

November 8, 2011

Sandstone charter a great experience for future Nordhavn owners

By Jeff Merrill



The Nordhavn 47 is, for many cruising couples, the perfect offshore trawler. With the raised pilothouse configuration behind a tall freeboard foredeck and fronted by the protection of a Portuguese bridge it is an easy boat to operate safely in a variety of sea conditions. The living accommodations are ideal with the master stateroom aft underneath the pilothouse and located to offer quick, easy access to the engine room.



The forward guest stateroom allows for guests to join you while cruising. Nordhavn offers two guest cabin arrangements – the standard layout features a double wide berth to port with an office desk to starboard and we also can build two sets of outboard bunks – providing four sleeping berths with or without a centerline bulkhead. The salon and galley are on the same level just forward of the aft cockpit with large windows providing excellent visibility and a huge open feel.



Many potential Nordhavn owners fall in love with our designs, but most can't consummate the relationship without first plunking down a million plus for the privilege...unless they can hitch a ride to taste the experience and savor the lifestyle. Or better yet spend a few days to a week or more



on a charter.

Voyages Northwest is a charter boat organization headquartered in Seattle with a specialty fleet of Nordhavns available to sample and over the past couple of years their bookings have increased to the point where advance reservations are a must to lock in the dates that best work with your calendar/schedule.



Doug Smith, managing director of Voyages Northwest has done a great job of promoting his Nordhavn fleet and one day after meeting with him in his office on Lake Union the light came on for me that he could be holding an incredible sales tool. Hold that thought.



I was contacted by a potential Nordhavn buyer from South Africa who was interested in one of my Nordhavn 40 listings in

California. After several emails he agreed to fly out to California to meet with me to view the 40 with the intention of making an offer. We spent a day aboard and he was hooked on Nordhavn, but he was uncertain if the 40 was the right size for his family. We took a brokerage 47 out for a sea trial the next day and he was convinced that the 47 was the ideal size. After reviewing all of the Nordhavn 47s on the market worldwide and trying to determine the ultimate cost to get any of them home to his native South Africa we started talking about a new build as an option to save on shipping...and get all of the latest developments included.



I showed him drawings and photos of the new Nordhavn 52 and he knew that building a new boat would take a bit more time, but not only could he order a Nordhavn with exactly what he wanted, he could also have it shipped to Capetown for commissioning and take delivery at home.

We met for a day reviewing options and negotiated a deal on a 52 that we had started in production without a buyer, but as close as we got he still wanted one



final concession...something that would add value to the entire purchasing/ownership experience and better prepare him for cruising on his own. I suggested that spending time aboard a similar sized Nordhavn with his family would help his entire family buy into the dream and suggested a charter on the Voyages Northwest Nordhavn 47, *Sandstone*.

We made the deal on the new Nordhavn 52 and reserved a week charter aboard *Sandstone* to fill some of the time while his new boat was completed.



I spoke with Doug Smith from Voyages Northwest and Mark Knoll, the owner of *Sandstone*, to organize a fun cruising itinerary in the Puget Sound. Voyages Northwest normally only offers captains charters, but my extensive Nordhavn



experience qualified me to skipper and met their insurance requirements.

of seven.

We drove our rental van to the Whole Foods market about 10 minutes from the Elliot Bay Marina and had a field day filling up shopping carts. The ladies had outlined a rough menu

It was a rainy day when I met the family in Seattle and they were a bit jet lagged when we hopped aboard *Sandstone* for a walk through to assess the equipment and living spaces before going out shopping to provision. It was going to be a full boat, husband and wife with son, grandparents, a family friend and me for a crew total



with breakfast, lunch, dinner and snack items and were excited to be able to prepare most of the meals aboard using the stove, oven and microwave. I like to get lots of snacks - pretzels, chips and nuts and my kids love string cheese so I thought their son would too – surprise, they'd never had string cheese before! One of the many culinary discoveries to be enjoyed in the coming days.

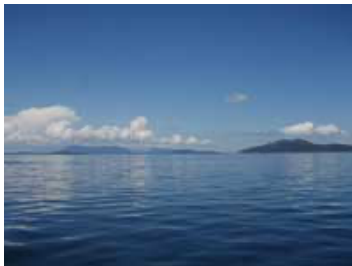


We spent the night on *Sandstone* after reviewing our charts and discussing the various harbors we would visit. I wanted to make one short trip each day with the goal being to spend a couple of hours underway practicing navigation and reviewing systems



operations and arriving in a community to tie up at the dock by late afternoon so we could plug into shore power and stroll through town in the evening.

The first day was a quick trip from Elliot Bay (where *Sandstone* is based) to Poulsbo. I love the town of Poulsbo and while mom and grandmother made sandwiches for lunch, the men folk – dad, grandfather, son, friend and I all talked about how wonderful it was to be out on the water and what a wonderful family vacation this was going to be. It was a two hour trip, enough for us to get our sea legs and have a nice rest that evening.



The following day we went on a six hour haul to Port Townsend, another favorite sea port of mine. There we ran into Thomas and Klaus Loehr (long time friends, Klaus and his wife Elizabeth own a



Nordhavn 40), then on to Roche Harbor (5.5 hours) in the San Juan Islands. We did engine room checks and we passed the 47 *Boundless Grace* on the way and

had a quick chat on VHF.



I had never been to Roche Harbor before and it is a great destination resort, living up to its reputation as an idyllic getaway. We tied up at our slip and went up to the Hotel De Haro to make dinner reservations when a



familiar voice shouted out my name. What a treat to run into Nordhavn 43 owners Kurt and Susan Antonius who had flown up from Southern California to one of their favorite places to celebrate Kurt's birthday. We all got together for dinner that night and talked about the extended Nordhavn family. Kurt offered some ideas on how they have their 43 set up and I took notes on ideas that we might incorporate into the 52.

We hiked, shopped and ate for the remainder of the week dodging ferries and enjoying stops in



Anacortes (a 5 hour run including a lunch anchorage to launch the tender and play around) and Edmonds before finally delivering *Sandstone* back to Seattle. We timed the tides to skim through Desolation Pass and ran down the length of Whidbey Island watching a bunch of sailboats in a race slowly travel by in the opposite



direction.

The entire week was a blur of conversation about boating experiences and ideas enjoyed by all seven of us on the 47. Our itinerary was easy to accomplish and a nice blend of time under way to make meals and enjoy travelling as well as an easy stop each night to stretch our legs and walk into town. We also happened to have an incredible run of sunny days and calm weather with the beautiful Pacific Northwest revealing her incredible beauty and making many strong memories for all of us.



The opportunity to live aboard continuously for several days served to whet a substantial appetite for cruising on the new 52 back home in Capetown, South Africa. We gained all kinds of insights into this marvelous lifestyle based on firsthand experience. It really was an incredible way to prepare for ownership and gain experience in operating a Nordhavn.

Chartering a Nordhavn from Voyages Northwest is a fantastic way to “try before you buy” so much so that even after delivering the new 52 to Capetown we booked a second week aboard *Sandstone*.

Note: PAE/Nordhavn does not have a formal business arrangement with Voyages Northwest and there are a small number of other companies that offer the ability to charter a Nordhavn, but VNW has really worked hard to develop a Nordhavn fleet that is continually expanding what is available. I encourage all seriously interested future Nordhavn owners and Nordhavn Dreamers to look into the various opportunities to get some time aboard. From my experience this is a “game changer” that is a proven winner.



You can contact Voyages Northwest directly to find out more about Nordhavns to charter including rates and availability.

Voyages Northwest - [www.voyagesnw.com](http://www.voyagesnw.com)

Doug Smith – [dougs@voyagesnw.com](mailto:dougs@voyagesnw.com)

(c) JMYS 2022 - Please contact: [Jeff@JMYS.com](mailto:Jeff@JMYS.com)