

January 23, 2012

Telling (trawler) time

When exactly is it best to be out on your trawler? Some would say it's best out in the middle of a glassy Atlantic Ocean en route to a European destination. Others would say it's best in rough, combative seas, when the safety and relief of being in your trawler is most apparent. Still others might have other thoughts on the topic. Each one has their own idea of what constitutes the ideal "trawler time," and all of them are correct, after all, it's an entirely subjective question and likely, many experienced trawlerites have multiple responses. For Eric Bloomquist, owner of Nordhavn 64 Oso Blanco, and co-author of the fabulous blog [Cruising with Oso Blanco](#), it's a combination of different scenarios. He's spent countless hours on Nordhavns (*Oso Blanco* is the Bloomquists' third Nordhavn), covered thousands and thousands of miles in them, and so has a good idea of what trawler time means to him. See if you agree...



Trawler Time

Posted: 02 Nov 2011 01:01 PM PDT

It's 4 am on our third day out from New Caledonia and we have covered over 630 nm in less than 70 hours. I just came back on watch after 8 hrs of wonderful sleep. I woke up slowly in a foggy haze – unsure of where I was and feeling only a gentle motion. The sound of the engine is a distant hum. Are we moving?

This is Trawler Time. The Pacific is just that – peaceful, but still alive. The boat is doing exactly what it is designed to do – working with the sea – not against it and carrying us toward our next destination, safely and smoothly. The eastern horizon has already taken on a pink orange glow foreshadowing another spectacular ocean sunrise. But the sea is not still today. As I came up to the galley for my morning coffee, I expected to see that mirror like, summer morning stillness we so often experience at our little lake in Wisconsin. This morning, the ocean is still providing 3' – 4' swells, but they are so long, so gentle, and graceful that the boat does not rock, roll, or twist about. Oso Blanco slowly rises and settles as each swell passes under. Each individual swell is visible as it gradually approaches us, one after another - lifting our 90 tons like a duck on the lake and softly settling. There is a gentleness to the ocean at times like this, but its power is unmistakable.

Sometimes during foolish cocktail hours, we get into the unanswerable debate of which is better, a sailboat or a power boat. To me, there is no more wonderful feeling than a finely tuned sailboat on a broad reach, in perfect conditions. The feeling of power, charging through the water, with only the sound of the waves breaking under the bow. It is what sailing dreams are based on.

Most of our sailing friends have never experienced Trawler Time. Yes, the seas are gentle and the sunrise is imminent, but the wind is very light and wandering around the compass like it's had 3 shells of kava. To be under sail at this moment would be rolling from side to side as the sails flop back and forth searching for direction from the wind. When we used to race in these conditions, we said one had to drool over the side to see if we were moving forwards or backwards. But this is our time. Our Nordhavn is purring along at 1350 rpm doing 7.8 kts toward Australia. The systems are working perfectly together and our stabilizing system reduces any roll to a gentle motion. All our doors and ports are open and the soft breeze drifts throughout the boat. With the engine turning so effortlessly deep below, all one is aware of is the sound of the waves as they roll along the hull.

Sailboat vs. powerboat is a foolish debate. Out here, we are all doing it our own ways. We take what the sea offers and hopefully we each enjoy our boat and each day. The fact that we get to drink a beer with interesting folks in faraway places and discuss such issues shows how lucky we are. The boat is only a means to an end.

But, then there is Trawler Time.....

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PS:

I apologize (not really) for any redundancy or repetitiveness in my ramblings while at sea. After a few days and nights in near perfect conditions I seem to enter a peaceful fog (purple haze?) that induces an inspiration to try to describe what it's like out here. This is especially true when I come on watch for my usual 4 am shift. Unfortunately, it also may blur previous attempts and the story may be repeated. Or is it I'm just getting old?

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