



CAN A LONG-DISTANCE CRUISER LIKE THE GRAND BANKS  
WEEKEND WARRIOR? CHRIS CASWELL FINDS OUT ON A 72-HOUR  
BISCAYNE BAY. Photography by Gary John Norman



# Family Ties

ALEUTIAN 65 ALSO SERVE THE  
ADVENTURE ON FLORIDA'S



Here's an insider's tip for those looking at expedition-style yachts: you don't have to go on an expedition to enjoy them.

In fact, they're just as good if you never stray more than 20 miles from home, and that's exactly how we used the new Grand Banks Aleutian 65 Raised Pilothouse. With Yachimo Art Director Dave Polard and his family, we set sail from Miami's Sea Isle Marina out across Biscayne Bay bound for...Biscayne Bay.

This was to be a three-day-weekend getaway and here's another insider's tip: you don't have to go very far from many major boating cities to get away. We need to get away more than ever in today's high-stress world, but away doesn't really have to be...away. It's great if you've got a few months to do a Caribbean cruise, venture into Alaska, or explore the Sea of Cortez.

But in just 72 hours, and with the skyscrapers of Miami still faint in the sea haze, we had the choice of snorkeling on a coral reef, prowling a world-class art festival, dropping the hook in an anchorage that Hollywood could use as a double for the South Seas, slurping gelatos while browsing antique shops, or simply watching a golden sunset that silhouetted the tropical palms against the horizon like black paper cut-outs. Our choices ranged from grilling hot dogs on the Aleutian's upper-deck barbecue (hands-down vote of the kids aboard) to five-star restaurants within walking distance of Dinner Key Marina (the parents lost this battle).

Our vehicle for this adventure couldn't have been better than the Aleutian 65 RP. With three big staterooms, there was more than enough space for everyone to spread out and, well, you know how it is with kids: bathing suits, swim fins, bags of potato chips everywhere. Oh, wait...those are mine! We didn't have any teenagers aboard (except in spirit) but the private crew cabin abath the engine room would have been a great place for teens to play their music (loud).

If the Aleutian name seems familiar, the Tom Pexas-designed Aleutian 64 was a departure for Grand Banks when it debuted in 2002. It was the largest GB at the time, it had a salty-looking Portuguese bridge, and a particularly efficient semi-displacement hull.

Aside from an added foot of length, the Aleutian 65 RP is vastly

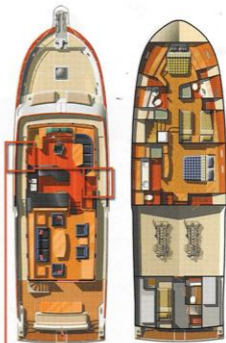
changed, but only in details, and she still retains her bluewater styling. The afterdeck has been enlarged and, with dual wing doors and a removable enclosure, this becomes an outside dining area.

Fitting into a size range that can be handled by a couple, the addition of doors on both sides of the pilothouse will make shorthanded boat handling easier. Whether you're shorthanded or not, having the engine room access door on the portside deck is safer and lot more convenient. There's still a watertight door from the swim platform for use at the dock, giving direct access for service technicians.

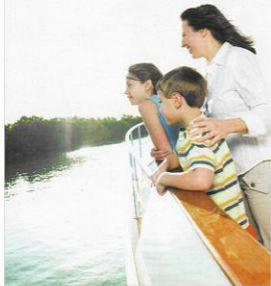
Here's another nice point: With a draft of 5 feet, 4 inches, we had access to many of the great features of Biscayne Bay. Some 22 nautical miles long (from Rickenbacker Causeway to Card Sound) and as much as 8 miles wide, Biscayne Bay isn't exactly deep.

Either way the pilothouse and the flying bridge helms on the Aleutian 65 were laid out to maximize the visibility of the oh-so-crucial chart plotters. In the pilothouse, the black fascia and slightly hooded dash made studying the monitors easy. On the bridge, where you'd likely want to be while tiptoeing through shallows, the chart plotter monitors are just below your line of sight. Even better for those belt-and-suspenders types like me, there is a Lucite-topped chart table at the skipper's right elbow and, believe me, we spent a fair amount of time comparing what we saw on the chart book pages to the chart plotter monitor.

Biscayne Bay is interesting because the western shore, the mainland, is well and truly developed while the barrier islands to the east that hold the Atlantic at bay remain relatively pristine. Key Biscayne was one of our first stops with a foray into No Name Harbor in Bill Baggs State Park. It's a well-protected, almost fully enclosed cove that is perfect for



PORT AND STARBOARD DOORS SIMPLIFY DOCKING.





THE ANNUAL COCONUT GROVE ARTS FESTIVAL ATTRACTS 150,000 PEOPLE AND HAS BECOME A MUST-SEE EVENT FOR FLORIDIANS (ABOVE). THE GRAND BANKS 65 IS SET UP FOR CRUISING WITH HIGH RAILS AND A DOUBLE ANCHOR ROLLER WITH PULPIT (BELOW)



RPM	KNOTS	GPH
1000	9.4	14.0
1200	10.5	19.6
1400	11.7	26.6
1700	14.6	49.2
2000	19.3	71.8
2150	21.6	87.0
2344	23.8	103.4

**TEST CONDITIONS:**

Speeds were measured by GPS off Miami, Florida, in smooth water and light winds, with half loads of fuel and water, and 16 people aboard.

overnighting or just dropping a lunch hook. The Booter's Grill is nearby and I was sorry we didn't have time for a slice of their key lime pie which is well to die for.

We were headed to Stiltsville, which is one of Biscayne Bay's unusual settings, and one often seen on "Miami Vice" and even as far back as Sea Hunt. Started by "Crawfish Eddie" in the '30s as a bait and beer (and occasionally gambling) shack on stilts, other shacks were soon built on these flats. During the '40s and '50s, Stiltsville grew a reputation as "party central" but Hurricane Betsy put an end to most of the shacks in 1965. Today only seven buildings still stand and are now a Park Service trust.

We put Pollard and the Pollardettes ashore by tender, although the "shore" was actually a Stiltsville sandbar covered by a foot or two of water. While they were splashing around, I took the time to look through the Aleutian 65.

The master suite, located precisely amidships for minimal motion, has been rearranged on the 65 with a king berth aftwardships. Like the rest of the 65, the finish is gorgeous teak with a wonderful bowfront bureau, raised panel lockers and sliding shoji screens to cover the ports. The head stretches the length of the suite, with double sinks in granite counters and separate compartments for the large shower and head.

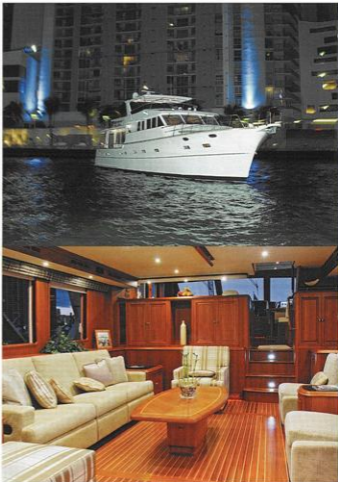
No guests are going to feel like second-class citizens in the bow VIP stateroom. It has a queen-sized berth, an en suite head with shower and sufficient hanging and drawer storage. Our test boat had the standard lower deck arrangement, which puts a twin-berthed cabin to starboard, with yet another en suite head. This cabin can also be configured as an office.

Back up on deck, the adventurers had returned and it was time to say farewell to Stiltsville, and turn our bow toward Dinner Key and Coconut Grove on the mainland.

Getting across the Bay was a chance to put the pedal to the metal and, with big Cat C18s of 1,000 horsepower, well, this isn't your Dad's Grand Banks. Top speed is about 23 knots, and the Aleutian 65 will cruise all day long at 19 knots and just 2000 rpm.

Coconut Grove (locals call it "the Grove") is the oldest and most eclectic neighborhood in Miami. In the '50s, it developed a reputation as an artist's colony and our visit coincided with the annual Coconut Grove Arts Festival, an open-air street gala that draws more than 150,000 visitors to view artists from around the country.

Dinner Key Marina is just one of several marinas dotting the nearby shore, and the transient dock allows an easy walk to the fes-



tival as well as the galleries and antique shops that line the streets. Dinner Key has a romantic background, since it was used by Pan American Airways as a base for the legendary Pan Am Clipper flying boats on the South American and European routes. It was the point of departure for Franklin Roosevelt to his famed wartime meeting with Churchill in Casablanca and, today, many of the vintage hangars from the '30s are now offices and boat-storage areas.

With a host of world-class restaurants nearby, we didn't get a chance to play in the galley of the Aleutian 65, but anyone who enjoys cooking will find it a wonderful place. The appliances follow your standard gourmet list, mostly Sub-Zero and Miele, with wide granite counters. I particularly liked the pop-up vent for the 4-burner cooktop to get rid of odors, and the pair of stainless rails are for potholders. Even better, touch a button and the cabinet above disappears into the overhead, so the chef has an open view of the pilothouse.

When even the delights of the outdoor bistros and European ambience of Cocowalk faded, there was plenty of entertainment inside



CRUISERS WILL DELIGHT IN MIAMI'S NIGHT SKYLINE (OPPOSITE, TOP). NOTICE THE UNOBSTRUCTED LINE OF SIGHT FROM THE PILOTHOUSE THROUGH THE SALON. WITH THE AFT DOORS OPEN, DOCKING WILL BE A BREEZE (OPPOSITE, BELOW). MORE FUN ON BISCAYNE BAY (THIS PAGE).

**LOA:** 67' 3"  
**WL:** 60' 3"  
**BEAM:** 19' 10"  
**DRAFT:** 5' 4"  
**DISPL.:** 106,500 lb  
**FUEL:** 2,200 gal  
**WATER:** 640 gal  
**ENGINE OPTIONS:**  
2 x 873-hp Caterpillar  
C18 diesels  
**ENGINES TESTED:**  
2 x 1,000-hp  
Caterpillar C18 diesels  
**BASE PRICE:** Upon  
Request



# GENERATION NEXT

## 4 WAYS TO TURN YOUR KIDS INTO FUTURE BOATERS

It's always a shame if you want to spend time on the boat, but your younger kids stomp their feet in protest when they hear that Chuck E. Cheese and GameBoys will be replaced by a weekend on the water. But most future yachtsmen are not born overnight. The trick is to mold them from passengers into participants early on. Here are a few tips on how to go about the transformation:

**DRIVING SCHOOL:** Most kids will jump at the chance to drive a boat. It helps to foster independence. You need to be responsible, so sit with them at a controlled speed. Teach them how to pick a mark on land, steer with a compass, and be responsible for their wake. It's also a good time to review the rules of the road.

**CHEAP LABOR:** Teach them to appreciate your boat and enlist their help with cleaning. Be sure they don't go nuts with the hose and spray your neighbor. And if you're working on a project, explain what you're doing, have them help with fetching tools and even aid in turning a screw.

**WHERE ARE WE?** Even with electronics, it's smart to verify navigational aids when close to shore. Have your kids pick out the next marks. Keep in mind that they may get bored after 30 minutes. So also work with them to keep a photo log of the trip. See "Gear" on page 68 for camera picks.

**SAILING SCHOOL:** Sign up your kids early for a summer sailing program.



The skills they'll pick up sailing on small boats will prove to be invaluable. Plus this is where they'll learn knots, weather patterns, and, above all, safety. Some camps are offered for teenagers on larger boats.

—George Sass, Jr.



THE MASTER STATEROOM IS ANOTHER IMPROVEMENT ON THE 65 COMPARED TO THE 64. THE ATHWARTSHIP KING FITS PERFECTLY (TOP). THE PILOTHOUSE IS SET UP FOR SERIOUS CRUISING (BOTTOM).

the Aleutian 65's salon. Three free-standing chairs and a decadently comfortable recliner sofa face a pop-up flatscreen TV and the dining area on the afterdeck is just steps away.

One change on the 65 is the comfortable U-shaped dinette on the starboard side of the pilothouse—close to the galley and with great views. Another improvement is dual stairways to the flying bridge, one from the pilothouse and one from the afterdeck.


If you're looking to get away from civilization, you can't do better than run down the line of barrier islands: Boca Chita, Sands Key, and Elliott Key. All offer tropical and protected anchorages in the prevailing easterlies, but keep in mind the minimum-wake zones.

We had a perfect afternoon to enjoy the flying bridge, and it wasn't long before everyone congregated there. With twin-curved settees around cocktail tables, there was plenty of room for all, and the beautifully finished fiberglass handtop offered the choice of sun or shade. The skipper and a companion had Stidd pedestal chairs.

As our exploration of Biscayne Bay wound down, I entered the crew quarters and headed for the engine room. A watertight door (and considerable effort in sound-deadening materials) keeps noise and vibration throughout the Aleutian to a Rolls-Royce hush.

Once inside, the engine room had all the seamanlike attributes I've come to expect on Grand Banks, from the carefully plumbed manifold to the husky stainless guard rails around each engine. Our test boat had twin Onan 21 kW generators instead of the standard single 21.5 kW unit. Looking back on our time aboard the Aleutian 65, it was clear that the word "expedition" doesn't have to mean far or long. With a fine yacht under you, 72 hours can seem like a year. You return refreshed, invigorated, ready to take on the world.

And if you don't think that you can turn a nearby destination into a cruise that seems far away, look at Gilligan. His "three-hour tour" ended up lasting three seasons!

Too bad he didn't have a Grand Banks Aleutian 65 RP!   
Grand Banks Yachts Ltd., (206) 352-0116; [www.grandbanks.com](http://www.grandbanks.com)

