

# USED BOAT review

# NORDHAVN 46

BY STEVE KNAUTH / CONTRIBUTING WRITER

## IN THEIR WORDS

It's hard to know whom to listen to these days. Thanks to talk radio, television and the Internet, the world seems full of self-styled experts telling us who's important or what's good for us. So when you come upon the voice of experience, it's refreshing. And if you happen to be looking for a globe-circling passagemaker you might want to listen to Wayne and Patricia Davis, who have logged more than 17,000 miles in their 1991 Nordhavn 46.

The Nordhavn has delivered on the Davises' plan of living aboard an oceangoing powerboat and cruising the world. After hours of homework and a lengthy search, they purchased Envoy from its original owner in 2001 for around \$500,000.



Patricia and Wayne Davis

"We knew little about motoryachts when we started," says Wayne Davis, 60, a longtime sailor whose previous boats included a 50-foot Sparkman & Stephens sailboat. "Our 'bible' was 'Voyaging under Power' [by Capt. Robert Beebe]. We found most of our experiences in sailboats and beliefs about safe ocean passagemakers were reinforced by this information-rich book."

The Nordhavn 46 design was proven, the boat seemed the right size for the couple to handle by themselves, and the price fit their budget.

The main engine, wing engine and generator were in good shape, and the layout included a good-size guest suite in addition to the master suite. It didn't hurt that the boat had a "handsome and distinctive look" the couple have grown to love. "The Nordhavn 46 met our requirements," says Davis. "Envoy had all the potential to be exactly what we wanted when we purchased her. She was well-equipped and well-cared-for by her first owner."

Still, there was plenty to do to get Envoy ready for the kind of long-term liveaboard voyaging the couple wanted to do: rebuilding both engine transmissions; replacing prop shafts, including new cutless bearings and packing glands; rewiring much of the boat's three electric systems; installing freshwater heads. Cosmetic changes included redecorating the interior.

As an offshore boat, Envoy is outfitted with lots of instruments and redundancies — for example, two radars, four GPS units, weatherfax and two autopilots. A dedicated laptop computer is used for navigation, with charting software and electronic charts.

All the time and effort have been worth it. Their first big adventure was in 2004, their first Atlantic crossing, as participants in the Nordhavn Atlantic Rally. Since then they've visited Spain, Corsica, Sardinia, Sicily, Malta, Greece and Turkey. Handling and performance, enhanced by hydraulic and paravane stabilizing systems as needed, has been as expected, says Davis.

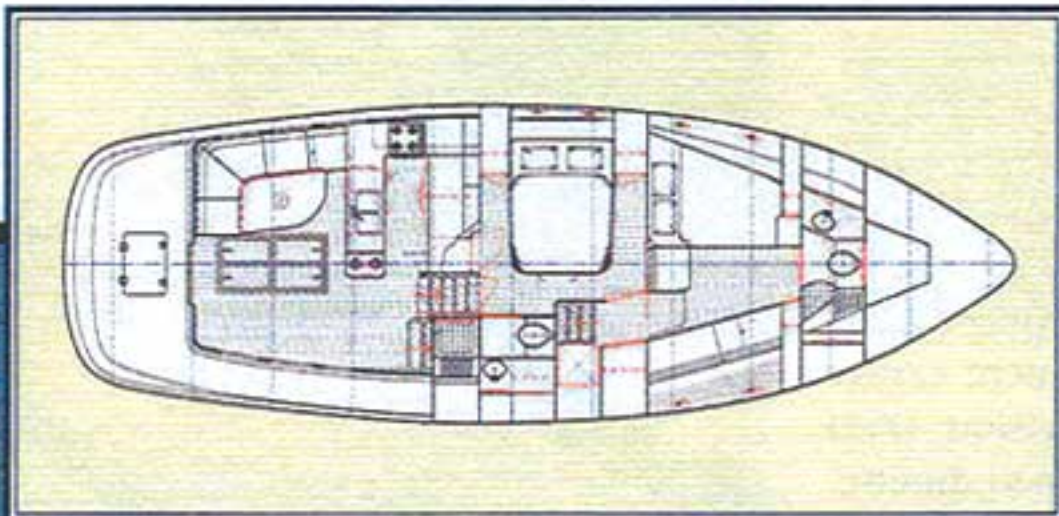
"Nordhavn 46s are designed to handle rough seas, and Envoy does so with ease," he says. "We believe she has a much better, more comfortable ride than some significantly larger vessels. With her 24-volt bow thruster and her heavy displacement, she is a dream to manage in very tight mooring situations, too."

Right now the Davises and Envoy are looking at two more years in the Med, then another Atlantic crossing and a return to U.S. waters. "[Envoy] is our only home, and we have no thoughts of trading her," says Davis. "We love our boat. She is exceptionally strong and well-built, and she is a safe platform for our exploring. She will go any place we decide to take her."

And that was the idea.

## WALKTHROUGH

The Nordhavn 46 rides a moderate (3-to-1 length-to-beam ratio), ballasted displacement hull based on a northern Eu-



## BACKGROUND

The roots of the Nordhavn 46 design may go back to the sturdy fishing vessels of the North Sea, but its history begins with the line of rugged, elegant bluewater Mason sailboats designed by Jim Leishman and built in Taiwan by Pacific Asian Enterprises through the 1980s. With a downturn in sailboat production, the company turned to power, and the Nordhavn 46 was its initial offering, making its debut in 1989. The unconventional recreational vessel caught on, riding a wave of growing public interest in long-distance trawler yachts suited for ocean voyaging.

The N46, designed as a project boat by Leishman's brother,

ably and economically [taking] their owners ... anywhere in the world." More than 80 hulls were built over the ensuing years, though the 46 is no longer in production.

Success bred more Nordhavn designs, and the 46 was followed by four other models in the 1990s, including the N40 and N57. Today, Pacific Asian Enterprises offers a fleet of Nordhavn passagemakers from 40 to 86 feet built in Taiwan and China. (The Nordhavn 40 is built in California.)



ropean commercial fishing trawler. The look is "North Sea," with bulwarks surrounding the forward portion of the boat and a substantial wheelhouse placed amidships (with wave-shedding, forward-raked windows), protected by a Portuguese bridge that's accessed by a wing door. The superstructure is topped by a mast for a steadying sail. The forward deck area is open and uncluttered, with oversized scuppers.

Standard power is a single 140-hp diesel, which delivers a reported 8-knot cruising speed and a range of up to 2,000 miles. She carries 1,000 gallons of fuel and 280 gallons of water.

Two cruising layouts are offered. The standard setup places the master stateroom amidships with steps to the saloon and wheelhouse, and the guest cabin (with offset v-berth) forward, accessing the wheelhouse only. The alternative layout places the master cabin forward with direct access to the wheelhouse, and the guest cabin (with bunks) amidships, to port. In both setups, the cabins have adjacent head compartments, with sink and shower.

The C-shaped galley up is to port in the saloon, with an island sink and work area, and the stove/oven and more counter space along the side of the cabin bulwark. There's a convertible L-shaped dinette aft, with room for chairs and a cocktail table to starboard. High side windows let in plenty of light.

The saloon is aft and offset to port, eliminating the port side deck but leaving a wide, covered side deck to starboard. Its roof forms a convenient deck area abaft the pilot-house that can accommodate a small launch or dinghy, a life raft and a dock box.

## AVAILABILITY

The popularity of the Nordhavn 46 means used models can be found around the country, with prices beginning at around \$350,000 for early versions. Here are a few examples found on the Internet.

A "recently updated" 1989 model with a new 135-hp diesel was for sale in Connecticut for around \$359,000.

The layout includes a master suite amidships, forward guest stateroom, crew berth and nav station, as well as a "laundry room" with washer. A 1990 model with a single diesel (3,000 hours) and fin stabilizers was for sale in New Jersey for \$440,000. The layout features the midships owner's suite, and the galley has a three-burner stove and fridge/freezer. A "meticulously maintained and updated" 1991 model in Maryland was priced at \$449,000, equipped with a 125-hp diesel and a 28-hp wing engine, both with "low" hours. ■

## SPECIFICATIONS

**LOA:** 45 feet, 9 inches

**LWL:** 38 feet, 4 inches

**BEAM:** 15 feet, 5 inches

**DRAFT:** 5 feet

**DISPLACEMENT:** 60,000 pounds

**HULL TYPE:** full displacement

**TANKAGE:** 1,000 gallons fuel, 280 gallons water

**PROPULSION:** single diesel

**BUILDER/DISTRIBUTOR:** Pacific Asian Enterprises, Dana Point, Calif. Phone (949) 496-4848.

[www.nordhavn.com](http://www.nordhavn.com)