

SPECIAL ISSUE

# New Boat

## Buyer's Guide 2023



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## GRAND BANKS 85

**T**wenty-five feet is the size of your average garden hose or extension cord, or five park benches lined up side by side. Those 300 inches made a world of difference when I took in the view of the Grand Banks 85 resting beside its 60-foot sistership at the show. Everything about the 85 feels bigger and more substantial. Saying that a boat feels like a small superyacht is an oft-used cliché, but with the 85, that sentiment rings true.

“One of the key goals with the Grand Banks 85 was not just building one of the best performing 85-footers in the marketplace, but also one of the most spacious boats in the marketplace,” says GB CEO Mark Richards as we walk from the aft platform into the cockpit. “As you can see here, the beautiful spacious cockpit is ideal for entertaining anywhere between 10 and 20 guests, with all the amenities you need to have a great time.”

The salon, galley and staterooms (there are three- or four-stateroom options) are reminiscent of the 54- and 60-foot models, albeit with larger spaces and more breathing room. Richards was most enthusiastic about the dedicated systems space beneath the sole in the accommodations area. Climbing into the well-lit and ventilated space, I could see why. A salon-worthy teak floor stretches from amidships to the bow thruster with unparalleled access to the fuel polishing system, watermaker, filters and pumps. The level of forethought of this space needs to be seen to be understood (there is a video online at [pmymag.com/gb85](http://pmymag.com/gb85)).

Then there are the engine rooms. Yes, rooms—plural. The 1,000-hp Volvo Penta D13-IPS1350s appear almost small in the tall spaces with walk-around access on the outboard side of the engines. In short, this boat is a gear head’s—or technician’s—dream. The next GB 85s will be built with 1,300-hp MANs with V-drives. In between the two engine rooms is an enclosed toy garage that can fit an army of Seabobs, kayaks, SUPs or SCUBA tanks.

The smaller power plants were a deliberate compromise. An efficiency aficionado, Richards has put a focus on cruising range in each of his models. Thanks to a 2,640-gallon fuel capacity, the 85 boasts a nearly 1,000-mile range at 20 knots and a long-legged 3,000-mile range at 10 knots. That efficiency is valuable not just

on long crossings, but Richards thinks it will become increasingly important to Americans paying higher fuel costs.

“There are small features that we always work on for performance and ease of handling,” Richards adds, lifting a section of the countertop to reveal a hidden wing station. “For example, the remote helm station here in the galley. If you look at the visibility from this position, it’s amazing for a boat of this size.”

Maneuvering into a slip one second and digging into a sandwich the next is a party trick I’ve not seen on a yacht. Another feature I’d missed in my haste to climb aboard is the hydraulic platform that lifts out of the stern platform, four feet into the air and four feet outwards and away from the boat. With an optional in-deck umbrella it becomes a private balcony above the sea for a couple to enjoy a sunset or for kids to practice their cannonballs. I’ve seen this type of feature on superyachts and a 95-foot Princess, but not a boat of this size. I predict a full-blown trend.

The new Grand Banks flagship blurs the lines between categories. Hints of trawler heritage are evident in the mechanical spaces and range, but then you have motoryacht planing speeds and finish. Yet again, elements are borrowed from the superyacht space. Perhaps, it’s the best of all those worlds. —*Daniel Harding Jr.*

**LOA:** 87'2"  
**Beam:** 22'2"  
**Draft:** 4'11"  
**Displ:** 108,000 lb.  
**Fuel:** 2,640 gal.  
**Water:** 270 gal.  
**Power:** 2/1000-hp  
 Volvo Penta D13-  
 IPS1350s

