



STORY & PHOTOS: DAVID LOCKWOOD

# D Y N A M I C

Grand Banks have more than 50 years of timeless styling behind its extensive range of motoryachts, such as the 47 Heritage EU. David Lockwood found it to be more than a staid society cruiser...

# Opulence

The new 47 Heritage EU (hull no. 45 pictured and 59 now ordered for Australia) is a beguiling and bedazzling boat that, like all new-generation Grand Banks, blends old-world charm with new-world comforts. Teak joinery, handcrafted timber furniture and planked cabin sides live in harmony with Gaggenau microwave, Grundig flat-screen TVs and a pair of powerful Caterpillar diesel engines.

Of course, Grand Banks are made from fibreglass these days — those clinker sides are merely in the mould — yet for all the mod cons and electronic contrivances these motoryachts remain as fitting (and fetching)

as at any time in the company's 52-year history. As ever, their timeless styling has a lot to do with their enduring appeal. And with diesel hitting record levels, a boat that potters about makes perfect sense. Right?

Pottering is something Grand Banks are famous for and, I might add, in a most dignified manner. Nowadays, however, the boats are real wolves in sheep's clothing. While they look like displacement cruisers of yore, they are raring to go. Put the throttles down on the 47 Heritage EU and the hard-chine hull lifts bodily from the water to a top speed of, wow, more than 20 knots!

You can take it as fast or as slow as you

like, as your time, the depth of your pockets and your cruising whims permit, but with real acceleration and fast cruise speeds on hand, there are many more possibilities. Undertake fast passages, make the most of windows of good weather, and speed is something you want crossing a bar of which, need I remind you, our coastline has plenty.

### COMPANY KUDOS

Founded as American Marine in 1956 in Hong Kong, Grand Banks have always been hugely popular. For example, the yard built 1141 of the GB 36, a boat launched in 1964 and retired in 2003; 1560 of the





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wildly popular GB 42 launched in 1965 and retired in 2005; and about 300 of the GB 46 launched in 1984.

But it wasn't until 1969 when it stopped building timber boats that Grand Banks opened its factory in Singapore. The first fibreglass Grand Banks was a 36 (hull no. 366) built in 1973. The new Eastbay range was launched a few decades later in 1993. Then in 1995 it opened a second, bigger factory in Malaysia. In 2001, the first of its Aleutian motoryachts, the 64, was launched.

Depending on economic circumstances, Grand Banks now builds 70 to 100 boats a year, with 80 expected to roll out of Malaysia and Singapore this year. While anyone can build a boat in Asia these days, a lot that is special about Grand Banks stems from its faithful staff and quality-control standards. There are more than 20,000 man-hours in a boat like the 47 Heritage EU, I'm told.

But while they might appear little changed to the untrained eye, there are big differences between the Grand Banks ranges. The classic Heritage cruisers from 41 to 52ft have hulls designed by Sparkman and Stephens with full forward sections for greater accommodation. The relatively new Eastbays from 39 to 55ft are a different kettle of fish, with Down East styling and faster hulls from the Raymond C. Hunt design stable. Then come the 59 to 72ft Aleutian motoryachts for true long-range, liveaboard boating and, with

engine options, 25kts-plus top-end speed.

Within these three ranges are various layout options. For example, the 47 Heritage comes in the Europa or EU version tested here, but also the Classic or CL aft cabin model which replaces the 42 Classic, the most popular Grand Banks ever. The signature features of the EU boats are walkaround decks and a flat cockpit covered by a moulded hardtop. The new 41 Heritage EU (July launch) will be available with MerCruiser's Zeus propulsion system with steerable drives and joystick docking. Talk about a surprise package!

Meanwhile, the Eastbay boats are single-level lobster-style craft except for the

47-footer that comes in a flybridge version (tested in *Trade-A-Boat*, December, 2006). Then there are the Aleutians, which all have pilothouses for cruising in fair and foul weather. The world release of the 65 Aleutian (\$4.1 million) will be at this year's Sanctuary Cove International Boat Show before heading west to its new Australian owner.

Which brings us to local representation. Riviera, Australia's biggest boatbuilder, has been the Australian agent for Grand Banks since mid last year. Naturally, the news was welcomed by pre-existing Grand Banks

**Clockwise from opposite top: The 47 Heritage EU retains the Grand Banks elegance; View of the cockpit from the bridge; Stainless steel hawsepipe and mooring cleat; Staircase lifts to access the engineroom; Stateroom in the bow has a giant island bed; Walkaround decks and cockpit have full bulwarks and safety rails.**

owners, but it also brings surety to those considering jumping aboard. In its first six months, Riviera has sold four Grand Banks — ironically, it built about 50 Grand Banks from 36 to 42ft here under licence in the late-80s — and new Grand Banks owners are backed by its national dealer network, R Marine, with outlets dotted along the coast.

**LIVEABOARD LUXURIES**

Back to the 47 Heritage EU. Although construction is nothing out of the ordinary, with a solid GRP hull that tips the scales to 23,055kg dry, the hull and deck are backed by a five-year warranty and there is a similar warranty against osmosis. The quality of the engineering and the finish are commensurate with a premium pricetag (\$1.428 million as tested), but best of all, for those of us who like to spend time on boats — not days away, but weeks at a time — there's a lot to embrace.

I won't bang on about the engineering, besides we had limited opportunity to get down and dirty, but all the key seacocks are labelled, the wiring is coded, the manuals are impressive and there are access points for most everything. Best of all, engineroom access is terrific behind the external lift-up moulded staircase. The walk-in arrangement will encourage owners to partake in (preventative) maintenance. A pair of Cummins fully electronic

QSC8.3 500hp diesel engines are standard on the 47 Heritage, however, the demonstrator had upgraded Caterpillar C9 575mhp (metric horsepower) donks for 24kts top speed when the boat has a clean hull. Upper and lower helm stations means cruising in all weather, too, potter about and explore new anchorages or put the throttles down and dash home.

Although it's not a custom yard, Grand Banks offers layout choices and a long factory options list for the 47 Heritage. The Sleiþner bowthruster is a must, while the Twin Disc single lever electronic controls to both upper and lower stations were a neat near-\$20,000 addition. The 47 Heritage also had optional 9.5kW Onan generator, air-con to the cabins and saloon, and an inverter so you can watch TV or heat supper without relying on the generator.

The teak decking in the flybridge and Sunbrella bimini add \$25,500 to the package and there were \$11,821 worth of interior blinds. But in dollar terms, the 270kg-lift MarQuip 6 davit for \$11,253 seems better value and liveaboard boaties will welcome the watermaker (\$16,889) and washer-dryer (\$6400). Though big-ticket items, they boost the liveaboard luxury. The boat also has a huge 984lt water capacity, 291lt holding tank and handy 2271lt of fuel in dual switchable tanks.

**FAMILY FRIENDLY DECKS**

One thing you soon notice about Grand Banks is the consideration given to human factors. You can move around the decks, range up to the bridge, or step down into the cabins carrying a cup of coffee without fear of tripping up. The deep walkaround decks with full bulwarks and safety rails make the 47 Heritage an especially family, grandkid and dog-friendly boat.

We came aboard via the swim platform, which is big enough to sit on, through the transom door and gate, and into the cockpit, where there is a hot/cold deckshower. While it's not a huge cockpit, it's big enough for

**HIGHS**

- Prestige badge
- Great backing from importers Riviera
- Terrific thought to human factors and deck space
- Walkaround access to the bow
- Big flybridge for cruising with company
- Lower helm means all-weather protection
- Great finish and teak joinery is a cut above
- Engineered to go places
- Huge galley for entertaining
- Comfortable twin-cabin, twin-head layout
- We love the motion through the water
- Speed to burn
- All the mod cons

**LOWS**

- Premium price
- Timber rails and trim will require maintenance
- Walkaround decks take space from saloon
- Big galley dominates saloon
- Will chew fuel when you put the pegs down
- Could do with more fridge space for extended cruising

assembling a small teak table and chairs. Otherwise, head up top to the flybridge overhang where there's as much room again. Big stainless steel cleats and fairleads will assist with mooring, while plenty of handrails trace the deep walkaround decks that step up to the high and dry bow.

The Grand Banks has a heavy-duty anchoring setup, salt and freshwater deckwashes, and a forward fender locker that doubles as a seat. In fact, the foredeck is sufficiently flat to entertain at anchor and underway.

Meanwhile, flybridge access is via a moulded staircase. Up top, is an L-shaped lounge around a dinette, a separate two-seater lounge, and a high-backed central Stidd helm chair. A sink is in a moulded





## GRAND BANKS ON THE HAWKESBURY

We tested the 47 Heritage EU during a Grand Banks owners' rally hosted by R Marine Sydney. Twenty-one boats ranging from timber beauties like the 32 and 36 Classics made in the early 1970s to the present-day craft including the 47 Heritage and Eastbay made for an impressive showing.

Amazingly, this gathering of Grand Banks was the biggest outside North America, we're told. And despite decades separating the generations, the lineage was apparent. Each Grand Banks flaunted the classic lines and displayed the determined demeanors that have for decades made them cruisers of choice.

We took the 47 Heritage EU from Pittwater to Dangar Island to meet the fleet. A photo session ensued before the conga line proceeded at a stately pace along a delightful stretch of the mighty Hawkesbury River to that famous waterfront dining institution, Peat's Bite,

which is perched perfectly at the mouth of Berowra Waters.

Anchors were dispatched in just a few metres of water and a long lunch ensued. But the food is just part of the attraction. Entertainment comes courtesy of the owners of Peat's Bite and is as much a part of the show as the stunning scenery, without so much as another house to ruin the sense of escapism.

Unsurprisingly, numerous (ex) sailors were among the 20 Grand Banks owners who, unlike some boat owners, seem to enjoy serious long-range cruising. Brett Jeffrey is a case in point. He bought his 42 Classic in Singapore for what, at the time, seemed a bargain price.

Jeffrey hired a skipper to deliver the boat to Sydney and was aboard en route to Bali when an overheating problem struck. There was nothing for it but to return to Singapore, a round trip which cost him 4000 litres in fuel. Not such a cheap boat

after all. After that, he left the delivery to the experts, met up with his boat in Cairns and drove it from there to Sydney, which is about a third of the distance to Singapore.

Needless to say, Grand Banks are made for long passages, with a great cruising range at displacement speeds, bigger-than-usual water capacities, and generous living areas that, depending on the model, extend from an aft cabin to a stateroom in the bow.

But it's only in the last few years that the evergreen Grand Banks have morphed into fast getaway machines. Fast or slow, a loyal following remains and there are even Grand Banks owners' forums where you can obtain great advice.

As you will see between these pages, prices on the second-hand market are holding up well. And with Riviera's backing, the badge is enjoying a higher profile. Expect more Grand Banks rallies and rendezvous in future.

— David Lockwood

**Clockwise from opposite top: The 47 Heritage EU is built for spending weeks away at a time; Flybridge helm and entertainment area; There is an abundance of Burmese teak joinery from ceiling handrails to flooring; Lower helm features a big timber ship's wheel; The Grand Banks owners' rally.**

amenities centre that has scope to fit a fridge, icemaker and BBQ. And while the aft bridgedeck had a davit and was designed to carry a tender, you can have rails fitted so it doubles as entertaining space.

With clears and a bimini, there's a reasonable amount of protection at the bridge. But the fold-down dash does an even better job of protecting electronics, which included a Raymarine E120, autopilot repeater, and ST290 with readout of navigation data and depth. There was also an optional spotlight and chain counter, plus bowthruster, Bennett trim tabs and the electronic Twin Disc shifts with preset Cruise 1, 2 and 3, and synchronization with single-level control.

Last, but not least, a big timber wheel reached out to shake hands and remind you of the fact you have a motoryacht underfoot. And where there isn't teak, you'll find an easy-clean, non-skid deck to assist with footing. Not that it lurches.

### INTERIOR GLOSS

The abundance of timeless Burmese teak joinery extends from ceiling handrails to flooring. There are oodles of opening windows, a starboard opening door alongside the lower helm, and a traditional forward awning window for light and natural ventilation. Or call on the air-con.

The L-shaped lounge to port, set around the optional high-low timber table, will cater for four or convert into a double berth should you need to sleep more than four aboard. The three-seater lounge opposite can also convert into a berth and, although doubling as prime possie for watching the TV, it might also come in handy when anchored in less-than-favourable conditions. The lower helm is alongside.

Though it swallows up a good deal of saloon

space, the galley will woo keen cooks. There are generous granite counters, with fiddles to help prevent accidents, microwave, four-burner cooktop with pot holders, fridge, and small freezer under the helm seat opposite, alongside the optional icemaker and wetbar.

The lower helm has another Stidd helm chair, a big, sturdy ship's wheel, all-teak dash with Raymarine electronics, while the AC/DC panel is nearby...as can be your guests or crew in inclement weather. In fact, with the autopilot and radar alarms, you could cruise places while cooking a fish curry. Just a thought...

The two-cabin two-head layout is one we often espouse as being perfect for families or cruising with another couple. Add the impromptu berths for three in the saloon and, if you were silly enough, you could sleep seven aboard at holiday time.

Owners will find their teak-planked stateroom in the bow. There's a giant island berth with innerspring mattress, separate TV, huge hanging locker, cupboards and drawers for your clobber.

The en suite forward and communal/guest's head back to port boast top-shelf Tecma heads, big man-sized separate shower stalls, teak vanities with granite counters, and Grohe fittings.

### DRIVING MISS DAISY

The 47 Heritage EU is very much the owner-driver cruiser. Views are great forward and, when parking from the bridge, you can see the portside corner of the swim platform through the staircase opening. From the lower helm, a touch of trim tab improves the views when running. When parking, slide open the door and stand in the bulwarks with one hand on the throttles.

Clearly, the modified deep-vee hull on the 47 Heritage EU has a flat run aft, as it slides onto the plane willingly at 1500rpm and 10.5kts. Good passage-making speeds were anywhere from 1800rpm and 15.2kts to 2000rpm and 16.7kts. According to Caterpillar, the twin 575mhp C9 diesel engines with common rail injection consume about 62lt/h aside at 2000rpm, giving a range of roughly 280nm leaving 10 per cent of the 2270lt fuel supply in reserve. However, the engines were pulling 2400rpm rather than 2500rpm and, as touched on, the hull may well have been a tad dirty.

Although the boat topped out at 20kts for us, it had apparently previously touched 24kts, as per factory specification. That said; cruising range at fast speed isn't the forte of the 47 Heritage EU. If you really want to reel in the sea miles then chug along at about 1300rpm and 9kts for 16lt/h per side and a safe range of about 575nm or Sydney to the Gold Coast on less than a tank.

At high speed, the boat was impressively quiet. Riding up top, you get a feeling of invincibility and a greater sense of speed with the wind in your hair. And a Grand Banks doing 20-plus knots is a sight to behold. As I said, fast or slow, the choice is yours. You pay for the name but, hey, Grand Banks pays handsome dividends, especially in the long run.

## GRAND BANKS 47 HERITAGE

### PRICE AS TESTED

The Grand Banks 47 Heritage EU was selling for about \$1,428,723, w/ upgraded diesel motors, and options

### OPTIONS FITTED

Upgraded Caterpillar motors, Twin Disc single electronic controls, bowthruster, generator, air-con, Raymarine electronics, washer-dryer, teak decking and canopy to flybridge, davit, interior blinds and high-low saloon table, watermaker, icemaker, Grundig televisions, spotlight, chain counter, and more

### PRICED FROM

\$1,271,097 w/ twin Caterpillar C9 575hp diesel engines

### GENERAL

Materials:..... GRP hull, and foam-cored decks and grid stringer system  
Type:..... Modified deep-vee monohull with keel  
Length overall:..... 14.24m  
Waterline length:..... 13.42m  
Beam:..... 4.80m  
Draft:..... 1.08m  
Weight: 23,055kg (dry w/ std motors)

### CAPACITIES

Berths:..... 4 + 3  
Fuel:..... 2271lt  
Water:..... 984lt

### ENGINE

Make/model:..... Twin Cat C9s  
Type:..... Fully electronic inline six-cylinder four-stroke diesel engine with common rail fuel injection, turbocharging and aftercooling  
Rated HP:..... 575 at 2500rpm  
Displacement:..... 8.82lt  
Weight:..... 946kg (each)  
Gearboxes (Make):..... Twin Disc  
Props:..... Four-bladers

### SUPPLIED BY

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