to let him out of our sight [at the show], every other big builder was working hard to sign him, too."

However, after considering plenty of other yachts, Conconi went with Nordhavn. Again.

"If they say they'll do something, they do it," Conconi said. "They take the time to find out what you're talking about — they don't try to find loopholes."

That had to be a big factor in why Conconi doesn't have the all-too-common phobia of hull number one. He's worked his way up through ever larger and more complex models with Nordhavn, learning as he went.

"Often things work perfectly," Conconi admitted, "it's just not well documented, but they walk you through it. They'll send someone or explain the process and everything's fine."

Trever Smith commissioned Conconi's first Nordhavn and has been the project manager on every one of his builds.

"I'd say we have a lot of confidence in each other," Smith says

TOP: MARY SOUTH; NEIL RABINOWITZ

CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE, *AURORA*'S ROOMY AND ELEGANT SALON; A RENDERING OF THE 120; THE DINING AREA; AN OCEAN-GOING BRIDGE; BOB CONCONI, RIGHT, AND NORDHAVN'S DON KOHLMANN.

of his — and Nordhavn's — relationship with Conconi. "It's not like a lot of other big companies and their clients." Smith points out, though, that serial boat monogamy is a common trait amongst Nordhavn owners. Right now, there are more than 20 owners who have had at least one previous Nordhavn, and most of them have had several.

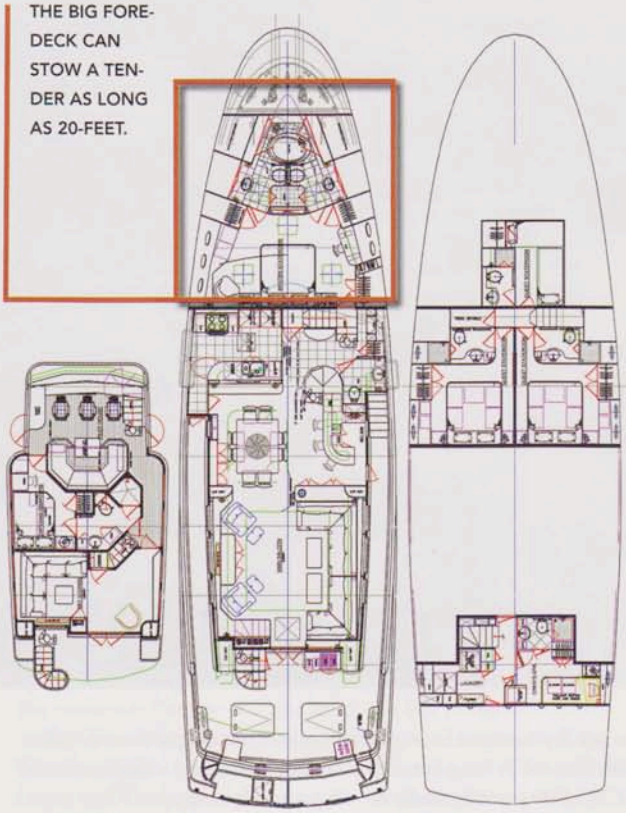
I met Don Kohlmann, Nordhavn's Northwest sales manager, and Bob Conconi just outside of Vancouver on a crisp early spring day. As my eyes adjusted to the dim light of the boathouse, I was struck by how massive the 86 looked in comparison to other Nordhavns. A long foredeck, 24-foot beam and a displacement of 325,000 pounds make the 86 positively shippy.

Aurora glided silently out of the massive boathouse and up into the still waters of Indian Arm. It was a beautiful day and after we'd been underway for an hour, we saw only an occasional house, surrounded by miles of forest and deep, glacial waters. It was the kind of cruising ground that cries out for a ship, a stout, seaworthy vessel that equals its rugged surroundings. This 86 trawler yacht seemed to fit the bill perfectly.

Nordhavn's 86 has a full-beam master and three en suite guest staterooms, as well as a captain's cabin. There are crew quarters aft with head and a laundry/utility room. *Aurora*'s

TOP: NEIL RABINOWITZ;
BOTTOM: STEPHEN CRIDLAND COURTESY NORDHAVN

THE BIG FORE-DECK CAN STOW A TENDER AS LONG AS 20-FEET.



interior is luxurious, with hardwood moldings and raised-panel wall joinery, but both Smith and Conconi enthused about the level of finish they're planning on the 120. This will be Nordhavn's first foray into the over-100-foot world, and the 120 will reflect that with loose furniture, electric activated doors, and LED lighting throughout.

"We went with Dee Robinson and Destry Darr Designs," says Conconi, who indicated that his new 120 will take some interior design cues from *Lady Michelle*, a 161-foot Trinity, also designed by Dee Robinson.

That's not the only influence Trinity brings to bear on this Nordhavn build. Working with Smith on the project has been Andrew Munn Design, whose owner used to work at Trinity.

"The build process has been going very smoothly," notes Smith. The hull is finished, the engines are going in, then the tanks, then the soles. "The feeling will be similar in some ways, but this build is two and a half times the cost, twice the weight and twice the volume of the 86," Smith remarks. "The systems will reflect that. Overhead piping. The engine room isn't molded, it's framed, and it has a diamond-plate sole." Nordhavn is also going "over and above" on sound attenuation, for a whisper-quiet ride.

The 120 is being produced in Nordhavn's Xiamen, China, yard, where they also build their 40, 42, 43, 52, 55, 60, 63, 75, and a total of seven 86 models so far. When the first 120 is finished, in April 2012, she will be ABS certified and make the 6,500 mile voyage from Xiamen to Vancouver on her own bottom. It's not bad as shakeout cruises go.

Nordhavn is ready to go on production of the 120. They've

LOA: 87'2"
LWL: 77'11"
BEAM: 24'0"
DRAFT: 7'4"
DISPL.: 299,436 lb. (half load)
FUEL: 7,000 gal.
WATER: 900 gal.
HOLDING: gray 190 gal., black 185 gal.
CONSTRUCTION: fiberglass
DESIGN: Jeff Leishman

INTERIOR: Dee Robinson
NAVAL ARCHITECTURE: Jeff Leishman
GENERATORS: Onan 40 kW, 27.5 kW
STABILIZERS: Trac 370
BOW THRUSTER: Hydraulic 50-hp
WATERMAKER: Village Marine 2,000 gpd
ENGINES: 2 x 600-hp MTU Series 60 model
SPEED: 12 kts
RANGE: 4,000 nm @ 9 kts
PRICE: $6,750,000

STEPHEN CRIDLAND COURTESY NORDHAVN

THE ELEGANT FULL-BEAM MASTER ALLOWS FOR A DESK TO STARBOARD, PLENTY OF STOWAGE AND EVERYTHING IS FINISHED IN CHERRY JOINERY.

invested over $2 million in tooling alone and expect future builds to take between 28 to 30 months from start to finish and cost $19 million.

"The N120's 28-foot beam is close to those of many yachts in the 150- to 160-foot range," Smith notes, with a similar stateroom layout, albeit smaller in scale. There's a greater emphasis on outdoor living spaces here then there has been on the smaller Nordhavn builds, as well.

Part of the deal Nordhavn reached with Conconi on the 120 is that this will be a turn-key vessel. When Conconi and his wife Diane take delivery, their yacht will be furnished, decorated and equipped right down to linens on the berths and silverware in the drawers.

It will also include some special modifications. The "Christmas tree" supporting the radar and other equipment will be hydraulically operated to fold down, reducing Conconi's bridge clearance from 56 feet to 41 feet, so he can continue to use his boathouse, which is something of a hard-to-find treasure in the Vancouver area.

"I'll be spending most of my time thinking about the electronics outfitting," Conconi notes, who is choosing all of his bridge gear. "But one call will fix it all," with Nordhavn providing service for anything he needs. Conconi thinks it's likely Nordhavn will move to a standardized electronics package on future 120 builds, much the way Westport and some other turn-key builders do.

Conconi jokes that he and Diane have used their 86 for mostly local cruising, "if you call local 2,000 miles of coast from Seattle to Alaska." Their most memorable trip, he says, was a six-week trip around Vancouver Island. The outside of the island is largely deserted, with about seven out of 10 houses empty now that logging and mining have died out there. "It was absolutely beautiful, though. A whole different part of Canada, and we could have easily spent another month there."

The Conconi's new 120 will hold 17,500 gallons of fuel, 2,500 gallons of water and will cruise at 10 knots. Twin MTU Series 2000 M72 engines, with 965 horsepower each at 2,250 rpm, will enable a cruising range of 3,000 nm at reduced speeds.

Looks like the Conconis might have to extend their cruising grounds, but they're certain to go on enjoying the stunning waters of the Canadian southwest, where they have served as the Swiftsure Race Committee boat for the last three years.

As we came back down the evergreen coast of Indian Arm and past the shoreside residential neighborhood of Deep Cove, I asked Conconi what he liked best about his Nordhavn.

"Piloting it," he said without hesitation. "I can put it in neutral and coast into the slip just using the bow thruster. *Aurora* tracks straight and is just a wonderful boat to steer."

That's something Smith had mentioned, too. "Bob and Diane love how strong the Nordhavn is. She's just got a wonderfully heavy, solid feeling when you're at the helm, unlike some other builds that size."

"I like Nordhavn because they're proud, they're committed to what they do," Conconi nodded. And he is clearly committed to Nordhavn, too. I'm tempted to say this romance has a happy ending, but I suspect there's more to come. As long as Nordhavn is making boats, my guess is Conconi will buy them. ❑

Nordhavn, 949-496-4933; www.nordhavn.com