

Trevor Brice has made quite a name for himself as one of the youngest and most promising yacht builders on the West Coast. Since founding his company, North Pacific Yachts, in 2004, the 25-year-old has already developed an impressive yacht sales record with his first model, the 42 North Pacific Pilothouse.

YACHTING'S WUNDERKIND

What began as family pastime has developed into a design come true for young entrepreneur Trevor Brice

BY CAROL-ANN GIRODAY
WITH PACIFIC YACHTING STAFF

With the help of his father, Brice designed, built and marketed the first yacht in early 2004. A couple of months later, he made his first sale. By the end of the year, he'd sold hull #8, and by the end of 2005, hull #26. The successful entrepreneur currently has orders up to hull #36.

"People I meet have typically travelled several hours, and often spent several thousands of dollars to meet with me and view the boats," says Brice. "The part I get the biggest kick out of is when they actually see me for the first time. They usually have a surprised look on their faces, and it can take about 15 minutes for them to get over the shock of meeting me before they realize I know what I'm talking about."

Yet of the 25 new owners who attended the first annual rendezvous for North Pacific in 2006, all said they were impressed with Brice's trustworthiness and integrity. "He's a man of his word," said one enthusiastic boat owner. And all agreed that he consistently provides a



Brice may look young, but at the age of 25, he's already become a very successful boatbuilder.



A passion of Trevor's is fishing. Here, he and his dad, John, pose with a trophy halibut.

missioning, with the exception of one delivered to Boston. The other six are for customers in Ontario, California, Georgia, Michigan, Texas and Virginia.

Brice's success is based in part on his ability to wear several hats at once. As the designer, builder and broker, he can leave the "middle man" costs out of the price tag, making his yachts considerably more affordable than the competition. His use of direct distribution helps keep his marketing overhead down and spread out over a large number of boats, while allowing him to offer a high quality product. His goal: to be the leader in providing best value for the money in his market.

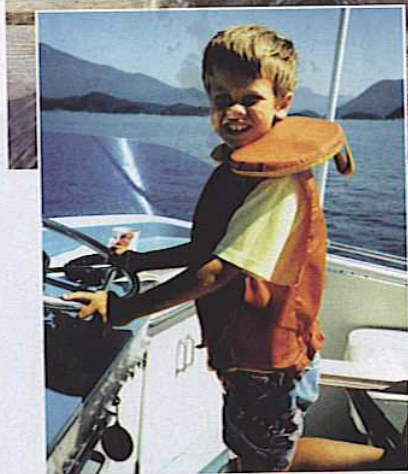
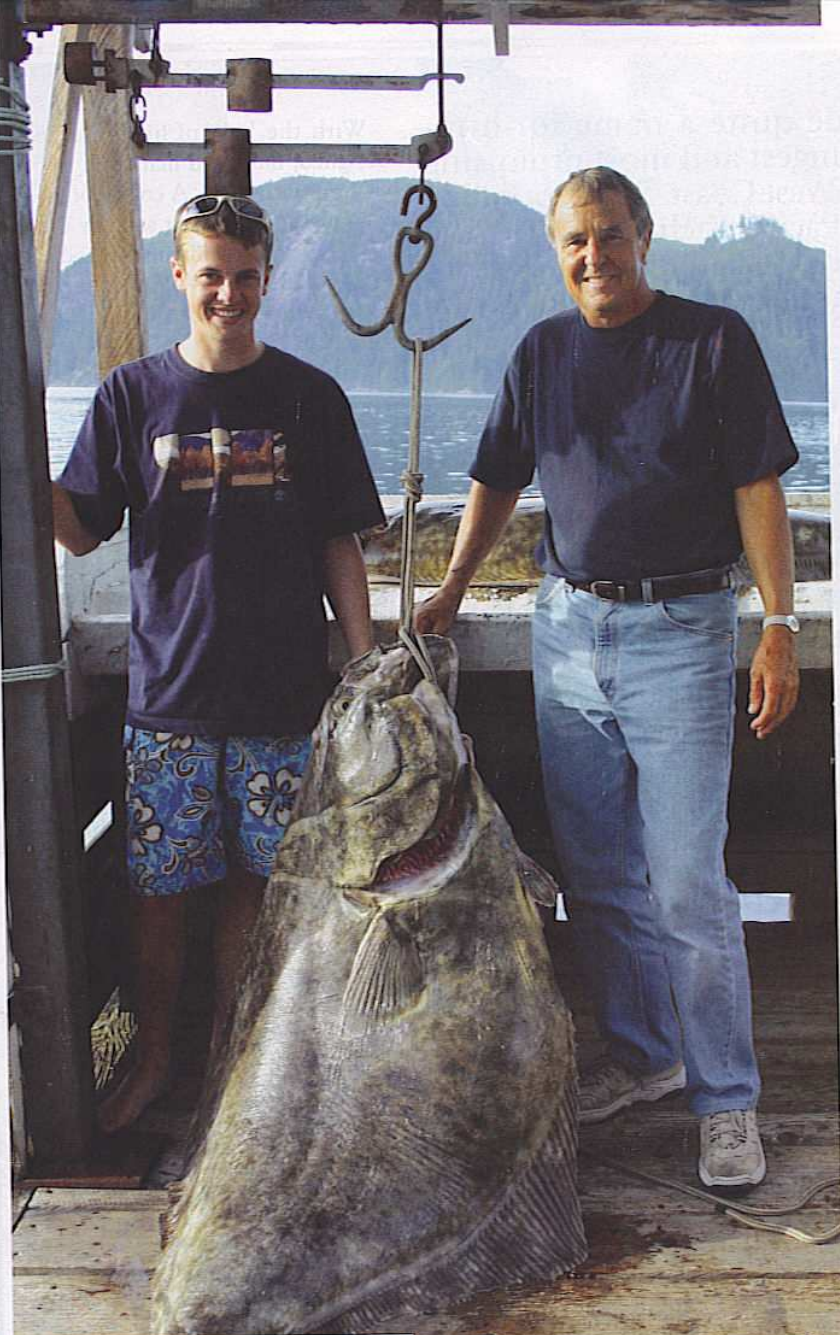
Brice has already introduced a second model—the 52 North Pacific Pilothouse. It has the same basic design and layout of the 42, with a full-width saloon and good pilothouse visibility, but is significantly larger, available in two- or three-stateroom models. The first one was delivered in December and two more are currently under construction.

Plans are also fresh off the drawing board for a 36' pilothouse that looks like the 42', with a wide-body saloon and single stateroom with separate shower stall in the head. It is expected to sell for US\$249,000.

Brice is also importing a much-improved classic, the 36' CHB sedan cruiser with an extended flybridge deck that covers the cockpit. It is currently selling for US\$199,000. CHBs have been produced for more than 35 years, and are built by the same yard that produces the 42 and 52 Pilothouse for Brice.

BRICE HAS BEEN BOATING since he was six months old, cruising the B.C. coast each summer with his parents and younger brother and sister. Since the age of 14, when he completed the Canadian Power Squadron Course, Brice was single-handing. At 16, he began taking friends out water-skiing and fishing in and around the waters near his family home in Crescent Beach, south Surrey.

Brice grew up under the influence of his entrepreneurial father John Brice, who had developed a highly successful business importing goods from China. The elder Brice had always discussed his



Left: Brice has been boating with his family since the age of six months.

high level of customer service and has a comprehensive knowledge of his boat, its capabilities and equipment.

Of the thirty-six 42 Pilothouse boats sold to date, 25 have remained on the West Coast. Designed specifically for West Coast cruising conditions, the boats have proven popular here, and, so far, all have come to Vancouver for com-



Top left and right construction in 52 North Pacific 2006 and is owned by its new owner.

business and was pleased his son had even attended the age of 14, the young man had an airplane and, later, a car.

After his Bachelor's degree in aviation from the Fraser Valley University, Brice's commercial degree in business spent actual time on each flight and the rest

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Top left and right: North Pacific 42s under construction in Ningbo, China. Above: The first 52 North Pacific Pilothouse was delivered in late 2006 and is currently on its way to Alaska with its new owners.

business endeavours with his son, and was pleased to notice that at an early age his son had a natural instinct for business, even attempting to sell hearing aids at the age of 11. While still in his late teens, the young Brice was importing ultra-light airplane engines from the Czech Republic and, later, original art from China.

After high school, Brice received his Bachelor of Business Administration in aviation from the University College of the Fraser Valley. His goal was to be a commercial pilot, but after completing his degree he realized the amount of time spent actually flying was about one hour on each flight (taking off and landing), and the rest was on autopilot. He knew

this wasn't going to be enough of a challenge, so he decided to become a recreational pilot instead. He now owns and operates his own plane as a hobby.

During Brice's childhood, the family owned four cruising boats, each one with shortcomings they wished they could either eliminate or modify. Many holiday evenings were spent at anchor discussing and designing the "perfect" boat.

Four years ago, it was time to make that perfect boat a reality. Brice and his father drew up plans for their first North Pacific on their living room coffee table, then chalked it out full scale in his father's office parking lot and followed up with a marine architect to finalize the design. The 42 North Pacific Pilothouse was born.

At that time, a 42' pilothouse was the perfect choice for them, so they built the boat with the feeling that, even if no one



Brice's latest design, a 36' pilothouse.

else liked it, it wouldn't matter because they had a boat they loved. Fortunately, the boat was well received. After having designed the perfect boat for their own use, it was time to listen to other people's observations. Once Brice heard the same comments from different people at least five times, he would incorporate the ideas as improvements into the boat.



WHEN IT CAME time to put the North Pacific 42 on the market, Brice's father told him he would have to know the boat inside-out and backwards, otherwise prospective buyers might have a hard time trusting his "baby face" appearance and would likely shy away from purchasing a boat from such a young and inexperienced salesman.

To gain the knowledge that would help him inspire confidence in his customers, Brice spent several weeks at the factory in Ningbo, China, to see and learn how the boats were built from start to finish. The people at the factory answered his questions, and he observed boats in the mold at various stages. The Ningbo FuHua Boat

Brice now imports a much-improved classic, the CHB 36 sedan cruiser, which is built by the same yard that builds his North Pacifics.

Building Industry Company is capable of building 40 boats per year, and will build 23 boats for Brice next year. He also deals with a boatyard in the south of China that can build him ten 52' boats per year.



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Brice usually goes to China four times a year. He has one employee, Mark Campion, born and raised in England, who works at the boatyard full time, so Brice doesn't need to be on site as often as when the boats were first constructed. Together Brice and Campion talk about improvements they could make, and while Brice is in the factory he goes over each boat at the different stages of construction. During construction, he's in daily communication with the factory, as they are usually building more than 10 boats at one time.

AFTER THE 42 became successful, Brice got ten-footitis and built a 52' pilothouse. Again, the response was positive. One couple who'd ordered a 42 North Pacific Pilothouse even asked that their boat be passed to the next person in the queue so they could get a 52' instead! At the recent Seattle Boat Show, Brice was encouraged and pleased to find strong interest in the 52 Pilothouse.

The 52' show boat is kept at Pelican Bay Marina in False Creek on Granville

Island (though it will be heading to Alaska shortly). The 36' CHB and 42 North Pacific Pilothouse can usually be seen at Captain's Cove Marina in Ladner. Because the boats are sold so quickly, it can be difficult to keep the boats for "show," so some of Brice's customers have agreed to let their boats be shown whenever they're not cruising in them. Because most people like to show off their boats, Brice is using interested customers as unofficial dealers for which they receive a small commission as a thank you. This strategy not only serves as a lower cost dealership network, it helps keep Brice's marketing costs low.

Currently, Brice is thinking about building a 44' Sportfisher, partly because he wants a boat that will allow him to get to the Gulf Islands in less than an hour. The new boat would have twin 500-hp engines and would hit cruising speed of 20 to 25 knots. Again, Brice believes the key to this boat's success will be "quality construction for a reasonable price."

Brice's business truly is his own—his father says he is far too busy maintaining

his own business to have a hand in his son's as well, though his assistance was initially needed with financing and setting up the yard in China. However, the elder Brice continues to be available for advice and support as the business grows.

Brice is smart, handsome, ambitious and extremely likeable. Instead of working against him, his "baby face" smile is only an asset when showing and selling his yachts.

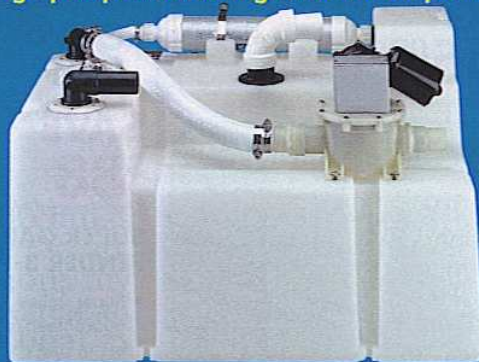
His goal for North Pacific Yachts is to build a recognizable brand name with a continued commitment as a leader in good value. "I'm in this for the long run," says Brice on his future, "and my goal is to build this company over the next 30 years." After accomplishing what he has with the company in only three years, it will be interesting to see where he can take it in 30.

For more information about North Pacific Yachts, visit the company online: www.northpacificyachts.com.

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