



KROGEN EXPRESS 52

LIVABILITY AT ITS FINEST

At times, scheduling a sea trial can get a little tricky. Variables such as vessel, captain and writer availability, weather conditions and vessel location all play a role. The stars fell into alignment for my latest trial, the Krogen Express 52.

On move-out day from the Palm Beach Boat Show, I was able to get on the KE52 before it headed to Alabama for the season. Fortunately, the weather was great, I had a slice of time and the boat was nearby. Interestingly for me, the captain was the new owner, who proved to be a great source of information.

“Classic” is the name of the game on the raised pilothouse KE52, and it begins with the exterior styling. A high forepeak, resembling the commuter yachts that ran Long Island Sound and other points in the Northeast, and a sharp entry let the KE52 easily part the sea. The water rides up the hull and gets knocked down by a spray strake that carries aft and becomes the chine, making for a softer, drier ride.

Side boarding gates and a transom gate provide access to the teak-covered aft cockpit, which has no built-in seats or tables, so owners can incorporate their own chair/table preference. An overhang from the bridge deck ex-

tends all the way aft and is supported by two polished stanchions, so it’s possible to enjoy an *alfresco* meal or sip cognac outside during a summer rain.

Wide sidedecks all around make traversing to the bow safe. Siderails run all the way from the aft step-up to the pointy end. The foredeck contains the raised house, which is a nice place to sit while at anchor or during slow-speed cruising.

Look closely for the double spring cleats along the side of the deck. They are mounted on the side rail, so no toes get broken.

Krogen designed a beefy anchor/gear locker, complete with a battleship-style hatch. The split locker puts the chain rode on one side and the fenders, poles, etc., on the other. A ladder descends into the well for all-around access. Speaking of anchor gear, the pulpit is large enough for two setups. And the underside of the pulpit has a plastic kickplate, which prevents damage and makes for easier

repairs if nicked.

At the transom are double hawse pipes: one on the transom and one on the side, for stern dock lines, so they don’t rub against the corners. Good thinking.

Another smart feature are the Pacific Coast Marine Dutch pilothouse side doors. They’re split, so you can open the top half to allow air in and leave the bottom closed for security. You don’t need junior or Fido getting out.

BETTER BY DESIGN

The features on the KE52 didn’t happen overnight. The boat is based on the builder’s proven 49-footer, which was designed by James Krogen. The KE52 is an evolutionary result of, basically, function and form.

Krogen Express principal John Tegtmeyer explained that improvements have come from him but also from boat owners. He’s not necessarily looking for the yacht’s shortcomings but rather for ways to improve the experience of running and owning a KE52.

“These yachts are exactly the same but totally different,” Tegtmeyer said as he explained the upgrades from one 52 to the next. And he should know. He owned hulls #1 and #10 and



Cherry wood and a cherry-and-holly sole give the Krogen Express 52 the charm and elegance that it's known for. The pilothouse (left) provides a terrific vantage point, while the main cabin (below left) has an all-inclusive feel from the salon through the galley.



has about 4,000 hours on board. It's apparent he knows his own product.

The flybridge, accessed via a staircase from the lower helm, offers unobstructed views. It's a simple layout, but then again, the KE52 is an uncomplicated yacht. The flybridge helm station is fully outfitted with a wide array of Raymarine electronics (as the owner desired), including dual HybridTouch radar/chart/sounder displays, a speed/depth log, an autopilot and a VHF radio. Completing the ensemble are Sidepower bow- and stern-thruster joysticks, Yanmar engine displays, a Fusion stereo remote, Lenco trim tab controls and more. The captain sits on an adjustable Stidd helm chair, and a destroyer wheel wrapped in white leather will keep the captain's hands warmer on chilly mornings while complementing the layout.

Guest seating is on an L-shaped settee that runs along the starboard side and across the aft, and behind that is an open deck suitable for a few lounge chairs or water toys. Our ride has a propane gas grill and a rail-mounted table. The previously mentioned deck overhang is great for dinghy storage and a handy Steelhead Marine

1,000-pound hydraulic crane.

For low spans, the KE52's radar mast lowers electronically.

INSIDE SCOOP

Throughout the interior, cherry wood joinery and cherry-and-holly flooring exude the charm and elegance the KE52 is known for. The climate-controlled pilothouse is trimmed in wood through and through, from the windshield mullions to the six-spoke steering wheel. The raised dash at the helm gives line-of-sight viewing for the displays, and the electronics in the console and the overhead liner are within easy reach. The result is a non-intrusive work area.

Aft of the helm is a raised bench seat with a table that converts to a double berth. Chill here when plotting your next course or hanging out with the captain. Either way, it's a great vantage point.

Down a few steps are the forward accommodations, which abide by Krogen's less-is-more philosophy. Instead of cramming sleeping room for six into the space, Krogen builds just two staterooms — both large and comfortable. The forward master has

as many drawers (I counted 14) and cabinets as a house. Storage is everywhere, including under the full-size island queen berth — no corners cut here. The richness of the wood is evident when the sun shines through the six portholes and hatches. And there's 7 feet, 4 inches of headroom!

The fine craftsmanship needs to be pointed out. Complex angles and cuts are necessary so the wood panels along the hull side fit perfectly with the steps to the berth. These cuts are so exact that the grain matches up. Lockers and cabinets don't have handles but rather have holes with curved wood inserts for easy pulling. Nice touch.

An en suite private head has a sink, a toilet and a shower stall with a seat. A porthole provides ventilation.

To starboard is a second stateroom that can be configured in a number of ways, even as an office. A second head is across the hall and includes a shower stall.

It's funny, but on a 52-foot yacht, there are more getaway areas than usual. There's the flybridge, pilothouse, foredeck, staterooms, aft deck and, not to be forgotten, the salon. Inviting in its own right, it has places to



stretch, curl up, catch some TV or entertain guests. An L-shaped settee to starboard flanks a foldout cherry table. Pull the chairs from the port side over, and you have a cocktail/dining setup. Open the windows and the double aft doors to bring the outside in.

The cherry bookshelf/bar unit is classic. There's ample space for bottles and glassware below, next to the U-Line icemaker, and books or other items up top.

The U-shaped galley is to starboard, and there's enough space and the right appliances to make any kind of meal. For cooking, there's a Force 10 three-burner stove/oven as well as a GE Profile microwave. For chilling, there's a full-size GE refrigerator/freezer with cherry panels on the front. A large stainless sink is surrounded by plenty of granite counter space.

ON THE MOVE

The owner of our KE52 test boat, *Easy Water*, is Skip Binkley, and he's no stranger to the water. He and his

TESTER'S OPINION:

The KE52 wants to be used, by virtue of its layout, style and sea-keeping ability. This is no picnic boat or weekender. Plot a course and let the KE52 take you there.

Distinction

➔ Don't think that Krogen Express and Kadey-Krogen are the same. The Krogen Express Yacht Co. debuted the KE49 – developed by the father-son team of James and Kurt Krogen – in 1996. John Tegtmeyer and his wife, Betsie, were Kadey-Krogen 42 owners, and they purchased the assets of Krogen Express in September 2001. The company transitioned from building the KE49 to the KE52 in late 2003 and are building hull #17 now. Their focus is on continuous improvement and customer satisfaction.

family own and operate Riverboat Discovery tours and excursions in Fairbanks, Alaska. His family has been involved with steamboats for five generations. And Binkley has cruised the British Virgin Islands and circumnavigated the Great Loop, to name just a couple of his trips.

Departing the dock, Binkley deftly maneuvered *Easy Water* sideways thanks to the gears and thrusters, which were needed in the approximately 4-knot cross current, and out between the pilings.

"It's a joy," Binkley said, as I queried him about the yacht, adding that he loves it when they have to stop during trips. "I feel proud of the boat. It's everything I always wanted."

What makes the KE52 move is a pair of six-cylinder, four-stroke turbo 480 hp Yanmar diesels. And getting to them is easy, as there are two entry points to the engine room, along with standing headroom and all-around access.

Underneath, the KE52 sports a full keel for improved tracking and protection of the Nibral props. Key support points of the hull are reinforced with Kevlar.

For comfort on excursions in rough waters, *Easy Water* is equipped with ABT TRAC fin stabilizers. We didn't need them on our test ride, as the KE52 rode great through the inlet and any wakes we could find.

Running speeds are impressive. At a slow cruise speed of 9 knots, the boat's range is more than 1,800 n.m. Push the throttles to 2500 rpm, and you'll cruise at around 16 knots with a range of just more than 500 n.m.

➔ SPEC BOX

LOA 57 ft., 6 in. BEAM 15 ft., 11 in.

DRAFT 4 ft.

DISPLACEMENT (HALF LOAD) 43,000 lbs.

FUEL 700 gals. WATER 360 gals.

ENGINES Twin Yanmar 6LY3-ETP, 480 hp

PRICE (LIST) \$1.6 million

STANDARD EQUIPMENT

Twin Yanmar 480 hp diesel engines, AquaDrive anti-vibration mounts, Racor fuel filters, Northern Lights 12 kw generator, underwater exhaust, Mastervolt inverter, 50 amp electric service, Glendinning CableMaster, 20-gal. water heater, A/C units, Maxwell windlass, VacuFlush toilets, engine oil-change system, Intellian satellite TV, tender w/40 hp motor and more.

OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT

Contact dealer.

CONSTRUCTION

The KE52 hull is gelcoat-finished, hand-laid fiberglass with Knytex mats. It is solid below the waterline and Corecell coring above with blister-resistant vinylester resin. Superstructure is balsa cored and has Knytex surface mats.

BUILDER

KROGEN EXPRESS YACHTS, Hilton Head Island, S.C.; (866) 4KROGEN; krogenexpress.com

WEST COAST DEALER

WATERLINE BOATS, Seattle; (206) 282-0110; waterlineboats.com

Wide-open throttle will take the KE52 to about 22 knots and drop its range to about 300 n.m.

Binkley called me a few days after our test ride, wanting to be out of earshot of Tegtmeyer, to expound on his relationship with the Krogen team. "I was treated so well by John," he said. "JD Power should recognize them; they take care of the buyer."

I like one of the words Krogen uses in its marketing: livability. The KE52 wants to be used, by virtue of its layout, style and sea-keeping ability. This is no picnic boat or weekender. Plot a course and let the KE52 take you there. 🍷