

## Getting Back to Basics

Nordhavn 43 owner inspired by simplification



[Angelique](#)

By Jeff Merrill

What is it that makes Nordhavn 43 hull 27, *Angelique*, so special? Nothing! Now I sound like Seinfeld, but in the same way that the show about “nothing” became something that stood out from the rest, so does this boat. I can’t resist saying *Angelique* is unique but when it comes right down to it, this bare-bones vessel, bound for New Zealand from the Pacific Northwest, is just that. In our ever-expanding trawler market of

liveaboard boaters who install everything including the kitchen sink disposal, this 43 could be classified as “fully unloaded”.

*Angelique*’s owner, Denis Woodward, is a bit of a maverick, a good natured gentleman who spent a great deal of time on the sea in an earlier chapter of his life and now has the wherewithal to travel by water at a leisurely pace without having to harvest from the waters beneath him.

As Denis and I prepared the order for 4327, I quickly realized that this project was going to be quite different than most of the Nordhavns I have helped build. I made my usual suggestions and

recommendations which Denis appreciated, but he’s a guy who knows what he wants and is fairly set in his ways. Cultivated from that mindset was *Angelique* – a distillation of essentials, deceptively simple and unpretentious, yet still one of the prettiest girls at the dance!

I was a bit concerned that the lack of extras and certain special requests may not come out right, but when I flew up to Seattle recently for my walk through and training orientation I was pleasantly surprised. Many of Denis’ “improvements” weren’t as obvious once I approached *Angelique* for the first time. He asked for a monotone gray deck (not white on the vertical surfaces as you might expect) and further, we painted his spars, doors and window frames a matching gray. It looks great with the contrast of the white hull color he selected. 4327 also has the aft saloon and pilothouse windows eliminated – you certainly lose some rearward visibility, but the teak bulkheads are magnificent not being interrupted by a view of the outside world. Denis plans to hang artwork in these open spaces.



[Denis and Angelique](#)

But the biggest difference between “Angelique” and all of the 43’s who have preceded her is the lack of some common factory options:

- Stabilization (although she will likely be outfitted with custom paravanes)
- Wing engine
- Air conditioning
- Generator
- Bow thruster
- Pilothouse helm chair

At the time of my walkthrough with him last month, Denis was working on organizing his own electronics and Denis was still considering his tender: probably a Whitehall rowing shell so he can also have it double as his exercise. Though this more stripped down rendition may surprise many, the back-to-basics approach is refreshing to me.

What do you really need to be able to get out on the water and experience the joys of the sea? Some won’t leave shore without a television while others don’t want one on board. There is no right or wrong, just a matter of choice and I suppose if Denis determines later on that he is wanting, it will be relatively easy for him to add items he desires. But I think he’ll put a season or two on *Angelique* as she stands and based on the amount of thought he has put into this project, I’m sure he’ll be quite pleased with how everything has turned out. It may seem obvious, but by not adding a lot of the big-ticket items Denis has been able to not only stay under budget, he now owns a beautiful new Nordhavn that cost less than brokerage 43s on the market.

The interior boasts two nice upgrades that I want to point out. One adds some luxury and the other will help with handling and should serve Denis well. The saloon settees which come standard with a white laminate vertical surface have been replaced with varnished teak faces. This subtle bit of elegance is a nice touch. He also selected a single lever shift arm for the main engine which combines throttle and gear for a simplified response (a tip he picked up while spending time on 4314 *Blue Jaunte* in Dana Point last year) and this is something I prefer myself.

4327 was constructed exactly as Denis ordered her, and more importantly is exactly what he wanted. Denis based his decisions upon his experiences in the past, ideas gathered from getting on other 43s (several days of careful evaluation) and sticking to an all around “necessity only” approach.



[Scott Bulger on the foredeck](#)

During my training trip we moved 4327 from Elliot Bay to our sales docks on Lake Union. Don Kohlmann, our Northwest sales manager crewed and I also recruited local Nordhavn 40 owner Scott Bulger to join us. Scott brought some extra fenders and lock lines and the four of us had a fun 2-hour lunch break trekking from one dock to the next. Denis got a chance to take the helm and feel *Angelique* come alive. The Chittenden Locks (or Ballard Lock) are always a fun adventure yet this was a happily uneventful excursion. Don, who is a world-class

sailboat racer, looked to me like he was trimming jib as he tended our aft dock line and Scott had fun keeping our foredeck away from harm.

This short trip was the first of what I am sure will be many more wondrous voyages for Denis and the crew who join him on *Angelique*. Denis, created a beautiful new boat and made some inspired choices. All of us at PAE/Nordhavn hope he will enjoy his new 43. I must say it was quite a different sales experience for me. I smile and think about how appropriate it was that one of our planning discussions took place over a homemade cheese sandwich. Like that meal, we kept this project simple and satisfying.



[Don in the cockpit](#)

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