



NEW BOAT:
GRAND BANKS 55 EASTBAY SX

Banking on
30 KNOTS

Improved proportions and shapely curves make the 55 Eastbay SX the hottest Grand Banks yet.

Reliable, practical, seaworthy—for more than 50 years these were apt words to describe a Grand Banks. While these terms still apply to every Grand Banks built today, there are new words cropping up in the company's lexicon, such as fast, luxurious and sexy. This new direction is exemplified in the 55 Eastbay SX, the latest launch in the builder's line of Down East-style yachts.

Making its debut at the 2007 Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show, the 55 Eastbay SX is designed to replace a popular 54-footer introduced in 2002. The 55SX features a larger deckhouse, new layout, more spacious accommodations, an up-to-date interior, and increased power—standard twin Cat

C18 ACERT derated 873-horsepower engines deliver more than 30 knots at top speed.

Grand Banks took customer input seriously when refreshing this model, interviewing current and potential customers to see how they use their boats. Feedback showed that owners spend most of their time on the helm deck and wanted more room for entertaining and better visibility. They also wanted a bigger cockpit and more spacious accommodations below—and they were willing to give up a stateroom to get it. Another customer request called for the ability for

By RISA MERL



Top: Expansive windows in the saloon provide commanding vistas and let natural light into this entertainment area and the galley below. The open galley design (above and right) is easy to move around in and provides all the necessary equipment for an extended cruise

single-handed operation. This was important to both new and seasoned Grand Banks owners.

By changing the proportions of the deckhouse, the Grand Banks design team accomplished several of these requests at once. The new deckhouse is three feet longer than that of 54SX. This not only delivers a roomier saloon, but it also changes the exterior for an elongated and sleek pilothouse. The helm has been moved 18-inches forward; the company says its owners think this has tremendously improved visibility.

The teak-decked cockpit is two-feet larger, which provides plenty of space for the optional molded-in settee that cleverly hides an hydraulic davit system. The settee also

pops up for storage beneath and a huge lazarette provides stowage for bulky items. The cockpit sole is raised eight-inches, a concession specifically aimed at European owners who will want to board via a passarelle. With the new design, said passarelle can stow under the deck and still clear the 1,000-gallon capacity fuel tanks below. Raising the cockpit also eliminates one step from the saloon entry and provides direct sightlines into the saloon. An optional wet bar and icemaker service the area.

The 55SX has enhanced dock appeal with pleasing deckhouse lines curved forward, radial windows and rounded steps. A blend of contemporary design and traditional Grand

Specifications

LOA: 55' 1"

Beam: 16' 1"

Draft: 4' 4"

Displacement (half load): 63,300 lbs.

Fuel/water: 1,000/180 U.S. gals.

Power: 2 X Cat C18 ACERT @ 873 hp

Top/cruising speed: 31/26 knots

Range: 400 nm

Grand Banks Yachts

Seattle, WA

206-352-0116

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Banks features can be found inside as well. The saloon is warm and inviting with large windows. In the standard layout there is a large U-shaped settee with dinette to port—the hi-low table folds into a coffee table for alternate use. A 10-bottle wine rack slides out of the port settee. A bar with icemaker and fridge and the media center with hide-away flat-screen TV are to starboard. The aft window lowers, opening up the saloon to breezes and creating a pass-through to the cockpit.

Forward, the traditional standing helm and large wheel has been replaced with a Stidd helm seat and a smaller wheel. Despite initial owner skepticism, the company reports that most have praised the new setup once they've tried it. For those that don't, the seat slides back providing room for helmsmen to stand if they choose. A starboard door leads to wide side decks with toe rails and sturdy, high stainless steel handrails for safe maneuverability on deck.

Also new is a power sunroof that imparts a

sport cruiser feel. Its recessed sunshade slides out for shade on summer days. A small, raised dinette to port gives guests a great view at the captain's side while underway. In the optional layout, the dinette is replaced with twin Stidd companion seats. Another option calls for an aft galley-up arrangement, with an extra stateroom or office below.

The standard layout is designed so conversation flows easily from the saloon to the galley below with its open configuration. Two portholes in the galley also add light and ventilation to this space. Black granite counters, a sleek four-burner range and double sinks make this space contemporary and practical. It's well appointed for extended cruising with two large drawer refrigerators and a big freezer in the companionway above the washer and dryer. Storage is abundant with space under the refrigerators, stove, steps, and even beneath the galley sole.

The spacious amidships master to star-

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The redesigned helm, above, is new to Grand Banks owners, featuring a smaller wheel and a Stidd helm seat that slides back for standing operation. The amidships master, right, is perfect for long voyages with tons of storage and creature comforts.



board features an island queen-size berth underlit by LEDs, lots of drawers and a large cedar-lined hanging locker, a flat screen TV, and a hatch that lets in plenty of natural light. The design is elegant with contemporary fixtures and sconces and fabric panels breaking up expanses of teak. A separate shower with glass door, vacuflush toilet and black granite counters grace the ensuite head.

Owner input showed preference for one spacious and well-appointed guest cabin rather than two small ones. Thus the forward guest cabin also features a queen-size

berth with steps for easy access and many of the same amenities as the master suite.

Taking the 55 Eastbay SX for trial run off Ft. Lauderdale, she showed an impressively smooth ride as she turned on a dime and sliced right through any oncoming seas. With modern styling, amped-up power and inherent sex appeal combined with excellent sea keeping abilities and a dependable design, the 55 Eastbay SX is unmistakably a Grand Banks—one that honors tradition while keeping an eye on the future. *ls*

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