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THE NEW NORTH PACIFIC 45 PROVIDES THE FULL PACKAGE

BY PETER A. ROBSON

Neil Rabinowitz

It's not often that I get to sea trial a new yacht that has already been put through its paces, but that was certainly the case with the North Pacific 45 I tested earlier this year. It had just returned from a three-month shakedown cruise from Seattle, Washington, to Glacier Bay, Alaska. During that time, owners Patti and Andrew Atkins had racked up 4,000 miles and 500 hours on their single diesel—without any significant issues.

To be perfectly honest, I don't usually like to sea trial yachts when the owners are aboard. Owners are likely to object (perhaps rightly) to a reviewer running their precious possession at full throttle, making abrupt maneuvers, and so on. However, in this case, who better to come along than the people with the most experience aboard this particular yacht?

The Atkins are no strangers to boating. They spent nearly seven years circumnavigating the globe on a sailboat and owned and operated a full-service boatyard and marina in Ontario, Canada. Their previous yacht was a North Pacific 43, so for them to choose a North Pacific 45 after researching all the other offerings on the market meant that the boat checked all the boxes.

DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

In 2004, North Pacific Yachts was founded by Trevor Brice in Surrey, British Columbia. To date the company has produced more than 120 trawler-style yachts that range from 38 to 59 feet. The success of North Pacific is largely due to their practical design, fuel-efficient displacement hulls, classic teak interiors, high-quality construction, fine finishing, and competitive price point.

The North Pacific 45 replaces the NP43, which was the first—and most successful—of the company's offerings, with 63 built to date. The NP45 incorporates many of the attributes that made

the NP43 so popular: a single diesel, a full keel, fuel economy, a full-beam saloon, two staterooms, a raised pilothouse, a covered aft deck, and a low-maintenance exterior.

The primary design differences between the NP45 and the NP43 include a more-or-less plumb bow on the NP45 that adds three feet to the waterline. Additional buoyancy was built into the after end of the hull by integrating the swim platform into the hull mold, which allows for higher top speeds (aided by the longer waterline). The spray chine was moved higher up the hull to reduce that annoying wave slap. The beam was increased by 13 inches, which, combined with the additional space afforded by the plumb bow, adds a significant amount of extra volume to the interior. The windshield of the new model has a slight reverse rake, which not only improves the overall look (in my opinion), but also helps keep the rain off. That rake also helps keep things cooler in the pilothouse on those hot sunny days and reduces instrument glare at night.

The entire hull is solid, hand-laid fiberglass with outer layers of vinyl ester resin to prevent osmosis (pretty standard these days). The superstructure incorporates Nida-Core (honeycomb) coring and resin-saturated marine plywood where additional reinforcement is required. Aluminum backing plates are used for cleats and stanchions. The decks and interior floors are built on a sturdy aluminum grid to eliminate flex.

ON DECK

The NP45 can be boarded via the swim platform (with staple rails for safety) or via a starboard-side bulwark gate. The covered cockpit is relatively small, but it has room for a folding table and folding chairs, which offer more flexibility than fixed seating. A

ladder leads up to the flybridge.

The full-width saloon means there are no side decks. Instead, port or starboard sliding doors in the pilothouse allow for access forward. Other than the anchoring gear, the main feature of the bow area is a comfy molded bench seat with backrest. Access to the flybridge is via the cockpit or exterior stairways to port and starboard aft of the pilothouse.

A fixed hardtop is standard and certainly looks better than a canvas bimini. All windows are framed in polished stainless steel, which again looks much nicer than the less-expensive alternative (aluminum, in this case). In addition to the standard duplicate helm controls and instruments, the owners of the test boat had customized the flybridge with a massive folding-leaf table built to fit between the facing settees aft of the helm where there's enough room for 10 or more guests. This table was clearly designed to be the center of action when the boat is at rest. The back portion of the flybridge held storage for a 10-foot RIB and a Nick Jackson electric davit.

INTERIOR

The saloon is entered via a heavy sliding door from the cockpit—a nice improvement over the hinged door on the NP43. There's an impressive amount of headroom (6' 11") in the saloon. Traditional teak and holly flooring and book-matched teak cabinets (many with louvered doors) and wall treatments give the entire interior a warm, cozy feel. A closer look at the woodwork shows a pretty well flawless fit and finish that goes the extra mile by incorporating bent and laminated teak fiddles and cabinet corners, instead of standard miter joints. Just above the cabin sole, rope lighting hidden behind valances adds to the warmth.

A dinette to port doubles as a bed, and the test boat was fitted with two plush electric recliners to starboard for the ultimate in lounging comfort. The U-shaped galley features a full-size refrigerator/freezer, propane stove and oven, overhead vent, double sinks, and granite countertops. As with the rest of the NP45, there's ample storage in the galley for extended cruising.

At the forward end of the saloon is a stairway up to the pilothouse and another that leads down to the accommodation area. The pilothouse is fronted by an uncluttered center helm console with twin 12-inch Garmin touchscreens (which can be connected via Bluetooth to an iPad) and a single lever throttle/shifter, in addition to the usual switches and gauges. Visibility from the single helm seat is very good. Unlike on most pilothouse trawlers, here it's possible to see the stern of the boat by simply glancing back through the companionway opening. The two sliding pilothouse doors provide access forward and allow for



LENGTH: 45' 8"
BEAM: 13' 8"
DRAFT: 4' 6"
DISP: 34,000 lb.
FUEL: 400 usg
WATER: 350 usg
HOLDING: 50 usg
POWER: 250 hp
 Cummins QSB 6.7L

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While the full-beam saloon eliminates side decks, it does allow for significantly more interior room.



Jonathan Cooper

Neil Rabinowitz

good visibility when docking.

On either side of the helm are flat countertops, perfect for laying out paper charts. The AC and DC switching panels tucked under the console are easily accessible. Aft of the helm is a pilot berth that does double duty as a settee. A small hinged table swings out of the way when not needed.

The companionway to the accommodation spaces has plenty of room for a single or stacked washer and dryer. Hatches in the sole provide generous storage for gear or food totes. The bow master is significantly larger than on the NP43, thanks to the plumb bow and added beam. The queen berth is lined in teak with plenty of storage in overhead cabinets (with smoked glass), nicely crafted bookshelves, and hanging lockers to port and starboard. For those wanting a second head, some of the cabinet/drawer space to port can be configured with a toilet and sink.

The guest stateroom is larger than most, with bunk beds. The upper berth folds up out of the way when not needed and the bottom bunk is wider. As elsewhere, there are 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 a Tecma quiet-flush toilet.

ENGINE AND SYSTEMS

Access to the engine (and assorted gear and systems) is excellent. The primary access is under the companionway stairs, and the



Clockwise: The guest cabin can be configured with different berth layouts, with an option for conversion to an office; The pilothouse layout is clean and simple. Note the reverse rake windows; The abundance of teak adds a glowing warmth to the master stateroom.

single engine means there's plenty of room to move around the engine compartment. All wiring is tinned copper and neatly laid out with color-coded and numbered wires. Wiring chases can all be accessed through either ceiling panels attached with velcro or behind wood panels with screw caps. Power is a single 250-horsepower Cummins QSB 6.7L diesel driving a four-blade prop via a straight shaft. A hefty 160-amp alternator provides plenty of charging power. 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 starting for the 6kW Northern Lights generator. Espar forced-air heating is standard and much more practical than reverse cycle air, which draws a huge amount of power. The test boat was fitted with a low-maintenance Spectra watermaker.

UNDERWAY

Proportional Side-Power bow and stern thrusters make it a snap to maneuver in tight quarters. We were testing the boat out of Canoe Cove Marina in Sidney on Vancouver Island. It was a sunny day and the waters were busy with boaters taking advantage of the beautiful summer weather. The only downside was that it was calm, which makes it tough to do a thorough test. 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 NP45, providing good acceleration (for a trawler) with no cavitation, a 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 1800 rpm (8.6 knots), while a fast cruise was at about 2200 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 (8.7 gallons per hour).

CONCLUDING REMARKS

I've always been impressed by the North Pacific brand and the NP45 is no exception. It is extremely well suited to both long-distance cruising and living aboard as it boasts a massive 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 I've tested. The owners' three-month shakedown trip to Alaska and back—with no significant issues—is further testament to the quality of the overall package and to the NP45's seakeeping qualities. The North Pacific 45 includes pretty much everything needed to go cruising, except a dinghy. ■