



Visibly
SUPERIOR



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PHOTOGRAPHY BY NEIL RABINOWITZ

RETHINKING A PROVEN DESIGN
IMPROVES THE OPERATIONAL
EFFICIENCY AND LONG-RANGE
LIVABILITY OF THE NEW
NORDIC TUG 39

Pulling the new Nordic Tug 39 out of her slip on the south side of Brewer Greenwich Bay Marina in Warwick, Rhode Island, I nudged the Cummins throttle in and out of gear, looking aft every few seconds to judge whether the integral swim platform was clear of the outer pilings.

I was very happy to have a Side-Power bow thruster joystick within easy reach, making my initial turn out of the slip, and then a subsequent turn into the main fairway that would take me out of this popular harbor, so much easier. I was wishing for a stern thruster, too, but the Nordic Tug 39, like its proven 37-foot predecessor, is very maneuverable at low speeds and in tight corners, and I found that I really didn't need it.

What I wasn't wishing for was improved visibility from the helm of this raised-pilothouse cruiser—because excellent visibility is one of the hallmarks of the new 39. Glancing aft to check the pilings was made easier by large Diamond/Sea-Glaze saloon windows on the cabin sides and aft bulkhead, supplemented by a Dutch-style aft cabin door, also from Diamond/Sea-Glaze, with glass in the lower and upper sections. Looking forward through the new pilothouse windows, which feature thin mullions supporting the—what else—Diamond/Sea-Glaze forward windows, was almost like looking through the windshield of my car, so wide and sweeping was the view forward. In fact, if you take into account the sliding Diamond/Sea-Glaze pilothouse doors—really, I'm not here as their representative—and the side windows for the helm and passenger seats, visibility inside is nearly 360 degrees from the pilothouse bridge.

I throttled up to a fast-cruising speed of 17 knots and headed just a little south of east out of the marina toward Apponaug Cove Approach Buoy 1, keeping it to starboard, aiming to exit Greenwich Bay on the upper portion of Narragansett Bay just north of Patience and Prudence Islands in search of rougher waters, as the waters of Greenwich Bay were well sheltered from the prevailing northeasterly winds. But by the time I reached the Southeast Ledge, a strong wind was stirring up a stiff chop, perfect for putting the new Nordic Tug 39 through her paces.



The NT 39's standard anchor setup features a horizontal Lofrans windlass offset to align the chain gypsy with the Samson post.

Fans of the earlier 37 will undoubtedly recognize the visual cues of the new 39—a near vertical stem with a deep, rounded forefoot, a flattish trunk cabin forward with twin portholes on either side, the large raised pilothouse topped by a faux smokestack and a boat deck surrounded by stainless rails, and twin rubrails flanking the signature recessed color stripe just below the rising sheerline. Not so visible is the full-length chine that adds roll stability and helps knock down spray, and the near-full-length keel that begins near the forefoot. Hull sections round out to add volume forward, but the aft third warps flatter to support semi-planing capabilities. Interestingly, Nordic Tugs does not put trim tabs on its hulls. Rather, it molds in a modest downward-angling wedge in the last 2 feet of the bottom to provide lift that counters squatting under acceleration.

Some new touches are the result of suggestions by owners, including secondary midship cleats just ahead of the pilothouse door, on either side of the boat, for ease of handling when locking or fast deployment of a breast

line when cruising shorthanded. Inside, there's a new, wider helm console that will accommodate multiple marine electronics displays, along with an adjustable, supportive Llebrog helm chair that can keep the helmsperson comfortable for a long day's run.

The foredeck and the aft deck are well protected by 2-foot-6-inch-high 316L stainless steel handrails that are 1-1/4 inch in diameter for a full grip. There's a toe kick all around the deck to improve footing, in accordance with CE guidelines, but the boat I tested lacked the secondary lifeline rails that the European standard demands and that some owners in this country value, as well. For those handling anchoring duties, the 12VDC Lofrans Tigres horizontal rope-and-chain windlass has foot controls positioned to starboard so that it's easy to watch the single anchor rise from the depths and self-store in the polished stainless anchor roller assembly. The Samson post and the chain gypsy are on the centerline, allowing the crew member on the foredeck to snub the chain to a solid tie-down point, should that be necessary. A bow pulpit option with a single anchor, extended handrails, and twin lockers is available.

Side decks are not overly wide, but there are stout stainless handrails over the pilothouse door, and above the saloon cabin top extending the full length of the cabin and the boat deck along both sides, all of which make moving about on raised side decks safer. The starboard-side boat deck rails are removable, so launching a soft dink or your favorite kayak is a little easier—no need to lift either one above the rails.

Good grabrails run from corner to corner atop the transom, except in the area of the opening transom door. A molded inset in the forward face of the transom stores four large fenders neatly and cleanly, keeping the aft deck clear of obstructions. For dockline and shorepower cord storage, a molded storage deck box extends from near the centerline to the starboard side. The propane locker is located beneath the boatdeck ladder. LED lights illuminate the swim platform and the aft deck.

Our test boat had optional MarineDeck 2000 cork flooring, a renewable product that is granulated, mixed with urethane, and formed under intense pressure. Applied like teak that is glued to fiberglass decks (but less costly than teak), MarineDeck 2000 is treated with an ultraviolet light inhibitor to withstand use on deck.

The lazarette deck hatch is nicely gasketed and guttered against leaks, and it has spring-assisted lifts to help hold it open when you're down below retrieving an item or examining the easily accessed rudder head and steering gear. When you climb down in the lazarette, you can see very well the reinforcing structures that help give the Nordic Tug 39 its strength and stiffness.



Top: Large windows and a Dutch-style door, all from Diamond/Sea-Glaze, help flood the saloon with natural light and ventilation. Above: New features in the pilothouse include larger forward windows with slim mullions, a wider console, and a Llebroc helm chair.



Left: The master stateroom, located forward, is notable for an abundance of storage and a queen size-berth that's easy to climb into. Right: The 39's head compartment is roomier than the 37's and features classic teak craftsmanship and a Corian countertop.

BUILDING THE TUG

“The hull is laid up as a solid laminate hull—no coring except up at the bow to add some depth for the bow guard attachment,” said Bob Shamek, Nordic Tugs’ manager of sales, marketing, and customer service. “That coring is half-inch closed-cell urethane foam. The composite begins with our Oyster gelcoat, is followed by a vinyl ester skincoat, and then by multiple layers, including an initial layer of what’s called ‘plus or minus 45 stitch mat’ to eliminate pattern bleed-through from the next inner and subsequent layers, which are bidirectional knitted fiberglass with threads oriented in a 90-degree axis.”

Bulkheads that provide transverse stiffening begin with the chain locker, include the forward and aft engine compartment bulkheads, and finish with a sealed bulkhead aft of the tank room that forms the lazarette. There are two pairs of continuous stringers, inboard and outboard, full length from transom to bow. The engine bed portion of the inboard stringers is reinforced with

Coosa Composites high-density fiberglass coring for loading strength.

“The stringers are foam, placed in the hull using a fixture to ensure precise location, then glassed in with multiple overlaps to become an integral part of the lamination structure of the hull,” said Shamek. “All the internal surfaces are sanded after curing to remove any burrs, making it safer for the owner or technician working below. All the exposed inner hull surfaces are finished with a white surface-coat material for good maintenance. In the engine room, the hull sides and overhead are finished in a foam-based sound-deadening material with a Mylar face.”

Nordic Tugs uses aluminum fuel and water tanks in the 39 and in its larger models. The fuel tanks are under the saloon sole on both sides of the tank compartment, while the water tank is set athwartships near the aft bulkhead. Blackwater and graywater tanks are integral with the keel void, the top of which is sealed with fiberglass from behind the bow thruster to the aft end of



the keel. Some keel voids are filled with foam, while the others are plumbed for the tanks. The genset sits to port on the engine room machinery flat, balancing the heavy Corian countertop to starboard in the galley above.

In the deck mold, coring is Core-Cell foam in the cabin sides, and a combination of end-grain balsa, foam, and plywood in the saloon and pilothouse roof. Backing plates are fiberglass pads for the rail mounts, and sealed marine plywood in the pilothouse and saloon roofs, where they sit down on the house flanges, as well as where upper deck rails are mounted. The hull-to-deck shoebox-type joint is chemically sealed with 3M 5200, mechanically sealed with stainless steel marine fasteners, and also fiberglass-tabbed inside for about two-thirds of the inner joint—primarily in the forward accommodations and saloon areas.

TOURING THE NEW LAYOUT

Looking at the accommodations plan beneath the specifications box at right, longtime fans of the Nordic Tug 37 will note that the new layout for the 39 has some interesting differences. One that doesn't show up in the drawing: access from the aft cockpit to the saloon is through a new Dutch-style door that adds new ventilation possibilities, but the door should remain closed when running to avoid the possibility of carbon monoxide intrusion from the wake via the so-called "station wagon effect."

To port, there's a new U-shaped settee that converts to a full-size double berth with three storage drawers beneath. Long-distance coastal cruisers will want to consider replacing the 90-degree turn of the settee aft, and the narrow locker just behind it, with a larger locker containing a compact Splendide washer/dryer combo. This conversion does not eliminate the convertible berth function, nor will it interfere with visibility aft. The large teak table measures 2 by 4 feet, is hinged for easy access, and is mounted on a pair of fixed pedestals that remove easily for settee-to-berth conversion.

The long, L-shaped galley to starboard is designed with loads of working space atop the Corian counter, which is equipped with a backsplash and sea rail, all mounted atop handsome teak cabinetry. A 6.8-cubic-foot Nova Kool refrigerator is set forward, with a large stainless steel under-mount sink next aft. Nordic Tugs designers considered well the needs of the long-distance cruiser when they added a 2.5-cubic-foot Nova Kool top-loading freezer aft that is easy to access and finished the layout with a three-burner Force 10 electric cooktop and a microwave/convection oven beneath. If cooking with gas is more your style, you can opt for a three-burner Force 10 LPG cooktop, with or without the microwave.

NORDIC TUG 39

LOA	40' (41' 3" with optional bow pulpit)
LWL	37' 4"
BEAM	12' 11"
DRAFT	4' 4" (full load)
DISPLACEMENT	26,000 lb. (full load)
BRIDGE CLEARANCE	10' 11" (to top of stack)
FUEL	320 U.S. gal.
WATER	144 U.S. gal.
HOLDING TANK	32 U.S. gal.
GRAY WATER	9 U.S. gal.
GENERATOR	5kW Onan eQD
ENGINE	380hp Cummins QSB5.9
MAXIMUM SPEED	17 knots
CRUISE SPEED	8 knots
RANGE AT CRUISE SPEED	1,000nm (approximate)
DESIGNER	Lynn Senour
BUILDER	Nordic Tugs Inc.
BASE PRICE	\$505,100

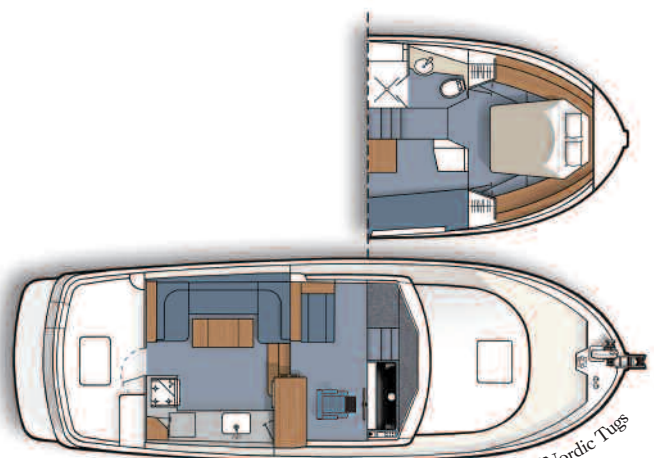
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Courtesy of Nordic Tugs



A Cummins QSB5.9 diesel fills the engine compartment, with room left forward for routine engine checks.

Storage includes four large under-counter drawers, a couple of small drawers, and an overhead cabinet in the corner. A sliding window over the cooktop should help carry heat out of the cabin when the boat is at anchor and the screened hatches and windows forward have been opened to promote natural ventilation. Even though the new, larger side windows are fixed, the view is magnificent, whether you're working in the galley or relaxing on the settee. You'll also appreciate the two overhead rails and, if you're into television, the new overhead-mounted Sharp flat-screen HDTV that folds up and locks in place, unobtrusive to the casual observer. It is powered by an optional DVD/HD/USB/iPod/AM-FM receiver that has speakers in the saloon.

"The new pilothouse and accommodations layouts helped solve the problem of the small helm console in the 37, which was not large enough to handle the larger MFDs that many owners wanted at the helm," Shamek said. "By swapping the head compartment to the port

side and locating the guest stateroom to starboard, the spacing was right to make the helm console wider. Now you could install two 15-inch displays, as is evident by the large Furuno on the test boat, with plenty of room left over for another. We will install any of the other electronics builders' gear, as long as the height and depth of the equipment fits the dash."

Sight lines from the helm and the new Llebroc helm chair are, as I mentioned earlier, really outstanding. There is good spacing between the chair and the custom teak steering wheel, for standing as well as passing through to the starboard deck. There is an option for a double-wide Llebroc, or a more traditional double bench to match the seat to port. The massive dash on the helm console seemed a little bare with the optional single Furuno NavNet 3D display and autopilot; there was room aplenty for the Cummins SmartCraft VesselView display and the Maretron systems monitor. The full-width overhead teak panel is large enough to accept a wide range of radios and small instrument displays. I appreciated the large flat area just forward and to the left of the wheel, the perfect place to spread cruising guides and chart books you want readily at hand. I also appreciated the new Blue Sea electrical panel, with a protective door, to the left of the wheel.

Generally speaking, the layout changes leave the master stateroom forward much the same as it was in the 37, but with the entrance door moved to port. The island berth is still queen size, with excellent access on both sides, and plenty of storage in four drawers under the berth, in overhead cabinets along the sides, and in twin hanging lockers at the bulkheads.

The single head compartment is 6 inches longer than before, and by relocating the molded shower compartment (with seat) to the back of the head, both portions of the compartment have gained usable volume. Nordic Tugs has specified a Tecma EasyFit electric-flush, low-water-flow toilet. The teak vanity has a Corian counter and sink, with storage below and in a small locker to the right of the sink.

The standard guest cabin to starboard has a settee that converts to a double berth, as well as a hanging locker and teak cabinets—one with drawer storage. Nordic Tugs will do a custom conversion of the guest stateroom, turning it into an office with a desk and berth, or a full-fledged office without the berth, or even a utility room with an extra freezer or refrigerator. The office option will require significant antenna mounting capacity on top of the house for satellite domes, and the builder offers two custom "pony" masts with platforms to accommodate a range of needs. In the guest stateroom there is excellent



The Nordic Tug 39 has a wedge molded into the last 2 feet of the running surface to provide lift and a proper running angle.

access to the back side of the helm installation through a large screwed-down panel that opens to expose wiring and steering and propulsion controls.

DOWN IN THE ENGINE ROOM

The engine room is under the pilothouse sole, beneath a pair of carpeted hatches on our test boat, or a pair of teak-and-holly hatches, should you choose that option. Access to routine maintenance points is good, and the designers have included a small step at the front of the engine to ease your descent into the space. The engine mounts are standard Cummins vibration isolators, and there's a Soundown water-lift muffler system. Both features are responsible for the quiet 61dBA sound levels I recorded at 8 knots, as well as the 75dBA levels I recorded at 17 knots. The shaft log is fiberglass down through the keel, with a PYI PSS dripless shaft seal on the inboard end, and Johnson cutless bearings at each end of the log to support the long propeller shaft. There are three 2,000gph Rule bilge pumps in the boat, and the engine room unit is equipped with a high-water alarm.

THE TEST RUN

The wind chop we found farther south of Greenwich wasn't nearly stiff enough to turn the head of the Nordic Tug 39. We made short, comfortable work of slicing through it. The boat answered the helm quickly and turned 180 degrees in a little over two boat lengths at 17 knots. Tracking with the full keel was straight and true with hands off the wheel for short periods. The single 380hp Cummins QSB5.9 turned a 28-by-24-inch Hung Shen four-blade nibral prop and showed a fuel consumption rate of 2.3gph at 8 knots, for a range of approximately 1,000 nautical miles. At 17 knots, fuel burn was 16.4gph, for a correspondingly smaller range of approximately 300 nautical miles. Both ranges were figured on the basis of 90 percent of usable fuel, with a 10 percent reserve.

With the interest in smaller, more affordable cruisers heating up the marketplace, the Nordic Tug 39 is sure to appeal to owners who want proven economy, a touch of speed when they need it, and the comfort to make long distances seem so much shorter. 