

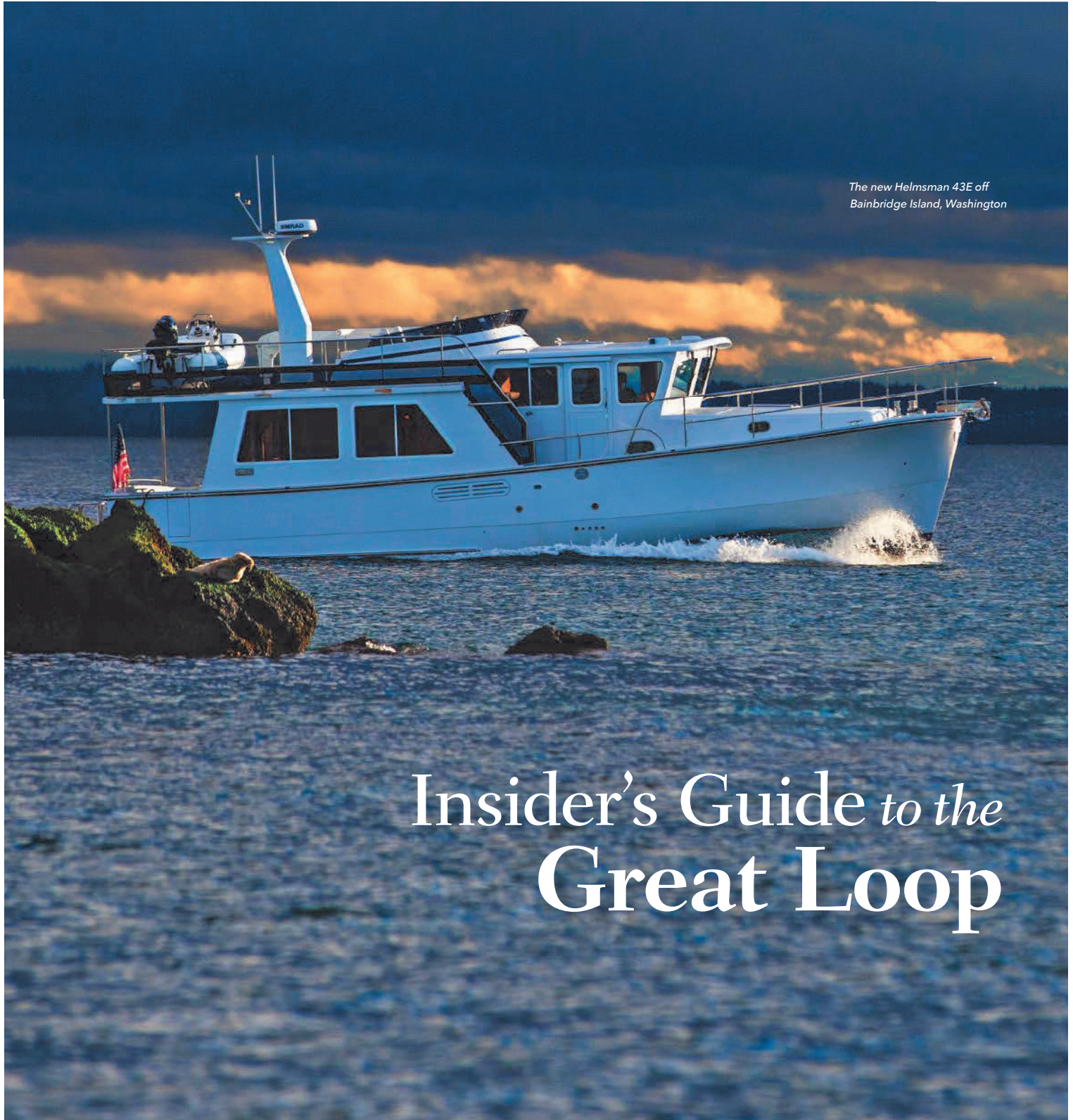
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*The new Helmsman 43E off
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Insider's Guide to the
Great Loop

Ask the Experts

Your technical questions answered by some of the most experienced trawler minds on the planet.

Dear Editors: I've been trying to sell my boat during the winter. Currently, the boat is on the hard, winterized and wrapped. An interested buyer wants me to unwrap it and put it in the water for a survey and sea trial. If the buyer walks or nitpicks after the survey, I am stuck with paying to wrap, winterize and haul again. There was nothing wrong with the boat when I stored it, and I'm confident that's still the case. My worry is being stuck with all the costs and giving the buyer all the leverage in this deal. Should I go through with this? Who should foot the bill?

—Anonymous, Deale, MD

Good question. Not sure if this is a “for sale by owner” or you have brokers. (I don't want to step on anyone's toes.) It's a potentially tricky situation, but not uncommon when winter is involved.

Before you do anything, I would confirm with the buyer what his or her insurance underwriter requires. Will they insure a boat that has not been completely surveyed? One approach would be to write up an offer with a first right of refusal to correspond with the seasonal relaunch where you will “summerize” and have your boat ready for a proper survey. I've been involved in winter deals before, and unless you can accomplish all of the due diligence steps, it does present problems of uncertainty.

You could have the buyer survey out of the water and then agree to a “hold back” amount in escrow, with specific instructions on what is to be tested after launch, and with a deadline and agreement on how any of the money is to be spent for repairs before the balance is released to the seller. In this situation, the buyer closes and owns the boat, but has a reserve to check items that could not be evaluated until the survey is completed. It's really hard to know what may not run well. I'm sure you are confident, but surveyors do have a knack for finding things that owners aren't aware of.

Without waiting for a proper and complete survey, this is a bit of a guessing game. In a normal deal, the buyer pays for the costs of the survey (haul out, inspections, etc.) and the seller makes the boat available for operations and inspection. If neither of you want to wait, what if you and the buyer agreed to split the costs 50/50 to launch and return as-was? The market remains active; there are more buyers than boats. A willing buyer and willing seller should be able to get it done with no winners or losers. The key is to keep it fair, fun and friendly. —Jeff Merrill, CPYB

I thoroughly enjoyed Sam Devlin's design column ruminations on his MugWump 22 (January/February 2021) and the prospect of using her as both a water and land yacht. In our trailer-boating days, we spent a few nights aboard on the trailer, although some RV sites freak out at the idea of a boat as a land dwelling. How would you deal with your gray water? Last I checked, you can't exactly empty a marine holding tank at an RV sewage dump. Engineering challenge, perhaps?

—Wade Griffith, Spokane, WA

Wade: That's a great question, and one that I'll address more in-depth in a future column. Half of what you are asking would be addressed by the addition of a 25-gallon gray water tank to the MugWump design. I am also specifying in the final design a unique and somewhat new toilet that will help with the waste disposal. By simple description, it's a toilet that uses a long length of mylar bag in its guts to strangle the waste flushed into a long sausage of mylar/waste. When the mylar bag has run out of space, a built-in plastic garbage bag can be tied off and the whole lot is disposed of as garbage, a bit like disposing a garbage bag of children's diapers. —Sam Devlin

I have a 44-foot Marine Trader with twin 210-hp Cummins. The other day, I had a warning light for the port engine, so I turned it off and continued onward with just the starboard. I was surprised that I felt no difference and didn't even need to increase rpm to maintain the same 7-knot speed. Is there something to just running on one engine for fuel economy? And are there any mechanical risks from long-term use of that practice? —Anonymous, Miami

Dear twin engine Marine Trader owner: You have made an interesting observation. It will surprise many boaters to learn how little power is required to move a boat through the water at hull speed. It is frequently much less than the horsepower installed in most production boats.

As to whether shutting one engine down will save fuel or harm your engine, the answer is maybe. The unused gear (propeller, shaft, etc.) being dragged through the water creates resistance, which offsets some of the fuel savings. The unused spinning prop turning the transmission can harm some transmissions. A detailed explanation addressing this issue can be found here: passagemaker.com/twin-engine-cruising —Bob Arrington ✪

Got technical questions? We've got answers.
Reach out to our top technical contributors at
editor@passagemaker.com