

A Brokerage Nordhavn 46 Goes To Sea Once Again

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[Sea Once docked in Sarasota](#)



[Bathing in the Florida sun](#)



[Life is about to be real good for Don Thompson, flanked by Dave Kauffman and Jeff Merrill](#)



[Don and Jeff close the deal](#)



[Don at work labeling in the ER](#)



[Don looks ready to head to sea](#)



[Don gets comfortable making those important lists](#)

By Jeff Merrill

The Nordhavn 46 is a true offshore classic. Originally conceived in the late 1980s as a power boat alternative to a proper long range cruising sailboat, she has become famous as the little ship that could, and has. The 46 launched the Nordhavn brand and was actively produced for over 15 years with a final tally of just over 80 hulls built. Passage making purists have embraced this marvelous design as the perfect couples seafaring yacht and a half-dozen circumnavigations and hundreds of successful ocean crossings have clearly qualified her for induction into the Voyaging Under Power Hall of Fame (and as soon as one is created I have no doubt she will be in the inaugural class).

Don Thompson first set his sights to travel the seas in a Nordhavn 46 about eight years ago, coincidentally about the time that 46 hull number 71 was built. Don collected all of the information he could over the years, studied all of the boats on the market and we spent a great deal of time talking about how and when he would finally take command of his own 46. Roughly one dozen 46s were built with a flying bridge – a fantastic addition to an already incredible boat, but something that didn't really catch on until about the halfway point of the 46's production life cycle. Finding a late model 46 with a flybridge became a test of patience and perseverance. The right boat never seemed to pop up at the right time.

In January 2008, the vessel Sea Once came on the market and Don was smitten. The second owners, Dave and Dorie Kauffman had appropriately named her Sea Once as they, too, had long considered a 46 before buying her. Their running dialog as to when they would purchase a 46 always included “see once...”, a popular southern expression that translates to “maybe” or “someday”. After ownership for six years, the Kauffmans decided it was time to move on.

I presented Don's offer for purchase and he flew to Florida to inspect her in person. A few items turned up in the survey report and the sellers had her hauled to make corrections. While waiting for repairs to be completed, we planned out all of the details required to complete the transaction.

Just last week we flew back to Sarasota, Florida to close the deal and take delivery. Even though Don just qualified for his Coast Guard 6-pack license there was an insurance requirement for him to hire a captain to go out for the delivery and to provide additional training. I called longtime friends Jerry and Wendy Taylor and they drove over from Fort Lauderdale to help out. Amazingly enough I first met the Taylors years ago when PAE hired them as the delivery crew to move the then brand new 4671 into the Miami boat show, proving once again that life has a way of bringing things full circle.

Before Jerry and Wendy arrived Don and I spent a full day aboard Sea Once while tied to the dock. This was a training day to help Don become better acquainted with the intricacies of systems and equipment. We spend the bulk of our time in the wheelhouse and the engine room. A few weeks earlier I had emailed an electronic copy of the Nordhavn Operator's manual that PAE had provided to the original owner. Don read it cover to cover as part of his homework before taking possession and it was obvious to me that his comprehension was solid as we poked around and talked about his new boat. We used blue tape and a sharpie to quick label components. (Don has since purchased a nice label machine that prints crisp, legible sticker labels). We also generated a lot of lists...questions for Dave Kauffman, gear to buy, maintenance tips to perform and project upgrades to consider. It was a full day of learning and by methodically working our way through the "heart and brains" of the boat Don has been properly initiated and his understanding will be furthered as he spends time out away from the dock in the coming weeks.

Since Don is a California resident we had to do our closing more than 9 miles away from the Florida mainland. The date was set well in advance due to travel commitments and scheduling and unfortunately a weather system had moved in which threatened our plans. We headed out to sea realizing we may need to turn back if it got too rough. Don was eager to see how his new 46 would handle 30 knots and 6- to 9-foot seas and he got his wish. Sea Once bravely weaved a course through the tumultuous waters and we all marveled at how effortlessly she bounded forward, never pausing, never slamming, just taking on whatever met her bow with the grace of a practiced dancer. We completed the paperwork and had a very fulfilling day at sea capped by an excellent dinner hosted by Don at a local Thai restaurant.

Don is now in the process of loading Sea Once up with all of the necessary tools, parts and personal gear and is immersing himself in the live aboard lifestyle. As you can imagine there are a lot of systems and equipment to become familiar with and after a few weeks he intends to set sail and bring his Nordhavn home, starting an adventure at sea that will likely find him visiting many of the exotic ports of call he has always dreamed of.

Congratulations, Don! Your wait is over and you now own the perfect ship to enjoy life at sea cruising wherever you want to, at your own pace and on your own schedule. Thanks for buying a 46 and welcome to the world of Nordhavn. We look forward to hearing about your adventures. Maybe you can even send us a story about your travels that begins with "Sea once upon a time...!"

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