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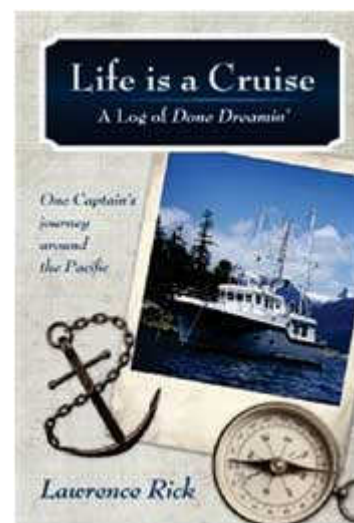
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## *Life is a Cruise*

by Lawrence Rick

Book review by Jeff Merrill

Life is a Cruise. Stop and think about that one for a minute. You may be at your desk at the moment or reading this from your smart phone, but the thought of being out on your own boat enjoying the trawler lifestyle is always in the back of your mind. It's a great title for a book because life really *is* a cruise and should be lived as such, and it's the premise of this series of reflections comprised by Lawrence Rick. The book is Rick's way of enticing the reader out of a life spent on cruise control, which, let's face it – between jobs, family and schedules to keep – is pretty much the way most of us are living. At one point, Lawrence, was a Nordhavn Dreamer too - although long before the cult web community of nearly 2000 members was established. And perhaps as a nod to all of those fantasists he left behind after purchasing his Nordhavn 40 in 2002, he gave his boat the appropriate moniker: *Done Dreamin'*. And thus, reading *Life Is A Cruise* gives you a glimpse of exactly what life is like when you're done dreaming.



I've known Lawrence for many years and remember when he took delivery of *Done Dreamin'*, a smart and well studied guy with some solid boating background, but new to the Nordhavn brand of adventure. What I didn't know was that Lawrence had been emailing his friends updates each week about his various exploits, adventures and the sorts of things that become commonplace while cruising emailing – all of which make up the contents of this very enjoyable book.

The Nordhavn 40 is a special long range cruiser. She is Nordhavn's entry level full displacement passage maker – in fact, I was aboard when PAE set a world record back in 2001 for the smallest production power boat to circumnavigate the globe as a result of the Around The World trip.

Stories of long distance and coastal explorations by Nordhavns always intrigue me and I'm particularly impressed by those adventurers who have selected the Nordhavn 40 to take on the oceans of the world.

Lawrence Rick has compiled an easy to read book cataloging his excursions aboard Nordhavn 40 hull #33, *Done Dreamin'*. Knowing bits and pieces of his travels made it all the more interesting

to finally sit down and read just exactly what he accomplished. The stories shared in this nearly 300 page long book are a fun way to live the life and learn from someone who has been there and done that.

If you intend to go out cruising on a trawler, this is a great resource to help you better understand what it takes and what is involved.

At a very early age Lawrence's family took a long trip on a cruise ship. The experience inspired Lawrence to one day be the captain of his own ship. After a multi-decade career in the airline industry as a pilot, Lawrence finally realized his ultimate goal when he bought his new Nordhavn 40.

His already rich life of travel became even more fulfilling as he learned the systems of his Nordhavn 40 and he takes the reader through his practical learning approach, starting with a cruise up to Alaska and then breaking free to cross the Pacific. Through emailed updates, he keeps in touch with his grown children and later has them on board for visits in various destinations.

As for the reader, the invitation for adventure comes right at the outset within the words of the tome's introduction: "This book is a chronicle of my lifelong dream becoming reality. Join me in the search for that cerulean – a blue that can only be found far at sea."

*Life is a Cruise* is a great collection of reflections written during those periods when Lawrence found time to summarize what has happened during the week. Each entry is called the NOW, or "News Of the Week", and in addition to seeing wonderful places and meeting fascinating people, there are stories of beautiful sunsets and broken parts – all components of the reality of traveling by sea. The sign off of each entry is "Life is a Cruise."

There are many great observations and I don't want to spoil your read, but would like to point out a couple. Early on Lawrence encounters a megayacht in Mexico that is captained with a chef and crew for a pair of older couples who are being waited on hand and foot. "Life may be a cruise, but, come on, that's putting life on automatic pilot. Where is the fun when you let someone else do everything for you?" Good point Lawrence!

I'm fascinated with the South Pacific and find two entry paragraphs that I'd like to reprint here:

From #55 NOW – May 31, 2005 in Tahiti.

"Today I continued to work my way around the southern tip of the island. Much to my surprise, I have only seen one other cruising boat. I guess everyone just stays up in Papeete and enjoys city life. They are missing the best part. Right now, I am anchored in a peaceful lagoon with towering peaks jutting out of the sea. They are covered with lush green vegetation and cascading waterfalls. On the shore are coral and sandy beaches with coconut palms reaching out to seas as far as they can. Paradise is really neat."

Here's another interesting note from Tahiti written a couple of weeks later on June 17, 2005.

“One thing that has been very apparent is the lack of motor cruising vessels. *Done Dreamin'* creates quite a stir when I pull into a marina or anchorage. I've had more than one person ask if I cruised over here from the United States. I feel like saying no, I flew it over, or some other dumb answer to the dumb question. I guess long-range cruising in 40-foot motor vessels is still in its infancy. When people see all the comforts we have, they go away shaking their heads, deep in thought about their next boat.”

As you turn each page you can't help but learn more about everyday life at sea and what to expect when you arrive in a new port. Lawrence's very human side of enjoyment and pursuit of cravings (searching for Hokey Pokey ice cream when he lands in civilized areas becomes downright obsessive) and the simple pleasures of fresh bread (especially made aboard), the wonders of satellite radio and other things we all probably take for granted are much more appreciated when you are operating your own transportation in your own world. The importance of email and satellite telephones for keeping in touch with those back home is reinforced throughout the book. Lawrence opens himself up to the humanity in all of us, especially those fortunate enough to be able to break loose and “sea” the world.

Boats require continuous attention, and getting back home on occasion to see the family is a huge treat. When it is time to return back to the boat you have to pack accordingly, especially when you are lying in Australia for example: “While back in the US, I accumulated two large duffle bags of parts and supplies for the boat. It was time to get airborne and wing my way back across the Pacific. What took me nine months to do on the seas passed below me in just 13.5 hours.”

Lawrence's previous boating and aircraft experience allowed him to enjoy one of his favorite activities almost non-stop: navigation. There are some keen observations sprinkled through the book that will provide a good foundation of things to think about for those who will also travel by sea.

There are good details on waypoints and fuel burn, average speeds, etc., that will help you plan for a similar trip (though don't expect to duplicate Lawrence's diesel fuel prices!). Lawrence has also included some nice summary chapters at the end going into more detail his observations of significant considerations.

I'm sure you will enjoy Lawrence's warm writing style and hope that by reading *Life is a Cruise* you will find yourself another step closer to writing the chapters for your own cruising escapades. For more details you can go to Lulu.com and order your own copy.



Jeff Merrill has lots of time at sea on Nordhavn 40's including crewing on the Barbados to Panama leg of the record setting ATW adventure. If you would like to know more about your Nordhavn 40 choices, please contact Jeff via e-mail at [Jeff.Merrill@JMYS.com](mailto: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, 2011 and has been updated.*