

TO THRIVE, NOT JUST SURVIVE

The Kadey-Krogen Beach House Design

Thanks to everyone for the great comments about last issue's article, "A Real Cruiser Looks at Real Dangers vs. Boat Show Hype." The responses confirm that Krogen owners are not storm chasers, and that having a well designed "home" is every bit as important as having a well designed "boat." This bears repeating: "Our goal is to thrive cruising, not just survive cruising!"

During our voyages, cruisers easily spend 85% of our time at anchor in some idyllic spot while the dinghy racks up twice the engine hours of the trawler. So, if you'll indulge me, I would like to share a few experiences from my perspective and that of other cruisers, directly relating to why Kadey-Krogen has certain homemaking design features in every trawler yacht we build. Since the background of those reading this article runs the gamut from those with a strong desire to live the dream to those who have already circumnavigated, let's use a paradigm all can understand—a land based home.

Let's design our dream beach house!

Picture a spectacular location with a million dollar view, let's say Jost Van Dyke in the British Virgin Islands. You'll have to pay top dollar, but you have

been dreaming of this for a long time and you are not skimping. You want the house to be safe. After all, your home is also home to hurricanes. So let's design first and foremost for storm preparedness. Instead of an appropriately strapped roof with nice pitch, and large storm windows with storm shutters, let's use poured concrete and tiny windows. Instead of our romantic cathedral ceiling bedroom with windows and a ceiling fan, put the bedroom on the ground floor in the back furthest away from the beach for when those nasty storms come. Since those storms really wreak havoc outside, we dispense with any balconies or porches from which to marvel at our view. You are now safe as well as being in the tropics. Unfortunately you have designed a home that instead of being open, light and airy looks like an industrial bunker or prison!

Now you are set! You have your big, safe bedroom built into the hillside. True, it gets hot with no windows, but as long as the air conditioning runs all the time to compensate for the heat and no circulation, you're good. As long as the electricity or generator never, ever turns off, you are really living now!

You're safe, but is this a home to live in?

I am only half-kidding here (or have you missed the boat?). Of course your home must be safe. So how are you going to arrange the space? Justifiably, we should be impressed with today's top production bluewater yachts built by companies such as Kadey-Krogen and Nordhavn, and custom yachts from respected naval architects such as Chuck Neville and Steve Seaton, just to name a few.

"Of course your home must be safe. So how are you going to arrange the space?"





Today's technologies have brought long distance cruising from an adventure requiring the daring of Errol Flynn and the pockets of a Rockefeller to the point where we are having this discussion. Modern engineering is a wonderful thing that can make over-the-horizon adventurers of us all, but where are you going to LIVE when you get there? Can't the same designers who make cruising safe and achievable make the experience beautiful and comfortable as well?

Thirty years ago, only a few brave souls of the Robert Beebe ilk went cruising under power at all, until a couple of sailors and cruisers named Art Kadey and James Krogen decided there might be a better way. Look around a boat show or a trawler fest and see what they started!

My own boat/house

First of all, I do not own a Kadey-Krogen (yet). My boat is a Gulfstar 44 motor cruiser, an interesting hybrid with fully rounded bilges and a full keel, hard chines and a somewhat square transom. In calm waters she cruises very nicely at 8-8.5 knots and burns about five gallons per hour. In following and/or stern quartering seas, she digs that chine in and carves turns like a surfboard. (This may be fun on a surfboard, but terrifying when it's your home.) But she is a good girl and has gotten me and my fiancée Sally there and back every time I have asked her, despite my skills as captain and weather guru. (Did I mention that I can afford her?)

During my cruising I've been fortunate to meet up with some wonderful Krogen owners, and now that I work for Kadey-Krogen Yachts it is even more interesting to compare our respective experiences. The most important similarity is that we were all out there, having the time of our lives. But we did have different experiences, due to the differences in our boats.

The most obvious difference was that moderate weather just didn't slow down the Krogen folks at all. If they were ready for the next island on a day with 15+ knots and four-foot seas, I just told them we would be a couple of days behind but we'd be along. I didn't mind waiting an extra day in this section of paradise before going to see the next one. Maybe I knew a lot more of the fuel docks in the Caribbean than they did, and I was not ever going to see Bermuda or Europe or South America, but there I was, having a ball.

Vive la difference!

The more daily, real differences were mostly in the liveaboard qualities of the boats. For those of you who don't know the Gulfstar layout, she is very much like a Defever 44 or other aft cabin motoryacht or trawler. Truth be told, above the waterline she looks more like a motoryacht than a trawler. (Can you say "windage?") Her very best feature is a large, 10' x 12' fully covered aft deck. Here I have a full size table, two chairs, a nice teak bench, a freezer and a bar. Whenever we socialized with other cruisers, we always seemed to end up with everyone on my aft deck, grilling lobsters and running blenders. The deck was covered, so rain or shine we lived in that space. It's such like a back porch that we have long since dispensed with the nautical "cockpit" or "after-deck;" it is The Porch.

So many boats have no aft deck/cockpit at all! Either that or they are so small as to be an afterthought. Who builds a beach house with no porch? I don't get that. In a gentle tropical rain, you would find us hanging out on the back porch of either our boat or one of the Kadey-Krogens (their decks are fully extended to cover the cockpit), entertaining our other trawler

"Can't the same designers who make cruising safe and achievable make the experience beautiful and comfortable as well?"



“My Kadey-Krogen friends tell wonderful stories of sleeping under hatches full of stars, with the breeze rustling the sheets...”

friends who, if they went back to their own boats, would have to go inside. Don't stop the Carnival!

Under that large aft deck on my boat is an equally large, aft master stateroom just like those on many trawlers with amidships masters. Space, closets? Got 'em, along with a walkaround queen and a small bathtub in the head. If I were headed north in the fall with lots of clothes, I would be all set. But I like barefoot boating in the tropics. After running my boat, with the engines just on the other side of the cabin bulkhead and only a few little portholes for light and no air circulation at all, I need either several hours of cool-down time or the generator running the AC so I can sleep. How well do you sleep knowing there is an engine running and no one is watching it?

My Kadey-Krogen friends on the other hand tell wonderful stories of sleeping under hatches full of stars in their forward staterooms, with the breeze rustling the sheets as the boats swung at anchor. With a single engine at the opposite end of the boat from their stateroom, they were cool and airy all the time. Their only complaint was having to remember to close a few curtains to avoid a sunrise wake-up call.

I have thought about those folks at boat shows who have said, “I'll bet it is really tough to sleep in the forward stateroom in really heavy head seas.” I'll bet you're right. So in very heavy head seas, please sleep in the guest stateroom, or the saloon or, better yet, bunk in the pilothouse! Personally, I would not want to give up these large amidships living/galley areas just so that, on those two or three days a year that I get the forecast wrong or feel I just have to head dead into the seas, I don't have to sleep on the sofa.

Continuing the space odyssey

Another Kadey-Krogen Yachts difference that really made an impression was the amount of space devoted to the saloon and galley, and the advantages of these all being on a single level. In my Gulfstar, you go



Cindy and Charlie Cole join Gary Hitch in the pilothouse of down four steps to the saloon from the back porch, and then down another four to the galley in the forward section. Sally and I would occasionally flip a coin or arm wrestle to see who was stuck in the galley during a gathering since whoever cooked completely missed the party, being so far removed from it. On our friends' Kadey-Krogens, we sat in the cockpit or the saloon and whoever was in the galley prepping still participated in the time-tested art of retelling stories we had all shared before, exaggerating the details or our roles so that this time the story would be even better.

In my aft-stateroom boat and in those with amidships masters, the wider, larger spaces of the boat are devoted to this cabin and thus necessitate moving the galley and saloon farther forward or aft to the smaller ends of the boat. I don't know about you, but I LIVE in my kitchen, den and porch, then I go to sleep in my bed. The Kadey-Krogen balance of these spaces is more suitable to my lifestyle, especially in the tropics.

Yet another major discrepancy is that my boat has no pilothouse. I have a second steering station in the





Easy Rider, Krogen 39049.

forward starboard corner of the saloon, but visibility is severely limited. As a result I spend 90% of running time on the flybridge, often very cold. I can see perfectly all around, and on nice days in the tropics this is where you want to be. But headed down the ICW in the fall, you would be amazed how cold Georgia can get, which only heightens your desire to get down to the Keys as soon as possible. So I bundle up in a ski coat, gloves and ski goggles (no lie) and go up to the flybridge to make more time. We still go places, we still have a ball—but I duly understand why our Kadey-Krogen friends love their large, airy pilothouse and consider it their primary space and the flybridge a sunny day, secondary station. I witness this as they pass me on the waterway and wave, drinking their coffee while in their t-shirts and fuzzy slippers!

The Krogen's pilothouse is not just a helm station. All of the Krogen owners I've met consider the pilothouse with its settee to be another living room, often their favorite area. They also agree that having the settee fold into a double berth is a big plus. Not a one would give up this living space or accept a small settee in trade for a dedicated "pilothouse berth" that takes up precious room for no other purpose.

Come on, take the plunge!

A boat being sound and seakindly is absolutely the first criterion of satisfaction, and you realize this even if you've yet to set forth on your first cruise. Seaworthiness and seakindliness, frankly, are

"All of the Krogen owners I've met consider the pilothouse with its settee to be another living room, often their favorite area."

Kadey-Krogen's most significant and by far the most demonstrable advantages over any other design—period. What I can't emphasize enough is that, to cruisers, liveability is absolutely critical to cruising success—not just whether they return safely, but how much fun they have while they're there and whether they plan to go again. Do not be so focused on safety, or whether to choose Furuno or Simrad, that you give liveability short weight in your overall purchase decision.

The average Kadey-Krogen owners own their boats in the neighborhood of six to eight years, with many in the 15- to 20-year range. In fact, more than 10% of Krogen 42' owners have had their boat more than 10 years, and about 10% of Manatee owners have had their boat 20 years or more!

Many other trawler cruisers, and sailors too for that matter, average less than three or four years. They do not die at sea—they just can't live on their boat for a long time. They do try, because they have told themselves and everyone else that they are going cruising for x number of years. But the boat never becomes their home. They feel restricted by it, and sell as soon as they return.

Liveability is why Kadey-Krogen pays so much attention to layout and living areas, and why we hope that when you come aboard you feel just as much desire to relax and stay awhile as you do to fire her up and "see what she'll take." We hope that you come visit on a Krogen soon. We'll be the ones in the big chairs out on the porch. I'll be the one with the blender.

"The average Kadey-Krogen owners own their boats in the neighborhood of six to eight years, with many in the 15- to 20-year range."

