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*Krogen Express 52*

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# *Krogen Express 52*







# *Cruising The Low Country Aboard This Commuter-Style Cruiser*

BY BILL PARLATORE

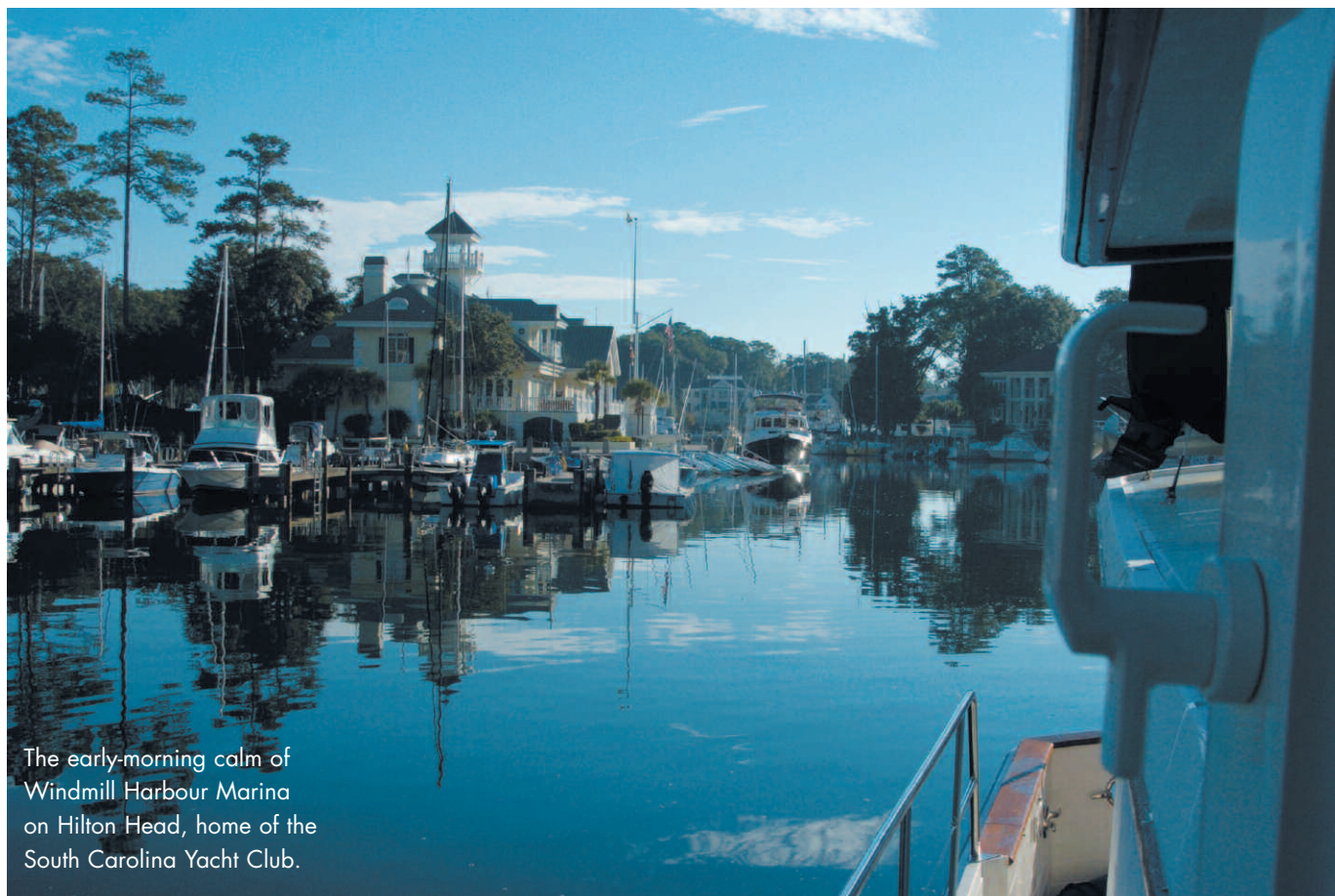
I was recently invited to spend a few days aboard the newly reintroduced Krogen Express 52. Betsie and John Tegtmeyer, owners of Krogen Express Yachts, were keen to show me the lovely waters around Hilton Head, their South Carolina home base, as well as nearby Charleston and Beaufort. In addition to sampling the pristine and charming southern coastal waterways, the trip would give me a good liveaboard experience on a boat that characterizes an alternative to the traditional trawler lifestyle.

The history of the Krogen Express goes back to the early 1990s, when Kurt Krogen asked his father, the late designer Jim Krogen, to draw a commuter-style cruiser that would take the efficient, slim hull of the 1920s-era commuter yacht and create from it a thoroughly modern yacht with all the comfort and competence today's couples demand. The first Krogen Express 49 was launched in 1996, and a total of 16 yachts were built.

Ever since its introduction, the Krogen Express operation has remained separate from Kadey-Krogen Yachts, builders of the familiar and popular displacement trawlers that have made the name Krogen synonymous with liveaboard comfort and competence.

Krogen Express





The early-morning calm of Windmill Harbour Marina on Hilton Head, home of the South Carolina Yacht Club.

## SOMETHING OLD, SOMETHING NEW

The Krogen Express story is a particularly interesting one, as it highlights the trend of many couples who want higher cruising speeds in a fuel-efficient hull that is also a comfortable cruising motorboat. While the full-displacement, long-range, trawler-style passagemaker remains the cornerstone of our lifestyle, many folks have recognized their dreams at slightly higher speeds that allow for longer cruises on a schedule.

A perfect example of this development, John and Betsie Tegtmeier once owned a Kadey-Krogen 42, a classic trawler that took them on many adventures with their growing family. Intrigued by the higher performance level of the Krogen Express 49, however, which retained the quality and feel of the Krogen brand, they purchased Krogen Express Yachts and, working with Kurt Krogen, retooled the boat's molds to offer it as the Krogen Express 52 with subtle detail changes. Built at the same Asia Harbor yard in Taiwan as the Kadey-Krogen line,



John told me the new 52 has all the “Krogenesque” qualities folks have come to appreciate, but in a commuter-style efficient cruising boat.

Incorporating changes or upgrades suggested by owners of the original 49-footer, the new boat is dimensionally larger, with a more traditional interior and higher-quality equipment and fixtures than on the original. And the Tegtmeiers have committed to making each KE52 better and better, improving the one model rather than expanding the

line with more models. And their turnkey approach is to sell a complete yacht, fully equipped with the best of the best, an attractive approach that differs from many yacht companies.

The tranquil early-morning calm on the docks of Windmill Harbour Marina on Hilton Head was the perfect setting to begin our mini cruise. John planned to run *Daystar* out in the Atlantic, up the coast to Charleston, giving me a sense of the boat at sea. After a brief visit to Charleston, a town whose charm has lured many a sailor with its numerous





Anchoring gear is ready to go cruising. The large Freeman hatch is watertight and allows crew to get inside the chain locker.

attractions, we would ramble down the ICW to Beaufort, South Carolina, and eventually back to Hilton Head. This float plan mixed up the underway routine, providing a good overall feel of the boat. The Krogen Express is intended for just this sort of adventure—not cheating death around the Horn, but civilized cruising with some fun people.

One thing that struck me right away about the Krogen Express is that it is a boat intended for one couple, much like my own *Growler*. But its overall length of 52 feet 6 inches allows for some greatly expanded living spaces for a husband and wife. While there is a guest cabin, its main purpose is as an office for the owners.

And many “Krogenesque” touches are visible just walking up to the boat. There is a sturdy rubrail just inches above the water, and it extends forward 15 feet from the stern. It is a feature I don’t see on many boats, but one I believe is critical for a boat going cruising, essentially going into harm’s way, playing bumper pool with pilings and fuel docks. A second stainless-steel-covered rail rings the boat, standing proud off the caprail to provide even greater protection.

Also typical of the Krogen approach to boats are the port and starboard side doors some 40 inches forward of the stern. These doors are 18 inches wide and 30 inches tall, 26 inches off the water, so real people can fit through them. A swim platform also provides access to the cockpit from a floating dock or dinghy. And for even more flexibility in boarding options, there are hinged stanchion gates just forward of the pilothouse doors that put side deck access a full 64 inches off the water. All very civilized, and very “Krogenesque.” Tidal ranges are not a problem.



Top: Clean side decks and clever relocation of hardware is a really good idea. Note the handholds and great security this layout offers, even when you’re moving around the boat under way. Right: The side doors are wide and deep, and ease boarding from some docks. The cast scuff plate is a nice touch.







The covered aft cockpit is 8 feet long and 13 feet wide and is one of two areas that are decked in teak. Headroom in the area is 6 feet 9 inches, and the surrounding bulwarks provide 32-inch security for those in the cockpit. A teak caprail rings the perimeter of the cockpit.

Teak-surfaced steps from the cockpit lead up to the 17-inch-wide side decks. The stainless-steel railing is 37 inches high for solid holding-on while moving about. Another nice feature of the new 52 is that all cleats are off the deck and difficult to snag or scrape against, yet they remain easily accessible. The broad foredeck leads to the real-world anchoring gear, with a large Freeman hatch into the chain locker. The boat's bow is 8 feet off the water.

### A ROOM WITH A VIEW

The new Krogen Express really opens up the interior space, at least as much as can be had with a 15-foot-5-inch beam. Rather than squeezing maximum accommodations into the slender hull, the opposite approach is taken, leaving the living spaces open and uncluttered. The saloon, for example, measures 8 feet long by 11 feet wide, and there are large opening windows that bring in light and provide a view of the world outside.

While there is a traditional L-shaped settee on the starboard side of the saloon, it is a full 7 feet long and would be a great place to snuggle up with a book on a rainy day. On the port side of the saloon, no furniture is built in, allowing for a couple of comfortable freestanding chairs, such as those comfy Ekornes chairs.



Top: The relaxed saloon is ideal for living aboard. Note the large windows and the double door to the aft cockpit. Left: The classic Krogen galley sets the standard in utility and good design.



Above left: Betsie whipped up a great low-carb lunch for a hungry crew. Above right: Steps up to the pilothouse and the signature Krogen storage on the port side. The cherry interior is a nice change from darker teak and adds to the contemporary feel.

The galley is a U-shaped, traditional Krogen galley—complete, efficient and well suited for meal preparation. Go aboard any Krogen Express or Kadey-Krogen yacht, and you'll see a great galley. The new Krogen Express 52 is no exception. *Daystar* has a full-size refrigerator/freezer, a microwave, a three-burner stove, an oven and large counters. There are many lockers and storage spaces throughout the cherry-trimmed galley and saloon interior. Another signature Krogen touch is the shelf unit located across from the galley on the port side, with practical cabinets for storing all sorts of provisions, bottles and books.

Three steps up from the galley will get you to the pilothouse, which measures 11 feet long by 11 feet wide and has 6 feet 7 inches of headroom. Two pilothouse Dutch doors provide access to the side decks.

The helm has excellent sight lines forward and to the sides, and it was designed with enough physical space to permit a Stidd helm chair at the wheel while allowing freedom of movement around the

pilothouse. On many boats, it takes effort, if it's even possible, to slip past the back of the helm chair and the table mounted at the raised settee behind the helm, especially for those with generous waistlines. This settee is long enough to serve as a watch berth and also converts to a double berth when necessary. There is storage beneath.

The pilothouse has a chart table with drawers for nav tools and charts, and it showcases the Krogen expertise in pilothouse design. One outstanding feature on this boat is the inside access to the flybridge. Gone are the days of vertical ladders from aft cockpit to boat deck. The Krogen Express hits the mark with this particular feature, one of the best I've seen anywhere. While the steps could be relaxed a bit to increase the ergonomic friendliness by extending the base of the steps out a foot or so, I'm still a big fan of this flybridge access.

As we entered the gentle swells of the Atlantic, I noted numerous handholds throughout the boat, all where they need to be. It is nice to see them even on a pleasure-seeking express cruiser like the 52.





A view from the flybridge, several miles offshore. Out here, it seemed, it was just us and the dolphins!

After all, not all seas are calm all the time, and sometimes the uphill slog into head seas will have any boat really dancing.

As John turned the boat on a northerly course towards Charleston, I joined him on the flybridge, where the only faint vibration came from the fluttering bimini straps. There was no sense of machinery charging us ahead at almost 17 knots. The efficient hull shape produces the smallest of wakes, unlike boats that push a huge wall of water as they attempt such speed. The Aquadrive thrust bearing removes much of the normal vibration and controlled chaos coming from twin Yanmar 440hp diesel engines.

The flybridge is a compact yet comfortable command station. A centerline Pompanette helm chair is located behind the raised fiberglass helm console, and an L-shaped settee provides additional seating, with storage lockers under the cushions. The flybridge sole is covered in teak.

There is a 7-foot-long area behind the bridge that is safely encircled with a stainless-steel railing. Aft of

this is where one stores the ship's tender, complete with Nautical Structures crane.

The seas were glassy-calm this morning, and we had little company besides a pod of whales and dozens of playful dolphins that followed us for miles. So I walked down to see the rest of the boat while *Daystar* powered along the oily seas.

Four steps down from the pilothouse lead to the staterooms. At the bottom of the steps is the guest/day head on the port side, complete with a separate shower. Across from the head is the office, with built-in desk and file cabinet. An L-shaped settee slides out to become a double berth, and a Pullman berth swings out over the desk for additional berthing.

Most of the time, this space will remain an office, and with the door open, the office space adds to the overall openness of the accommodation footprint, almost as a foyer to the master stateroom forward.

Krogen owners must be big people, as I found 6 feet 8 inches of headroom as I walked forward into the master stateroom. The combination of opening





Left: The settee in the guest stateroom pulls out and converts to a double berth. The Pullman bed tucked away above the desk adds further options for overnight guests. Right: The master stateroom is open and bright, and it has almost unlimited storage for living aboard. It is a very comfortable stateroom.

ports and overhead hatches, along with the contemporary cherry treatment, makes this stateroom an inviting and bright cabin. The island queen is surrounded by lockers, shelves and cabinets for storing a full wardrobe. A large mirror is mounted over the bureau across from the foot of the berth. This is a very nice stateroom, and it clearly works. Camping it is not.

The longer I spent on the boat, the more storage spaces I found, as if someone at Krogen was tasked with creating a virtual storage facility using all the nooks and crannies on the boat. Even lifting the island mattress reveals storage. You want storage? Look around the boat, under seats, behind cushions, under mattresses. It is an amazing accomplishment of superior storage utilization.

I then walked around the boat taking sound measurements, and at 16-plus knots, engines at 80-percent load at 2700 rpm, the noise level in the pilothouse measured 77dBA; the master stateroom,

72dBA with the door closed; the guest stateroom, also 72dBA; and the saloon, 77dBA. While these levels are certainly reasonable, I would comment that the folks at Asia Harbor are accustomed to building displacement trawlers with engines that barely tick over to get to a 7-knot cruising speed. Building a faster express cruiser with high-output, high-revving diesel engines creates a different scenario entirely and perhaps requires a different approach to sound deadening, especially with the high-pitched whine of turbochargers. There have been a lot of improvements in insulation products and technology, and I think it is a great opportunity to marry Asia Harbor's excellent construction with the newest sound-control technology. Conquering noise is the next frontier of boatbuilding.

Satisfied with my initial tour of the Krogen Express, I returned to the sunshine on the flybridge as Betsie served lunch while we continued to glide north on the Atlantic. The morning melted into





A commercial trawler heads in from offshore, surrounded by birds looking for an easy lunch. The Charleston waterfront is home to many such working trawlers, which add immensely to the charm of the Low Country, not to mention some fabulous seafood!

afternoon, and we made the run of 75nm in just under 4-1/2 hours.

After we tied up at Ashley Marina in Charleston, John explained his philosophy of equipping the

boats with top-quality hardware and equipment, such as Kahlenburg horns, Exalto wipers, Simrad chart plotter and autopilot, Northern Lights genset, American Bow Thruster, Icom radios, Nautical

Structures dinghy crane, Corian counters, VacuFlush toilets, Maxwell windlass, and Force 10 stove. Even the Avon center-console tender is standard.

After a walk around old Charleston and an early dinner, I retired in the guest cabin, converting the settee into a berth. I found it a simple task, and I had more than enough room for my short stay. While this would be less appropriate for more-regular guests, the arrangement works great for the way many use their boats.

The next morning I explored the engine room, now cooled down from yesterday's run. Just outside the guest stateroom/office door is the 18-inch-by-64-inch access door into the engine space, complete with a 7-inch port for visual inspection. While the door seemed a bit narrow



Betsie and friend relax in the pilothouse as we come into Charleston Harbor. Note the rugged Dutch door is off the deck, so even driving rain or standing water on the side deck won't drain inside the boat, as on some other trawlers.





Right: Steps up to the flybridge are terrific solution, although it is easy to see the base extending out another foot or so without cluttering the floor plan.

for my shoulders, once inside it's a whole new deal. There is 5 feet 9 inches of headroom for 7 feet aft from the door into the engine room. As the engines are in that area, it is a terrific feature.

The two Yanmars sit 58 inches apart, crank to crank, and the passage between them is a full 28 inches. The large raw-water strainers are easily accessible, as are the two pairs of switchable Racor 1000 fuel filters for the main engines and dual Racors for the genset. Nice.

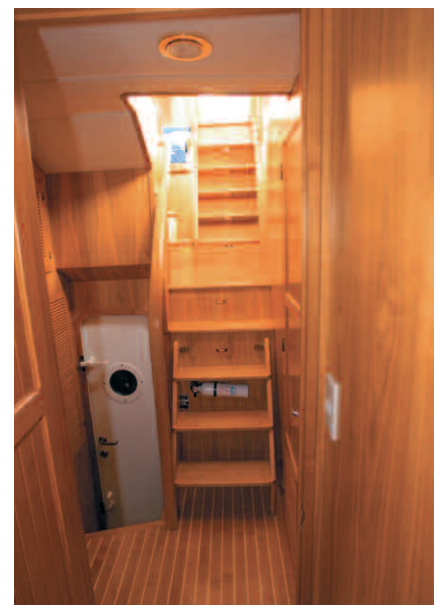
The two water tanks have sight gauges, as do the fuel tanks, both outboard of the engines and Aquadrive gear and shafts. The Northern Lights genset sits inboard of the dripless stuffing boxes.

A common practice I want to highlight is that the master battery switches are in the engine room, another thing we're trying to get changed. In the event of a fire, especially an electrical fire, it is vital to shut those switches off to kill all electrical power. But entering a smoke-filled engine room with toxic fumes is a deadly and unnecessarily risky endeavor. Modern thinking is to install these master switches out of the engine room, where they can be reached and switched off quickly and safely. On the Krogen Express, this will be an easy fix.

Overall, the Krogen Express engine room supports the task of being religious about maintenance schedules. Lighting is terrific, and there is plenty of room for spare parts and tools. And one can easily be spoiled by that headroom!

The following day we meandered down the Intracoastal Waterway to Beaufort, the southern belle town nestled in South Carolina's low country. The Municipal Marina was already full of trawlers, most heading south for the winter. In no time, I was among *PMM* readers, all interested in what each other had planned for the season and the future. Trawler people are like that, sharing a common passion for the good life.

As *Daystar* made way at 8 knots for the trip back to Hilton Head, I took

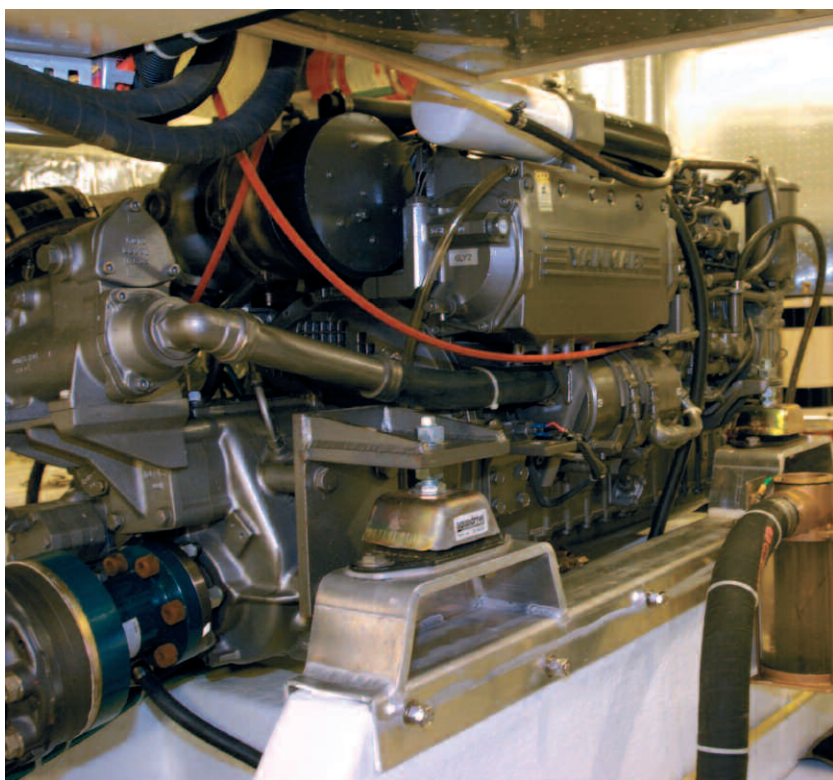


Left: The pilothouse settee is raised for great visibility under way. Note the terrific storage under the cushions. Right: Looking aft from the master stateroom doorway, you'll see the engine-room access door and the steps leading up to the pilothouse.





John drives the boat from the pilothouse on the ICW. Light rain forced us off the flybridge, but visibility is almost as good from the Stidd chair.



The engine room allows for great maintenance access, and all major elements are within reach of the almost standing headroom portion of the space.

another set of sound level measurements, as the Yanmars were running at just 1000 rpm. The sound level in the pilothouse was a quiet 64dBA; in the master stateroom, it was 60dBA; the guest stateroom, 58dBA; and the saloon, 62dBA. At trawler speeds, it seems, the Krogen Express is quieter than most trawlers.

The gray day seemed as mellow as our speed, and it took us 2 hours to cover the distance back to Hilton Head. We'd covered a lot of ground in these 3 days, a major point of boats like the Krogen Express. Unshackled from displacement speeds, we could choose to go fast or slow, and either way, we were comfortable. The reasons why people look at a cruising boat that is capable of operating in the midteens were again validated on this trip.

Along the ICW, we passed a whole lot of sailboats motoring south at 4 knots. The faces of those sitting





John gives *Daystar* a quick washdown after our return from our cruise. The profile is nicely proportioned, another Krogen winner.

hunched over in the cockpits had that look of quiet toleration. I bet we'll see them at a TrawlerPort event one of these days. Such hardship just doesn't make sense in light of the alternatives now available.

John and Betsie Tegtmeier are moving ahead with their project and hope their enthusiasm and pride

for the new Krogen Express 52 will create a new family of Krogenites who also appreciate the "Krogenesque" touches that set these boats apart. I can envision this cruising boat doing well in the Pacific Northwest, at anchor in the Bahamas or crossing the Gulf of Maine en route to Nova Scotia. The Great Circle? No problem. The Krogen heritage ensures it is a fine sea boat, and it also looks pretty sharp among the sea of white fiberglass.

Check out this new commuter-style cruiser, and see if it's time to bring the straw hat and white blazer back into your life. Maybe your own cruise along the low country might start something special. The magic of southern hospitality is like that. 🌴



## KROGEN EXPRESS 52

LOA	57' 6"
LWL	51' 4"
BEAM	15' 5"
DRAFT	4'
DISPLACEMENT	44,480 LBS.
FUEL CAPACITY	650 U.S. GAL.
WATER CAPACITY	370 U.S. GAL.

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