





Grand Banks 55 Eastbay SX

It's got curves in all the right places.

BY TOM THOMPSON

The name Grand Banks evokes classic style, practicality and seaworthiness. Add luxurious and sleek, and you get the company's 55 Eastbay SX. This Down East cruiser, successor to the popular 54SX, has created quite a wake.

At a glance, the 55 Eastbay SX looks like a traditional Grand Banks, but upon closer inspection you'll see the subtle styling updates. There are more curves, in places like the salon windows and the superstructure lines, to draw the eye across its length.

The deckhouse proportions are slightly larger than its predecessor because the master suite is amidships instead of forward. The helm deck gains 3 feet in length as a result. In addition to the panoramic expanse of tall windows surrounding the space, a sliding-glass sunroof opens it up to the outdoors. A U-shaped sofa is aft to port, with an L-shaped lounge forward, opposite the helm. The standard Stidd Admiral low-back seat provides a commanding view. Wood cabinets running along the starboard side hold a pop-up 29-inch television, a fridge and an ice-maker.

Although Grand Banks offers the traditional galley-up deck plan on the 55SX, the standard configuration has the gourmet kitchen forward and down along the port side. It's a well-lighted space open to the windshield above. The range boasts four hexagon ceramic burners. Two slide-out refrigerator drawers, plus a separate freezer on the lower deck, provide ample storage for meal supplies.

The cabin accommodations on the lower deck are quite comfortable, for

not only a cruising couple but their guests as well. In addition to a walk-around queen berth with drawers beneath, each stateroom has its own generous locker space and head with a stall shower. The use of light fabrics and wood tones gives a contemporary feel. A cabinet in the companionway holds a washer/dryer.

The cockpit can have an optional L-shaped bench across the transom and along the port side, while an aft-facing bench along the back bulkhead of the cabin comes standard. A section of the seat lifts for access to the engine compartment. Three hatches in the cockpit sole get you into the lazarette. A swim platform is an option, as is a cleverly concealed davit hidden under the transom seating.

Our test boat had standard twin Caterpillar C18 derated diesel engines at 873 hp each, which moved the 55SX to a top speed of about 30 knots. At a cruising speed of 25 knots, we had a range of about 410 nautical miles. The C. Raymond Hunt-designed hull is true to the Grand Banks tradition of excellent foul-weather handling.

Specs

LOA	55'1"
Beam	16'
Draft	4'4"
Weight	63,300 lbs.
Fuel capacity	1,000 gals.
Power as tested	T/Caterpillar C18s (873 hp)
Price as tested	\$1.6 million

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