



## Nordic Tugs 42

AN ENDURING DESIGN WITH SPEED, RANGE AND AN UPSCALE ATTITUDE

BY ROGER MCAFEE

**WHEN NORDIC TUG INTRODUCED ITS FIRST BOAT** to the public at the 1980 Seattle International Boat Show it was an instant success. Orders were taken for 54 of the jaunty 26 footers that looked a lot like “Little Toot” of the children’s book fame.

The late Seattle designer Lynn Senour gave the Nordic a tough, purposeful profile that looked “right” going slow. Because of the oil crisis of the 1970s fuel had more than doubled in cost and the boating industry was hit hard.

Because the small tug looked good going slow, and because the tug look was, and continues to be, “macho” by many standards, it had a wide appeal across much of the boating community. Those who were new to boating thought the boat looked “cute,” but since tugs had a reputation of being tough and seaworthy, “cute” was not a derogatory term.

### FUEL CONSCIOUS

Experienced boaters knew that tugs were tough and seaworthy, and they also knew how much it cost in

fuel to push the high-speed hulls of the day — they saw the 26 footer with its economy-minded full-displacement hull, as a way to go boating without breaking the bank.

The little red tug got about 13 nautical miles per U.S. gallon at a modest cruising speed of 6.5 knots. More than 750 boats later Nordic’s concern with fuel economy continues to be an important design criteria.

In 1985 Nordic added a 32 footer to its line and designed the underwater profile so that, with enough power, the vessel could top out at 16 knots. Ever since then Nordics have offered fuel efficiently at displacement speeds as well as faster planing speeds — even at full tilt these vessels get about 1 mile per gallon.

The latest Nordic Tugs 42 gets just a hair under 5 nautical miles per gal-

lon at about 7.5 knots, and she cruises comfortably at 15 knots. With a 600-gallon tank, allowing a 10 percent reserve, the vessel has a cruising range of about 2,700 nautical miles (3,045 statute miles) — more than adequate for coastal cruising.

### MAKING A GOOD THING BETTER

Our test boat was the 86th 42-foot hull made. A number of years ago I had been on hull No. 3 of the 42 series, so I was quite interested to see what changes had been made.

One major change was how the forward staterooms were accessed. To get to those spaces on the older models it was necessary to climb up into the wheelhouse from the main salon and then down into the foc’s’le. Many boaters still love that system.

In the newer 42s the forward staterooms, and a compact work station that contains both the 12v DC and 115v AC distribution panels, are accessed directly from the salon.

Many boaters prefer this system, which opens up more space and improves the traffic pattern if there are a number of people on board.

### SOLID EXTERIOR

Our test boat was easily and safely accessed through a transom door off a substantial swim platform positioned level with the dock. Anglers will appreciate the swim platform if they have to land a large salmon. There's plenty of space for both the angler and the net person. Strong stainless steel transom rails add to the security on the platform.

The aft cockpit itself is big and uncluttered with more than half of it protected by the salon roof overhang, a feature that is always appreciated by Pacific Northwest cruisers who had the need to duck out of the rain from time to time. Even in warmer climates, the overhang will provide a comfortable measure of shade.

Fender storage is always a concern on any boat. Prudent skippers like to have bumpers available and Nordie has developed a "pouch" that is built into the void between the inner and out transom skin, under the aft transom cap, into which the fenders fit. They are held in with a simple rod and are always visible and quickly accessible.

The side decks are accessible along both sides of the cabin, up a couple of steps from the cockpit sole. Substantial hand rails make moving along the deck quick and safe. The foredeck rails provide good security while attending to the anchor or when fighting a fish. The side decks can also be accessed through sliding doors from either side of the wheelhouse.

### PLUSH INTERIOR

The woodwork and fit and finish throughout the 42 is as good as what can be found on yachts costing twice as much. There is also generous use of carpet throughout the vessel—carpet is easy to move around on when a boat is rocking and rolling, and it provides good soundproofing and additional warmth.

The wood paneling and teak and holly floors in the galley, master and guest head give a traditional wood warmth to the entire vessel. Corian galley counter tops, complete with spill

## An Inside Look



### TESTER'S OPINION

**"The Nordic Tugs 42 deserves its reputation as an elegant go-anywhere boat that's tough as nails. She feels solid in the water and has the speed and reach for West Coasters who want to maximize their boating time during weekends and vacations. Inside she has all the look of a more expensive yacht, and outside she has room to enjoy the sunshine and go after fish."**

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lips combines to give a tough, yet stylish, working surface. Galley cupboards and cabinets provide more than sufficient storage space for galley needs. Substantial teak grabrails throughout the vessel aid in moving around in a sea. Once again, Nordie planners understand the reality and practicality of boating.

The master stateroom boasts an island queen bed with port and starboard hanging lockers and drawers — more than adequate for a cruising couple. The guest cabin is finished as well as the master, and both cabins have a

head with a separate shower stall.

The teak-trimmed raised pilot-house is reached by a short stairway up from the salon. The visibility is 360 degrees. By standing at the top of the steps up to the wheel house and crouching slightly, the skipper can see most of the salon and right out into the cockpit through the glass in the aft salon door.

### PERFORMANCE

We fired up the 540 hp Cummins QSC diesel and moved away from the dock. At idle the engine noise was

## Nordic Tugs

42

### SPECIFICATIONS

LOA (w/bow pulpit)	46 ft., 3 in.
Beam	13 ft., 10 in.
Draft	4 ft., 7 in.
Weight (dry)	31,400 lbs.
Fuel capacity	600 gals.
Water capacity	200 gals.
Base price (Northern climate spec) w/540 hp Cummins QSC	\$584,100

### PERFORMANCE SPECS

Top speed	15 knots
MPG at 7.5 knot cruise	5.64
Range @ 7.5 knot cruise	3,045 miles

### STANDARD EQUIPMENT

Lewmar bow thruster, Nova Kool refrigerator/freezer, Majestic washer/dryer, teak-faced cabinets w/teak drawer faces and doors, anchor with Lofrans Tigres windlass, VacuFlush toilets, Espar hydronic heat

### OPTIONAL FEATURES

Air conditioning vs. diesel hydronic heat, bow pulpit w/stainless steel roller, 240v 50 amp single shore power connection, flybridge package, fuel polishing systems, inverter charger systems 2,500 watt 120v, davit system

### CONSTRUCTION

Hand-laminated RFP construction process on the hull and deck; infusion-molded process on salon, pilothouse tops and cabin soles.

### BUILDER

**Nordic Tugs Inc.**, Burlington, WA; (360) 757-8847; [www.nordictugs.com](http://www.nordictugs.com)

### DEALERS

**Ballena Bay Yacht Brokers**, Alameda/San Diego, CA; (888) 619-8600; [info@ballenabayyachts.com](mailto:info@ballenabayyachts.com)

**SkipperCress Yacht Sales**, Anacortes, WA; (800) 303-0704; [info@skippercress.com](mailto:info@skippercress.com)

**Nordic Tugs of Alaska**, Juneau, AK; (206) 919-7887; [www.nordictugcharters.com](http://www.nordictugcharters.com)

**Bay Breeze Yacht Sales**, Traverse City, MI; (877) 941-0535; [baybreeze@bbys.com](mailto:baybreeze@bbys.com)

**Bay Breeze Yacht Sales**, Honey Harbour, Ontario; (877) 727-2297; [baybreeze@bbys.com](mailto:baybreeze@bbys.com)

**Massey Yacht Sales & Service**, Tampa/St. Petersburg, FL (888) 808-0250; [www.masseyyacht.com](http://www.masseyyacht.com)

**Massey Yacht Sales & Service**, Sarasota/Bradenton, FL; (866) 629-1015; [www.masseyyacht.com](http://www.masseyyacht.com)

**Annapolis Sail Yard**, Annapolis, MD; (410) 268-4100; [scott@sailyard.com](mailto:scott@sailyard.com)

**Wilde Yacht Sales**, Essex, CT; (888) 447-6944; [ben@wildeyachts.com](mailto:ben@wildeyachts.com)

barely noticeable, and we didn't detect any vibration. With the judicious use of the bow thruster we ghosted through the crowded marina easily. Once in the open fairway I asked our test skipper, Jim Cress, President and CEO of Nordic Tugs, to run the speed up to normal cruise while I wandered through the vessel looking for squeaks, rattles, flexing decks or bulkhead joints. As an aside, in all of the boat tests over the years I have only once before had the manufacturer's President and CEO act as a test skipper, so this was real treat.

I poked into lockers, drawers, under bed storage areas, into kitchen cabinets and under counter storage areas. I examined doors and shelves. I didn't expect to find any squeaks or rattles and I didn't. I wandered up onto the flybridge and found everything secure while noting the excellent visibility from up top. Nordic Tugs have a reputation for being very well built, and my inspection confirms that.

Even with the engine operating close to wide open, the engine noise was more than acceptable in all areas of the vessel — and there was virtually no engine-induced vibration.

When I finished my inspection I took the wheel and cranked from hard port to hard starboard and the

vessel responded smoothly and without leaning or pitching as we crossed over our own wake. The vessel behaved in a solid, civilized manner performing whatever maneuver was asked without complaint.

The engine space (under the salon floor) on this vessel is incredibly well laid out. Naturally it's not a full-height, walk-in engine room, but the layout is ingenious. Moving around the engine space is a hands-and-knees operation, but the machinery is laid out to allow for that. All items requiring inspection or servicing are easily accessible, and getting from one side of the single engine to the other is easy — and you won't scrape your knees or hands on sharp metal.

There's one nice touch that is barely noticeable to the eye, but it is one of the main reasons for the lack of vibration while under way. The stainless steel salon floor support post is rubber mounted to both the hull and the salon floor — a small detail that makes a big difference.

Nordic Tugs have been a hit with West Coast boaters ever since they appeared in the early 1980s, and the 42 has been a popular model. It has the range, speed and features that give you the ability to enjoy the water on your own terms.

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