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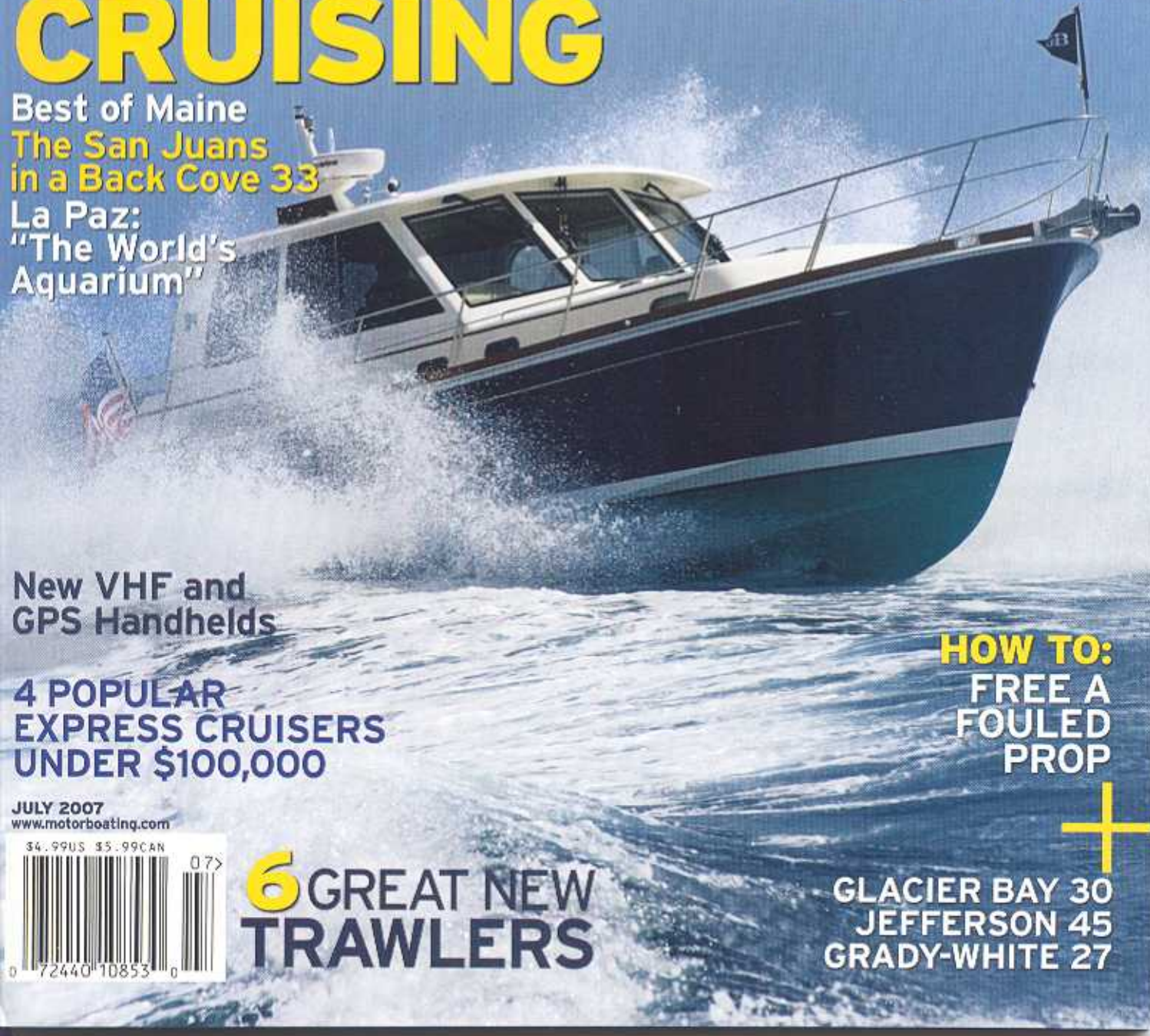
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BIMINI

The new EASTBAY 45 SX from Grand Banks demonstrates



BEAUTY

a flair for cruising comfort and fine performance in Bahamian waters.

Story by **Capt. John Wooldridge** Photography by **Gary John Norman**



I

IT WAS BLOWING A STEADY 18 KNOTS OUT OF the south the afternoon we cast off the lines to make a 10-nautical-mile run from South Bimini to Cat Cay in the Bahamas for a test drive of the new Grand Banks Eastbay 45 SX. The Gulf Stream greeted us with endless rows of four-footers, some of which appeared to be steeply stacked up on top of one another. I throttled up to about 25 knots and let the deep-V hull designed by C. Raymond Hunt Associates go to work.

The hull's sharp forefoot effectively cut into the approaching waves, while the flare forward knocked down the spray and added just enough buoyancy to provide lift as we drove through the blue water. Wide chines aft provided excellent side-to-side stability when we turned the boat to quarter the seas. At the helm, while looking for the flatter spots to give my shipmates the most comfortable ride possible, I misjudged one of the taller waves and the boat quickly dropped several feet down its back side. The Eastbay landed level and without a bone-jarring reentry, thanks to the deep-V shape amidships. The props stayed in the water, hooked up and driving, and we never lost headway.

The marriage of a Hunt-designed hull with the renowned boatbuilding expertise of Grand Banks has produced a yacht that makes cruising in less than perfect conditions a real confidence builder. One thing I never heard during the sea trial was creaking joinerwork, rattling drawers or clattering doors. Everything about the interior in the Eastbay 45 SX is built to go to sea.

This yacht is one of six in the Eastbay family of Downeast-inspired

EASTBAY 45

SPECIFICATIONS

LOA (W/PLATFORM): 45'2"
 BEAM: 14'6"
 DRAFT: 3'7"
 DISPLACEMENT: 41,000 lbs.
 FUEL: 475 gals.
 WATER: 150 gals.
 TEST POWER: (2) 567-hp Caterpillar C9 diesel inboards.
 BASE PRICE: On Request

PERFORMANCE

RPM	KNOTS	GPH	DB-A
900	7.6	4.0	64
1200	9.5	10.0	67
1500	13.1	18.4	70
1800	18.8	27.0	71
2100	21.7	38.0	74
2400	29.5	59.4	78
2500	30.5	60.0	78

Speeds measured by GPS on the Atlantic Ocean w/six adults on board, 238 gals. water and 110 gals. fuel. Fuel consumption measured by the Caterpillar electronic engine-management system. Sound levels measured at the helm in dB-A.

Grand Banks Yachts
www.grandbanks.com



cruisers. It joins the 39-, 49- and 55-footers in the SX line of performance-oriented models that feature a fully enclosed salon with hardtop. It

offers wonderful views and outstanding protection from the elements.

One of the most attractive things about the Eastbay 45 SX is the range of accommodation plans it's offered with. The standard plan features a large salon with seating for about eight people, galley down to port and two staterooms with a single head and enclosed shower. The boat I tested had the galley up and relocated to the aft port corner of the salon, which meant fewer stairs to climb when serving meals. It also placed the settee and dining table directly opposite the helm, so that family and guests stay very much in touch with the helmsman and have identical views forward—a nice option.

Our test boat had the standard guest stateroom forward of the helm, which is great for families. Some





HULL MAGIC: The deep-V hull by C. Raymond Hunt Associates produces a comfortable ride in open waters (above), is stable at rest (below), and draws less than four feet (bottom left).

owners may prefer to convert this space to an office. To do so, Grand Banks installs pocket doors in place of the bulkhead; they slide open and hide away, and open up the lower level very nicely. In the space to port where the galley normally is located, our test boat had a utility room with a combo washer/dryer (optional) and a freezer, two features few cruising yachtsmen will want to be without. This space can also be configured as a day head.

All layouts for the Eastbay specify a master stateroom forward with a queen-size island berth; teak-and-holly steps are on either side. Finished in teak ceiling strips

and furnished with two hanging lockers, the master is a warm and inviting living space for owners. Two wide drawers in the base of the beautiful, handcrafted berth showcase the fine joinerwork that Grand Banks is known for. The adjoining head compartment has a contemporary shower with acrylic cylindrical door and a teak-and-holly sole that's hand-fit and beautifully finished.

In the main salon, the wood sole is complemented by finely finished teak in window treatments and mullions, carefully fit furniture and a helm that is as functional as it is beautiful. The designers wisely left enough room on the console for a pair of large electronic displays, mounted at a height that makes it easy for the driver to see vital navigation information at a glance. Electronic engine displays flank the wheel, making detailed performance data available at the touch of a button. The teak-rimmed sport steering wheel tilts, and the Stidd helm chair is mounted to a mechanism, hidden in a teak base, that adjusts the chair fore and aft.

When the weather's right, the driver can touch a button and increase the natural ventilation by opening a power sunroof. A power window behind the sink in the aft bulkhead also lowers on cue, and the upper half of the Dutch-style cabin door opens manually for even more airflow. Screened sliding side windows, plus skylight hatches with screens and blinds, are also included. An entertainment center located behind the helm houses a flat-screen TV mounted on a lift. Here you'll also find locker stowage and an optional icemaker.

The granite and teak galley is mostly located to port,



WEATHER REPORT: A fully enclosed salon offers protection from the elements (left); excellent visibility from the helm (above); and snug comfort in the master stateroom with a queen-sized berth (below, left).



equipped with centerline service points for easy checks. There are Groco Safety Seacocks on raw-water inlets to help control flooding in the event of a hull breach, Racor water-separating fuel filters for each engine as well as for the Onan 9-kW genset, plus raw-water intake strainers for the engines. Delta-T Air Demisters supply the engine room with plenty of clean, dry air, while the entire engine compartment is well-insulated to help reduce sound in the salon above and staterooms forward. A close look at electrical connections showed that all wiring was numbered and colored for easy maintenance.

All in all, the Grand Banks Eastbay 45 SX is a splendid example of the company's commitment to quality. It's designed well and finished to high standards, facts I'll most likely remember whenever I think of that fantastic ride out of Bimini. ♪

although a second granite countertop for additional working space and a below-counter refrigerator are located just across the aisle to starboard. The galley also includes a microwave/convection oven, electric cooktop and a deep stainless sink to work with, plus an exhaust blower and enough stowage to please any cruising chef.

Access to the engine room is through a hatch in the galley sole. Climbing down, I saw that both engines were

PEER GROUP

LEGACY 42



With twin 425-hp Cummins diesels, this well-appointed yacht built in Rhode Island can hit a top speed of 28 knots. Base price is about \$672,000.

SABRE 42



This Maine-built, traditional hardtop design can achieve a 29-knot top speed with twin 440-hp Yanmars. Base price is \$590,000.

HINCKLEY 44



Twin 480-hp Yanmar diesels powering Hamilton waterjets push the Hinckley Talaria 44 to 30 knots. JetStick steering eases docking. Price on request.

EASTBAY 45

When Grand Banks launched the first Eastbay 38 Express in 1993, the company started a new trend in yacht design, capturing the enduring appeal of Downeast boats and fusing it with the company's trademark teak interiors. To differentiate the Eastbay brand from the builder's successful line of long-range cruisers, Grand Banks turned to C. Raymond Hunt Associates for a go-anywhere-hull design that would perform efficiently with a brace of powerful diesel inboards. On the 45, designers chose to give the boat plenty of beam so that owners could choose from one of several interior layouts.

HOT

- 1 Dutch-style door and power window in the aft bulkhead open helm deck to the cockpit.
- 2 Layout options let the owners customize the cabin interior.
- 3 Visibility from the helm is obstruction-free.

NOT

- 1 Some will prefer to have a starboard door for quick access to the side deck from the helm station.
- 2 There are no built-in seats in the cockpit, so bring comfortable folding chairs.
- 3 To quickly check systems, you have to open the dark glass door on the electrical panel.

WATER WORKS

The day head shown in this plan can also be configured as a utility room with Splendide combo washer/dryer and Coolmatic freezer.

SOCIAL SPOT

In this optional salon layout, four people can sit on the Ultraleather-covered dinette sofa and be on the same level as the helmsman, with the same great view. The galley is aft, convenient to serve guests in the cockpit or the dinette.

GEAR HOSE

In the large cockpit, there's hand-laid teak planking with three large, well-drained hatches for stowage and steering gear access, all standard.

ONBOARD OFFICE

If you need a place to work while cruising, the spacious guest cabin can be configured as an office with pocket doors—they replace the solid bulkhead in the walkway.

WISSA CENTER

The teak entertainment center aft of the helm seat houses an ice-maker below and a flat-screen TV on a power lift that drops out of sight.

BETTER BULKHEAD

The aft bulkhead has curved-glass corners to improve visibility, a Dutch-style door with independently opening upper and lower sections, and a power window behind the sink.

