

NORTH PACIFIC 45

A high-quality, fuel-efficient, go-anywhere trawler at an excellent price point

BY PETER A. ROBSON



Generally, we prefer not to sea trial yachts when the owners are aboard. Owners are likely to object to us running (perhaps rightly) their precious possession at full throttle, making abrupt manoeuvres and so on. This limits our ability to put the vessel through its paces. However, despite our trepidation, when we reviewed Patti and Andrew Atkins' new North Pacific 45, they were perfectly willing to let us do as we pleased. They'd just returned from a three-month voyage to Glacier Bay, Alaska, putting 4,000 miles under their keel and 500 hours on the diesel, so nothing we could do would be worse than what they'd already experienced.

The Atkins are no strangers to boating. They spent 6.5 years circumnavigating the globe on a sailboat, and owned and operated a full-service boatyard and marina in Ontario. Their previous yacht was a North Pacific 43—the predecessor to the 45—so for them to buy a North Pacific 45 over all the other offerings on the market, meant it had to be pretty outstanding.

DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION The North Pacific 45 replaces the 43, which was the first in the company's China-built trawler line—as

well as their most successful model to date, with 63 built. The new 45 incorporates many of the attributes that made the 43 so popular—a single diesel engine, a full keel to help with tracking and to protect the prop, excellent fuel economy, a full beam saloon, two staterooms, a raised pilothouse with good visibility, a covered aft deck, a low maintenance exterior and rich teak woodwork throughout.

The primary difference in the new 45 is a hull design

with a more plumb bow that adds three feet to the waterline while only adding two inches more length overall (45 feet 10 inches). At the same time, 13 inches were added to the beam, which when combined with the additional space afforded by the plumb bow adds a significant amount of extra room to the interior. Other design changes include adding more lift to the after end of the hull to allow for higher top speeds (which is also aided by the longer waterline length) and moving the spray chine higher up the hull to reduce wave slap noise in the staterooms. Another design change was changing the windshield so that it has a reverse rake, which not only improves the overall look but helps keep rain off the windscreen. It is also said to keep the pilothouse cooler on

hot sunny days and to reduce instrument glare at night. Many of these changes came as a result of input from owners of the North Pacific 43, and the company certainly paid attention.

The entire hull is solid hand-laid fibreglass with a superstructure that incorporates Nida (honeycomb) coring and marine plywood where additional strength is required. Gear such as cleats and stanchions use aluminum backing plates. The decks are built on an aluminum grid that eliminates flex and won't ever sag or squeak. Overall, the construction materials and processes are very well thought out.

ON DECK Access is via a transom door from the roomy, integrated swim platform, where folding staple rails provide added

security. There's also a handy starboard side bulwarks gate for even easier boarding. The swim platform and cockpit have Flexiteek synthetic flooring that has the look of teak, but doesn't require any maintenance and doesn't show footprints like standard white non-skid fibreglass. The covered cockpit has a custom folding table and folding chairs, which offer more flexibility than fixed seating. The standard arrangement has a ladder leading up to the flybridge.

All windows are framed by polished stainless steel instead of the usual, less expensive aluminum, which is more prone to corrosion (and doesn't look as good).

The full-width saloon means there are no side decks. Instead, access forward is via port or starboard sliding doors in the pilot-

house. There are gates in the stanchions for direct dock access from forward. Port and starboard stairways aft of the pilothouse doors lead up to the flybridge. The bow area features sturdy handrails, anchor windlass, chain and fender lockers and a comfy molded-in bench seat with backrest.

A fixed hardtop comes standard and certainly looks better than a canvas Bimini. In addition to the standard duplicate controls and instruments, the flybridge has bench seating aft of the helm. On the test boat, the owners had a massive folding table built to fill the space between the bench seats with enough room for 10 or so family and friends. The aft portion of the flybridge was home to a 10-foot, six-inch-long RIB, with a Nick Jackson electric davit. ▶

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1. The saloon has traditional teak and holly flooring, and book-matched teak cabinets. 2. The pilot-house features an uncluttered centre helm console. 3. The master suite in the bow is significantly larger than the one in the North Pacific 43. 4. Access to the engine and assorted gear is excellent.



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INTERIOR The saloon is entered via a heavy sliding door from the cockpit—a nice improvement over the hinged door of the 43. There's an impressive amount of headroom (six feet, 11 inches) in the saloon, and another foot of headroom in the forward portion of the saloon. Traditional teak and holly flooring and book-matched teak cabinets (many with louvered doors) and wall treatments give the interior a warm feel. A closer look at the woodwork shows flawless fit and finish that goes the extra mile by using bent lamination teak fiddles around the countertops and cabinets instead of standard mitre joints. Adding to the warm feel is rope lighting tucked into the valances and near the cabin soles.

A dinette to port makes for a cozy place to hang out and doubles as a bed. Two plush electric recliners to starboard offer the ultimate in lounging comfort. The U-shaped galley features a full-size refrigerator/freezer, propane stove and oven, overhead vent, double sinks and optional granite countertops. There's a huge window that brings in plenty of light and gives the chef a chance to keep an eye on things outside while cooking. As with the rest of the 45, there's also ample storage in the galley.

At the forward end of the saloon, there is one stairway up to the pilothouse and one down to the accommodation area. This is a unique departure from the traditional pilothouse trawler where one has to climb up stairs into the pilothouse and climb down stairs at the forward end to the accommodation area.

The pilothouse features an uncluttered centre helm console with twin 12-inch Garmin GPS Map 7612 touch screen panels

(with Bluetooth capability to an iPad), single lever throttle/shifter and the usual switches and gauges. Visibility from the single helm seat is very good and one feature not often associated with pilothouse trawlers is that it's possible to see the stern of the boat by simply glancing back through the companionway opening. Normally visibility aft is poor. To either

side of the helm are flat countertops, perfect for laying out paper charts. The AC and DC switching panels are tucked under the console and easily accessible. The two sliding pilothouse doors provide good access forward. Aft of the helm is a pilot berth that does double duty as a settee and a pull-out berth. A small, hinged/folding table can be swung out of

the way when not needed.

Belowdecks, the companionway has plenty of room for a single or stacked washer and dryer and hatches in the sole can be raised to provide generous storage for gear/food totes. The bow master is significantly larger than in the North Pacific 43, thanks to the plumb bow and added beam. The queen berth ▶



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On Board Power



is almost walkaround with good headroom at the head of the berth and nicely-crafted bookshelves and overhead cabinets (with smoked glass) to either side. There are hanging lockers to port and starboard, though by eliminating some of the cabinet/drawer space to port, that area can be configured as a second head with a toilet and sink.

The guest stateroom is larger than most and has criss-crossed bunk beds, with a larger (about 48 inches wide) bottom bunk, ample drawers and a large hanging locker. Across the companionway is the head, with large separate shower stall, granite countertops, rich teak cabinetry (lots of it) and Tecma quiet flush toilet.

ENGINE AND SYSTEMS

Power is a single 250-horsepower Cummins QSB 6.7-litre diesel driving a four-blade prop via a straight shaft. The diesel is fitted with a hefty 160-amp alternator. A 6 kW Northern Lights generator provides auxiliary power. Espar forced air heating is standard. Having

only a single engine means there's plenty more room in the engine compartment. Access to the engine and assorted gear is excellent with the primary access under the companionway stairs. All wiring is tinned copper, colour-coded and numbered, and neatly laid out. Wiring chases can all be accessed through either ceiling panels attached with Velcro or behind wood panels with screw caps. The 12-volt electrical system incorporates seven 220-amp 8D AGM batteries. There are three for the house bank, two thruster/windlass batteries, and one each for main engine and generator starting. The test boat was fitted with a low-maintenance Spectra watermaker.

UNDERWAY Proportional Side-Power bow and stern thrusters make leaving (or returning) to the dock a snap, regardless of wind and/or current. We were testing the boat out of Canoe Cove Marina in Sidney on Vancouver Island. It was a sunny day and the traffic was busy with boaters taking

advantage of the beautiful summer weather. The only downside was it was calm, which always makes it tough to really put a yacht

through its paces. However, with the owners having just returned from Alaska and reporting having gone through gunwale-to-gunwale seas without incident, one can feel confident there are no performance issues. We found the 250-horsepower Cummins was well-suited to the 45 with good acceleration (for a trawler) with no cavitation, a nice tight turning radius of less than two boat lengths, no slipping in hard turns, responsive steering and very good straight-line tracking. Our top speed was just under 13 knots (we were light on fuel and water). The owners found that a comfortable slow cruise was at about 1,800 rpm (8.6 knots), while a fast cruise was at about 2,200 rpm (10.4 knots). At a slow cruise, fuel economy was excellent, at 2.6 miles per gallon (3.3 gallons per hour). At a fast cruise, fuel economy decreased but was still a very reasonable 1.2 miles per gallon.

THE SPECS

LOA

13.92 m
45' 8"

Beam

4.17 m
13' 8"

Draft

1.37 m
4' 6"

Disp

15,422 kg
34,000 lbs

Fuel

1,514 L
400 USG

Water

1,325 L
350 USG

Holding

189 L
50 USG

Power

250 hp Cummins QSB
6.7 L diesel

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CONCLUDING REMARKS

We've always been impressed by the North Pacific brand and the new 45 is no exception. It is extremely well-suited as a long distance cruiser or live-aboard and boasts an amazing amount of storage. The fit and finish is excellent and all the amenities and systems have been well thought out for comfort and efficiency. The fuel-sipping single engine offers slow cruise fuel-efficiency higher than any trawler we've tested. The owner's three-month shakedown trip to Alaska and back—without having any significant issues—is further testament to the overall package and the 45's seakeeping qualities. Price for the North Pacific 45, very well equipped with pretty well everything needed to go cruising, except for a dinghy, is US\$675,000. 