

Sea Trial

A Motoryacht for the Times

The Passagemaker 60 Doesn't Make Waves

BY NEIL RABINOWITZ

The Passagemaker 60 *Dauntless* was en route to Juneau from Seattle and had completed nearly half of a ten-week voyage up the Inside Passage. Then she hit Queen Charlotte Sound's Hecate Strait.

While the preceding protected coastal waters had been calm but for the occasional tidal narrows, this shallow stretch of open water is notorious for blustery crosswinds and a steep chop. Such conditions frequently force cruisers and commercial fishermen alike to wait in Port Hardy or seek shelter in the southern coves of the Queen Charlotte Islands.

"We found ourselves facing 10- to 12-foot head seas, with larger rollers and a myriad of breaking crests," recalls owner Ed Koethe. "We wound up with

beam seas, but over our 14-hour run, the autopilot and stabilizers held the boat steady as a rock, and we averaged a steady 8.5 knots—better when we reached the lee of some smaller islands."

That *Dauntless* continued unfazed while other cruisers lay back in the coves, waiting for the seas to subside, should come as no surprise. The Passagemaker 60 has an offshore pedigree and was born and bred to handle the world's oceans.

Designed by Sparkman & Stephens from an original concept reflected in Vincent Mausset's *Atlantique 50*, she was developed under the direction of Dan Fritz. True to Fritz's vision, the Passagemaker 60 has all the practical functions and comforts of a long-distance trawler but the slippery efficiency and seaworthiness of an oceangoing sailboat.

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Sporting big-boat lines and systems, the Passagemaker 60 is actually designed with the owner/operator in mind. The heavy displacement hull is both sea kindly and easily driven, achieving speeds of 10 knots on an economical 340-hp power plant.

Fritz, who for 16 years had built 50- to 115-foot motoryachts under the *Queen-ship* name in Canada, saw the *Atlantique* at a Florida boat show, contacted Mausset, and bought the concept for his new company, *Sea Spirit*. "Using the 50 as inspiration, I recognized that a new boat—stretched to 60 feet, with higher bulwarks, new systems, a third stateroom, and two heads—would be a great oceangoing and coastal cruiser for liveaboards," says Fritz.

Earlier still, Koethe had seen the *Atlantique 50* and had fallen in love with its profile. But he envisioned a vastly different interior. When he asked Sparkman & Stephens about modifying the layout, Bruce Johnson, the firm's chief designer, put him together with Fritz, and the contract for *Dauntless* was hatched.

Koethe had spent most of his boating life around the Great Lakes but had



The saloon features honey-toned teak woodwork and large windows to bring in light and views. Buyers also have the option of a wide-body version.

SPECIFICATIONS

LOA: 63' 4"

Beam: 17' 2"

Draft: 4' 11"

Displacement: 108,680 lbs.

Power: Single 340-hp diesel

Fuel: 2,105 gals.

Price: On request

Information: 604-888-6178

www.ssqueenship.com

dreamed of ocean cruising and came to the project with a trunk full of design concepts based on his experience. Koethe had not only owned powerboats but had also harbored a love of sailing, one that prompted him to charter several times in the Caribbean. He brought those sensibilities to the design process, as well.

Sea Spirit's Fritz was a willing collaborator: "Unlike many yards that value 'spec' projects to avoid any difficult change orders or other snarls, I am stimulated by owner-driven projects like this," explains Fritz. "I enjoy the rigorous creative discussions with an intelligent, contributing owner."

The Hull Form

A distinctive canoe stern rising above an integral, curved swim platform gives the Passagemaker 60 a seafaring appearance. Below the waterline, the hull tapers slightly so that following and quartering seas don't lift and toss the stern, as happens with many conventional powerboats.

Moreover, the wake is barely detectable, even at cruising speeds, and the high bulwarks, Portuguese bridge, and low-profile superstructure combine with a raked mast to give the Passagemaker 60 a classic, almost retro look with minimal windage.

"In the course of our voyage north I spent more than 45 hours single-handing," reports Koethe. "I originally wanted a boat that two people could handle by themselves while providing the ultimate in safety on board during long ocean cruises."

Koethe, who will be 70 soon, often takes his grandchildren along, and both his age and theirs were factors in his specifying high bulwarks. Still, the Passagemaker 60's sheerline is graceful,

and its rise to the bow creates a handsome profile.

"The driving concept behind the boat's form," says Johnson. "was to harken back to a 1950ish *Feadship* style, adding subtle elements like a return on the flying-bridge caprail, vents, funnels, and a round port in the galley. We also gave this motoryacht some of the attributes of a sailing boat, such as proper fiddles, handholds, secure lockers—all things sailors take for granted."

"The hull's stern is narrow and is rounded like many sailboat forms," notes Johnson. "Combined with the



The forward VIP stateroom rivals many master cabins on boats of similar size.



The sheltered aft deck provides additional living and entertaining space. Note the centerline door.

meter-high bulwarks, the anchor system, and the style treatments, that gives the vessel the aesthetic feel of a little ship.”

When S&S designers investigated refining the original full-displacement shape of Mausset’s *Atlantique 50*, they extensively tank-tested alternatives and followed the example of ocean-going commercial vessels that utilize transom extensions.

“We knew that displacement speed is often exceeded by motoryachts with enough horsepower,” says Johnson. “They tend to push a big bow wave and create a stern wave that rides over the transom. The hull just isn’t breaking free.

“Instead, the *Passagemaker’s* form reduces weight aft and provides a crisp edge that allows the water to break away for reduced drag and optimum handling in following and quartering seas.” Forward, S&S incorporated a bulbous bow to further reduce resistance and the resulting bow waves. Moreover, notes Johnson, “As a whole, the *Dauntless* is light, with a draft of just 4’11” and a lower topside profile than that of most expedition cruisers.”

The *Passagemaker 60’s* hull is a solid laminate of fiberglass reinforcements and vinylester resin from the keel until 10 inches above the waterline; beyond that, and in the superstructure, the laminate is cored with Corecell. The hull also features cored longitudinal stringers and transverse frames for stiffness and strength.

Construction now takes place in Zhuhai, China, at the Uni Shine yard, where over a ten-month period each boat is produced under the supervision

of *Sea Spirit’s* local team of naval architects and engineers. Led by Tee Tser Yu, this group is already at work on a series of 55-, 75-, and 88-footers that will follow the current *Passagemaker 60*.

Reliable Propulsion

The *Dauntless* is powered by an economical single-screw Lugger diesel producing 340 continuous horsepower at 1,800 rpm. Her top designed cruise speed is 10.7 knots at 1,300 rpm. The boat features

a Wesmar APU “get-home” system, where either genset can drive hydraulics to turn the main shaft, moving the hull at up to five knots.

On extended passages, the reliability of any diesel engine depends in large part on clean fuel. The *Dauntless* is equipped with a double-filter system that scrubs the contents of all four tanks, and there’s a separate day tank for the polished fuel. With a total capacity of 2,100 gallons, the *Passagemaker 60* boasts a range of some 6,000 nautical miles at 7.5 knots and 3,000 nm at just under 9 knots.

Sea Spirit offers the vessel with several different deck layouts. *Dauntless* has a “wide-body” saloon with a starboard-side walkaround. The interior is teak on all sides, with coved moldings, pure teak flooring and mullions, and some burlled-maple countertop detailing. Koethe called for a cozy, warm, honey-toned décor.

A corner desk angles aft from the starboard side. Overlooking the saloon, the galley features wide stone countertops and a dining bar, from which three steps lead up to the wheelhouse. The house and its twin helm seats are located far forward in the boat, offering terrific visibility over the bow. The adjacent settee provides a panoramic view for guests who want to be near the action.

Below are a queen-berth VIP stateroom forward, a twin-berth guestroom, and a full-beam master with settee. With the long-distance cruiser firmly in mind, every void has been turned into storage in the form of closets, lockers, and drawers.

Up on deck, the aft cockpit is teak soled and follows the curve of the canoe stern, where there’s a semicircular settee that’s split dead center for access through a pantograph transom door. The bow features another settee that’s divided port and starboard to provide access from the Portuguese bridge to the foredeck.

Thanks in part to isolation mounts on all the machinery, the boat is quiet underway—especially topside on the flying bridge. Here, there is a settee, a dining table, and a fully equipped helm.

The vessel’s raked stack incorporates a hollow that opens up to reveal a barbeque—a neat trick. The composite mast is hinged to reduce the *Passagemaker 60’s* height to 20 feet in order to accommodate travel through New York State’s canal system. “I intend to bring *Dauntless* to Lake Erie,” explains Koethe. “I can save a thousand miles by avoiding the St. Lawrence Seaway and, instead, running from the Hudson, through the canals, and through Lake Ontario.”

That’s just one example of the kind of planning more power cruisers will need to do in this era of \$5 diesel, but Koethe will go one step farther: On the return trip, he’ll take the St. Lawrence *with the flow* on the way back to sea.

Whether she is plying inland waterways or mid-ocean archipelagos, the *Passagemaker 60* has combined some of the best elements of sailboats and powerboats to produce a seaworthy, efficient vessel ideally configured for a new age in power cruising.



Stainless-steel rails surround the Lugger main engine, which is positioned for 360-degree access.

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