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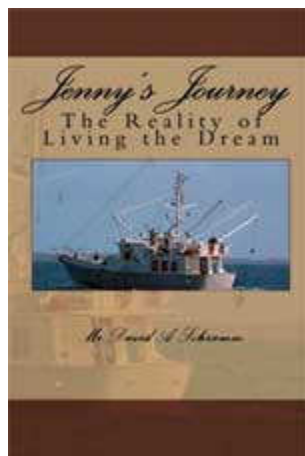
Jenny's Journey

by David A. Schramm

The reality of living the dream

A Nordhavn owner's tell-it-like-it-is account to long-range cruising

Book review by Jeff Merrill



What is it about traveling by sea that speaks to so many of us? If you want to know more detail about what happens after you buy the boat of your dreams (both the good and the bad) then you need to pick up a copy of David Schramm's book, *Jenny's Journey: The reality of living the dream*. This is a great read for trawler owners – past, present and future.

David let me know a few months ago that he was working on this book and I offered to review it once it was done and what a treat! Written in a similar format to Ken William's two great Nordhavn adventure books this is a chronological stream of emails and observations nicely weaved into a blow by blow account of the travels of *Jenny*, Nordhavn 46 hull number 39. David and Mary bought *Jenny* to enjoy the dream we all have, ship out to sea on the foam-paved ocean undulations that provide a path to anyplace in the world you can imagine...

This is a thick soft cover book (364 pages) with insights, details and lessons learned along the way. David's narrative classifies many of the aspects involved in acclimating to and then living the cruising lifestyle. I have included a few of my favorite quotes from the book, but they only hint at the complete content which is really a fantastic overview of what you might expect should you follow in *Jenny's* wake and do something similar.

Buying the boat before retirement, getting her ready while wrapping up a career and then cutting loose – it's a voyage of discovery that has been played out countless times before, but never laid out in such honest detail. In addition to travel times, average speeds and GPS locations (you could plot *Jenny's* course as a navigational practice drill) we learn about things that break and their costs to fix including creative solutions to common problems.

The joys of completing trips and exploring new destinations – the people and places along the way such as fellow boaters in the cruising community and locals to mingle with – are all highlighted.

David correctly characterizes himself as *Jenny*'s "caregiver" and rejoices as he uncovers her many secrets, a process that is only revealed through time and experiences aboard. The light bulb flashes, the dot connects and a mystery is un-shrouded.

Jenny is the star. She flirts with other boats and in many ways is the central character of the book. Propelled by "JD", the affectionately named Lugger main engine, her "heart of steel is rock solid." We get to know a lot about the Nordhavn 46. *Jenny*'s reliable performance in severe sea conditions takes care of David and Mary while the boat's apparent feature flaws are identified by David over time as he ponders solutions and enacts improvements. David explains the importance of SSB for weather and networking with other cruisers. He learns that time takes on another dimension in his planning: "Weather and tides rule our travel plans as opposed to the calendar. Life is already a bit different". The adventure is explained philosophically as "Life on board is a constant set of challenges coupled with exotic scenery, people and wild life". David, a physicist by training, figures out tricks like maximizing refrigeration and stashing his portable electronics devices in the oven to protect them when lightning fills the air. He longs for simple things we all take for granted, like maple syrup, which he finally restocks along the way. He cleverly uses Google Earth and Weather Buoy to supplement his navigational resources.

David's time aboard *Jenny* allows him to shift gears in his internal wiring from the rat race to cruising mode. "It is nice not being on a schedule. I guess if you get past the six month mark you can get into a different groove, a different understanding of cruising. At this point *Jenny* has become a home instead of a vehicle."

Having a hookah to dive and inspect the hull gives him a new found freedom underwater and boosts his confidence of self reliance. Basic fishing techniques are developed to harvest free fresh meals from the sea. The joys of landfalls and beautiful sunsets (which go mostly unreported...we all know they are just part of the deal) are suddenly interrupted one night when David catches a thief on board who is trying to depart with valuable electronics. A reminder that in many ways you can't get away from civilization as long as there are humans. (David provides smart suggestions on how he would handle- and prevent- any future intrusions). There is even a whale collision during this trip (both *Jenny* and the whale swam away from the incident without any damage).

David's faithful dog Nicholas enjoys the entire adventure and is his steadfast companion throughout and readers will learn valuable tips regarding traveling with a dog (including by air) as well as immigration requirements for pets. Sailboats and trawlers share special coves and there are also periods of glorious solitude and heartbreaking loneliness. "No sign of other boats today. It is too nasty out. I am so glad to be on *Jenny* instead of a sailboat. At least I have windows and some view on the world". David's life conclusions are brutally honest and he has clearly enriched his life with these experiences.

Jenny's Journey takes place from December 2003 to May 2009, following a wonderful second hand Nordhavn 46 as she travels from British Columbia down the west coast of the United States, through the Panama Canal and then across the Caribbean to Florida – a distance of over 8,000 miles.

Don't be surprised at the money spent to enjoy this lifestyle (David gives some very real cost break downs of his boat breakdowns.) The title is appropriate; it is the reality of the dream that makes the story ring clear. David's writing is remarkably candid in not only disclosing what things cost, but also what fixes he made. The bonds made and support shared with like minded travelers, especially fellow Nordhavn 46 owners Larry and Sue Tomback, remind us all that even though you are on your own boat you are also "in the same boat" as your fellow cruisers.

Pick up a copy of *Jenny's Journey* if you would like a good book to help you better understand what the life of a cruiser can be. Order your copy and enjoy the ride.

REVIEWER COMMENT:

Without wanting to spoil the story, any reader might like to be forewarned that there are some episodes in this story that coincide with personal events and relationships written in a "tell all" fashion as the cruising lifestyle in this example leads to turns of events and conflicts of emotion that come to define different expectations for the owners. The author has included very personal insights and experiences that reflect what happened during this adventure...reminding us that every one of us goes through life charting his or her own course. Given that "caveat" I believe all trawler owners - former, current and future - can identify with the learning curve of getting to know your boat and discovering more about yourself when you take off to sea.



Jeff Merrill has hundreds of miles at sea on Nordhavn 46's and thinks they are a great ocean trawler. If you would like to know more about the Nordhavn 46 model in general, or *Jenny* specifically, please contact Jeff via e-mail at Jeff.Merrill@JMYS.com, or you can reach him by cell phone (call or text Jeff) at +1 949.355.4950. You can also follow Jeff on Twitter @merrillyachts. *Note: This review originally appeared on the Nordhavn website in November, 2009 and has been updated.*