

A Modern Classic

Grand Banks sleek Eastbay 50 SX is the builder's first to offer Volvo Penta IPS.

When the Grand Banks Yachts' design team conceived the new Eastbay 50 SX at the 2012 Miami International Boat Show, choosing Volvo Penta IPS (Integrated Propulsion System) propulsion was a landmark move. IPS was introduced in the mid-2000s and is now common, yet Grand Banks had never utilized the forward-facing propeller IPS design. "It's our first foray with Volvo Penta and we are impressed," explained Tucker West, general manager of Grand Banks Northwest in Seattle. Tucker was on hand at the 2013 Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show to introduce the brand-new Eastbay 50 SX. (It will also be at the 2014 Miami Yacht & Brokerage Show this month.) "The horsepower is outstanding, and the location and setup of the engines allows us to keep the cockpit lower."

Volvo Penta isn't the only company offering pod propulsion,

and Grand Banks has offered boats with Cummins diesel power and Zeus pod drives. However, the combination of new twin Volvo Penta D11 700-hp engines and IPS 950 drives are a superb fit for the low-profile Eastbay 50 SX (traditional shaft drives are also available.) The yacht features a swept-back look from bow to stern with large side windows that create a feeling of speed even at rest. "The IPS propulsion offers an improvement in fuel efficiency and excellent maneuverability with the joystick controls," West said. "At 28 knots you are burning 45 gallons per hour of fuel, and that is excellent for a boat of this size."

Grand Banks launched the Eastbay Series in 1993, and the new 50 SX stays true to the C.R. Hunt design, while adding

By DOUG THOMPSON



big boat features such as side bulwark doors, an integrated foredeck sunpad, retractable cockpit awning/shade, side helm door, and a mammoth retractable sunroof. Opening the sunroof fills the helm station with natural light and connects the captain and passengers to the outdoors. The boat's stout construction begins with a PVC foam-cored, hand-laid fiberglass hull, with a deep-V entry for excellent sea-keeping in rough water. Humphree trim tabs are standard equipment with the Volvo IPS package—with the push of a button, a stainless steel plate descends or ascends to change the running angle of the boat.

"Most Eastbay owners cruise the Eastern seaboard down to The Bahamas in the spring and cruise New England, Maine or Canada in the summer," West said. "If you were to order one right now we can deliver the boat in about 12 months.



The boat is built at our factory in Singapore, shrink-wrapped and delivered to the U.S., where we install the electronics to the owner's liking and do the final fit and finish. We are on hull number three. Hull number one was sold to the same customer that bought our first Eastbay 49 in 1996."

The 50 SX is entirely done in teak, and when boarding the boat the aft cockpit offers a stately setting with a white transom couch and table forward. The table folds in half and allows access to the engine room through a hatch in the deck. Removable buckets act as storage bins when in place—simply remove the bins to access the pod drives for servicing. An optional docking station was added to the boat we reviewed, housed inside a hideaway compartment aft of the deckhouse. The IPS package also offers Volvo Penta's optional DPS (Dynamic Position System), which holds your



SPECIFICATIONS

LOA: 50'1"

Beam: 16'6"

Draft: 3'6"

Half Load Displacement: 50,050 lbs.

Fuel/Water: 800/162 U.S. gals.

Power: 2x Volvo Penta D11 engines and IPS 950 @ 700hp

Cruise/Top Speed: 22.5/28.9 kts

MSRP: Contact dealer for pricing

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Clockwise from left: The well-appointed master feels spacious; the galley down allows for conversation with passengers in the saloon and at the helm; the large, open aftdeck becomes an extension of the saloon. Next page: The dinette is conveniently situated deck up from the galley and across from the helm; The Volvo Penta IPS, on the auxiliary aft helm station, brings precision and convenience when piloting the 50 SX.

boat's heading and keeps it within a very limited area—even in a current or in windy conditions—while you set fenders and lines.

Off the back of the boat is a teak swim platform that's both wide and deep enough to accommodate a few deck chairs for lounging, and it also has chocks that pop out and rise up from a flush position for mounting a dinghy. An optional hydraulic swim platform with a 350-kg capacity can help assist the launch and storage of a tender.

Double-sliding six-panel doors lead into the main saloon with 6'8" headroom and elongated side windows to provide expansive views. Comfortable couches are positioned to port and starboard with a pop-up flat-screen television for an extra touch. The control station with two Stidd helm chairs is to starboard and offers an expansive dash with all the necessary electronics, steering wheel, and throttle and trim tab controls.

The galley and staterooms are accessed down a three-step staircase and again, the teak joinery is resplendent amid the drawers and cabinets of the portside galley. The galley features intelligently designed pullout glassware stowage, a Sub-Zero refrigerator and freezer, and Meile four-burner cooktop. "We offer this boat in numerous different layouts," West said. "This is the midship master two-cabin layout option, and the master



has a queen bed, and an ensuite head with a full vanity and shower that closes off. The VIP or bow stateroom also has an ensuite head and separate shower with a queen bed, a deck hatch and port holes for lots of light." A second layout option situates the galley starboard of the helm, with three separate staterooms below. The third option is a mid-level galley, and instead of three steps down, it's up a little higher and allows a view of the water.

Moving forward to the bow of the 50 SX, the wide side decks are easily accessed from the cockpit, and sturdy stainless-steel handrails provide security. The huge windlass and anchor are easily accessed if needed, but it's more likely you'll come to the bow to recline on the two-person sunpad. From here you can watch the voyage unfold in comfort on board the Grand Banks Eastbay 50 SX. [↗](#)

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