



North Pacific 43

THE CULMINATION OF AN EVER-GROWING DIY PROJECT

BY ROGER McAFEE

WHEN TREVOR BRICE WANTED a family cruising boat for Pacific Northwest waters, he couldn't find one that suited him. His requirements weren't exotic — a stout vessel of about 42 feet that could operate efficiently at displacement speeds and that offered good value.

So he and his father decided to “do it themselves,” but not in the backyard, as many people do. Trevor's research indicated that a number of potential boaters were looking for the same type of vessel, so he decided to go into the boat-building and sales business — and North Pacific Yachts was born. North Pacific owns all of the designs and the tooling for its boats but took advantage of Trevor's father's ongoing commercial dealings in China to have the boats built there.

The first vessel, a 42-foot trawler,

was introduced at the 2004 Vancouver International Boat Show. I examined hull number 1 in detail then, and I jumped at the chance to test hull number 55, the most recent edition of the original trawler. By the time you read this, hull number 61 will have been pulled from the mold and be in the fitting-out process.

The new boat is actually a 43-footer, with the addition of a longer and wider swim step. Other than that, the hull and interior layout are very similar to the original.

The ruggedly styled hull, complete with molded-in plank lines, is hand-laid solid fiberglass with a solid keel. The decks are cored with Nida-core, as are the upper works. The hull stringer system is solid fiberglass. There is no wood on the exterior of the vessel, reducing maintenance time and cost.

North Pacific makes good use of marine-grade structural aluminum in the construction of its vessels. All floor grids, including in the forecastle, are welded square tubing, which adds great stiffness and strength to the structure and provides nonflexing floors, without adding much weight. Marine-grade aluminum is also impervious to saltwater corrosion. The machinery-space floor is aluminum checker plate, and this material is easy to wipe clean and does not soak up fluid spills.

The fiberglass work throughout the vessel is smooth, fair and without print-through or haze. The use of vinylester resin on the outer skin, combined with

An Inside Look

a barrier coat below the waterline and top-quality antifouling paint, reduces wicking. All exterior rails are husky stainless steel. All decks have a molded-in nonskid surface, and it's sharp enough to provide good footing even when it's wet.

Access to the vessel is via a large swim step with a pair of substantial staple-type safety rails at the aft end and a vertical grabrail on each side of the transom. Then it's into the cockpit through a transom door. The swim step is positioned so it is almost at the same height as the dock, making access quick, safe and easy. The cockpit cleats are on the cockpit sides rather than on the sole, where they can be toe-stubbers and interfere with serious fishing.

The cockpit itself is well protected from the drenching rain and the blazing sun by the deckhouse roof, which extends far enough aft to offer almost complete protection for passengers lounging in the cockpit. For fishermen, the swim step aft rails are more than solid enough to accommodate rod holders or down-riggers. The lazarette, reached through a gas-assisted cockpit hatch, is a well-lit, very large space available for storage or as an area for additional equipment.

The foredeck of the 43 is very secure. The combination of relatively high bulwarks and stainless rails makes for an overall rail height of approximately 55 inches. Even at the raised anchor pulpit, right at the bow, rail height is approximately 32 inches. There's plenty of storage forward, with two large lockers forward of the wheelhouse.

The chariot-style command bridge can be reached via a cockpit ladder or steps outside the port and starboard sides of the pilothouse. Visibility from the bridge is excellent, and there's plenty of room for a 10.5-foot dinghy weighing a maximum of 400 pounds. There's a reversible double helm seat and two large dockbox-style lockers with cushions, so they double as seats. Engine, thruster and anchor controls complete the standard upper helm. A hinged radar arch tops off the



TESTER'S OPINION

"If you are looking for a trawler-style boat, the North Pacific 43 should be on the must-see list."

The 43's salon is fairly traditional, with a starboard settee and a port-side dinette and galley. An alternate layout (bottom) eliminates the dinette.



North Pacific 43



SPECIFICATIONS

LOA	43 ft.
Beam	12 ft., 7 in.
Draft	4 ft., 5 in.
Displacement	31,000 lbs.
Fuel	380 gals.
Fresh water	350 gals.
Holding tank	50 gals.
Engine	Cummins MerCruiser QSM 5.9

CONSTRUCTION

The hull is hand-laid solid fiberglass. The deck and superstructure come from a single mold, with fiberglass over structural coring. The keel is solid, and the decks are nonskid fiberglass.

STANDARD EQUIPMENT

Cummins MerCruiser QSM 5.9, 425 hp, engine room lights, blowers, two fiberglass fuel tanks, aluminum checker plate floors, stainless shaft, dripless shaft seal, seacock and strainer, Racor fuel filters, automatic bilge pumps, a manual bilge pump, variable-speed freshwater pump, 11-gal. domestic hot-water heater, diesel forced-air heater, 5 kw Northern Lights generator w/sound shield and muffler, 3,000-watt inverter/battery charger, 12v heavy-duty no-maintenance batteries, Blue Sea master control panels, numbered and color-coded electrical system, tinned wiring throughout, 50-amp shore-power connection, teak flooring throughout, aluminum floor grid, hand-rubbed teak paneling and cabinetry, louvered cabinet doors, curtains on all windows, screens on all sliding windows, teak cabinet above stove, teak drawers and cabinets, Corian (or equivalent) countertops, stove w/oven, double stainless sink, Novakool 9-cubic-foot refrigerator and more.

OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT

Many optional layouts available. See builder/dealer for more.

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command bridge and, when it is down, allows for safe and easy service of the radar, lights and anything else fixed to the arch.

INSIDE SCOOP

The salon, entered from the cockpit, is fairly traditional for this type of vessel — a settee along the starboard side with a dinette and a galley to port. There are no hanging lockers or cupboards that chop up the space. This “open” plan, when combined with nine large windows, makes for a bright and cheery salon, even on rainy days. Visibility is excellent. The openness also means that the cook is part of the gang, even while on galley duty. There’s plenty of storage under the settee, which converts to a bed, and headroom throughout the salon is 6 feet, 5 inches.

The galley itself is well equipped for a vessel of this size, and there is plenty of drawer and cabinet storage. A round, deep, stainless double sink indicates that the builders are boaters, and they understand that such an arrangement makes galley work easier and safer, particularly in a seaway. The galley countertops have a molded-in lip that confines spills and makes cleanup easier. Stylish, home-style faucets, with a pullout unit, add to the utility of the galley without making it look utilitarian.

The two staterooms and the head and shower are located down and forward. The master, in the bow, features a queen-size island bed with storage underneath and individual reading lights. There’s plenty of drawer storage and two hanging lockers. Seven feet of headroom gives the master an open, airy feeling.

The guest stateroom, to port, is available with a single or double bed or two bunks. It can also be finished as an office. Regardless of the configuration, there’s plenty of drawer and hanging-locker space.

The head, with a separate fiberglass shower stall with a molded-in seat, is located to starboard, across from the guest stateroom.

PACIFIC PERFORMANCE

With Trevor Brice, North Pacific’s

president, at the helm, we fired up the computer-controlled Cummins MerCruiser 5.9 diesel and backed easily into the Fraser River. The engine, although starting cold, flashed up instantly and idled smoothly without a hint of smoke. Idle speed was 600 rpm, and the noise level was just more than 70 decibels, even with all of the doors wide open.

The six-cylinder, 359-cubic-inch (5.9L), 1,350-pound, common-rail engine was tuned to put out 425 hp at 3000 rpm and performed well throughout its entire power range.

At idle, we moved along at about 2.6 knots and burned 0.6 gph. At 1000 rpm, we made 5.2 knots and burned 1.2 gph. We burned 2.7 gph at 1500 rpm and made 7.2 knots, and our noisemeter showed 66 decibels. When we cranked it up to 2000 rpm, the noise level went up to 71 decibels, we burned 6.2 gph and made 9.1 knots. At 2500 rpm, we burned 13.6 gph and made 10.7 knots. Wide-open throttle gave us 14 knots, and we burned 22.4 gph. Speeds were measured on an independent GPS, and fuel consumption came from the engine’s onboard computer.

Since we did this test on a large river, we ran both with the current and, immediately thereafter, against the same current. We then averaged the run at each engine speed.

The vessel responded smartly to the helm at all speeds and easily handled the various tugboat wakes that rolled to the vessel.

So how does the new 43 compare to the original? There is little difference, and that’s a good thing. The spaces are about the same, and the woods used on the interior are the same, but the interior finish on the new vessel is a bit finer. They look similar on the outside, with the exterior finish being the same quality on both. The quality of the original 42s is so good that many of the older vessels coming onto the used market are able to command a higher price than the original buyer paid. That’s the measure of a good vessel, properly priced.

If you are looking for a trawler-style boat, the North Pacific 43 should be on the must-see list. 🍷