

# ADVENTURE CALLED, THEY ANSWERED YOU CAN, TOO

*“Looking back on 17 years of cruising over 23,000 miles, we are amazed by the places we’ve seen, the things we’ve done and the issues we’ve solved together. It’s not always easy, and it’s not always comfortable, but we have never regretted a moment of it.”*

— Ron and Nancy Goldberg, *Duet* (below)



## BY THE EDITORS

**D**efining adventure isn't simple. It depends on personal perspective. But one thing we can agree on is that adventure doesn't happen within our comfort zones. The first step always involves taking a risk, opening ourselves to new and remarkable experiences that may seem beyond our imaginable grasp.

We found a handful of people who had a dream, made a plan and headed for the horizon. Their sto-

ries are inspirational, largely because we can see ourselves in them — and because they *did* it.

We asked these world voyagers how they got started, how they prepped, what they've learned and how it's changed them. We didn't have room to share everything, but you can find their complete Q&As at [SoundingsOnline.com](http://SoundingsOnline.com). They make for good reading. Whether they inspire you to dream or create a plan is up to you.



## CHRIS AND SANDRA TRETICK

### Diesel Duck 462 Moken

#### Currently lying in Subic Bay, Philippines

**LOA:** 48 feet, 5 inches • **BEAM:** 14 feet, 10 inches • **POWER:** single 150-hp John Deere 4045TFM diesel • **SPEED:** 6.5 knots cruise • **RANGE:** 6,825 nautical miles at 6.5 knots • **TANKAGE:** 2,000 gallons fuel, 250 gallons water • **CONTACT:** Seahorse Marine, Zhuhai, China, +86 (756) 550-1060. [seahorseyachts.com](http://seahorseyachts.com)

**What was your introduction to boating, and what is your boating history?** We both grew up on the West Coast of British Columbia, and we're avid divers, so we've been in and around boats our whole lives. Before buying this boat, our biggest was a 26-foot Glen-L Hercules trawler, and we've also owned small runabouts and an aluminum landing craft. We volunteered with the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary (now Royal Canadian Marine Search and Rescue), which gave us great training, on-water experience and simulator time related to boat handling, seamanship, search and rescue, and first aid.

**What are some challenges of long-distance passagemaking?** For us, the combination of wind and swell has been the big issue. The northeast monsoon winds in the Philippines can be relentless, and many passages in the areas we like to cruise are exposed to swell coming from the west or northwest, making for some messy seas and uncomfortable crossings. Waiting for better conditions usually means we have to deal with wet dinghy rides to shore, bumpy anchorages and tedium.

**Which of your seamanship skills have improved the most?** All of our seamanship skills have improved over the last five years, but we are now much better at docking, grabbing moorings and anchoring. Docking a heavy steel boat with a full keel and a single engine can be challenging and stressful if the wind isn't cooperating. We try to practice docking without relying on the bow thruster, just in case it doesn't work one day when we really need it. We have a large triple hook on a length of line that makes it fairly straightforward to grab moorings.

**What type of modifications/special gear/systems/equipment did you have to install to prepare your boat for this type of voyaging?** When we bought our Diesel Duck, it came with a lot of necessary equipment for offshore passagemaking, from the Northern Lights generator and the Village Marine watermaker, to the ICOM IC-M802 HF marine transceiver. Most of our modifications since then have addressed three main areas: increasing power

generation, reducing power usage and building redundancy. We added four solar panels that generate 800 watts with an Outback controller, and an Eclectic Energy D-400 wind generator. We've swapped halogen lights to LED and switched out an AC refrigerator with two Isotherm DC fridges. We installed a second depth sounder and VHF radio, upgraded our two Victron inverters and have multiple navigation charts and plotters from which to choose. Other changes have focused on security, safety, comfort, ease of use and diving.

We also installed a Viking RescYou self-righting life raft, a FLIR infrared and thermal camera to make night passages safer, an alarm and light system to deter unwelcome boardings, a man-overboard pole with a strobe and halogen fire extinguishers. We replaced our tender with a Bullfrog utility tender and added a dive compressor and a dive hookah system to make for easier hull cleaning.



**“Do your research. Check out lots of boats. Walk the docks at marinas to look at how different boats are set up for cruising. Join groups, such as the Bluewater Cruising Association and Seven Seas Cruising Association. Go to boat shows and events such as TrawlerFest. Take some courses. Check out some of the many Facebook groups dedicated to sailing and cruising in the regions you plan to go. Ask lots of questions.”**  
— Chris and Sandra Tretick



## JOEL AND DOMINIQUE MARC

### Selene 66 Jade

#### Currently lying in Kodiak, Alaska

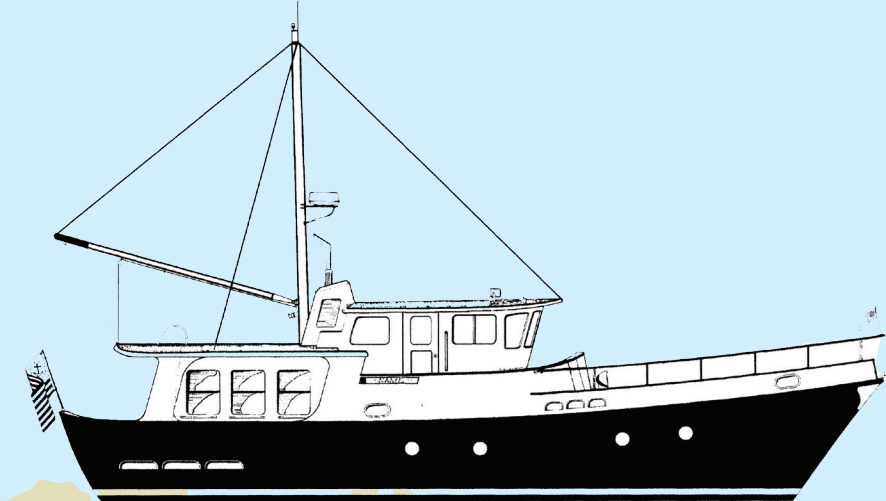
**LOA:** 71 feet, 5 inches • **BEAM:** 18 feet, 8 inches • **POWER:** single 525-hp John Deere 6125AFM diesel • **SPEED:** 7 knots cruise • **RANGE:** 6,500 nautical miles at 7 knots • **TANKAGE:** 3,200 gallons fuel, 600 gallons water, 250 gallons waste • **CONTACT:** Jet Tern Marine, Zhuhai City, China, +86 (756) 772-5339. [seleneoceanyachts.com](http://seleneoceanyachts.com)



**Where have you traveled under power?** We've cruised around New Zealand; to Kamchatka, Russia; and then to Kodiak Island, Alaska. Fjordland and Steward Island in New Zealand were highlights.

**What type of modifications/special gear/systems/equipment did you have to install to prepare your boat for this type of voyaging?** Improvements include upgrading the windlass, anchor chain and ground tackle, installing 14 solar panels for recharging the batteries and adding a dishwashing machine, compactor, microwave, deep freezer, stove, etc. A watermaker is a critical piece of gear on any long-distance boat, so we installed a Spectra (60l/h) 24-volt watermaker. We run it as soon as we move, or even at anchor on sunny days. Our tanks are always full of fresh water. We changed most of the bilge and gray water pumps for higher-capacity membrane pumps.

**What are your future cruising plans?** To explore Alaska even deeper — it is so beautiful! Then we'll head down to Seattle and on to the Sea of Cortez before heading back home via the Marquesas or Hawaii. Better yet, we'd like to go through the Panama Canal, up the U.S. East Coast to Greenland and then to Europe via Iceland and Norway.



## JENNIFER AND MARK ULLMANN

### Nordhavn 46 Starlet

#### Currently lying in the Society Islands, French Polynesia

**LOA:** 45 feet, 9 inches • **BEAM:** 15 feet, 5 inches • **POWER:** 105-hp Luger L668 diesel • **SPEED:** 8 knots cruise • **RANGE:** 1,800 nautical miles at 8 knots • **TANKAGE:** 1,000 gallons fuel, 280 gallons water • **CONTACT:** Pacific Asian Enterprises, Dana Point, California, (949) 496-4848. [nordhavn.com](http://nordhavn.com)

**What was your introduction to boating, and what is your boating history?** Prior to *Starlet* we owned a 24-foot powerboat for diving. She was a Chaparral named *Easy Diver*. We've taken several weeklong live-aboard dive trips and chartered a Mainship trawler to explore the Exumas. Both of us have spent time on sailboats. My husband, Mark, eventually got his captain's license, and I took a Power Squadrans course.

**How did you get into long-distance passagemaking? What was the inspiration behind your decision?** A bad day at work was the inspiration. We love to travel and realized that many of the places we wanted to see could be reached by a boat. Both of us love the water and are scuba divers, so it seemed like an economical way to see the world.

**What was the first voyage where you pushed the limits, distancewise?** We worked up to it slowly. First, we did an overnight from Fort Pierce to Jacksonville, Florida. Next we did a two-night trip from Jekyll Island, Georgia, to Beaufort, North Carolina. We also made some four-night trips from Hampton, Virginia, to Jacksonville, and another from the Bahamas to the Dominican Republic. By the time we made a six-day trip from Florida to Bermuda, we thought we were ready for an 11-day trip to the Azores. Our longest passage was from the Galapagos



to the Marquesas in French Polynesia, which took 20 days.

**What can you tell us about your best cruising moment?** We have so many. Sitting in the Azores at 10 p.m. after 11 days and nights at sea and realizing that we really did it. We always wanted to visit Italy, so walking around Sardinia for the first time felt exhilarating. A week in Santorini, Greece, was very memorable. We loved all 43 islands, but sunsets in Santorini are extra special — it is a nightly event.

**Where have you've traveled under power?** Bahamas, Florida to Maine, Dominican Republic, U.S. Virgin Islands, British Virgin Islands, Bermuda, Azores, Portugal, Gibraltar, Morocco, Spain, Balearic Islands, Sardinia, Sicily, Malta, Albania, Greece, Montenegro, Croatia, Cyprus, Egypt, Turkey, Cape Verde Islands, Panama, Galapagos, French Polynesia and more.





**JOHN AND  
PAULETTE LEE**  
Krogen 5816 Seamantha  
Currently lying in  
Chaguaramas, Trinidad

**LOA:** 63 feet, 3 inches • **BEAM:** 18 feet, 10 inches • **POWER:** twin 158-hp John Deere diesels • **SPEED:** 7 knots cruise • **RANGE:** 3,840 nautical miles at 7 knots (single engine) • **TANKAGE:** 1,760 gallons fuel, 400 gallons water • **CONTACT:** Kadey-Krogen Yachts, Stuart, Florida, (800) 247-1230. [kadeykrogen.com](http://kadeykrogen.com)

**What was the first voyage where you pushed the limits, distancewise?** One year we planned to do a five-day, 900-nautical-mile passage from Stuart, Florida, to Jersey City, New Jersey. Since this was to be our first extended offshore experience, we brought along two professional captains to help us. It was an invaluable experience making our way up the East Coast, sometimes venturing as far as 100 miles offshore.

**What is the favorite spot you've cruised to so far?** That's a difficult question to answer because there are so many. We loved heading up the Chambly Canal to Montreal and Quebec. Maine also was a favorite. In the Caribbean, the lesser-known islands of Les Saintes, Marie Galante and Tobago enamored us with their quaintness and charm. We love Martinique for the beautiful landscapes, hiking and great food. The less-developed islands of the Dominican Republic and Dominica taught us that less is more and demonstrated the unity of a "village." Each place has its own charm, and we have something good to say about almost every stop we've made.

**"You must have confidence in your boat. Getting a well-found boat that has been well-maintained is paramount. Also, have confidence in your own skills. You need to believe you can find a fix for almost anything. Plan for the worst; hope for the best. Boredom is a problem – have a way to pass the time. If you don't, you will worry yourself to death. Don't chase the weather. Once you're underway, there isn't much you can do about it."**

— Richard Bost



**RICHARD BOST**  
Krogen 42 Dauntless  
Currently lying in Huatulco, Mexico

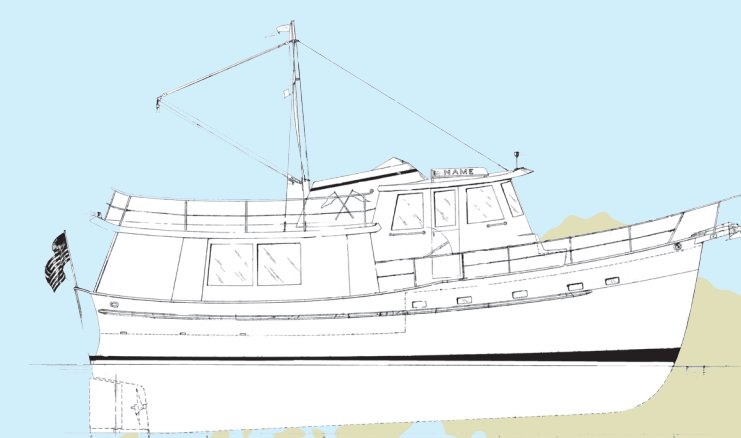
**LOA:** 42 feet, 4 inches • **BEAM:** 15 feet • **POWER:** single 135-hp Lehman diesel • **SPEED:** 7 knots cruise • **RANGE:** 3,200 nautical miles at 7 knots • **TANKAGE:** 700 gallons fuel, 360 gallons water • **CONTACT:** Kadey-Krogen Yachts, Stuart, Florida, (800) 247-1230. [kadeykrogen.com](http://kadeykrogen.com)

**How did you get into long-distance passagemaking?** The initial goal was simply to have a boat that we could live on in Europe. The more I read about the exploits of others in small boats crossing oceans, the more I realized that not only I could do that, but that I was always into the trip as much as the destination. In short, we love traveling.

Because my former wife had only three weeks of vacation in the summer, the original plan was for her to meet *Dauntless* in Europe after arrival. But my prospective crew fell through just weeks before our planned departure. Julie decided she wanted to do the Atlantic from Rhode Island to the Azores. She loved it. Her first words after her first steps on land were, "I could do another three weeks!"

**What type of modifications/special gear/systems/equipment did you have to install to prepare your boat for this type of voyaging?** Simplicity is more important than redundancy when crossing oceans because you must have the confidence to fix any problems or breakdowns. That being said, we've added a lot of systems, including paravane stabilizers, a watermaker, an AIS transceiver, a four-person life raft, Jeppesen C-Map charts, a fuel polishing system, half-inch Lexan storm windows over all glass and a ton (literally) of spare parts.

**What are your future cruising plans?** For 2018 we will cruise north along the West Coast of North America. Between 2019 and 2020 we'll tackle British Columbia and Southeast Alaska before crossing the North Pacific to Japan and South Korea in 2021. Beyond that, we'll do Taiwan and more of Korea and Japan in 2022, return to northern Europe between 2023 and 2024 and do our second Baltic cruise in 2025.



**RON AND NANCY GOLDBERG**  
Nordhavn 50 Duet  
Currently lying in Tahiti, French Polynesia

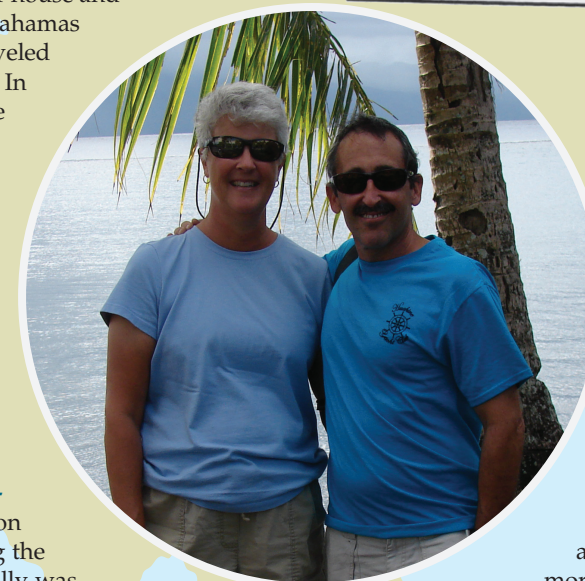
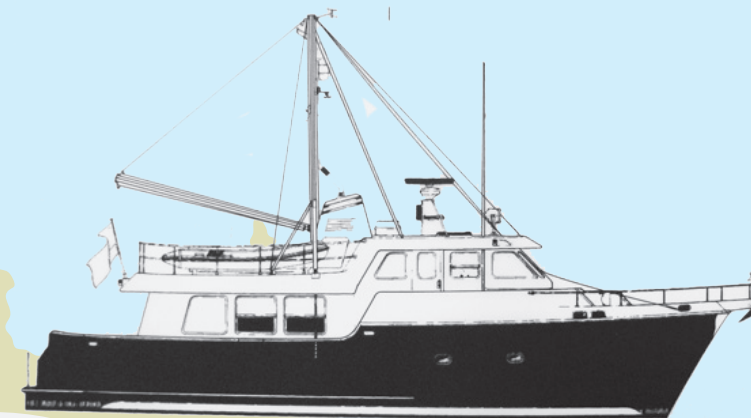
**LOA:** 51 feet, 2 inches • **BEAM:** 16 feet • **POWER:** single 300-hp Luger L-6108A diesel • **SPEED:** 8 knots cruise • **RANGE:** 2,800 nautical miles at 8 knots • **TANKAGE:** 1,320 gallons fuel, 260 gallons water • **CONTACT:** Pacific Asian Enterprises, Dana Point, California, (949) 496-4848. [nordhavn.com](http://nordhavn.com)

**What was your introduction to boating, and what is your boating history?** We started with sailboats in 1993 and chartered in the British Virgin Islands, Grenada and Guadalupe. In 1996 we fell in love with a Nordhavn 46. A wise salesman told us to buy a smaller trawler first, so we bought a Monk 36 and cruised her on Chesapeake Bay. In 2000 we bought a 1996 Nordhavn 46 and named her *Duet*. We cruised the Chesapeake for a year, sold our house and moved aboard, spending winters in the Bahamas and summers in the Chesapeake. We traveled about 10,000 miles over the next six years. In 2007 we sold the boat and moved to Lake Tahoe, Nevada. After five years, we realized we really missed cruising, so we bought our current boat, a Nordhavn 50, also named *Duet*. Since we purchased her in 2012 we have traveled about 13,000 miles, from Seattle, north through British Columbia to Alaska, then south to Mexico and across the Pacific to French Polynesia, where *Duet* is now.

**How did you get into long-distance passagemaking? What was the inspiration behind your decision?** We started on our Nordhavn 46 with the idea of crossing the Atlantic one day. We're not sure there really was an inspiration — it was more an idea that formed over several years after meeting folks who had traveled far and wide. We never did cross the Atlantic, though, something always seemed to get in the way. When we bought our second Nordhavn, we really wanted to cross an ocean. We felt that we would regret it if we didn't do it, and since we weren't getting any younger, we figured we'd better go soon. We decided on the Pacific, as the destinations along the way appealed more to us.

**What was the first voyage where you pushed the limits, distancewise?** We have completed dozens of 24- to 72-hour coastal runs. Our first "long" voyage was from La Paz to Ensenada, Mexico, in early 2016. That journey was just over 100 hours, or four days and 600 miles. This trip was a test for our planned 2,700-mile leg from Mexico to French Polynesia.

**What are some challenges of long-distance passagemaking?** It can be uncomfortable, boring, and both of us get seasick. It can also be scary, but you become accustomed to whatever it is that scares you. You don't have any choice, as there is nowhere to run. Over time, you find you can get used to almost anything. French Polynesia is, relatively speaking, little visited by recreational cruisers. So there isn't much information. The cruising guides, for example, are more than 10 years old. The anchorages are often open to swells or full of coral. But the people are incredibly friendly, there is almost no one there, and it's spectacularly beautiful, so it's worth the effort — at least for us.



**How have your seamanship skills improved?** Seamanship is a combination of a lot of things, ranging from the obvious, such as being able to navigate, to the less intuitive, such as being able to judge a good anchorage from a bad one.

There's only so much book learning you can do, and then you need to get out there and feel it. The more experience you get, the better. On a boat like ours, seamanship includes a lot of technical skills, such as how to use both radars and the AIS simultaneously to figure out exactly what those fishing boats are doing on a dark, rainy night. We are much more comfortable with situations and conditions that would have scared us silly several years ago.

**Someone once told us to push our personal envelope just a little bit every time we take the boat out. Our personal envelope is much bigger than it used to be.**  
— Ron and Nancy Goldberg

**What advice would you give to anyone who's considering doing what you've done?** The key is to not bite off more than you can chew. One or two bad experiences can shake a couples' confidence and doom what could have been a wonderful cruising career. We advise people to change only the boat or the cruising area, not both at the same time. When we got our Nordhavn 46, which was a much more complex boat than our Monk 36, we spent a year in the familiar Chesapeake before we set off into new waters.

**Where have you traveled under power?** Chesapeake Bay, U.S. East Coast, west coast of Florida, Bahamas, Pacific Northwest, British Columbia, Alaska, California coast, Baja Mexico, Marquesas, French Polynesia.





**Jade**  
Kodiak Harbor, Alaska



**Toccata**  
Gaeta, Italy



**Highland Duck**  
Malta



**Moken**  
Subic Bay, Philippines



**Argo**  
Fort Lauderdale, Florida



**Dauntless**  
Huatulco, Mexico



**Seamantha**  
Chauguramas, Trinidad



**Restless**  
Singapore



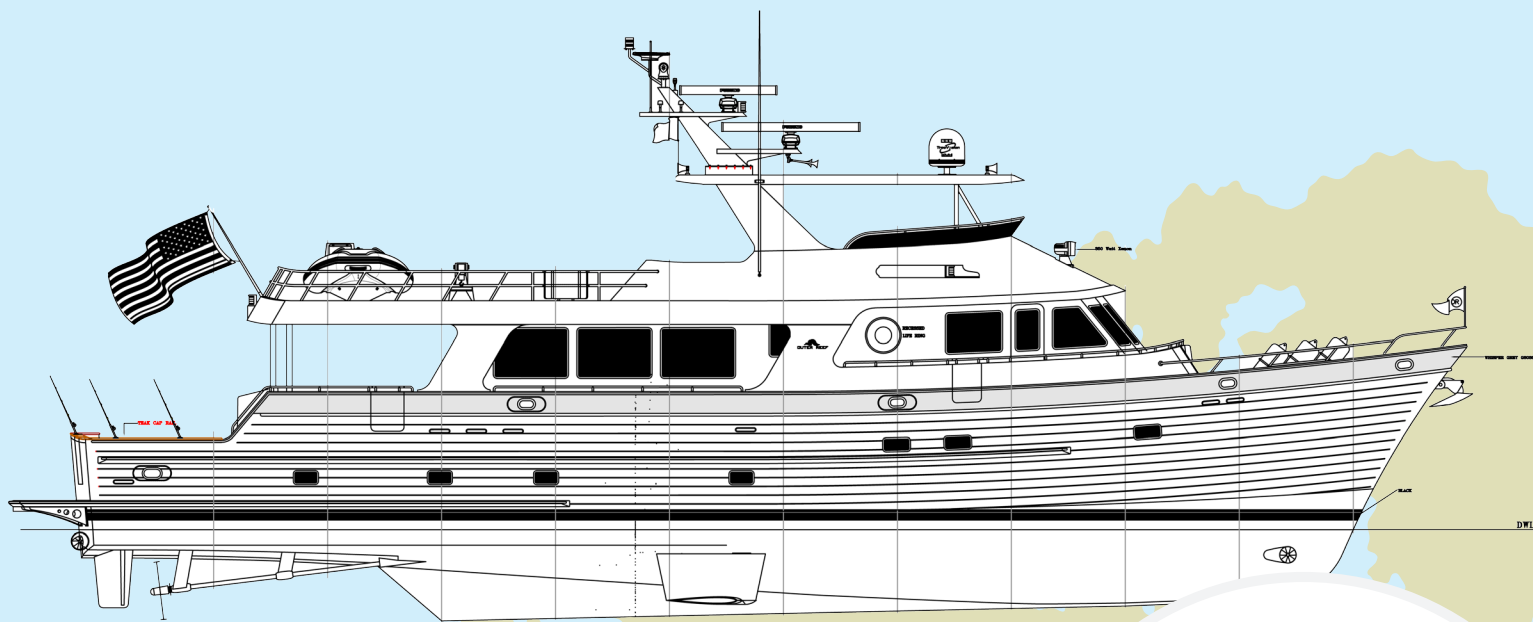
**Starlet**  
Tahiti



**Duet**  
Papeete, Tahiti







## PAUL HAWRAN

Outer Reef 88 Argo  
Currently lying in Fort Lauderdale, Florida

**LOA:** 88 feet • **BEAM:** 21 feet • **POWER:** twin 750-hp John Deere 6135 diesels • **SPEED:** 8.5 to 13 knots cruise • **RANGE:** 2,600 nautical miles at 8.5 knots • **TANKAGE:** 3,000 gallons fuel, 500 gallons water • **CONTACT:** Outer Reef Yachts, Fort Lauderdale, Florida, (954) 767-8305. [outerreefyachts.com](http://outerreefyachts.com)

**What was your introduction to boating, and what is your boating history?** I started boating in college when a friend and I purchased an 18-foot Mako and moored the boat in Port Jefferson, New York. She was a boat that was essentially ignored and had an engine that had its own personality and proclivities. I enjoyed rebuilding and trying to put her personality back into the boat. I relocated to San Diego in 1993 to begin a new career as a biotech entrepreneur, and one day I took my son, who was diagnosed with attention deficit disorder, to a local pier for a day of fishing. I was amazed that he was so focused on just watching his line and the sheer happiness on his face — even when he didn't catch a thing (neither did I). Based on that day, I purchased a 60-foot Hatteras, which like my first boat was in need of a lot of TLC. Following the Hatteras, I commissioned an 82-foot Westbay, a 94-foot Westbay and, finally, an 88-foot Outer Reef.

**What was your scariest moment at sea?** I was leaving Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, and my weather routers told me the seas heading to Costa Rica were good but to expect some squalls. Just north of Acapulco, I noticed a number of squalls forming around me. As I got in the middle of the outlying squalls, they all joined together, forming a storm that was

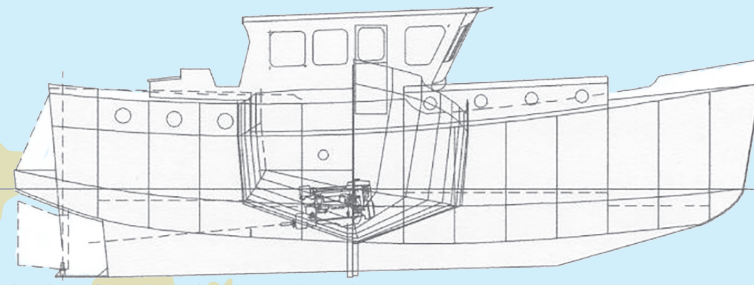
certainly not expected. The winds came up to about 50 knots, and the seas — well, I'm not sure what they were, but I know there was blue water flying over the flybridge hardtop. And, of course, Rex Neptune decided to give me a little added twist by killing my hydraulic systems, making my stabilizers useless and steering difficult.

**Where have you traveled under power?** *Argo* has cruised from Victoria, British Columbia, to Alaska and then all the way south to San Diego and to La Paz, Puerto Vallarta and many other Mexican cities. From there we navigated to Costa Rica, then to Peru, Chile and Cape Horn. On the return trip, we stopped in Peru and are now back to Costa Rica. We have seen Patagonia, stood

on Robinson Crusoe Island, visited Easter Island and the phenomenal northern deserts of Chile, as well as Machu Picchu and a list of places that will always be engraved in my brain. After this vacation from a vacation we start all over, going through the Panama Canal and to the Caribbean, where we will spend about 270 days and 5,000 miles checking out all the islands.

**“Voyaging past the dry deserts of Chile to the green forests of northern Patagonia to the wind-ravaged islands of south Patagonia puts everything in proper perspective. We are merely insignificant visitors in a vast and beautiful world.”**

— Paul Hawran



## BOB AND MARGARET JACK

Diesel Duck 462 Highland Duck  
Currently lying in Valetta, Malta

**LOA:** 48 feet, 5 inches • **BEAM:** 14 feet, 10 inches • **POWER:** single 150-hp John Deere 4045TFM diesel • **SPEED:** 6.5 knots cruise • **RANGE:** 6,825 nautical miles at 6.5 knots • **TANKAGE:** 2,000 gallons fuel, 250 gallons water • **CONTACT:** Seahorse Marine, Zhuhai, China, +86 (756) 550-1060. [seahorseyachts.com](http://seahorseyachts.com)

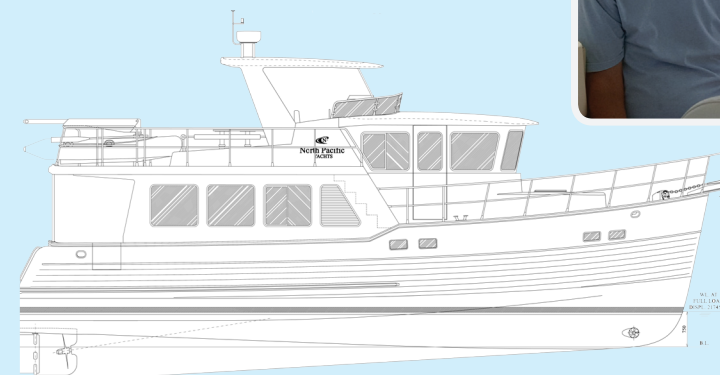
**What type of modifications/special gear/systems/equipment did you have to install to prepare your boat for this type of voyaging?** We added fuel capacity to increase our range, for starters, and having dual autopilots is essential for the type of voyaging we do, so we added one for redundancy. I don't know of any long-range cruising boat without a reliable watermaker and lots of fresh water storage. Storing food is important, so we have two fridges and a large freezer. All safety gear should be offshore capable.

## JOHN BRICE

North Pacific 49 Restless  
Currently lying in Singapore

**LOA:** 51 feet, 6 inches • **BEAM:** 15 feet, 4 inches • **POWER:** single 305-hp Cummins diesel • **SPEED:** 7 knots cruise • **RANGE:** 1,900 nautical miles at 7 knots • **TANKAGE:** 920 gallons fuel, 350 gallons water • **CONTACT:** North Pacific Yachts, Vancouver, British Columbia, (877) 564-9989. [northpacificyachts.com](http://northpacificyachts.com)

**What was your scariest moment at sea?** Traveling from Miri to Kuching in Malaysia. We waited almost four weeks for a good weather forecast because along this coast there is almost no shelter. Within about eight hours of setting out, we encountered an unexpected storm with 40-knot sustained winds, 50-plus-knot gusts and blind-



**“You must select the correct boat for what you want to do. We’ve also found that having an engineering background is a huge help. Taking courses on diesel maintenance and other systems aboard can fill in the gaps. You should have good physical and mental health, and if cruising with a partner, your relationship must be strong.”**

— Bob and Margaret Jack

**What was the first voyage where you pushed the limits, distance-wise?** Our first voyage, from Thailand to India, a 10-day passage.

**What was your scariest moment at sea?** Most of our scariest moments are in marinas, but ours was in the Gulf of Mannar, between Sri Lanka and India — 10 days, two with very high winds, 35 knots, high seas on the beam.

**What can you tell us about your best cruising moment?** We love the Philippines: beautiful clear water, coral, fish, desert islands, great scenery and very friendly people.

**What is the favorite spot you've cruised to so far?** Port Barton on Palawan in the Philippines. It's a beautiful anchorage with clear water, plenty of low key resorts on sandy beaches and desert islands to relax on.

ing rain, nonstop for more than 30 hours. The waves were huge, and my crew was so sick I had to stay awake at the helm the whole time. Because of the high headwinds, we were only able to make 4 knots burning 6.6 gph, while we normally go 6 knots and burn 1.6 gph. We eventually detoured 50 nautical miles out of our way to find shelter in a commercial port because I simply could not keep going.

**What can you tell us about your most memorable cruising moment?** This is tough, as there have been many. When we were cruising in the Pacific Northwest near the Broughton Archipelago, we saw a large pod of around 50 of killer whales. They were heading our way, so we stopped the boat and turned off the engine. One large male headed directly for the boat. He surfaced for air about 30 feet away from our port side and then swam right under the swim platform, where we were standing. As he did, he rolled and looked right at us. It was amazing making direct eye contact with this huge whale just a few feet under our boat. It seemed in slow motion. It was incredible.

**What are some challenges of long-distance passagemaking?** In the United States and Canada we are spoiled, having such an abundance of boating facilities. In Indonesia, we found none of this, and getting fuel became a problem. There were many instances where we had to find locals willing to bring jerrycans and barrels of diesel out to the boat. Needless to say, you need to be self-sufficient and inventive when cruising in remote locales. Also, bring lots of spare parts.







## CHRIS AND CAROLYN GROOBEY

### FPB 64 Toccata

Currently lying in Gaeta, Italy

**LOA:** 64 feet, 11 inches • **BEAM:** 17 feet, 9 inches • **POWER:** single 236-hp John Deere 6068TFM diesel • **SPEED:** 9 knots cruise • **RANGE:** 6,400 nautical miles at 9 knots • **TANKAGE:** 3,400 gallons fuel, 1,800 gallons water • **CONTACT:** SetSail FPB, [info@setsail.com](mailto:info@setsail.com)

**How did you get into long-distance passagemaking?** Before we bought the FPB, we spent three years building a Gunboat 55 sailing catamaran. The goal at the time was to have a boat that we could race and cruise. We came to realize that we wanted to do more adventuring and long-distance travel and less racing. We bought the FPB in Seattle in summer 2015. Since then, we have been around Vancouver Island, down the West Coast of the United States, to Mexico and Central America, through the Panama Canal, up to Nova Scotia, back down to the Caribbean, across the Atlantic, and now we're in the Mediterranean.

**What are some challenges of long-distance passagemaking?** One challenge is being away from family and friends for extended periods. We consider our two dogs part of our family and wanted to cruise with them. It sounds silly, but we spend an inordinate amount of time making travel arrangements for them, sourcing good food and building itineraries around their requirements. But it's completely worth it; we

make so many friends because of the dogs.

**What are your future cruising plans?** We will return to the boat this spring, cruise Greece and Croatia for the early part of the season, then likely head to the British Isles. Eventually we hope to cruise the Baltics and then return to North America via the northern route across the Atlantic. ■

**“We are in our 50s and not retired – we’re just taking a sabbatical to reconnect with each other, pursue some shared dreams and figure out what we want to do next, professionally. Why shouldn’t adults have ‘gap years,’ too? It’s frightening to walk away from careers and paychecks when you are not ‘done’ earning money, but it will be worth it, and the world is changing so much that you need to see it now. Have confidence that you will be just fine when you return to your professional life.”**

– Chris and Carolyn Groobey



# GO OR NO GO?

## Tips From An Expert Weather Forecaster

By Richard Bost, *Dauntless*

I spent my first 10 years as a weather forecaster in Alaska and Europe, which forced me to learn the basics like few forecasters do today. Instead of using wildy powerful computer models, we had to analyze our own surface and upper-air charts from raw data — which came to us by way of fax machines and teletypes that had been in use since World War II.

While it's hard to beat Sirius XM Weather for ease of use for coastal and canyon use, serious passagemakers usually turn to professional weather routers for help. And even if you're a skipper who subscribes to every weather service under the sun, with constant feeds flowing through the multifunction displays at your helm, learning the basics can help you better plan for weather.

When I'm planning a cruise, I look at just three things: the National Weather Service surface analysis, the NWS forecast discussion and *windy.com*.

The surface analysis is the one information stream that an NWS forecaster actually makes or modifies. It's massaged by hand instead of by algorithms, which today are the basis for virtually everything else. When I was crossing the Atlantic, I had friends text me the positions of lows and highs from this map only. It's that reliable.

Next is the forecast discussion. If you are going offshore, this is the one item that is absolutely crucial to have. Every regional forecast office issues one, and you'll find slight differences among different regions of the country. In the Northeast, the discussions are particularly descriptive. Other regions, not so much. The forecasts also vary based on the forecaster doing the writing.

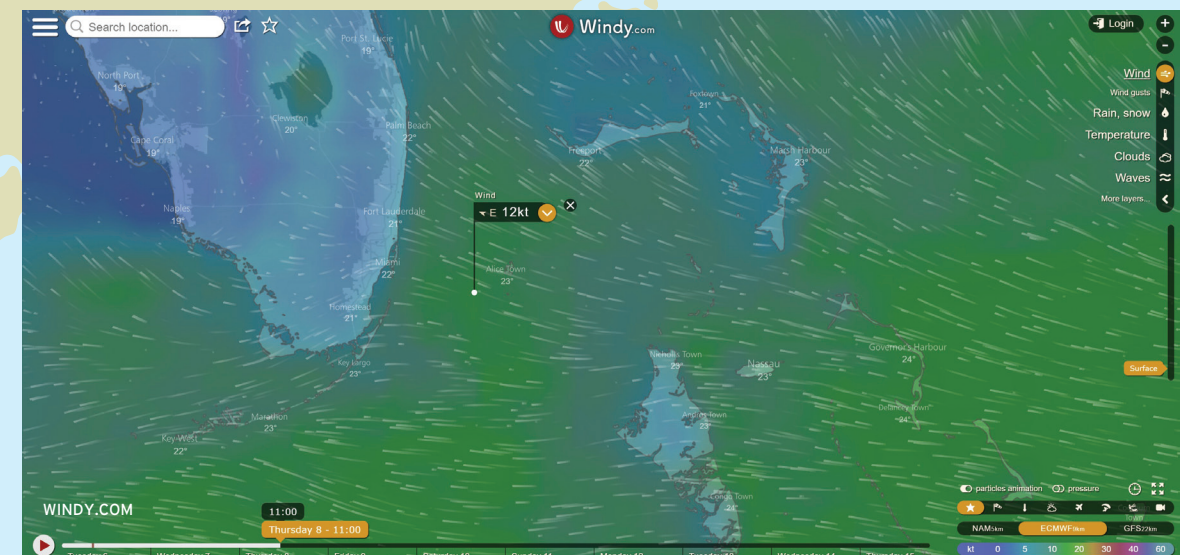
Last is what I consider to be the sexiest source: *windy.com*. Click on the little symbol above the +/- symbols, and you can choose winds at different altitudes, waves, swells, wave period, currents and more. You can also choose the numerical model. The default is the NWS worldwide model, also known as the Global Forecast System, with 13½-mile resolution. Each data point is that distance, or 12 nautical miles, apart. And across the United States and off the coasts, a 3-mile (5-kilometer) North American version is available. The third model is the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts model, at about 5½ miles. It's also a worldwide model and has a better resolution than the Global Forecast System.

No one model is better than the others at any given time, place or season. One may do particularly well during the summer over New

England, but the same model may not do as well in the Southeast at summertime, or with high-pressure areas versus lows. Depending on where you do your cruising, you can test them and see which works best for you. Look at aspects such as the currents layer; it will show you everything from wave heights (which I don't always find accurate) to winds (which are usually right on the money).

The thing about forecasts is that they're seldom wrong in all facets. A forecast may have a timing or location error, but usually not both. Look at trends, and figure on timing and location loosely, and you should be able to compensate for these typical forecast shortcomings.

Don't give much credence to forecasts for days beyond about a week to 10 days because they're not based in science. And if you're relying on GRIB (binary) weather files, know that they're disseminated without any humans involved. (This means no one is checking to see whether the underlying data is right or wrong.)



Last but not least, if you're in a situation where you have to make a go/no-go decision, use what I call the 50 percent rule for wind direction, wind speed and the resulting sea state. Begin with the assumption that whatever is forecast could be off by 50 percent in either direction. So if I am hoping for winds at 180 degrees at 8 knots or less, then the wind direction, +/- 45 degrees could be from 135 degrees to 225 degrees, and I have to take that into consideration. Likewise, a forecasted 8-knot wind could materialize anywhere between 4 and 12 knots. This means that while I could be OK with 12 knots, if the forecast is actually for 12 knots, it's a no-go because I assume that 12 could be as much as 18.

Remember: The most important aspect of using forecasts for route planning is factoring in information you trust to make sound cruising decisions before you set out. ■