A Legendary World War II PT Boat Rides Again (page 46)

POWER & MOTORYACHT

Grand Banks 60
Redefining a Legacy

UNTOLD STORY:
A Restoration That Sparked a Revolution

+ The Best View at Microsoft
Transforming a Kadey-Krogen into The ultimate floating office.

Whole New World

GRAND BANKS REDEFINES GOLD-PLATED BOATBUILDING WITH AN INNOVATIVE 60-FOOT BEAUTY THAT'S AS SINGULARLY FAST AND FASHIONABLE AS SHE IS EFFICIENT AT DISPLACEMENT SPEEDS.

BY CAPT. BILL PIKE

LOA: 66'10"
BEAM: 19'2"
DRAFT: 4'7"
DISPL.: 63,900 lb.
FUEL: 1,530 gal.
WATER: 370 gal.
TEST POWER: 2/900-mhp Volvo Penta D13-900 diesel inboards
STANDARD POWER: 2/725-mhp Volvo Penta D11-725 diesel inboards
TRANSMISSION: Twin Disc MGX 5096A; 2.04:1 ratio
PROPELLERS: 31.5 x 39 5-blade NiBrAl ZF Faster
GENERATOR: 1/25-kW Fisher-Panda 25000i genset/inverter
PRICE (STANDARD POWER): $3,280,000
PRICE (TEST POWER): $3,360,000

"It's a little bit like a racing sailboat's," Richards, the ocean racer, replied. "And it's a little bit like a naval destroyer's."

Let's talk numbers for just a few—big-time numbers. During a recent trip to Australia to sea trial the new Grand Banks 60, the first GB to launch since the company's reorganization under the leadership of Aussie maxi-yacht racer and Palm Beach Motor Yachts founder Mark Richards, I gathered some test data that was flat-out, head-snatchingly amazing. And although the owner of the boat, David Berkman, was on board during the trial, along with several other Australians, all of them garrulously ganged up in the wheelhouse, I'm confident that, despite the uproarious laughter that sometimes obtruded, the speed, fuel-burn, sound, and other values accompanying this test report are spot-on.

The data? To begin with, consider the fact that when doing 9.5 knots, while turning just 750 revs (and factoring in a fuel reserve of 10 percent), the 60 offers a range of 2,973 nautical miles. That whopping number is certainly worthy of a full-displacement trawler making her hull speed but for a vessel capable of achieving a lusty top end of 30.5 knots, it's full-bore radical and, based on my perusal of several test reports on comparable vessels in *Power & Motoryacht,* also full-bore singular.

Think of it. On the one hand, the new GB 60 offers her owner a set of sporty speeds that are realistically useful and expedient under most offshore conditions. But on the other, with a little cooperation from the weather, she also offers the lucky soul enough range to travel from, say, Halifax, Nova Scotia to Plymouth, England in a little over 10 days—in luxurious comfort!

At one point during our sea trial, while Grand Banks honcho Richards drove and I dealt with the ol' clipboard, Richards observed, "You'll not find another powerboat hull form in the world today that performs the way this one does." Given what I was seeing on Australia's Broadwater Estuary at the time, I found no reason at all to quibble with the claim.

Destroyer? Or Racing Sailboat?

Back in January of this year, during a visit to the Grand Banks boatbuilding facility in Johor Barhu, Malaysia, Richards and I had occasion to hunker down and look at the running surface of the partially completed 60. I remarked how I'd never before seen a recreational powerboat with such a running surface.

"It's a little bit like a racing sailboat's," Richards, the Maxi racer, replied. "And it's a little bit like a naval destroyer's."

Both analogies seemed apt. Except for a modest chine flat that proceeds from the bustle under the swim platform all the way forward to the stem, the 60 has virtually no bottom augmentations. No running strakes, no tunnels, no steps, nothing to engender drag or turbulence outside of a short skeg and what you'd expect to see from your typical straight-shaft running gear. Surfaces are smooth, subtly curvaceous on either side of centerline and sweep into an exceptionally fine entry forward. Then, via a steady reduction in deadrise (to a mere 8 degrees at the transom), they transition into an assemblage of virtually flat, lift-producing after sections.

The philosophy behind all this runs absolutely counter to deep-V technology, which seeks to chop its element into submission from above in knife-like fashion, especially at higher speeds. "By comparison, a warped hull moves through the water very efficiently," Richards opined as we finished off our running-surface study that day in Malaysia. "And it works best for boats with a top speed of 30 knots or so, which is what we're aiming for with the 60."

No Bowrise? Really?

Although hull form had lots to do with the performance data I was gathering on the Broadwater, there were other contributing factors, not least of them being the materials and techniques used in the 60's construction. While the vessel's hull is conventionally hand-laid using E-glass and vinylester resin and her engine room liner is infused using much the same stuff, the boat's deck, superstructure, and hardtop are composed of super-strong, vinylester-resin-infused, Gurit Corecell-cored carbon fiber.

The strategy here is obvious. The 60's broad-beamed hull retains conventional heaviness, but everything above the hull, thanks to the carbon fiber, becomes comparatively light. The result is a very low vertical center of gravity (VCG), a very high level of transverse stability, and speeds that are fast and exceptionally efficient, thanks to an ethereal displacement of just 63,900 pounds.

Sound levels and running attitudes were almost as impressive as the 60's speed and range numbers. Thanks to a variety of fire-retardant noise- and vibration-attenuating products from Pyrotek installed in the engine room (including Decidamp tiles in way of the props and elsewhere), as well as the noise-blocking effects of a single, massive fiberglass fuel tank which separates the machinery spaces from the living spaces forward, the sound levels I measured were whispery, not only at the lower helm but also in the athwartships master stateroom and the VIP further forward. Indeed, it took speeds of well over 18 knots to push sound levels in the latter two spaces beyond 65 decibels, the level of normal conversation.

And running attitudes? Without getting too technical about the subject, let's just say that the 60 runs flat, achieving a bow rise of just 2.5 degrees at approximately 11 knots and then maintaining that attitude throughout the rest of the rpm register. Rather than overcoming her bow wave by lifting her nose significantly as most planing boats do, the 60 rises bodily in the water as her speed increases. She never seems to actually detach herself from or rise above her element.

The Rest of the Test

Before we finished up on the Broadwater, I took a turn at the lower helm station and immediately satisfied my desire to check out our 60's optional Twin Disc Express Joystick System (EJS), with its QuickShift transmissions, hydraulic bow and stern thrusters (with manual override), Dynamic Positioning capability, and EC300 Power Commander electronic single-lever engine controls.

Talk about cool! I've been a big fan of EJS since it debuted almost 17 years ago and was not disappointed with the 60's seriously updated version. I had our test boat moving sideways and diagonally with only the faintest of joystick manipulations and no drama whatsoever. But then, you take a couple of big, 31-inch props that can

Clockwise from top left, Richards demonstrates EJS using the 60's cockpit station; the new (and ecstatic) Aussie owner David Berkman; hands of a craftsman at the Grand Banks facility in Malaysia; and the 60's flybridge and boat deck arrangement.

Components are kept functionally discrete at the 60's two helm stations, the point being to avoid total shutdown if one component fails.

instantaneously spin at virtually any rotational speed, fast or slow, and team them up with a set of vibration-reducing Seatorque Enclosed Shafts, a black box loaded with serious computer firepower, and two thrusty, trusty hydraulic thrusters, and it's no wonder robust and steady dockside maneuverability results, minus the turbulence and clunky boat movements you sometimes get with pods.

And fun, Fun, FUN! That was my take on the driving experience. Because the 60's running attitudes at speed are so shallow and her VCG is so low, hardover turns via the boat's Hypromarine electric-over-hydraulic steering system tend to happen right sportily, engendering a level of excitement and enthusiasm that caused me to delightedly exclaim, "Whoooooeeeeee!" at least once, maybe twice. Moreover, tracking was railroad-steady, the ride was super-smooth (no seas of any significance on test day unfortunately), the Humphree Interceptors needed no tweaking at all, and acceleration had more in common with muscle cars than boats.

And Oh Yeah, The On Board Tour

Once we'd returned to the lovely little marina at Sanctuary Cove, I spent a while with Richards examining the 60 in detail. Her basic layout, of course, is quite conventional, with a saloon/galley/helm station on the main deck, a three-stateroom-two-head accommodation below, and a flybridge up top. Within this envelope, however, Grand Banks manages to present a raft of nifty features, a few in the saloon but more down in the machinery spaces.

Our first stop—the saloon. It was as bright and airy as the Aussie countryside around Sanctuary Cove, thanks to a wraparound assortment of huge windshield panels and side windows (two of them electrically retractable), as well as a rear window and door we left open so the mid-afternoon breezes could circulate. A Cruisair air-conditioning system kept things invisibly cool via a clever "false ceiling" with supply plenums at the sides and a return plenum on the forward edge. And the galley was simple but complete, with Miele appliances mostly, Silestone solid-surface countertops, and a large, practical Franke stainless-steel sink.

We accessed the ER via a ladder under a gas-shock-activated cockpit hatch. And while at 5 feet 3 inches the place did not offer standing headroom (like loftier, less sleek, less low-slung GBs of the past often did), the spaciousness around the twin Volvo Penta D13s was beyond anything I've seen this side of an oceangoing tug.

Clockwise from top left, note walk-in hanging locker in the master; our VIP forward had optional Pullmans; yeah, a galley-forward option is available, but the view from the after galley is too cool for words; the saloon is literally circumscribed with windows, some retractable.

Between the mains I measured a whopping (and highly unusual) 5 feet of open, untrammeled vinyl-treaded walkway. Outboard, the measurement came close to 3 feet or a tad more.

And hey, there were no blowers. The 60's ER is cooled via vent boxes (with demisters), port and starboard, that are part of a system that supplants hot air with cool air via natural convective action. Also, the electrical system was savvily solar-energized, with four Lifeline AGM batteries divided into two starter banks, eight more Lifelines divided into two house banks, and a couple of standard, 300-watt Enerdrive solar panels on the hardtop's roof, which keep onboard refrigeration operable without having to resort to shore- or genset power. And each main was equipped with a Groco safety seacock in lieu of a conventional crash pump.

"You know what I like about this place?" I asked Richards as we exited via the ER's watertight door.

"What?" he asked, going up the lazarette's ladder.

"Although it's simple—easy to figure out and maintain," I replied, "it's still absolutely cutting edge. Nothing else like it."

"Yeah," Richards replied, "the 60 represents a whole new world in boats, mate. A whole new world." ❐

Grand Banks Yachts, 616-499-2519; grandbanks.com

RPM	KNOTS	RPM	RANGE	dB(A)
600	7.9	2.6	4,184	62
750	**9.5**	**4.4**	**2,973**	**62**
1000	11.6	10.4	1,536	62
1250	**13.0**	**19.4**	**923**	**64**
1500	18.0	28.1	882	66
1750	**22.4**	**42.1**	**733**	**68**
2000	26.3	60.2	602	73
2350	**30.5**	**87.0**	**483**	**76**

TEST CONDITIONS: Air temperature: 72°F; humidity 70%; seas: 1'-2'; wind: 4-8 knots; load: 612 gal. fuel, 185 gal. water, 9 persons, 400 lbs. gear. Speeds are two-way averages measured via Garmin display. GPH estimates taken via Volvo Penta monitoring system. Range is based on 90% of advertised fuel capacity. Sound levels were measured at lower helm. 65 dB-A is the level of normal conversation.

NOTEWORTHY OPTIONS: Twin Disc EJS with three stations ($110,000); Garmin electronics package ($35,000); Seakeeper SK-9 gyro stabilizer ($93,500); 34-gph Idromar watermaker ($13,780); engine upgrade ($80,000)