



SHE HANDLES HEAVY WEATHER

Story And Photography By BILL JACOBS

As we cleared the Ft. Lauderdale jetties, the two yachts, which minutes ago had looked large in their slips, suddenly were like toy boats tossed to and fro by the breaking waves of the Atlantic. A strong, persistent flow of easterlies had built up some impressive seas.

After a brief discussion at the dock before sunrise, we had decided to venture into the ocean for our scheduled photo shoot of the Ocean Alexander 50 Classicco. The boat we'd be shooting from, the comfortable and luxurious Ocean Alexander 52 motoryacht, was a far cry from the small runabouts and fishing boats to which I've become accustomed. Capt. Al Eason and his crew did their best to hold our platform reasonably steady as Bob Holland, a photographer for Ocean Alexander's ad agency, and I shot frame after frame of the 50 tackling the seas. She looked proud and steady as she punched through the waves into the rising sun. What better test could there be of the seagoing capabilities of this stout trawler yacht?

After an hour of both boats and crew being banged around, we headed inside. Capt. Steve Wanger backed the 50 to our stern as I transferred with my gear to complete the sea trial. We discovered that while under way in rolling seas, the saloon table, which inadvertently had not been fastened down, had come loose and recorded its voyage across the cabin, gouging the teak-and-holly sole.

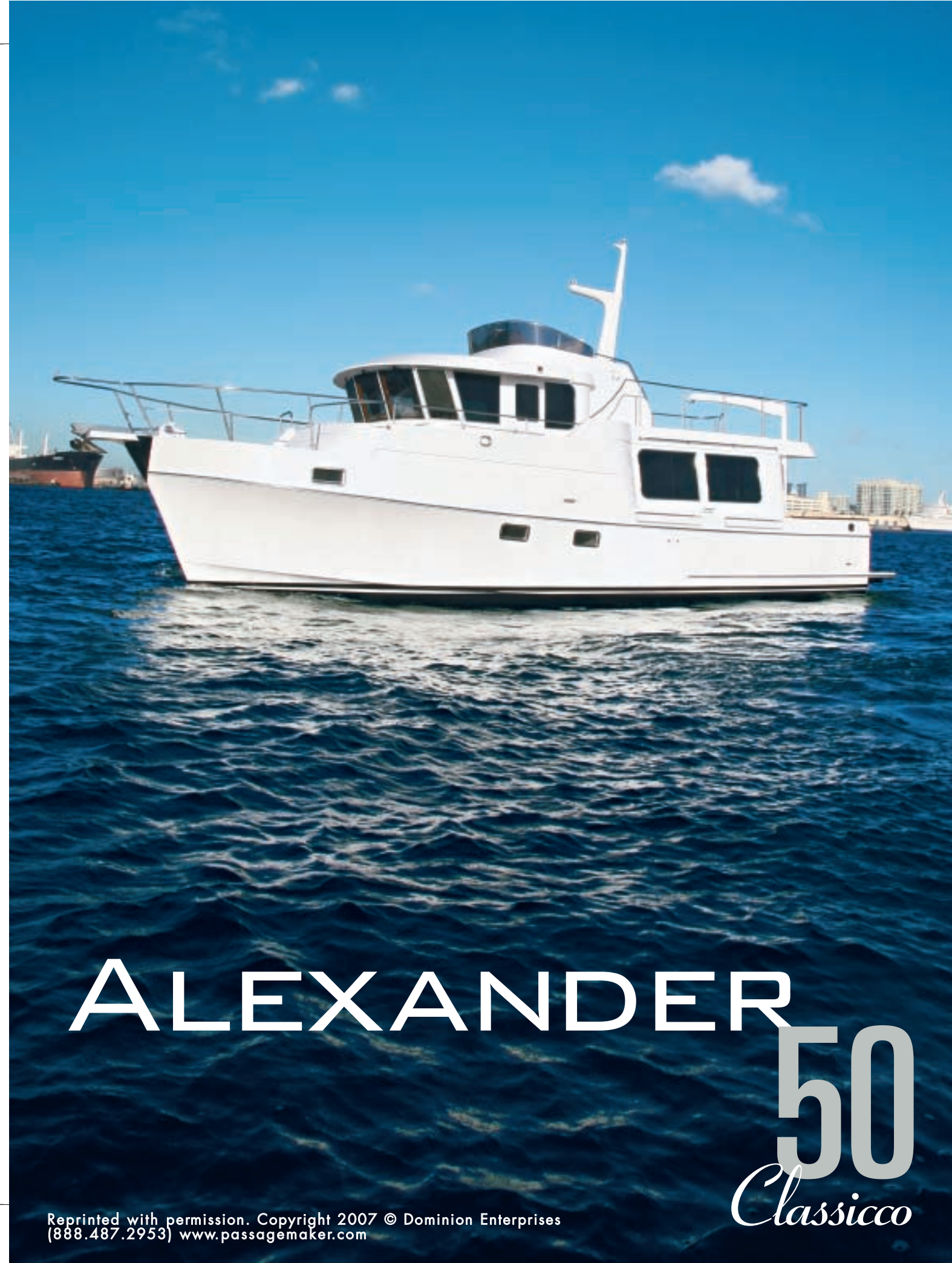
Capt. Steve, who does the commissioning of the OA yachts, was not happy, nor was he excited about taking the boat back into the open ocean. I couldn't blame him. We decided to conclude our tests and decibel readings within the confines of the jetty and the ICW.

Even that proved quite a challenge: Port Everglades was bustling. As we attempted to traverse the protected waters, we had to dodge two outgoing cruise ships, three inbound freighters, Coast Guard patrols, and assorted tugs and pilot boats. In my limited time aboard, the boat ran smoothly and handled every course adjustment with ease. Her John Deere engine is well insulated; decibel readings in the pilothouse ranged from 72dBA at idle to 79dBA at wide-open throttle (12 knots).

Having watched her from the 52 in big ocean swells, I was impressed by her apparent stability in weather one would never choose to be boating in. The boat is designed to accept active stabilizers, but because this was an inventory model, she was not so equipped. She is hard chined in the aft third of her hull, and this, coupled with her full skeg, provides an impressive amount of hull form stability.

OCEAN

ALEXANDER
50
Classicco





Top: The walk-around bridge allows for easy line handling, and the cushioned area is a great spot for lounging once anchored. Above: The foredeck is a clean and simple space. Just be sure to shut the hatch before washing down the anchor!

DESIGN ELEMENTS

Ocean Alexander has been building boats for more than 25 years, completing nearly 2,000 yachts in that time period. The family-owned business has its own yards in Kaohsiung, Taiwan, and Shanghai, China, and, with over 600 full-time employees, is one of the larger boatbuilders in the industry. The company was founded by Alex Chueh in 1973 and is currently managed by his son, John Chueh. In 1977, Alex developed a relationship with Ed Monk Jr. Since then, Ocean Alexanders have been designed exclusively by Monk.

Over the years, Ocean Alexander has built trawlers, pilothouse yachts, and motoryachts in various sizes and configurations, ranging from 38 feet to its latest flagship, a 98-foot motoryacht that debuted at the 2006 Miami International Boat Show.

The 50 Classicco trawler began life in 2000. Originally introduced as a 43, she was enlarged to a 46 in 2006. The current model is essentially the same as the 46, but the boat is now designated as a 50, which brings up the lack of a standard of measurement in the yachting industry. One man's 50 may be another man's 54, since a different manufacturer may include the swim platform and even the anchor platform when measuring a boat's

length. In my own experience, it seems every yacht owner has two boats: the first is the one he tells his friends about; the second is the one he tells the dockmaster about at a marina charging a per-foot slip fee. The OA 50 measures just longer than 46 feet on deck, with the additional 3-plus feet given over to the swim platform.

(Technical editor's note: The ABYC defines LOA as "the straight line measurement from the foremost part of the boat to the aftermost part of the boat, measured parallel to the centerline and to the design waterline." Included in the measurement are components that are molded or welded onto the boat by the builder, such as bow pulpits, swim platforms, and rub rails; not included are such items as attached bowsprits, pulpits, rudders, and railings. From the standpoint of measurements that determine a vessel's navigation light requirements, the entire length, including swim platforms and bow pulpits, must be taken into account.)

The 50 Classicco has a pilothouse configuration with a compact flybridge station topsides. Her semi-enclosed Portuguese bridge rings the amply glazed pilothouse. The reverse-raked windows, coupled with very thin mullions, provide 180 degrees of visibility and produce an open, airy feeling in the pilothouse. The use of polished stainless-steel window frames throughout the boat adds a touch of class and provides a durable non-chip finish. Diamond/Sea-Glaze doors open from both sides of the pilothouse. The port door leads to a well-protected companionway to the bridge, the starboard door to a built-in seating area and foredeck.

The substantial bow pulpit encloses a sturdy anchor platform equipped with a Muir Cheetah horizontal windlass. A stainless-steel plow anchor with full-chain rode is to starboard, leaving adequate space to port for a second anchor of the owner's choice. The divided anchor locker, large enough to hold two all-chain rodes of about 200 feet each, is reached through a small deck hatch.

The foredeck and all outside areas feature deep bulwarks and strong rails with stainless-steel handles, providing a great deal of security for crew working on deck. The exceptions are the 8-inch toerails found on either side of the main saloon, which are for the surefooted only, either at the dock or in calm water. There is a full-length handrail above the ledge that offers support, but getting a line on the midship cleat while under way would be daunting. Fortunately, there is a hawse cleat located farther forward at the port and starboard pilothouse doors that can be easily rigged before docking. The midship cleat can then be rigged, if necessary, from the dock.

On the plus side, this narrow ledge allows a full-width



Top: Stairs leading from the pilothouse to the dinghy deck are nice and wide. The stainless handrail adds a feeling of security. Above: Hawse cleats are set into the side decks, which helps prevent stubbed toes.



The 50 Classicco cuts through chop with ease. A dinghy would fit well on the top deck and could be maneuvered handily with the hefty Steelhead Marine WD800 crane.

saloon in a symmetrical layout; as with most things on boats, there is a trade-off.

Topsides, the dinghy deck measures 11 feet wide by 13 feet deep and will accommodate a large tender with a motor. A powerful Steelhead Marine WD800 crane supplies the power to make launching and retrieval easy over the port side.

The flybridge area provides a double helm seat that is adequate for the skipper and mate. A small settee to port offers some additional seating. I liked the visibility of the helm station but thought the overall space dedicated to outdoor steering and socializing was too limited for a boat that might be used in warm climates. The sculpture-like fiberglass tower, an Ocean Alexander signature, not only looks good but provides space for the owner's choice of an array of electronics.

The mast, along with the inlaid teak wheel, has appeared on many of the boats that Ocean Alexander has built over the years. This consistency of detail is a distinguishing feature of this line of boats.

The interior of the pilothouse includes a central helm, luxurious seating for the helmsman, a settee for other crew members, a small table, and plenty of console space for complete instrumentation, communication, and electronics.

The aft deck measures a generous 12 feet by 6 feet 6 inches and is also well protected with bulwarks and handrails. The dinghy deck extends 4 feet overhead, providing partial shade. The aft deck's solid teak is the only wood on the boat that is exposed to the elements. A door to starboard provides deck-level access, and another in the stern leads to the 38-inch-deep swim platform for boarding from floating piers.

The main saloon is accessed through a 44-inch-wide Diamond/Sea-Glaze sliding door. The built-in settee and two movable stools provide storage under the seat cushions. The high-low table has a weighted base but is not fixed in position. As noted earlier, it must be secured in heavy seas. This boat did not have any freestanding chairs or tables to port, but the 12-foot-wide cabin allows



Top: The large helm station has plenty of room for electronics, and surrounding windows provide excellent visibility. It's easy to get around in the pilothouse because of the open layout. Above: The pilothouse settee offers a perfect place to eat lunch while under way. The small pilot berth would be comfortable only for a short person or a child; it will most likely be used for casual storage.

space for adding furniture. The port side has hinged-door storage below the large fixed light. On this boat, one of the cabinets contained a flat-screen television on a concealed lift. At the forward end of the cabinets is a radiused glass cabinet that is perfect for displaying a piece of sculpture. The wide saloon is compatible with many styles of interior decorating and furniture layout.

The galley to starboard is generously sized at 4-1/2 by 5 feet. An upright refrigerator/freezer flanks a three-

burner Force 10 LP gas range and oven. Above the range is a Sharp microwave convection oven. The double-well stainless-steel sink sits below a large port that provides a wealth of natural light. All countertops are dark granite; because the boat I toured was still in the commissioning process, some surface polishing remained unfinished. Ample storage is available in dovetailed drawers and hinged-door cabinets. A 56-by-15-by-24-inch pantry completes the package.

The circular counter end works well as a bar, with bottle storage directly below. Meal preparation, serving, and entertaining should flow nicely in the adjoining galley and saloon. This arrangement also allows for more privacy and better lighting conditions for navigating from the pilothouse at night.

A set of stairs leads from the galley to the pilothouse. Forward in the pilothouse, a second stairway gracefully curves to the sleeping accommodations. This configuration, common in many pilothouse designs, does require one to go up and down stairs to move from the main saloon to the private cabins. However, the stairs on the OA 50 are beautifully designed with safety in mind and feature excellent nonskid footing.

A vestibule at the bottom of the stairs leads abeam to the guest head, aft to the owner's stateroom, and forward to the guest cabin. The guest head doubles as a powder room for visitors but, despite ample size, does not include a shower. This boat had a door that opened from the vestibule into an area containing a vertically

stacked, full-size Maytag washer/dryer. Without this option, a stall shower can be specified for the head.

The forward guest cabin has staggered berths, which fit well in the relatively confined space. The berths themselves measure 30 by 70 inches (for the lower berth) and 30 by 80 inches (for the upper). Storage includes three drawers, three hinged-door cabinets, full-length shelves above each berth, and a large 60-by-25-by-22-inch cedar-lined hanging locker.



Top: The view looking forward through the saloon is open; space is well used, and cabin windows provide lots of light. Above: The galley has ample counter space, and the opening window provides natural light and ventilation. Note the round countertop, which can be used for cocktail service. (There's room for bottle storage directly below.)

Top: A comfortable settee surrounds the adjustable-height table. The movable hassocks that fit around the base of the table also contain storage space within. Middle left: The queen-size bed is to starboard in the midship master suite. Above left: The cozy guest cabin is quite comfortable. The bunks are spacious, and well-placed steps allow good access to the upper berth. Above right: These stairs are pleasing to the eye, and they provide sure footing with a nonskid surface and a fiddle at the edge of each tread.

OCEAN ALEXANDER 50 CLASSICCO

LOA	49' 6"
LWL	42' 2"
BEAM	14' 8"
DRAFT	4' 2"
MAST HEIGHT	19' 7"
DISPLACEMENT	42,500 lb.
FUEL CAPACITY	700 U.S. gal
WATER CAPACITY	200 U.S. gal
HOLDING CAPACITY	60 U.S. gal
STANDARD POWER	300hp John Deere 6068SFM
MAXIMUM SPEED	12 knots
CRUISE SPEED	7-10 knots
BASE PRICE	\$636,200
TOUR BOAT PRICE	\$770,500
For more information: Alexander Marine oceanalexander.com; info@oceanalexander.com 800.815.4081	



Two heavy hatches provide access to the engine room from the saloon. They are well engineered and are supported with gas struts.

cabins lend themselves well to the occasional visitor. If the entire area were used primarily by one couple, it would be more than adequate for long-term occupancy.

POWER SUPPLIES

Returning to the main saloon, two separate hatches, each supported by gas struts, lead to the engine room and equipment spaces by way of stainless-steel ladders with flat cushioned steps. There is an additional entryway to the engine room through a watertight door leading from the large lazarette.

The engine room walkways are covered in blue Heronrib rubber flooring, which provides an attractive nonskid surface that can be removed for cleaning. Because there is only enough headroom for kneeling throughout most of the compartment, it's wise to wear



Above: The tidy engine room as viewed looking forward from the lazarette door. The Heronrib flooring provides good footing but is tough on the knees if you're wearing shorts. Right: The heavy fiberglass battery boxes are fixed to the hull and provide excellent containment for battery fluid. The boxes have fiberglass tops that are secured by nylon straps.

kneepads if you're dressed in shorts while working in the engine room, as the surface is sharp to the skin.

The engine room is well organized, and it is easy to locate all major components and systems. The single engine provided on this boat, the standard 300hp John Deere 6068SFM, is completely accessible from either side for servicing. Heavy-duty Perko bronze seacocks supply all water to the machinery, and they are connected to the bonding system that links all components, tanks, and steering mechanisms.

The 12-volt electrical system is well organized throughout the vessel, with four wet cell 8D batteries providing house and starting power. (One battery is



a dedicated start battery, two are house batteries, and one supplies the Northern Lights 12kW generator.) A ProMariner IV 2,000-watt inverter rounds out the standard electrical package. Ocean Alexander representatives say the boat's electrical system is ABYC compliant.



Courtesy Ocean Alexander

The engine is flanked on either side by the main fuel tanks, made of 3/16-inch-thick 5052-H32 aluminum alloy, which complies with ABYC specifications. The tanks will hold 700 gallons of fuel and have clearly marked sight gauges, with shut-off valves on the bottom and top of each gauge. On this boat, the tanks were installed neatly and covered with white panels. The panels do not appear to be easily removable, and no access hatch to the tanks is apparent. This is a change from prior boats shipped to the dealer, who will look into the accessibility issue. All tanks and fuel lines are pressure tested at the factory before installation, and the fuel manifold is easily accessible on the forward bulkhead. This boat was equipped with tandem Racor 500 series fuel filters, but they lacked the recommended marine-grade heat shields. Directly in front of the side tanks, space is provided for installation of active stabilizers at the owner's request.

The Classicco has a 200-gallon stainless-steel water tank; the FRP (fiberglass-reinforced polyester) holding tank has a capacity of 60 gallons. The boat is equipped with five 12-volt bilge pumps: one each in the forward, master stateroom, and engine room bilges, and two in the lazarette. There's also a manual bilge pump.

The interior hull, where visible, exhibits a carefully finished surface. It has been smoothly laid up, faired, and painted to a high gloss. Below the waterline, the hull is constructed of solid fiberglass (FRP). Upper hull structures are formed using resin-saturated AL-600 end-grain balsa core. Ocean Alexander backs its hulls with a five-year warranty against osmotic blistering; a seven-year warranty covers structural components (hull, stringers, and superstructure).

The forward section of the boat contains a collision bulkhead. Engine room structural stringers that carry the engine and power train load are reinforced with carbon fiber.

CRUISING CAPABLE

All of the attention paid to hull construction appears to have paid off, and not only in the heavy seas experienced during our photo shoot. I had the



For coastal cruising or offshore passages, the OA 50 Classicco offers comfort and luxury combined with capability.

opportunity to talk to Gil and Durlene Johnson, new owners of an OA 50 named *Dog's Life*. After delivery and sea trials in Ft. Lauderdale, they departed last April 1 for their home in northern Virginia, not far from the Potomac River. They were pressed for time, so they ran offshore for a large part of the voyage. The last leg was an offshore overnight from Wrightsville Beach, North Carolina, to the mouth of Chesapeake Bay.

The NOAA weather forecast had called for southerly winds building to 20 knots late in the afternoon. After passing Cape Lookout shoal, the weather began to worsen. The winds had far surpassed the forecast, and the confused seas built to over 10 feet. With less than two hours of daylight remaining, the Johnsons changed course, heading for Ocracoke Inlet.

The seas, running up to 17 feet, were on the beam, with the wind building to 35 knots. They notified the Coast Guard of their progress and passed the Ocracoke

Inlet sea buoy, cleared the jetties, and finally entered sheltered waters. A few items that had not been well secured had been tossed around in the cabins, and some water, which probably had entered through the engine vents in the beam seas, had accumulated in the bilge. Other than that, there had been no harm done; all of the bilge pumps had operated satisfactorily. After finally docking at 2 a.m., the Johnsons realized that not only was their Ocean Alexander 50 a great value, but she was a seaworthy vessel.

Ocean Alexander envisions the 50 Classicco as the first in a series of luxury trawlers to be added to its extensive line of motoryachts. The boat has evolved from earlier models and succeeds in most areas to become the basis for a new line. The company's long, successful history in boatbuilding, coupled with a strong commitment to servicing its customers, will ensure ongoing interest in its trawlers. 🚤

FUEL USAGE AT VARIOUS SPEEDS

RPM	SPEED (knots)	FUEL USAGE (gph)
1600	6.1	3.6
1800	8.1	3.6
2100	9.5	7.5
2300	10	10.0
2500	10.5	13.1

Shorepower receptacles (50 amps each) are located on each side of the vessel, but both are well forward. No receptacle is provided on the aft deck, which means long runs of heavy shorepower cable are required to connect the boat when docked in a stern-to position.

Each battery is contained in a rugged case, with its cover secured by nylon straps. All batteries are readily accessible for servicing, which, because they are of the flooded variety, will be required. Lacking, however, is a consolidated battery switch outside the engine room that would allow the skipper to turn off all batteries. Each battery has a separate switch nearby, but all switches are located within the engine and mechanical spaces.

The engine and gear case are attached by a shaft that is manufactured of Aquamet 22, a high-alloy stainless steel known for its corrosion resistance, and coupled to a dripless face shaft seal. The engine and gear case are accessible by removing a small area of the walkway.