

IN THE AFTERGLOW

Before completing the Great Loop on a 43-foot North Pacific, this couple ordered a larger model to explore the Pacific Northwest and beyond.

BY JEFF MOSER / PHOTOS BY JONATHAN COOPER



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Happy Place cuts a fine figure on the waters north of Vancouver. Her boat deck comes with a 1,000-pound-capacity Steelhead davit. **Facing page:** The cockpit seating can face forward or aft.



Vancouver, British Columbia is the gleaming jewel of western Canada.

It's nestled on a deep harbor amid the North Shore and Cascade mountains, with evergreen forests seeming to burst above the dark waters of Burrard Inlet. The major metropolitan hub consistently overloads my senses with natural beauty.

However, as I drove to the city's Coal Harbour Marina for a date with the North Pacific 490, I was seeing red. Tens of thousands of soccer fans dressed in vivid shades of scarlet were primed to watch Canada in a World Cup Group Stage match (red was also the color of the opponent, Switzerland). As the sounds of "O Canada" echoed through the high-rise canyons, North Pacific sales broker Jonathan Cooper and I realized resistance was futile. We took in the early afternoon game via a giant screen on Granville Street amid the crimson-clad fans.

Later, as temperatures cooled off, we met owners Steve Shaw and Nancy Johnston aboard their 490, *Happy Place*. They had just taken delivery and were in the afterglow of having kicked off the season on a new boat with a four-day weekend at Thunderbird Yacht Club on Gambier Island. Both told me they hosted a conga line of friends excited to see the boat, with Steve adding that everyone was impressed with the interior's fit and finish.

NORTH PACIFIC 490

LOA: 51ft. 4in.
Beam: 15ft. 4in.
Draft: 4ft. 10in.
Displacement: 64,000 lbs.
Fuel: 920 gal.
Water: 250 gal.
Power: 1x 355-hp
Cummins QSB6.7
Info: northpacificyachts.com

The Vancouver-based couple have come a long way since buying their first boat, a Grady-White, six years ago and putting hundreds of hours on it. Next, they Loop-dreamed their way into a late-model North Pacific 43, on which they completed the Great American adventure, crossing their wake along Florida's east coast. Somewhere between sharing a meal on a rickety dock in Georgia with the proprietor of an oyster shack and the culinary delights of Charleston, S.C., they ordered their 490.

Chief among the reasons the couple chose to invest in another North Pacific is the ability to work with a shipyard that offers a semicustom build process. The craftsmanship was apparent as I walked from the cockpit into the salon. *Happy Place* has satin-finished, grain-matched, horizontal teak with contrasting wenge and white oak soles. Panoramas of bonded glass, soaring headroom ("our son, who is 6-4, doesn't have to duck," Nancy says) and the absence of full walkaround side decks give the salon an open, airy quality. Valance lighting throughout is fabulous, Steve says. I was able to see at different times of day that it's a real mood-setter.

As much as I like an aft galley to service the cockpit and salon easily, theirs sits amidships. The position means they gained a full-size fridge and freezer that anchor the area, and more counter space than an aft galley can offer. Mosaic tiles and bone-white Silestone countertops with subtle dark veins are fine additions to the contemporary palette. The chef's

The raised pilothouse feels like a professional mariner designed it. The settee converts into an off-watch berth.



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This page, clockwise from top: By placing the galley amidships, the owners gained more counter space and room for a full-size fridge/freezer; The full-beam master stateroom, with the horizontal teak treatment that continues belowdecks. **Facing page:** Looking at Indian Arm, British Columbia, from the flybridge.

kiss may be the operable windows that flank the galley, a fine way to get some cross-ventilation with the sliding door to the cockpit.

It's five steps from the salon to a raised pilothouse that feels like a luxe space for a professional mariner. Side windows work in concert with the reverse-raked, forward-facing glass to give the helmsman unobstructed sightlines in three directions. Black mullions and a matte helm treatment further ensure reflection-free and commanding views from the single Llebroc helm seat. The raised settee, a fine place to pass time and keep the captain company, converts into an off-watch berth.

The next morning, *Happy Place* tracked straight and true through a busy Vancouver harbor humming with seaplanes, ferries, recreational craft and workboats. Steve switched the CMC Marine stabilizers off in the wakes of marine traffic to demonstrate their effectiveness. "They are a game changer," he says as Nancy nods in agreement.

Steve and Nancy are a well-oiled machine, donning headsets and politely refusing our help to gather lines or pull fenders as we left the harbor, bound for Indian Arm. Both are excellent stewards of Vancouver Harbor history, playing off each other's knowledge to share interesting anecdotes about our cruising grounds. My favorite was hearing of rumrunners who stashed kegs of the precious brown spirit at Jug Island Beach, to fetch on moonless nights at low tide.

On previous North Pacific builds, I have been impressed with the beefy sound deadening. The 49 is similarly notable: Noise levels never exceeded 70 decibels, even when she was running wide open. At 69 decibels, the full-beam amidships master was a bit

louder than the 63-decibel reading I took in the forward VIP and pilothouse, owing to the master's proximity to mechanical spaces.

The couple chose to expand *Happy Place's* fuel capacity to 920 gallons, which is 30 percent more than the standard 700 gallons. They also selected a single 355-hp Cummins power plant instead of twin 480-hp engines. Where the twins would give the CE Class A-rated semi-displacement hull a higher top end, the calculated range and economical speeds for the single engine are a fine match: 1,705 nautical miles at 7 knots; 1,380 nm at 8 knots; 943 nm at 9 knots; and 845 nm at 10 knots, all with a 10 percent reserve. At her top speed of 11.5 knots, the boat has a range of more than 500 nm.

On our return to Vancouver, Steve deftly used the variable-speed thrusters to put us side-to-a floating dock for a touch-and-go exit. The couple were bound for the Broughton Archipelago for several weeks, and were looking forward to retrieving their pups, Hudson and Toba (named for memorable cruising grounds), and heading north.

With the Queen Charlotte Islands in their sights and Alaska as the end goal, they have chosen a formidable coastal cruiser they can confidently pilot up the Inside Passage, with the legs to take on even more adventures. 🍷