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## A Day In the Life of a Nordhavn

Typical shakedown cruise provides “bigger picture” to a future factory tech

By Jeff Merrill



[John operates from the flybridge](#)

John Torelli is the proud new owner of his second Nordhavn 40 Mark II, *Maria Elena*. As part of my full service sales program I try to spend time with each new owner doing a training trip. On John’s first 40II we sailed from Dana Point to San Diego, a day that started before sunrise and ended as the sun was on the horizon. This time John and I planned an overnight visit to Avalon, the tourist harbor on Catalina

Island 30 miles away.

Two four-hour crossings and a night aboard is a great indoctrination and as our plans firmed up I asked John if I could invite a special guest, Austin Hsu, whose father Tsai is the owner of South Coast Marine which builds the Nordhavn 40II, 43, 47, 55, 75EYF and 86.

Austin is going to college in southern California before returning back to China to work in the factory. Talk about someone who has quite literally grown up around Nordhavns – he’s seen over 100 of them come to life. Unfortunately, tank tests and harbor sea trials never afforded him the opportunity to actually get out and experience a Nordhavn. I met Austin last year at the Ft. Lauderdale boat show where he was traveling with his father to learn more about the boating business. When Austin mentioned that he was attending school not far from our sales office I proposed that he should come out for a ride some time during a shakedown cruise. Now several months later, we finally were able to synch schedules and Austin was excited about his first opportunity to ride a Nordhavn in the open ocean.



[Austin in the Lazarette](#)



[Austin could get used to life on board a Nordhavn!](#)

I picked Austin up on my drive to Dana Point and soon he and I joined John on board to review my pre-departure training checklist (I make lots of lists!). John was just finishing up with the nav/com electronics technician and within minutes the three of us were skulking around the engine room checking the oil dip stick, coolant level, belt tension, filters, etc. Austin was soaking it all in like a human sponge! His enthusiasm was contagious and put a bit of fun into an otherwise routine check. Soon afterwards we took out to sea. Austin climbed up to the flybridge to let the sun, breeze and views take him in. With porpoise playing off to port, Austin dialed up some friends on his cell phone. “You’ll never guess what I’m doing right now!”

John made sandwiches for lunch and the three of us enjoyed a friendly camaraderie as John and I discussed systems while Austin sat in and listened to learn. Before we knew it we arrived in Avalon, got a mooring and took the shore boat in to town.



[Maria Elena moored at Avalon](#)

We watched a little TV after making it back on board and then it was lights out. In the morning John made coffee to get things started. I donned my mask and snorkel to give 4061 a closer look below (and to accelerate the caffeine in the coffee). I can remember summers in Catalina when I was Austin’s age where a dip in the AM cleared my mind for the upcoming day, but couldn’t convince Austin or John to join me. The cockpit shower was a perfect end and we took off bound for Dana Point.

I’d forgotten how much college kids like to eat and Austin was thrilled to find a huge cheese burger...but John had other plans and later treated us to a great seafood dinner at Armstrong’s where our seaside table gave us a great view of *Maria Elena* floating out in the harbor.

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Austin took the helm to test his hand and we all enjoyed a tame passage home. John and I hammered out most of the new owners systems checklist on this trip and Austin did a lot of smiling, soaking it all in. We even tested the emergency tiller!



[Three for dinner](#)



[John and Austin hang out in the pilothouse](#)



[Sorry, Austin – we’re having seafood!](#)

I think giving Austin a day in the life of a Nordhavn owner helped give him a bigger picture of his future. He wouldn't just be building boats, he'd be providing lifetime adventures for people. Getting to use a Nordhavn 40 and see how all of the details come together into the final product was quite an eye opener for Austin and it seemed his willingness to gain some hands-on knowledge speaks well for the incredible future that lies before him.



[John and Austin with the E Tiller](#)

To further bolster Austin's place at South Coast, John made Austin promise that he would take special care when the Torelli's next Nordhavn hits the production line. Austin happily agreed.



*Jeff Merrill has traveled aboard Nordhavns all over the world with his clients and enjoys being out at sea when he is not "working". You can email Jeff by sending a note to [Jeff.Merrill@JMYS.com](mailto:Jeff.Merrill@JMYS.com) Twitter – @merrillyachts.*

*Note: This article originally appeared on the Nordhavn website in July, 2007 and has been re-edited.*