



Selecting A Boat

Preparation

After moving from Canada to Asia in 1993, we were boatless for five years. All we knew at this point was that we wanted a boat, something much larger and slower than the Bayliner we used to own, probably a motorsailer or a trawler.

During this period, we read every boating publication we could find, got our sailing certification, visited boat yards and marinas, and we attended every boat show and Trawlerfest that we could afford. We spent a lot of time on the Internet, especially the Liveaboard List, Trawler World List and a bunch of boating news groups. Maurice even started taking the Westlawn correspondence course in naval architecture.

Deciding on the Boat

Armed with all this knowledge and experience we used a scientific decision-making process to select the makes and models of boats that would suit us. First, we made a list of "musts". To keep an open mind we limited ourselves to eight musts and debated for some time as to what those were. Here is our Must List:

- * The helm separate from the accommodation (so that night vision will not be impaired)
- * The galley up with the saloon and of a safe design for sea going
- * At least two staterooms, with a full size or larger double bed in the owner's
- * At least 6.5-foot headroom throughout the accommodation area and at least 3.5-foot headroom in the engine room
- * Full displacement and single screw, with at least 2500 miles usable range

- * Washer/dryer or space to install one
- * Portuguese bridge or similar bridge protection at sea
- * The price no more than \$500k

Then we made a very long list of "wants" (e.g., U-shaped galley, good engine access, lots of storage). The wants we arranged in order of importance; this is not easy (e.g., is lots of storage more or less important than a bow thruster?). It took a lot of soul searching and discussion between the two of us to complete this step. We then "weighted" each want on a scale of one to ten, with ten being the best (i.e., just how much more desirable is a big galley to a stand-up engine room?).

Armed with our two lists, we began looking at boats. No boat was considered further if it violated any of the musts. We assigned "fulfillment" numbers between one and ten depending upon how well the boat being looked at fulfilled each want (e.g., the Nordhavn 46 scored 9 for seaworthiness while the Krogen 42 scored a 6). This wasn't too difficult to do.

The rest was simple math. For each boat, the weight of each want was multiplied by its fulfillment number to get a score (e.g., if the weight for a U-shaped galley was a 5 and the Krogen Whaleback scored 7 for how well it fulfilled this want, its score for this want for this boat was 35) . The weighted scores for all the wants for each boat were added up, giving us an overall score for the boat. The result was a table comparing dozens of makes and models. This was easy to do using a spread sheet.

Once we began to have really clear feelings about what we liked and did not like, and why, the last step was to boil the list down to the best half dozen boats. While the overall score of each boat influenced our decision, we made a conscious effort to let our emotions rule at this final and critical step.

Up to this point, we intentionally made no offers, no matter how good the deal sounded or how much in love with a particular boat we were.

Laying in Wait

Being armed with a list of six boats, with all our desired options weighted, was a great position to be in. We were now definitely in the market.

We waited until boats on our "short-list" came onto the market, went aboard and looked very closely at every inch of each boat, guided by our want list. If there were significant deviations from the make and model of boat that had made it onto our short list, we occasionally punched the one we were looking at into our spread sheet to see if the overall score kept it in the running. We looked seriously at a fantail 50, a Sunfjord, several Nordhavn 46s and a couple of Krogen 42s. But we either could not get them for a price we were willing to pay, or they were too far away, or both.

With only a few years until retirement and no suitable boat located, we decided to have a boat built. So, we started to draft a design layout and specifications. Having our two lists made this easy. We had barely started this process when a Kadey Krogen Whaleback became available; this boat was very high up on our list. We bought her, moved aboard and never had any reservations whatsoever about our choice.