

# GRAND BANKS

## EASTBAY 46 SX

TRADITIONAL AND ELEGANT, BUT MODERN FROM THE KEEL UP



**G**rand Banks, as a marque, was launched in 1964, when American Marine Ltd., until then a Hong Kong custom builder, splashed the first GB 36. The 36-foot trawler proved so successful that an average of 30 boats per year were built over the next 39 years. In 2003, the model was retired. In 1965, the GB 42 was introduced and was even more successful than the 36. By the time that model was retired in 2005, 1,560 had been built — an average of 40 vessels a year.

The Eastbay series, introduced in 1993, was designed by one of the most experienced and best-known design teams in the marine industry, C. Raymond Hunt Associates. The Eastbay 46 SX is a new model from Grand Banks. It is traditionally and elegantly styled, but is a thoroughly modern vessel from the keel up. Its hull is a modified V, with a fairly sharp entry blending into a V aft, allowing the vessel to knife smoothly through a chop. The hard chine forward functions as an effective spray knocker. The bow has a pronounced flare, creating reserve buoyancy that helps keep the vessel dry, even

when driving into a nasty head sea. The difference between this vessel and the 45-footer it replaces is that this boat is powered by Zeus pod drives, a first for the Eastbay series, meaning it has 7 inches less draft than a traditional inline engine, shaft and rudder setup.

The hull below the waterline is solid, hand-laid fiberglass. The topsides are cored with Airex closed-cell foam, and the core is vacuum bagged into place. A molded glass stringer system is bonded to the hull. Grand Banks uses a clear gelcoat below the waterline that the builder says allows visual inspection of the laminate during the quali-

ty-control process. All Eastbay hulls receive three coats of epoxy barrier coat to help reduce the likelihood of water uptake.

As expected with a builder of Grand Banks' experience and reputation, the glasswork on the 46 hull is meticulous.

### ON BOARD

Access to the vessel is through a transom door into a good-sized teak-decked cockpit. A large, comfortably padded transom-mounted seat, with storage underneath, makes for comfortable lounging in good weather. The foredeck and anchor tackle can be accessed via the sidedecks, either port or starboard. A stainless steel rail gives adequate protection moving forward when the vessel is at rest.

A watertight glass-panel door opens into the deckhouse, where one of the benefits of pod drives becomes appar-



Jonathan Cooper photos

**ABOVE** The Eastbay 46 SX deckhouse is flooded with natural light, thanks to windows all around. And throughout the interior or the boat, Grand Banks' decades of woodworking experience are on display.

ent: more space. In a traditional marine propulsion system — engine, gear and shaft — the engines are relatively far forward and usually occupy prime space inside the hull. With a pod system, the engines are generally coupled directly to the drive, and the whole package sits well aft in the hull, freeing up interior space.

The 46 SX makes good use of that extra space. In a boat with just less than a 42-foot waterline, Grand Banks has, in one of the optional layouts, created three comfortable staterooms. While this layout is not unique, it is unusual in a boat this size. One of the staterooms can easily be converted into an onboard office.

The interior of the deckhouse contains more window glass than fiberglass, and that creates a bright, cheery inte-

rior, flooded with natural light. Visibility is excellent all around, and the skipper, from the starboard helm, can easily see everyone on the main deck, inside or out.

Our test boat is laid out in what Grand Banks calls its standard arrangement, which features a U-shaped dinette immediately to port upon entering the deckhouse, with a three-cushion settee opposite. Forward of the settee is the helm station. Across from the helm station is a double mate seat, and the galley is down and forward of that seat. During our test, we had six people on board and, because of the clever floor plan, we weren't stumbling over one another. Day cruising with four couples would be no problem.

The soft furniture is comfortable, and all of the horizontal surfaces are

well finished and easy to keep clean. The dinette is easy to slide into, even for those of us on the husky side. The woodwork's fit and finish throughout the boat is excellent and shows off Grand Banks' decades of woodworking experience. Overall, the deckhouse is warm and inviting, and we felt comfortable as soon as we entered. Even though we were testing a brand-new boat, we did not get the "be careful where you put that" or "don't sit here" feeling that often comes with new boats. The Eastbay seemed to say, "Welcome aboard, let's go have some fun."

The galley is flooded with natural light from the overhead windshield, and, because of the galley's U-shaped configuration, the cook will be out of the way of anyone going forward. There's plenty of storage and a reasonably good-sized countertop. A deep, square stainless sink makes a good place to quickly dump stovetop pots if rough water suddenly kicks up. For those who don't want the galley down, Eastbay offers an option that places the galley in the main deckhouse, immediately to port on entering off the aft deck. The space taken by the down galley can be an office or another stateroom, and the double mate seat is eliminated by the dinette being moved forward.

Lifting the steps leading down to the galley reveals a large storage area under the forward part of the deckhouse, which, according to Eastbay's printed material, can be fitted out as crew quarters. Apparently, that's popular in Europe.

The master stateroom, in the forepeak, contains an island queen berth, an en suite head with a separate shower stall, plenty of storage and locker space, and bedside reading lamps, and it is beautifully finished. The twin-berth guest stateroom is to starboard aft of the master and features private access to the day head. Both staterooms on our test boat are bright and comfortable.

## PERFORMANCE TIME

We fired up the twin 505-cubic-inch (8.3L) Cummins MerCruiser QSC8.3 diesels mated to Zeus pod drives and idled away from the dock — a simple and easy procedure thanks to the sys-



tem's joystick control. At idle, 600 rpm, we moved along at 5.6 knots, burning 1.3 gallons of diesel per hour. Our noisemeter gave us 65 decibels. Normal conversation is about 70.

As we pulled into Elliott Bay, we upped the rpm to 1000, burned 3.8 gph and made 7.6 knots, while the decibel level went to 70. At 1500 rpm, we moved along at 10.5 knots, burning 12.5 gph, with a decibel reading of 73. At 2000

### TESTER'S OPINION:

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revs, we made 16.8 knots and burned 12.5 gph. When we tapped the throttles up to 2500 rpm, our speed increased to 24.3 knots and fuel burn was 40 gph. WOT gave us 30.4 knots, and we burned 59 gph.

The 1,975-pound common-rail diesels produce their maximum torque at 1800 rpm, and at that engine speed, the 46 SX made 14.5 knots and burned 20 gph. The engines were operating at 38 percent of maximum load. The torque curve remains fairly flat to about 2800 rpm. Clearly, these engines have a relatively wide power band and can handle any reasonable weight variations the boat might present.

All speeds were measured with an independent GPS and represent speed over the ground. Fuel-consumption figures are in U.S. gallons, from the engine's onboard computer, and are the total burned by both engines.

A pod-drive vessel generally responds more quickly to the helm than

a traditional shaft drive, and the 46 SX was no exception. With Grand Banks Seattle general manager and national sales manager Tucker West at the wheel, we went hard over at WOT — just more than 30 knots — and the vessel carved into the turn like a gold medal Olympic slalom skier. We held the

helm hard over for a couple of turns and then slammed into a hard-over turn in the opposite direction, still at WOT. The vessel handled these maneuvers without a skip, skid or shudder, and with a speed loss of barely a knot. During the entire test, we had at least a 20-knot wind and the sea was kicking up to a 4-foot chop. Other than a bit of wind-whipped spray, at no time did we get the deck wet. The right combination of hull design, drive system and power has produced a superb Grand Banks.

That does not mean there can't be improvement. A grabrail along the deckhouse top would help getting forward along the sidedecks, even if it was tucked under the deckhouse side overhang.

Testing a Grand Banks can be difficult, because expectations are high and what might be acceptable to another builder is not to Grand Banks. Therefore, the standard against which the 46 SX is compared is higher than most. It had no trouble meeting that standard. The Eastbay 46 SX is a well-planned sedan cruiser. The fit and finish throughout the vessel is excellent, and it handled very well in snotty weather off Seattle. All fittings and equipment are top quality, and the well-finished teak throughout the vessel will make a traditionalist happy. It also wears well and cleans up quickly and easily.

Grand Banks discovered that some of the factory literature provided during our test contained an error. West intercepted me at the Ft. Lauderdale International Boat Show (no mean feat) and gave me the correct information. While this incident made absolutely no difference in how the boat operated, it

## ➔ SPEC BOX

LOA 49 ft, 11 in. BEAM 14 ft, 7 in.

DRAFT 3 ft, 4 in.

DISPLACEMENT 44,154 lbs. (full)

FUEL 500 gals. FRESH WATER 145 gals.

HOLDING TANK 60 gals. ENGINES Twin Cummins QSC8.3, 550 hp

### STANDARD EQUIPMENT

Twin Cummins QSC8.3, 550 hp diesels, Zeus pod system, retractable salon window, electric bilge pump, battery charger, air conditioning, hot water, microwave oven, marine head, refrigerator, deep freezer, shore-power inlet, generator, teak cockpit, cockpit cushions, swimming ladder, cockpit shower, electric windlass and more.

### OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT

Twin Cummins QSC8.3, 600 hp diesels, Skyhook station-keeping GPS interface, refrigerator/freezer in the utility room, reverse-cycle air conditioning, granite countertops in the galley and heads, forward-facing cockpit seat w/cover, ice-maker in cockpit, saltwater washdown at the bow, Mastervolt 12V/2000W inverter, 50-amp shore-power inlet aft w/Glenninning Cablemaster shore-power cord retraction system and more.

### BUILDER

Grand Banks Yachts, Seattle; (206) 352-0116; [grandbanks.com](http://grandbanks.com)

### WEST COAST DEALERS

STAN MILLER YACHTS, Long Beach, (562) 598-9433; Newport Beach, (949) 675-3467; San Diego, (619) 224-1510; [stanmilleryachts.com](http://stanmilleryachts.com)

OCEANIC YACHT SALES, Sausalito, Calif.; (415) 331-1642; [oceanicyachts.com](http://oceanicyachts.com)

GRAND BANKS NORTHWEST, Seattle; (206) 352-0116; [grandbanks.com/northwest](http://grandbanks.com/northwest)

GRAND YACHTS INC., Vancouver, (877) 822-0358; Sidney, B.C., (866) 373-5772; [grandyachts.com](http://grandyachts.com)

did provide insight into how the Grand Banks dealership operates. Any builder, of any boat, who corrects an error quickly can likely be relied upon during the sales process.

The Eastbay 46 SX is in a tough market segment, but at a price range of \$935,000 (base) to approximately \$1.2 million (depending on options, order timing and equipment), it is almost a million dollars less than two of the other major players in that market. 🐾