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AUGUST 1999

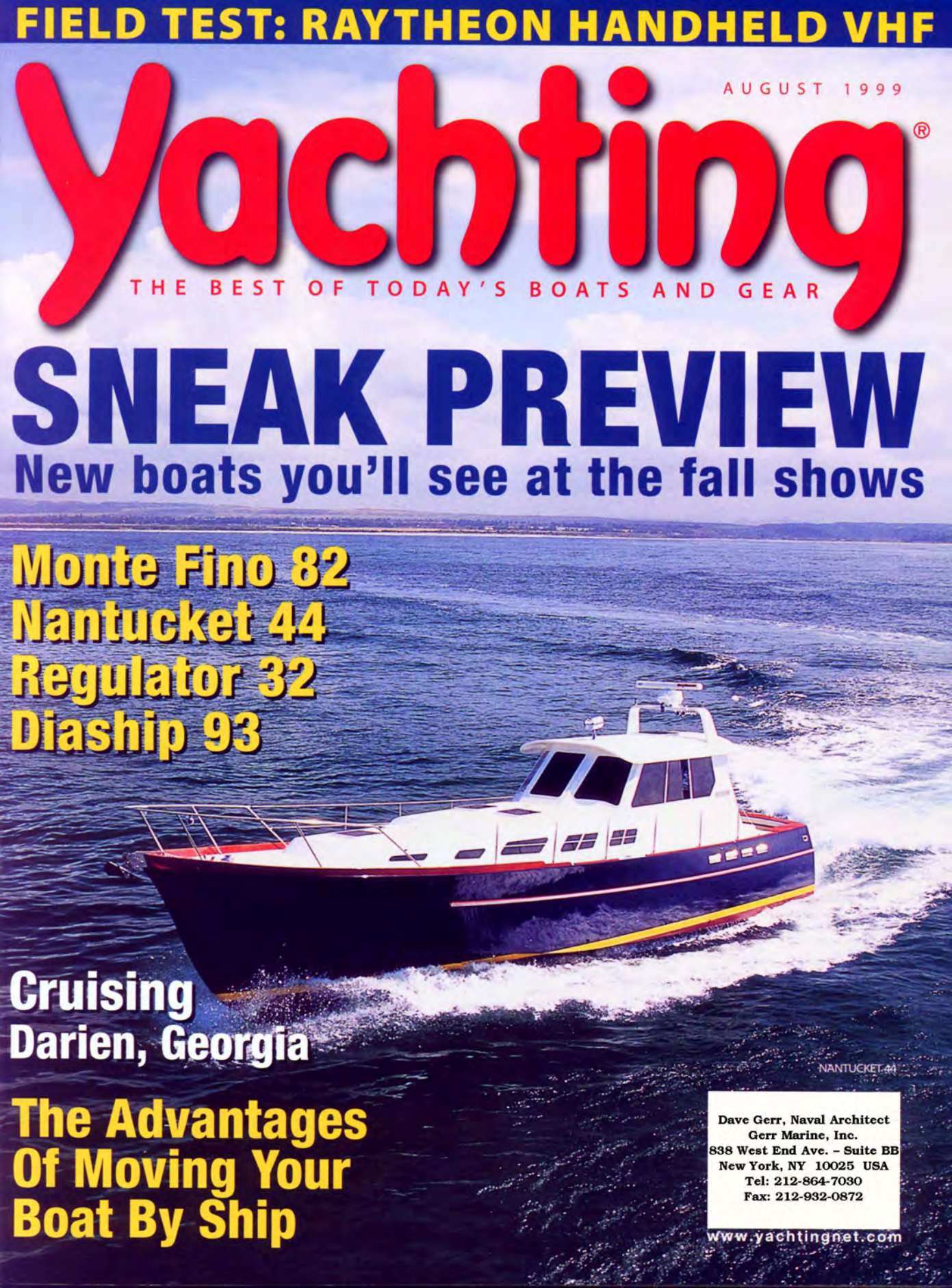
# Yachting®

THE BEST OF TODAY'S BOATS AND GEAR

# SNEAK PREVIEW

## New boats you'll see at the fall shows

**Monte Fino 82**
**Nantucket 44**
**Regulator 32**
**Diaship 93**



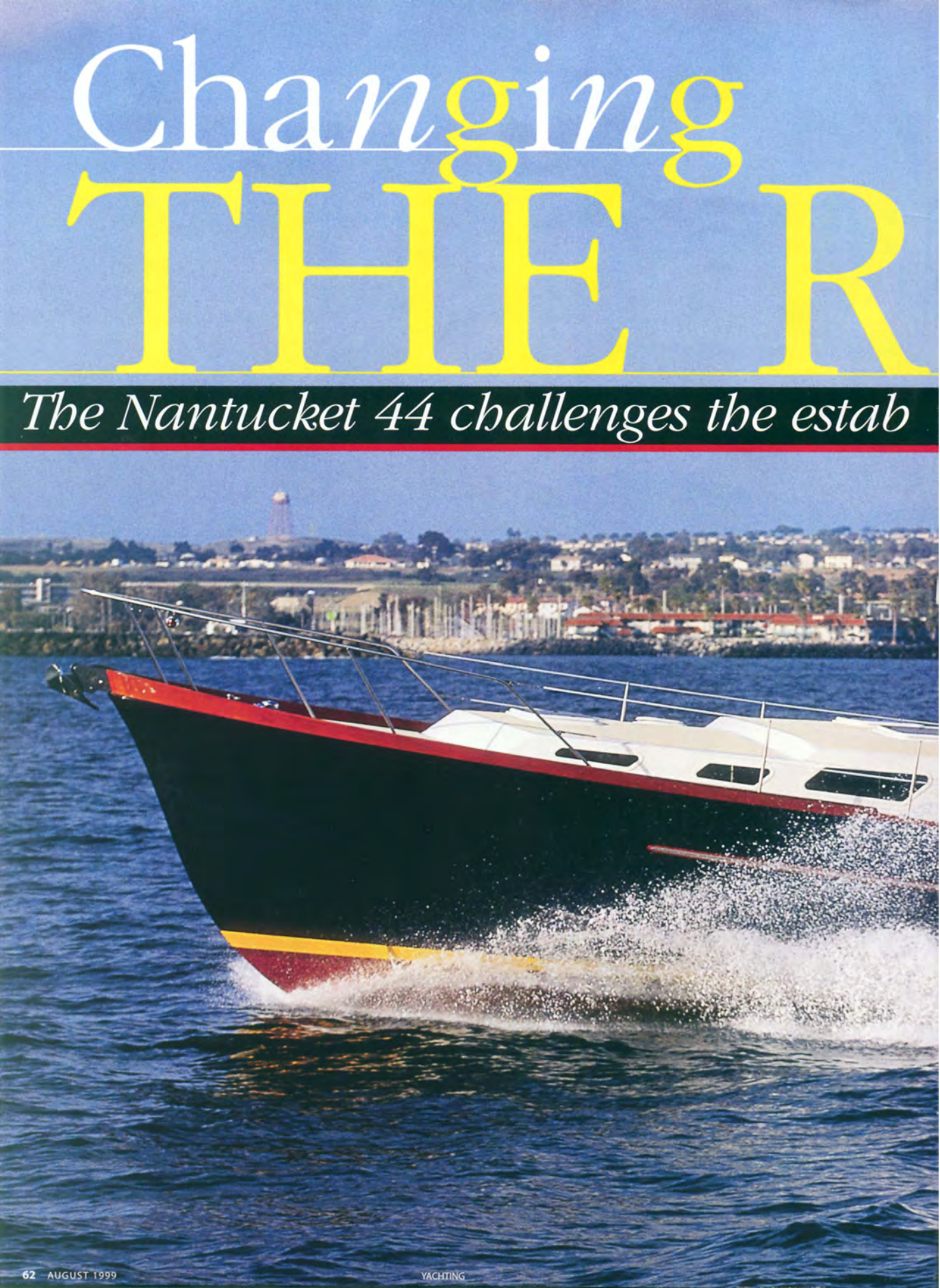
**Cruising Darien, Georgia**

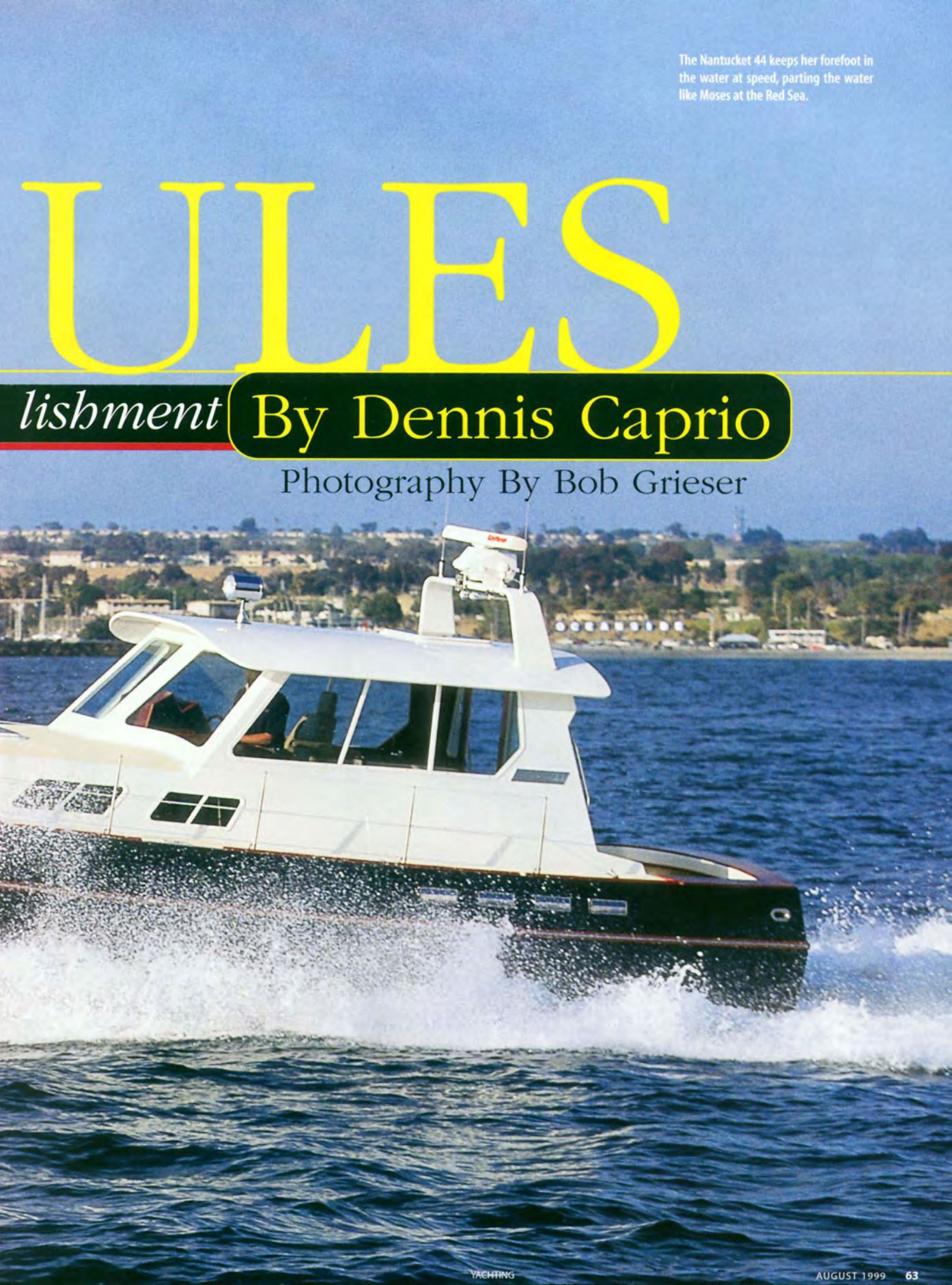
**The Advantages Of Moving Your Boat By Ship**

NANTUCKET 44

# Changing THEIR

## The Nantucket 44 challenges the estab





The Nantucket 44 keeps her forefoot in the water at speed, parting the water like Moses at the Red Sea.

# ULES

## *lishment*

By Dennis Caprio

Photography By Bob Grieser

Most of our preconceptions about fast powerboats won't count for much when we open the throttles of the Nantucket 44 and head out to sea. This boat is different from anything we've driven in the past. It's fast—almost 40 knots—the ride is superb, the handling rapier sharp and wonderfully predictable.

I'm tempted to label the hull a breakthrough, but I can't because nothing about this boat is genuinely new. In fact, designer Dave Gerr said that he didn't invent a single design element of the 44: he merely combined in a unique way a handful of well-proven ideas from the past.

The most obvious of these elements is the boat's narrow beam (see Lean & Mean, YACHTING, July 1999); 11'2" is only a quarter of the LOA. Compare these figures with the typical 14' to 16' beam on a 44' LOA. Narrow boats, even the planing variety, are more easily driven than fat ones of the same length because they have less wetted surface area. They also weigh less, everything else being equal. If we power both boats with the same number of horses, the narrow hull will be faster and more economical than the fat one. The Nantucket 44 needs only 840 hp to reach its top speed, about 20 percent less than her chubby sister.

Less obvious is the shape of the bottom. Deadrise at the transom is 24 degrees—the accepted angle for deep-Vs—but it's 27 degrees amidships—not the norm. As C. Raymond Hunt conceived the original deep-V more than 30 years ago, it has a constant deadrise from amidships to the transom. Angles notwithstanding, the Gerr-Vee is more than a simple deep-V. Most modern V-hulls are exactly that—a V—but the Nantucket's bottom is shaped like a bell with a flat machined off the top. This flat grows in width as it approaches the transom. Gerr also left the bottom free of spray-suppressing/lift-enhancing excrescences.

| | |
|---|---|
| LOA | 43'10" |
| LWL | 40'2" |
| Beam | (max.) 11'2" |
| Beam | (LWL) 10'11" |
| Draft | 2'8" |
| Displ. | 28,200 lb. |
| Fuel | 400gal. |
| Range | 1,150 miles @20mph (1700 rpm); 26 gph @ 30 mph |
| Engines | 2x Cat 3126 @ 420 hp |
| Top speed | 36 kts. |
| Cruising speed | 25-32 kts. |
| Price | $679,000 (base) |

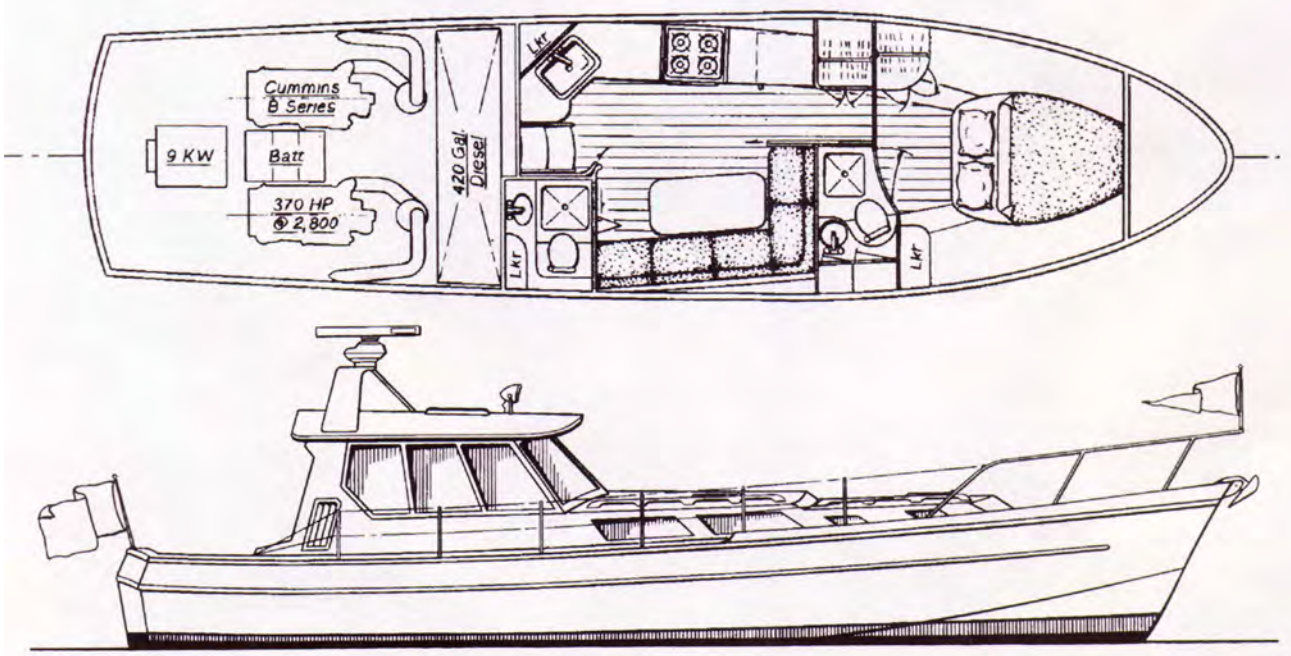
On a traditional deep-V, these excrescences compensate for the shortcomings of the basic design. Deep-Vs need a lot of power to climb onto a plane; they can suffer lateral instability (chine walking) at speed; they can be quite wet topside. Lifting/spray strakes lend a bit of lateral stability at speed, stiffen the flat surfaces of the bottom and increase lift. On the downside, they harden the impact of re-entry after a boat leaves the water.

The Nantucket 44 gets its lift from the hollow chines and the delta-shape flat along the keel. Most V-bottom boats have chine flats, which add initial stability at rest and when the boat is under slow way. They also provide some lift, but chine flats let water escape to the sides of the boat: Gerr's chine tunnels trap the water, which increases their lifting component. They look cool, too.

You won't find the 44's deep forefoot on a conventional deep-V. It's largely responsible for the boat's cushy ride: cushy, because when the boat comes down off a wave, the hull says cushhhh. The fillings stay in your teeth; your tibia doesn't try to become part of your femur; and the whole business makes boat flying quite a lot of fun. At slower speeds, the deep forefoot slices through the waves, dispersing the impact. While we cruised at about 33 knots in seas of 3' to 4', I went forward and climbed onto the V-berth. A person could actually sleep up there in the conditions most of us encounter on the average week-long cruise.

You may not believe how well this boat works until you try it. Matthew Smith, president of Westbourne Custom Yachts, and I converged on the Oceanside Marine Centre in Oceanside, Calif., at about 11 a.m. Under way about 30 minutes afterward, we had to idle on one engine to maintain a no-wake speed. When we cleared the mooring area, Matthew treated us to a few hole-less donuts—forward on port, reverse on starboard, the 44 easily spun in her own length. This maneuver surprised me, because the boat has a lot of bottom in the

*continued on page 90*



The boat lifted as though by the hand of Neptune and bounded forward with the eagerness of a shark

Big windows mean a BIG view in every direction. The engine gauges in the upper section of the binacle are within the helmsman's line of sight. This V-berth (left) is large and comfortable. In the saloon (below), the dinette converts to a double berth. The galley wasn't designed for serious cooking at sea. The day head is on the left in the photo.

*continued from page 64*

water at displacement speed.

We cleared the breakwater and accelerated into winds of 12-15 knots and seas of about 3'. By the time the tach needles spun past 1200 rpm, we were on plane. The entire boat lifted as though by the hand of Neptune and bounded forward with the eagerness of an attacking shark. This was serious acceleration for such a luxurious yacht. We settled into a 2400 rpm cruise, and Smith motioned me to the helm.

Steering was light and very accurate, but I could still sense action at the rudders. Although the boat is equipped with trim tabs, we didn't need them until we sped at maximum velocity across the beam seas and wind. The Nantucket's house presents quite a lot of sail area to beam-on winds. Factoring in the beam seas and her narrow bottom, I wasn't surprised by her angle of heel. A few degrees of leeward trim tab leveled her in a flash.

Cornering at speed, the 44 dug into the water with her inside chine hollow and tracked through the turn like a Champ Car. She leaned into it, the way most V-bottom boats do, but less so than most deep-Vs I've driven. In following seas, I expected her deep forefoot to upset the steering—making her pivot around the entry and ignore input from the rudders—but she needed only minor corrections at the wheel.

If you don't enjoy flying at nearly 40 knots, throttle back: the Nantucket is totally content at low speeds. She idles at 8 knots; planes at about 12 and never changes her running angle—at least not enough so anyone aboard will notice.

During our antics, Smith and I were able to carry on our conversation at a normal volume: noise levels in the pilothouse were similar to those you'd experience in the cabin of a Porsche 911, well into the engine's power curve. Westbourne has isolated and damped the noise and vibration that intrudes on the cabins of many boats. Up forward, the sound of the water against the hull was louder than that of the engines.

Smith's goal for the Nantucket 44 is to lure buyers who have been looking at sedan and express cruisers from Little Harbor, Alden, Able Marine and Hinckley. He's on the right track: workmanship throughout the boat equals or betters that of competing boats. The joinerwork is excellent; all the hardware is custom-made investment cast stainless steel or is fabricated by Westbourne's own metal shop. The company stripes all of the wiring in-house to ABS and European standards. The cast bronze rudders turn on stainless shafts that penetrate 6" into the body of the rudder. What's more, the rudder shafts are long and turn in a hefty bearing at the top and bottom. This arrangement allows them to take huge loads without binding the bearings.

Construction, too, is top-drawer. Saving weight requires sophisticated materials and skillful workers—but it's the only way to have luxury with high performance and reasonable fuel economy. Westbourne uses biaxial E-glass over Baltek's DuraKore set in epoxy resin. Bulkheads and much of the furniture is made of Baltek's Decolite panels covered with matched-grain veneers.

Although yachtsmen who can afford a boat in this league ($679,000, base) don't have to justify the purchase price, they expect good value. The Nantucket 44 gives them a design that looks like nothing else in the harbor, is as comfortable as any boat in its class, and is faster and more seakindly than most. Docking a 44 at the yacht club will be like wheeling into the country club parking lot and slotting your McLaren F1 coupe in a sea of Mercedes, Porsches and BMWs. □

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