

Innovative Nordhavn 47 Equipped for Luxury Cruising of the Great Loop

By Jeff Merrill

It used to be that those who wanted to cruise the Great Loop were restricted to smaller down-east style boats that would have an easy time dealing with the low bridges along the route's way. But surprisingly, some larger Nordhavns have already made the trip (including two 40s and a 62) and now a Nordhavn 47 is poised to follow in their wakes.

Mike and Carol Gordon bought their 47 for just this type of inland waterway adventure. They wanted to be able to cruise the Great Loop in the comfort, style and safety of their Nordhavn. So after getting together with their salesman, Jeff Merrill, and project manager, Dave Harlow, the first Nordhavn 47 designed from the start to sail under low clearances was born.

In their attempt to create a boat that could accommodate their cruising plans, what the Gordons really did was turn out one of the most versatile Nordhavns in PAE history. Hull number 22, *Evelyn J*, (named for Carol's mother) is so innovative that it really is as at home in the salty Atlantic Ocean as it is in the freshwater of the Great Lakes.

How is this possible? Noticeably, the most important breakthrough feature of *Evelyn J* is a self-lowering mast and dry stack exhaust package. The Great Loop is a "circumnavigation" if you will, of the East Coast and Mid-western waters of the U.S. including the Hudson River, Great Lakes, Mississippi River, Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway and Gulf of Mexico. Along this popular scenic adventure's route is a bridge in Chicago that requires you to squeeze under a 19-foot bridge. Other fixed bridge clearances are key to the trip and before signing on the dotted line Mike and Jeff measured several 47 flybridge hulls to make sure he'd be able to make it under this lowest "bottleneck" bridge. (A standard Nordhavn 47 measures about 30 feet from waterline to the top of the mast.)



[Mike & Carol Gordon on Evelyn J](#)



[One part of the revolutionary self-lowering mast](#)

Typical of Great Loop cruisers who want to take their time and explore the areas they cruise through, the trip requires many stops at unfamiliar marinas with unusual docking situations. Evelyn J is the first 47 to feature the new Lugger electronically controlled main engine. They also added a Sidepower stern thruster that has already proven quite helpful when Mike has been forced to “parallel park” into hard to reach or out of the way slips.

Further illustrating its dual capabilities of local and offshore cruising is the choice of Glendinning controls. Evelyn J has three steering sections (wheelhouse, flybridge and cockpit) so having dependable electronic shifting is key. One of the most impressive features of the Glendinning system is that it has a built-in mechanical back up shift – so if you have a problem with electricity or power on your main controls you can switch over without missing a beat. And this is handy no matter what waters you are traversing.

For the Gordons, almost as important as equipping Evelyn J with the necessary components to make it robust and capable of lake cruising, was their need for comfort and stylish surroundings. This includes granite not only in the galley and heads, but also on all horizontal surfaces such as desktops.



[Granite on surfaces throughout evoke a luxurious and cozy setting](#)

The galley in the 47s already rivals gourmet kitchens in the finest homes and the Gordons took theirs one step further by installing an all-propane GE stove and oven for fabulous meals underway or at anchor.



[Evelyn J departs Stuart, FL up the Intercoastal](#)

The Gordons have a wonderful boat and are well underway on their dream cruise. Things got off to a great start with a 12-day shake down trek from Stuart, Florida, to their home in Alabama that took them through the Okeechobee, Intercoastal Waterway and Gulf of Mexico. It prepped them well for the Great Loop adventure and they are currently poised at the bottom of Lake Michigan getting ready for the limbo dance in Chicago. After dreaming and conceiving and now, realizing, this boat, the Gordons are enjoying a leisurely pace and stopping to smell the roses!

