

Grand Banks 72SC

THOROUGHLY MODERN CLASSIC

The hull of the Grand Banks 72SC not only has a proven past, but the fresh design of the superstructure is looking to a bright future. A recent day trip on the 72SC out of Newport, RI, allowed further exploration.

STORY Michael Verdon
PHOTOS Billy Black and
Kristina Strobel







ABOVE: Teak, a Grand Banks signature, warms the main salon's classic decor; stairs, visible in the background, lead to the raised pilothouse

It's a calm day in Narragansett Bay, with two-foot seas in the Atlantic, when we get aboard. The fair weather makes it a busy day in the bay, with lobster pots and fishing trawlers out in force. They have a very faint air of familiarity.

If Grand Banks has origins in custom boat building, fishing trawlers inspired its founders to create a whole new line of business. In 1956, Robert J. Newton and sons built custom sailboats and motor yachts on Junk Bay in Hong Kong under the name American Marine Ltd. They used renowned naval architects such as Sparkman & Stephens, Nathaniel Herreshoff, Ray Hunt and Kenneth Smith, among others, for their designs. In 1962, they commissioned Smith to design a 36' diesel-powered boat with radically different lines. The Newtons specified a humble-looking design, incorporating traditional workboat lines derived from New England's trawlers and fishing vessels. The result was *Spray*. The Newtons were so enamored with the design that a year later they abandoned custom work and launched a line of boats. The Heritage Series' intrepid go-anywhere trawlers are *Spray*'s direct descendents. In 1993, Grand Banks added the Eastbay Series, characterized by sleek Downeast lines and simple, refined interiors. The Aleutian Series came next. Beginning with the 53 RP, the line grew to include the 72RP and 72SC, the largest and most generously appointed boats in the Grand Banks line.

The Aleutian 72SC is the new flagship. Built on the same hull as the 72RP, launched in 2004, it features many of the same design cues, except for the extended flybridge deck that now covers the aft cockpit below. The late Tom Fexas designed the semi-

displacement 72SC hull, which can reach 23.8 knots at top end with standard twin 1,015-hp Caterpillar AC-ERT diesels, or cruise for 1,000 miles at 10 knots. With the optional twin 1,150-hp Caterpillar engines, the new Aleutian flagship reaches 25 knots. This makes it a versatile design that works for day trips along the coast, quick jaunts across to Bimini or Catalina, or much longer jogs from mainland Alaska to, well, the tip of the Aleutians.

We first head for the pilothouse. It is a social area with a galley five feet behind the leather-covered Stidd Admiral helm seat and a dinette to the right adjoining the bulkhead. The console features elegant simplicity. It is covered in flawless teak—even the large stainless wheel is teak-clad—and instead of a blinking bank of monitors, there are two 15-inch touch-screen monitors with a few small gauges beneath. The Garmin 5215 touch screens, which are an option on the Grand Banks, are well worth considering as they make navigation all encompassing and fun. We scroll down to select multiple functions and put up radar info, sonar data and 3D charts on one screen in less than two minutes. Using the mapping software and remote control, we plot our course for the day's run in less than 30 seconds. It is nice to be able to consult just two screens instead of looking across three or four small ones for different data points.

Since there is quite a bit of traffic, we climb the internal

stairs next to the galley and head up to flybridge helm station to navigate out of the bay. The 72SC is an effortless boat to run, thanks to power steering and easy tracking of the hull. We run through the RPM curve, reaching 2,350 and 23.3 knots, about a half-knot lower than the company's official top end. Later, we discover that the 9-sq.ft. Naïad fin stabilizers are activated. There is a trade off for smooth running through the chop; the fins create enough hull drag to lower the speed but we still seem to zip by other boats.

With its substantial hardtop (headroom: 6'9") the upper deck is a good place to relax, even on extremely sunny or mildly rainy days. Two L-shaped lounges (the larger measuring 6'1" x 4') with tables and electric Miele grill complement the well-equipped helm and companion seats, perfect for the navigator. The section aft of the outer stairwell is a large 14' x 19' space for tender storage or minus the tender, another large social or sunning area. The bow, with its two lounges and open foredeck, also makes a good social or sunning area. But the real social area is the lower cockpit. It measures a luxurious 12' x 19', or 228 square feet. The extended bridge overhead gives it full protection from the sun and rain, and an elegant eight-person wooden table, aft lounges and beautiful teak floor make it a special place to congregate.

The interior is defined by teak, which is Grand Banks'

BELOW: The real social area is the lower cockpit, which measures a luxurious 228 sq. feet; the boat features a real office; the master stateroom has a nautical feel



signature. Teak is everywhere in the 72SC, through the salon, into the galley, up to the pilothouse and down to the three staterooms. The joinery work and cabinets show that the company employs fine woodworkers. The teak interior is light and airy. Grand Banks enhanced the sense of open space by using modern, modular furniture in the salon, an off-white headliner with some teak frames and speckled beige/brown Giallo Topazio granite counters in the galley and stateroom heads. Large rectangular windows running across the main deck and hull windows allow natural light to permeate the interior on all decks.

Grand Banks took every care to add all the comforts of home. The galley, for instance, not only has an electric stove, microwave/convection oven and large fridge, it also has double-bowl stainless steel sink, garbage disposal, dishwasher, freezer and trash compactor. The full-beam master suite, likewise, has a king-size bed with innerspring mattress, walk-in hanging locker, built-in safe, television cabinet, en-suite head with two sinks, huge shower stall and exceptional storage space (as well as a second door to the engine room). The designers used Shoji screens to soften the angles around the windows and add another level of privacy, while softening the light in the staterooms. In this optional four-stateroom layout, there are two other staterooms (one with twin beds) that carry the same high levels of fit and finish as the rest of the boat. The boat features a real office with a lounge, desk and windows—the perfect spot for an owner to keep tabs on business while away from home.

The engine room is meticulously laid out, providing good working space around the big Cats as well as easy sight checks on fluid levels and gauges. Five fuel tanks are judiciously placed along the length of the hull for even weight distribution. Aiming for strength and lightweight, Grand Banks used hand-laid glass beneath the waterline, cored construction above and installed honeycombed backing behind the joinery and bulkheads in the superstructure. Even some of the furniture has honeycombed interior for weight savings.

The boat's looks make this a classic but the engineering, construction and technology make this the most modern Grand Banks yet. ■



ABOVE: The pilothouse is functional and attractive; the console features elegant simplicity with a teak-clad stainless-steel wheels and large monitors



For more information, call 206-352-0116
or visit GRANDBANKS.COM



Grand Banks 72SC

LOA: 72'
BEAM: 19'10"
DRAFT: 5'4"
MAXIMUM SPEED:
23.8 knots (standard power)
HIGH CRUISE:
18.5 knots (standard power)
RANGE@ HIGH CRUISE: 600 miles
SLOW CRUISE:
11.5 knots (standard power)

RANGE@ SLOW CRUISE: 927 miles
FUEL CAPACITY: 2,625 gal. (9,937 L)
FRESH WATER CAPACITY:
350 gal. (1,325 L)
ENGINES: 2 x 1,015 hp CAT ACERT
C18 diesels
PROPELLERS: 41"(D) x 36.5"(P) x
5(B) NiBrAl
GENERATORS: 1 x Onan 21.5kW
Second generator optional

BOW THRUSTER:
Hydraulic, Side-Power
STERN THRUSTER: optional
WATER PURIFIER: Seagull IV
AIR CONDITIONING:
Marine Air reverse cycle
STABILIZERS:
Naiad model 302 (optional)
CONSTRUCTION: composite
BUILDER: Grand Banks