

Headlines

November 9, 2009

Nora's Ark: Too much is not enough

I'll stop short of calling myself a Nordhavn 43 expert, but it seems so many of [my customers](#) are focused on that size. After all, it's small enough to fit into practically any marina without problem *and* be easily handled by a cruising couple, yet its roomy interior (read: two heads) proves that it's not too cozy for comfort inside. So after nine new boat deliveries – not to mention several pre-cruised 43 sales – under my belt, I went into the deal of Nordhavn 43 hull #38 confident that I knew what I was getting into.

Little did I know that my customers, Bob and Nora Langthorne, were going to commission probably the most extraordinary Nordhavn 43 ever. Mind you, I've been on a lot of 43s and have seen the gamut of outfitting. From the bare bones [Angelique](#) to the technically equipped Three@Sea whose crew routinely posts web blogs to their comprehensive website. The Langhornes decision to christen their boat an *Ark* was no accident. Not only has this boat got everything, it's got the *best* of everything.

The hull was deep into our production series life span – a contracted boat whose buyer couldn't complete. Timing was such that not a lot had been done to the boat, yet she was still very customizable. So the Langhornes took over the project and then took advantage of just about every upgrade we have ever offered. The result is a stunning Nordhavn 43 flybridge edition.



Now that I know Bob and Nora, I should have seen this coming. They are enthusiastic about their “modes of travel.” I met them at the Lake Union Boat Show last January where they stopped to check out the Nordhavn brand because their neighbors had recently taken delivery of a new Nordhavn 55. Soon I discovered the passion they have for transportation: motorcycles, cars and RVs – each one being the best of the best and impeccably maintained. (In fact one “classic” vehicle that I got to go for a ride in is their “Grizzly”, but that’s a whole other...you’ll just have to ask me in person.) So, you see, I should have seen this coming.

4338 shipped to Seattle for commissioning and in late April of this year I flew up to conduct the official delivery as well as to provide a proper indoctrination including training on the systems.

We pulled out of Elliot Bay early one morning. On board *Nora's Ark* was Bob, Nora, myself and Brian Coleman of Emerald Harbor Marine who installed the comprehensive nav/com package ordered for the boat. (Emerald Harbor is our commissioning partner up in the Pacific Northwest.) As we pulled out, I was excited to see how such



a tricked out 43 would perform.

The Langthornes had turned an exceptionally well equipped 43 into a gorgeously outfitted passage maker. Elaborating on the phrase “no stone left unturned”, *Norah’s Ark* echoed the couple’s lifestyle philosophy of surrounding themselves with only the finest: surfaces and finishes, interior décor, and electronics.



A few of the highlights that reflect both what we can do at the yard and what a clever owner can do during the outfitting/delivery phase are shown in the photos. For factory improvements I would like to mention the cockpit control station pod, flybridge bench seat (much cozier than two individual seats, the flybridge “rumble seat”

(something that I actually developed and has become a popular option) and black Majelite overhead material in the pilothouse to reduce night glare.

They also took advantage of three of my favorite delivery options: beefy stainless rails on their optional factory swim platform; a covered cockpit which effectively turns it into a sunroom; and a clear wrapped Bimini top on the flybridge which makes for a year-round all-weather command and leisure center. (The exterior enclosures really help stretch the outdoor season – a plus when cruising up in the northern Pacific.)



South Coast Marine (our Nordhavn builder in Xiamen, China) does an excellent job of constructing our boats – the gelcoat glistens, the stainless shines, the granite glows and the rich teak woodwork sparkles in selection and joinery finish. And this is just the “surface” visual you see when you approach and board *Nora’s Ark*. The all important systems are immaculately installed with beautiful runs of wires and hoses that are not only well labeled, but easily accessed and user friendly. All of the important operations required of a thoroughbred passagemaker are fantastic, but I still can’t get over the lavish Four Seasons resort-type of interior fit out on *Nora’s Ark*. It’s what you would expect to see in the priciest of homes in the most exclusive neighborhoods. Yet, somehow, it’s not *overdone*. You feel comfy and at ease sitting in the saloon.





Bob is in the flame detection industry and has offices worldwide. Nora has a clothing embroidery business and all of the crew were treated with silk screened shirts featuring *Nora's Ark* and beautiful jackets with the Nordhavn brand emblazoned.

Being aboard Nora's Ark was an interesting contrast for me as a couple of weeks prior, I'd been invited by Eric and Christi Grab to join them in Panama for a canal transit aboard 43 #18 *Kosmos* and help return her to her home ocean, the Pacific, in their quest to be the first 43 to circumnavigate (which they [did successfully](#) in May). Of course, comparing a brand new 43 which includes all of the latest and greatest to any of the aforementioned sister 43s probably isn't fair. However, the fact that they all have equal capabilities brings a smile to my face.

Our trip for day one of the training delivery was to depart Elliot Bay near Seattle and arrive in Sidney, BC. We met aboard at 6:00 am and were quickly underway. We had fun getting to know the boat and while I was showing how things work Brian was tweaking the nav/com so it would be perfect. We began with 27 hours on the main and did engine room checks en route as well as talked through the various systems (like trying the emergency tiller). The weather was a mild summer day and Nora is a great hostess (as well as a very astute mechanic in the engine room). We seemed to be constantly eating delicious treats and Bob was clearly pleased to be plunked down in his new Stidd helm chair marveling at and engaging with all of the "dashboard diversions" that beckoned him.

We did our official hand off and offshore delivery near the end of the trip and arrived in Sidney around 4:40 pm. This turned out to be a 10 ½- hour day covering 78 miles. Bob cleared us in through Canadian Customs and we soon found our slip in the marina. I saw several other Nordhavns in the marina (including good friends Sandy and John Henrichs who were aboard their Nordhavn 64).



We wound up checking into a hotel for the evening since Nora wasn't quite ready for overnight guests yet. After dropping off our bags we went to the local pub for a nice dinner...and ran into the Miners (Dave and Carol) who purchased 43#29 last summer and were enjoying some time aboard in the same marina.



In the morning we had a light breakfast of coffee and pastries before setting off to our

ultimate destination – the new home port for *Nora's Ark* – Point Roberts. Bob and Nora are Canadians and live not far from Point Roberts so it's an easy drive for them to get to their boat. It's an interesting slice of land, a chunk of US soil surrounded by Canada (I kept thinking of it as a NW Guantanamo Bay, Cuba without any of the military presence). Look it up on a chart; it's got to be the result of some map maker negotiations decades ago. We got boarded by US Homeland Security along the way. Behind my grin I was biting my tongue watching as they traipsed across the brand new perfect carpet in their high laced-up boots which I didn't *dare* ask be removed.



Our travel distance from Sidney to Point Roberts was about 40 miles. The spring tides showed us arriving after the low tide mark and the water was filling the marina, but it appeared pretty shallow as we approached. We entered slowly and watched a sailboat who was planning to exit make an about face after bumping the bottom and returning to their dock. This was going to be a good test of our draft. Too good, in fact, as we pattered in very cautiously and then...yep, you guessed it: our turn. We nudged the bottom. I was in the pilothouse with Bob and he calmly stopped the boat and then put us in reverse. While he was steering and reversing I used the bow and stern thrusters to gently wiggle our hull and soon we were free. Well, they say you aren't really cruising if you don't run aground occasionally and this little pause only meant we would need to retrace our steps to deeper water and then cruise around for an hour or so while the marina basin filled up with the tide. There was no wind and as we casually killed time it was interesting to watch a sailboat trying to ghost around with no breeze. No better way to appreciate all the comforts of our Nordhavn home than watching (and feeling for) a couple of frustrated sailors relying on the forces of nature for propulsion!

We finally waited it out and made a clean entry on our next approach then tied up to the US Customs dock. With the paperwork complete we powered back up and headed to our new home slip.



Nora's Ark is berthed on an end tie and by now, of course, the wind had freshened making our docking a bit trickier, but Bob handled our landing like a pro and soon we were tied up, shutting things down, connected the shore power and were making our plans to start heading home. The four of us hopped into the Grizzly (this is a true limited edition classic offroad beast that Bob has restored and must be a predecessor to the Hummer - or at least carry some similar DNA) and after clearing out of US customs and driving in to Canada we went to the Langthorne home to drop off some gear and switch cars.

Our total trip was about 116 miles on the water compressed into two days of travel with two Customs check-ins and we crammed a lot of cruising and training into that short window of time.



A couple of months later my wife Pam and I attended the Nordhavn Northwest Rendezvous in Port Ludlow, WA and our “new best friends” were Bob and Nora. They weren’t able to bring *Nora’s Ark* due to scheduling conflicts and business travel, but they did get to enjoy her for several days of cruising this summer.



Bob reports that all is well, there are, naturally, a few kinks to be worked out, but he and Nora are thrilled with their boat. Some of the “nice touches” the Langthornes added are shown in the attached photos. One thing that Bob said to me recently has been particularly intriguing...he and Nora are already talking about a larger boat. Now *Nora’s Ark* has the “two” of everything already...but as that song goes, “too much of everything is not enough” so it will be interesting to see what happens next.

***AUTHOR’S NOTE: I finished this article a few weeks ago and called Bob to talk about it and get his permission to post the story. We had failed to come to terms on a larger Nordhavn, but he did find a builder who wanted 4338 to take in on their trawler in inventory...so I was a bit hesitant to confuse things by posting this and decided to wait a bit to see what happened. *Nora’s Ark* came on the market and swiftly sold through the Nordhavn Seattle office by Barbara Lippert so some new people are getting a brand new Nordhavn 43 without the wait and Bob and Nora have their larger trawler so everyone wins!

Jeff Merrill is a sales representative for Nordhavn based in our Southwest office. He loves to talk about the Nordhavn 43!

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