

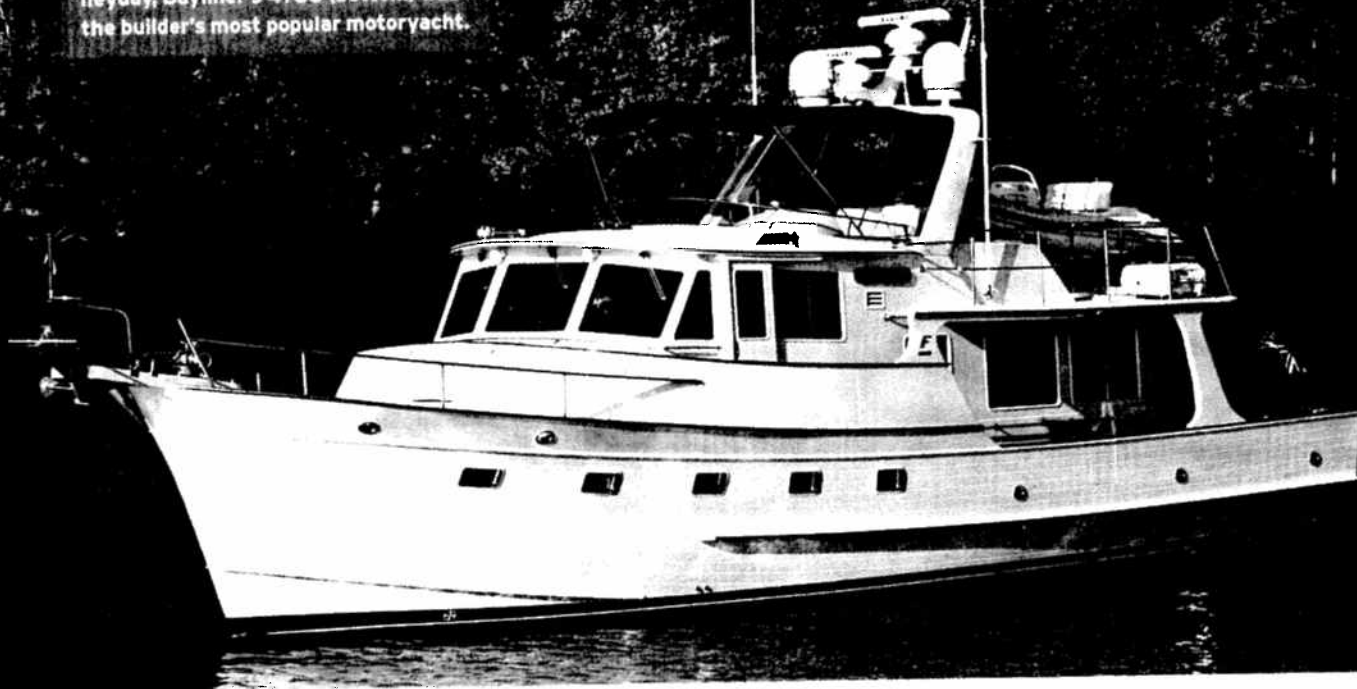
10^{TOP} cruising boats

It's not an easy job to choose the all-time best designs, but somebody had to do it. So, here's our list of the boats that have made lasting impressions.

BY THE EDITORS

ALL-STAR: The Grand Banks 42 defined the trawler/yacht concept and made everyone's list of favorites.

PILOTHOUSE CRUISERS: The Fleming 55 (below) is salty and elegant; in its heyday, Bayliner's 4788 (bottom) was the builder's most popular motoryacht.



ASK THE GUYS YOU KNOW TO MAKE A LIST OF their favorite cruising boats and you'll start a discussion about boat design that is as widely divergent as the lifestyles and budgets of the people you meet on the water. Well, we asked the question anyway—amongst ourselves, mind you—and while there was some general agreement on several memorable models, there were also heated debates, bruised egos and a few notepads thrown across the conference table. Nevertheless, we managed to whittle the list down to the following 10 boats.

GRAND BANKS 42 Launched in 1965, it defined the trawler/yacht concept. Built in an era when speed was king, the 42 introduced boaters to square windows, boxy lines and the pleasures of cruising slow and efficiently—about 8

knots flat out—consuming 3 gph. The GB42 boasted lavish teak interiors, three different configurations and layouts for boaters with diverse cruising needs. With 1,560 of these hulls built—the last was delivered just a year ago to an owner in Connecticut—the GB42 is a legend in its own time.

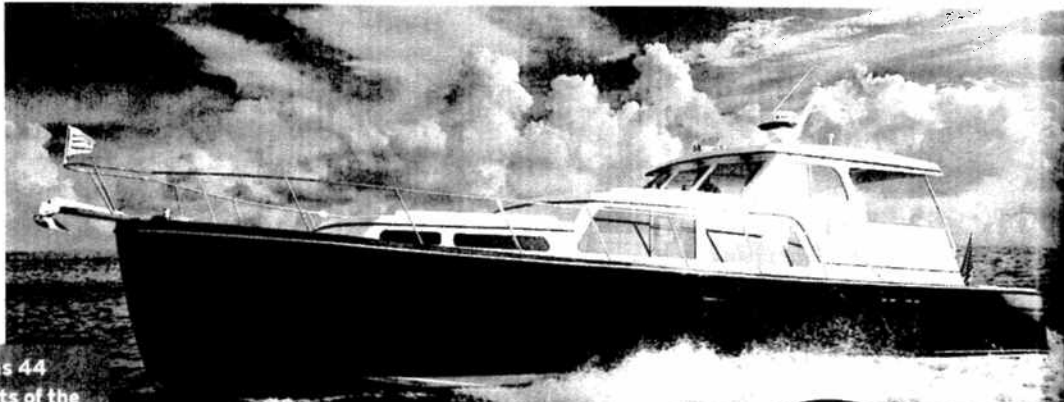
FLEMING 55 “A blend of elegance, saltiness and sensibility,” is how Contributing Editor Jay Coyle describes the Fleming. Drawn by naval architect Larry Drake of Newport Beach, Calif., for Tony Fleming and built to high standards in Taiwan, this capable and beautifully finished pilothouse has twin 435-hp Caterpillar diesels that drive it along at a comfortable 15 knots. Aqua-Drive motor mounts and shaft-drives keep the ride smooth and quiet, and the pilothouse has kept many of us warm and dry, even in late-season conditions.

BAYLINER 4788 PILOTHOUSE It was in production for about eight years, and during its run, this three-stateroom, two-head design was at one time the most popular Bayliner motoryacht in the world. It was so well-loved that the company was making 100 a year. Today, this model is one of the best values on the used motoryacht market, and a favorite among liveaboards who demand comfortable accommodations. Editorial Director Peter Janssen once ran the 4788 down the Columbia River from Lewiston, Idaho, to Portland, Ore. “That was a long cruise, but the boat was very comfortable. And the raised pilothouse offered excellent visibility.”

HUCKINS 44 The 44, which was popular in the '50s and then reintroduced in '96, is based on the legendary Huckins Quadraconic hull that first proved its worth on PT boats in



NEIL RABINOWITZ, BOTTOM LEFT AND OPENING SPREAD



NOW AND THEN: The Huckins 44 (right) evokes the great yachts of the '50s; Sea Ray's 340 paired a fast planing hull with express cruiser design.



READER POLL
Every boater has a cruising design that's near and dear to his own heart. What model tops your list? Let us know at:
www.motorboating.com

years after its debut, it still ranks as an ideal cruiser for a couple—there's just one stateroom

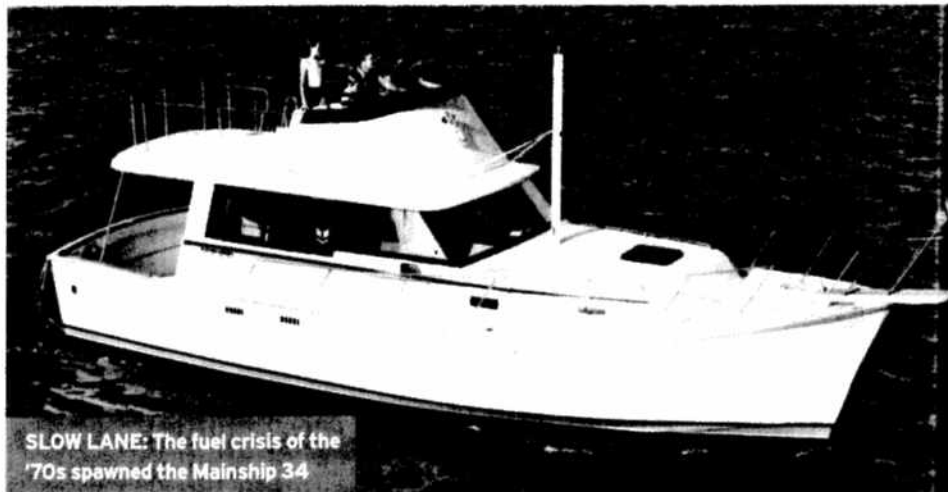
WWII. Thanks to the running bottom, says Senior Editor John Clemans, "the 44 can really cook in a lively sea. It runs dry and fast; the best of both worlds." We also like the classy, classic exterior and comfortable interior. With twin 350-hp Cat 3116s, the 44 runs 31 knots, burning only 38 gph. At a 22-knot cruise she burns just 18 gph for a 500-mile range.

SEA RAY 340 SUNDANCER First launched in 1984, the 340 established the express cruiser concept on a fast planing hull. The end result was a family-friendly craft that could cover more water and tuck into more ports in less time. That benefit was important to time-challenged boaters in the go-go '80s, and it's key today. The 34 is still in production, although the design has evolved over the years. One of the most popular mid-cabin cruisers on the water, there are over 4,000 models afloat.

MAINSHIP 34 Although it was initially perceived as just an affordable motor cruiser, the Mainship 34 quickly earned a reputation as a versatile trawler, thanks in part to its semi-displacement hull. With its 160-hp Perkins diesel, it could cruise economically across a wide range of speeds—from a displacement pace of 8 knots and 2 gph to 11 knots and 6 gph. Twenty-eight

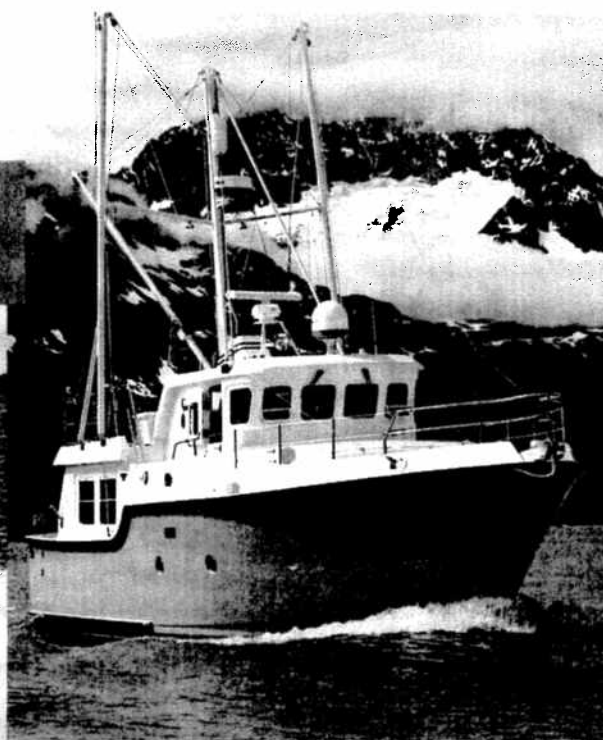
down and forward, which leaves plenty of room for a big galley and head, and a salon large enough for a formal bar and lower helm.

CARVER 36 MARINER Here's a boat with a higher volume of cubic feet per length than a boxcar. Newer boats that have been launched since the Carver debuted (back in 1984) have a tough time matching its exceptional interior living space—there's 120 square feet in the main cabin with 6'3" headroom, akin to what you would find on a boat 10 feet longer. The flybridge is equally spacious, a boon for sun worshippers who live where seasons are short. The 36 is no longer in production, but in its heyday, it was



SLOW LANE: The fuel crisis of the '70s spawned the Mainship 34 that burned 2 gph with one diesel.

NEAR AND FAR: Carver's still-popular 36 Mariner (below) has unrivaled space in the cabin; the Nordhavn 40 (right) can, and does, cross oceans.



a tremendously popular family cruiser in the Great Lakes, as well as up and down the East Coast.

NORDHAVN 40 This rugged expedition boat is at the top of Managing Editor John Wooldridge's list: He was on board a 40 in the western reaches of the Pacific Ocean for a portion of a 25,000-mile circumnavigation. He spent five days and nights under way between the Marshall Islands and the Caroline Islands, a voyage that culminated with a 24-hour thrashing at the hands of a late-season typhoon. Nordhavn 40 owners should be able to voyage almost anywhere in this well-designed, rugged passagemaker.



BIG MOVERS: Hatteras built more than 600 of the 53 Motor Yacht (above); the Kadey-Krogen 42 can take you anywhere, comfortably and safely.

HATTERAS 53 MOTOR YACHT In production for an impressive 19 years (1988 was its last), more than 600 of the 53s were built. It remains the most successful design from a builder that has produced a number of memorable boats. "In size and versatility, the 53 hit the golden mean, that magic number with room for a captain and mate, if that was your lifestyle," says Contributing Writer Dudley Dawson. "But it was still easy for a family or an experienced couple to operate." It's small enough to handle ICW runs, yet with its high freeboard and minimal superstructure it's big enough to cruise anywhere.

KADEY-KROGEN 42 This design is among a handful of boats that conjure images of exotic, distant places. It's both a sensible out-island cruiser and comfortable liveaboard. In recent years, the 42s have served coastal and Great Loop cruisers with equal aplomb. Here's one that can really go the distance. ♪

