Grand Banks 47 EU
Base Price:$856,500
LOA.....50'9"
Beam.....15'9"
Draft .....3'10"
Deadrise.....17 degrees
Displ..... 50,827lbs.
Fuel.....600 gal.
Water.....260 gal.
Contact: Grand Banks Yachts ,(206) 352-0116; www.grandbanks.com.

V FOR VICTORY

THE 47 EU IS NOT YOUR GRANDDAD'S GRAND BANKS

BY PETER SWANSON

The Grand Banks 47 Heritage EU was paralleling the beach at a cruising speed of 20 knots. As Captain Oscar Breeding turned the wheel hard to port, the 47 responded to the helm like a thoroughbred, leaning nicely into the turn. This was definitely not your grandfather's Grand Banks.

Stubborn adherence to tradition made Grand Banks one of the most successful boatbuilders in history, with more than 1,500 GB 42s produced since 1963. In the early days, the owners were trawler folk, content to steam along at 9 knots. But by the go-go '80s, Grand Banks was attracting younger, feistier buyers with a need for speed. A vessel's speed is largely a function of hull and horsepower, and Grand Banks focused entirely on the latter as it began installing ever more powerful engines in its traditional semi-displacement hull shape.

GRAND BANKS DID A FINE JOB OF UPDATING THEIR INTERIORS WHILE MAINTAINING THE GB HERITAGE.

The "sweet spot" for these big-power 42s was a 12-knot cruise, but because of the hull's rounded semi-displacement shape, performance at the higher end was not entirely satisfying. The 42 might hit 18-21 knots at wide-open throttle, but it did so in the netherworld, between displacement speeds and the liberation of full plane, a wet ride was the result.

Turn rudders hard over at speed, and a 42 would behave the opposite of the new 47 we tested off Ft. Lauderdale; unlike the 47, a 42 would have leaned off the turn, a function of her rounded trawler hindquarters.

Our 47 EU has a big motoryacht feel, but with twin Caterpillar C-9 567hp diesels, she sprinted from idle speed to plane in less than 10 seconds. Naiad active stabilizers ensured a rock-solid ride, and Capt. Breeding asserts that the fins probably diminish her 25-knot top end by just a single knot. (Unquantified, however, was the negative effect of the 47's keel, a vestigial structure for better tracking and stability at displacement speeds.)

What Grand Banks had done with the 47 EU was to work the other half of the speed equation. They had tasked the naval architects at Sparkman & Stephens with designing the first Grand Banks Heritage with a modified-V hull. The result was a leap forward in performance without sacrificing the traditional aesthetics the world has come to expect from Grand Banks. That this could be accomplished without obvious major compromise, makes one wonder what took the folks at Grand Banks so long to adopt the V-shape, a shape brought to it extreme by naval architect Ray Hunt in the early 1960s.

The new hull shape accounts for other performance improvements. Unlike the plumb bow of the 42, the 47 sports a subtle flare, which should ensure a drier ride. Similarly the deep forefoot has been eliminated, which may well diminish the tendency to bow steer in following seas that had dogged the 42 since Hull No. 1.

The 47 EU has two cruise speeds. At 1000 rpm, she doddles along at nine knots burning 5 gallons of diesel an hour.

A SOLID TEAK SOLE REPLACES THE TRADITIONAL TEAK PARQUET.

Throttle forward to 1400 rpm and she runs at 10 to 11 knots burning 13gph. Between 1400 and 1600 rpm, fuel consumption increases dramatically with little payback in speed. At 2100 rpm, the 47 cruises at 20 knots with a burn of 36 gallons per hour. At this speed, you could leave Lauderdale at 11 a.m. and be in Nassau in the Bahamas in time for Happy Hour—a 150-nautical-mile passage—and still have more than 300 gallons in the 47's 600-gallon tanks.

Here, it might be worth mentioning the boat's dimensions. In terms of LOA the 47 EU is really not that much bigger than the old 42; in fact, Grand Banks originally designated it as a 44, following the company's usual rule of thumb. Then the decision was made to comply with ABYC's recommended standard, which includes in LOA any integrally formed, molded or welded components, while excluding those that can be removed "in a non-destructive manner." Because the Heritage series featured a molded-in swim platform, inclusion of which brought the boats' LOA of 46 feet, 8 inches, all three Heritage models were re-designated as 47s.

So the 47 was longer than the 42 but not as much as the number suggested; with its added length, however, came two more feet at the beam. This was significant, and accomplished a couple of things: it allowed walk-around decks wide enough for the beamiest of mariners, while ensuring stowage down below that might otherwise have been lost due to the constrictions of the deep-V.

Our test was courtesy of Hal Jones and Co., and our host was Vice President of Sales Steve Fithian, a samurai of the yacht sales world. Fithian easily fended off one of my few doubts about the new hull design.

Why had Grand Banks chosen to retain a centerline keel on a twin-screw boat when it could have designed the boat with dual keels to shield the otherwise exposed running gear from pot warps and debris? Performance, he insisted. Such a modification would likely produce unacceptable cavitation in the props at speed.

Fithian's success in selling yachts may well be a function of his ability to alternate between that kind of "gear talk" and the language of decoration that was rolling off his tongue as we walked the 47's interior. "Rollbacked settees," "inset cabinet fronts," "barrel chairs"—to me these improvements seemed awfully subtle, but, then again, until today I might have judged the boxy interior look of a 30-year-old GB to be the height of seagoing elegance. That's what happens, I suppose, when one focuses on the quality of the woodwork (superb) rather than the big picture.

Grand Banks, however, hired a professional design company to ensure that the interior of the 47 EU said "megayacht," rather than "trawler." Fithian said the approach to styling was an evolution that started with the 46 Europa as Grand Banks responded to buyers, increasingly in their 40s and 50s instead of those in their late 60s.

From the galley-helm area, three steps lead down below. Forward, the master has a warm feel, thanks to teak furniture and traditional ceiling strips lining the hull. The queen-size berth is accessed via step-ups on either side. Without them it would be a chore hopping into bed, an annoyance in many vessels with centerline berths forward.

This owner's cabin features an en suite head with separate shower, while *continued on page 71*