

A Class *of* Its Own

The new True North 34 lets you enjoy your time on the water — and you'll look great everywhere you go.

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Flair. Brio. Élan. Individualism. Character. The new True North 34 has it all, plus some. Whatever else you can say or think about this boat, you won't confuse it with anything else out on the water. From its low profile, plumb bow, long sheer, gracious tumblehome and rakish reverse transom, the True North 34 stands out from the crowd, any crowd.

And it comes from a good family. The True North Marine Group in Warren, Rhode Island, is part of Pearson Composites, which has been a leader in using SCRIMP infusion technology to produce lighter and stronger hulls for many years and is now making J/Boat and Alerion Express sailboats, in addition to True North powerboats from 34 to 47 feet. These are all high-tech, good-looking, top-of-their-class performers that stand the test of time. There's a lot to be said for a rich heritage, particularly when the newest offspring looks one-of-a-kind.

The new True North 34 actually is an updated version of the 33 that was introduced four years ago, offering more living space, with expanded seating areas on the bridge deck, a smaller galley and cockpit and a shallower draft (now under 3 feet) to enhance performance. Nothing radical (after all, the 33 certainly had its own identity), just some nips and tucks, a little rearranging of the furniture, as it were, to adjust to the way people actually use their boats.

The result: This is a boat that makes you happy. It's about as carefree as boating on a pretty 34-foot mini-yacht can be. For such an elegant boat, the True North



INVITING VIEWS. Looking aft from the helm (top), visibility is excellent; the True North's tumblehome and curves are classic (above).

has minimal brightwork. At the end of the day, you basically hose it down and put it away. The True North people want their owners to enjoy their time on the water, to be able to relax on the boat, to spend the day up on deck where everybody has a place to sit and watch the action (visibility is superb) while still being able to go below for a comfortable overnight or extended weekend. The idea is that the large upper deck area is for living, eating and having fun, while the reduced below-deck area is for sleeping (and the head). Since the bridge deck is protected, that's where most people will want to spend their time, even when the weather turns less than perfect.

On a foggy early-summer morning, I met Mark Edwards of True North at the Newport Onshore docks in Newport, Rhode Island. Even in a crowded marina, it was easy to spot the True North; the dark blue hull and its distinctive lines give it away even from a distance. When we climbed on the boat, we found out how user-friendly it really is. My daughter, Liz, was home on vacation from college in Los Angeles, so she was with me. Her boating frame of reference is our Grand Banks 36 (which we cruised every summer to Newport and Nantucket, Massachusetts); she also was with me years ago when I tested hull number one of the Hinckley Picnic Boat at the factory in Southwest Harbor, Maine. (She's wanted one ever since. So do I, but don't hold your breath, Liz.)

There are built-in nonskid steps on both sides of the boat leading down to the cockpit; in addition, a supersize stainless grab rail running down the side of the house lets you get a grip, if you need one.

After Mark arranged all the cushions (there's seating everywhere), we headed out into Narragansett Bay for a test run. As the fog settled in, we ran up past the Pell Bridge and then turned around to get our performance numbers. Even at speed, the True North runs fairly level (2 to 3.5 degrees) with little bow rise. This is probably due to the

new TrueTrac Drive, designed by Clive Dent, which mounts the prop higher up in the tunnel and provides less vibration, cavitation and noise. The hull has a fine entry, with a knuckle forward to deflect spray and provide width for the master stateroom. Power steering

TRUE NORTH 34



SPECIFICATIONS

LOA: 37'2"
Beam: 12'4"
Draft: 2'11"
Disp.: 12,500 lbs.
Transom Deadrise: 16 degrees
Water: 65 gals.
Fuel: 180 gals.
Contact: True North Yachts, tnyachts.com
Base Price (w/ Volvo D6 370 hp): \$319,850

PERFORMANCE

TEST POWER: (1) Volvo D6 435 hp diesel. Speeds measured by GPS in Narragansett Bay off Newport, Rhode Island, in calm conditions with three people on board, half fuel and half water. Sound levels measured at the helm in dB-A.

RPM	KNOTS	GPH	DB-A
600	4.3	0.4	72
1,000	6.2	0.7	68
1,500	8.4	2.9	77
2,000	11.8	5.8	78
2,500	16.4	10.1	83
3,000	22.1	14.9	85
3,460	27.9	21.6	87

INSIDE: (1) Nonskid side decks are wide and safe, with stainless grab rails along cabin top. (Stainless bow rails are optional; you give up some of the sleek look, but you gain some security.) (2) Large sliding windows on both sides of the bridge deck are great for visibility and ventilation. Center panel of windshield also opens. (3) Convertible settee can extend to an astonishing 7.5 feet long with a comfortable backrest. (4) Gull wing doors of the transom open wide for toys.

PROS:

- Unique good looks.
- Lots of space for on-deck living.
- Easy maintenance.
- Economical fuel burn.

CONS:

- Stateroom is relatively small (the tradeoff for all the on-deck space). Head is small, too.
- Galley area also is not large.



NIGHT AND DAY. The sleeping area, with V-berth and filler (left); the helm station (right) is user-friendly and affords great visibility.

makes turning easy (you can turn the wheel with one finger), and the ride is soft. Since the seas were calm, we had to settle for finding larger wakes when we could. At Mark's suggestion, we dialed back to displacement speeds and found the boat still moves comfortably through the water. The fine entry, steep deadrise and a rocker leading back to the skeg and flat aft sections add

up to a nice performance at any speed, even in the 8- to 16-knot range, where many boats simply slog along and wander through the water.

With the three of us arranged near the helm, conversation was easy at a 16-knot cruising speed, and the fuel flow numbers show the True North to be absolutely miserly. Indeed, the single Volvo D6 435 hp diesel was

Living the Way They Want on *Whiskey Tango Foxtrot*

Will and Marie Crump know a thing or two about boats. In fact, they've been on them most of their lives. Will, who's from Richmond, Virginia, grew up sailing on the Chesapeake and loved it. He won several North American and East Coast championships in J/Boats and served as head coach of the JWorld team in Annapolis, Maryland. For her part, Marie was raised in Denmark and graduated from a leading sailboat racing school there. She's the two-time Danish Match Race Champion and has competed in almost every leading women's match racing event in the world. Both Will and Marie now work for software companies on Cape Cod.

I interviewed them the day they returned from competing (in separate boats) in the Bermuda race, and they were looking forward to spending some time on their new True North 34, *Whiskey Tango Foxtrot* (think about it). "We're sailors," Will says. "This is a bit of a departure for us. But we want to be able to escape to other destinations that we don't have time to get to in a sailboat." Why True North? "Every boat I've ever owned came from that



factory," he says. "I have a high degree of confidence in their ability to get it right." The boat's unique design "lets us live the way we want," Marie says, "with us up on top in the open during the day and then below at night. I also like the ability to see everything, and there's lots of room up top."

For both, the transition from sail to power had its moments. "It was a humbling experience," Will says. "I can take a racing sailboat through a course and miss another boat by inches. This is different, but the guys from True North took us out for some practice and they made it easy." Marie says: "There's definitely a learning curve. I'm learning how to tweak it, but it handles very nicely."

The Crumps were heading off for Nantucket on their new boat at the end of the summer; eventually they plan to cruise down the ICW. "This boat gives us much more freedom," says Will. Another plus: Everywhere they go, he says, "people comment about the boat's elegant looks and presence on the water." That's a powerful endorsement, indeed.



RUNNING FREE. The boat tracks straight and true at any speed and cruises easily in the low 20-knot range with a very economical fuel burn.

burning just a tad over 10 gallons an hour at 16 knots; this engine was an upgrade from the standard Volvo D6 370 hp, which probably is even more fuel-efficient (both have common rail technology). With this performance, you don't need to sit at the dock worrying about fuel bills; just turn the key and go anywhere you want.

Back in the harbor, idling past kids getting their sailing lessons in Optimists, the standard bow thruster made docking easy, and we tied up and had a good look around the boat. First things first, perhaps the most unusual piece of this singular boat is its gull-door reverse transom, which opens wide so you can load a kayak, a Sunfish, a dink or just about anything you can think of directly from the water into the cockpit. True North also designed a vertical transom with an extended swim platform called the Hideaway Tailgate, which won an NMMA Innovation Award last year. The center portion of this transom folds down flush with the cockpit sole and then back up again like the back seat of an SUV to form a straight-across transom. It's your choice.

The port side of the bridge deck is the major seating area (you can also have seating across the transom, on the sides of the cockpit and an aft-facing seat at the forward end of the cockpit), with an L-shaped settee that has a

dual-function seat back at its forward end. It can serve as a backrest for the two-person companion seat across from the helm, or you can move it all the way forward and open up the settee to a full 7.5 feet. This also slides out to become a convertible bed. Facing it on the starboard side is the galley, with a combination alcohol/electric stove, sink, fridge and lots of storage.

The engine room in the middle of the boat is neat, with custom True Quiet insulation and lots of room all around. The Volvo diesel rests on flexible engine mounts and there's a 4-foot muffler and underwater exhausts. A smaller hatch forward leads to space for the optional Fisher Panda 4-kW genset; an inverter is standard.

Forward, down two teak steps, is the master stateroom with a V-berth and bolster; a hanging locker and four drawers are to starboard, a head compartment with telephone shower is to port. It is clear the boat is designed for the upper areas in terms of space. I could not stand up straight here, but then I'm almost 6 feet 2 inches tall.

Indeed, it's the outside that gives the True North 34 its character and its appeal. "This is a social boat," says Liz, as we thank Mark and climb on the dock. "You could take a ton of people. It really would be a lot of fun." ♦