



STORY BY CHRIS CASWELL  
PHOTOS COURTESY OF OUT ISLANDER

# GETTING IT WRITE

THE OUT ISLANDER 64'S EXCEPTIONAL  
CRUISING FEATURES TELL IT ALL

This is a story about a notebook. Nothing special, really—blank pages, hardbound, picked up at an office supply store for a few bucks. As time went by, the notebook grew thick with scribbled words, with penciled sketches, with clippings and names. With phone numbers and serial numbers. With stapled photos and dog-eared business cards.

With ideas.

After a few years, the notebook was looking pretty weary. It had seen its share of salt spray and had been left out on the bridge in the dew a few times, so a fat rubber band kept it all together.



Still, it was more than just a notebook. It was a dream.

The man who had filled all those pages, and other notebooks as well, is Greg Sturgis. His dream seemed simple. But, like so many things in life, it was deceptive, and it had lured many men before Sturgis. He wanted to build “the perfect cruising yacht.”

To that end, the notebook and its sisters were a meticulous record of features he wanted, and notations about what didn’t work, too. If he banged his elbow on something, it would find its way into the notebook: “Why did the designer put *that* there?”



Set well aft for easy motion and minimum spray, the flybridge has wraparound seating and a seamanlike helm with chart table.

To even think about a project as ambitious as building the ultimate cruising yacht requires vast experience, and Sturgis has that in spades. He spent 14 years as the East Coast distributor for Offshore Yachts. Before that, he was a dealer for Islander and Tartan sailboats, and, at one time, he was the largest dealer for Rampage sportfishers. Not exactly a meager CV.

More important, Sturgis is an avid cruiser. For decades, Sturgis and his family have boarded their boat shortly after school lets out, returning only when it's time to put the two boys back in class. They've spent months enjoying the Bahamas, exploring the Eastern seaboard, and cruising the Great Loop.

At one point, Sturgis approached designer Tom Fexas about creating his dream, but 15 years would pass before Sturgis turned Fexas loose on the project of translating his notebooks into a yacht. Sadly, it was the last design Fexas would work on before his untimely passing, but the Out Islander 64 would be the culmination of a long and successful career with such builders as Cheoy Lee, Palmer Johnson, Grand Banks, and Burger. The charter that Sturgis set out for Fexas might have daunted lesser

men, but the Out Islander 64 remains as a tribute to this very talented and innovative designer.

Sturgis wanted a yacht for the owner-operator, and he wanted her rugged on the outside with a yacht-quality finish on the inside. She had to be comfortable and fuel efficient at displacement speeds, but she also had to be fast enough to outrun an approaching squall. In Sturgis' words, "She had to have the versatility of a Swiss army knife."

### THE VIEW FROM THE TOP

The result is a truly remarkable yacht, and it is the details that give her such an appealing character. Take the reverse-raked pilothouse windows. Sure, they give the Out Islander a kinship with the crabbers seen on The Discovery Channel's *Deadliest Catch*, but there's more to them than looking tough: slanted glass doesn't reflect the instrument lights, so it gives the skipper on an Out Islander better night vision. It was in the notebook.

Tucked under a cockpit designed to handle a fighting chair, there is ample space for scuba tanks and dive gear, because diving has always been a part of the Sturgises'



Wing controls on the outside of the flybridge coaming provide exceptional visibility when docking.

cruising lifestyle. If you don't dive, then you can use the area for water toys or extra provisions or all the gear you take on a cruise. It was in the notebook.

Even if the props are protected by pockets and a skeg, rudders can be damaged if you tag the bottom. And, trust me—if you're cruising, you will. So, rather than relying on welded or "skinned" rudders that can fail, the Out Islander has rudders of solid stainless steel. That's right, solid. About 350 lb. each. And not cheap. This was also in the notebook.

The heart of the Out Islander 64 (in my mind, at least) is the flybridge, where you'll probably spend most of your time under way when the weather is decent. The pilothouse runs a close second, but with so many attractions on the bridge, it swayed my vote.

For starters, the flybridge is roomy, but there's not an inch of wasted space. The skipper and a companion both have swivel helm chairs, and the instrument panel is properly sized to handle a couple of large monitors, plus the ancillary electronics and engine screens. The skipper has a Lucite-covered chart table at his elbow, a

telephone handset is tucked in a watertight locker, and there are stainless steel handrails everywhere.

Aft, an L-shaped settee wraps around a pair of granite-topped tables, which allow anyone sitting in the center to exit without disturbing the other guests. Like most surfaces on the Out Islander, there are substantial sea rails to corral drinks and plates because (surprise!) boats can roll in a seaway.

A console to starboard has a refrigerator but no barbecue (there's one in the cockpit; more on that in a moment), and the entire bridge is covered by the standard hard top. Well finished, with faux planking underneath plus built-in lighting and speakers, it is strong enough to carry kayaks or surfboards. (You guessed it—it was in the notebook.) An enclosed-bridge version is offered with the same basic layout. Unless you're always in cold or wet weather, I'd opt for the open version, because there is such a wonderful pilothouse below.

The boat deck is large enough to carry a 14-foot Novurania RIB, which launches with a 1,500-lb. MarQuipt crane. A side view of the Out Islander clearly shows that the bridge is set well aft, which reduces pitching at the helm and makes it dry in rough seas.

But here's what I really love about the flybridge: the two wing stations. Since the bridge extends full beam, sheltering the side decks from sun and rain, Sturgis fitted control stations on the outside of the bridge coaming. Protected by stainless steel rails, the skipper can stand amidships with an unhindered view of the entire hull side, making this the ultimate docking station.

### DESIGNED BY CRUISERS, FOR CRUISERS

The pilothouse is just as well arranged, with a large teak-and-burled-wood dash for two monitors, ample space on each side for charts, and a pair of pedestal seats. There's a secondary electronics and monitoring panel above the large windows, and a pair of husky Freeman dogging doors leads to the side decks. The full electrical panel sits behind Lucite doors next to the helm, with clear labeling and easy access.

The galley is just aft of the pilothouse, separated from the saloon but open to the helm area, with a pass-through above the backsplash. Granite counters and large windows make this a lovely place, and a full array of appliances is arranged for optimal convenience. Opposite the galley is a dinette that converts to a pilot berth for passagemaking. A large drawer under the raised sole holds charts, and easy-to-navigate stairs lead to the bridge above.

As you'd expect from a builder-owner who spends months aboard, the saloon is homey and comfortable, with a wraparound couch, a high-low table with





Opposite page top: The raised pilothouse combines galley, dinette, and helm in one well-equipped and efficient area for cruising or living aboard. Opposite page below: The saloon is designed for casual entertaining, with lounge seating and excellent sit-down visibility. Above left: There are no “galley slaves” here—the chef enjoys granite counters, an array of appliances, and great views through the pilothouse windows. Top right: No guest will feel slighted in the forward VIP cabin, which features a queen-size berth and ample space. Above right: The owner’s stateroom has a private entry, a king-size berth, and an oversized hanging locker.

leaves, and a pair of bucket chairs. “Sit-down visibility” was in the notebook, and large windows make it a reality. To starboard, a pop-up plasma TV and entertainment system add the finishing touches. Overhead, Cantalupi lighting and wall sconces are on dimmers to match the mood.

Mindy Sturgis, well known as a yacht decorator, opted for the teak interior (cherry and mahogany also are available), and those who look closely will delight in the exquisitely tiny inlays that trim the joinerwork. Because cruising often means warm climates, the saloon alone has 2 tons (24,000 Btu) of air conditioning, and the overhanging boat deck helps shade the windows from midday sun.

Just outside the sliding glass door is the raised “lanai” deck, where you’ll find the fifth set of engine controls, including a steering wheel, making Med-mooring or shorthanded docking a cinch. This raised deck also has an aft-facing settee, and the rail on the Sturgises’ boat,

*Island Bird*, is lined with rocket launchers to hold rods for trolling. The settee can be replaced by an enclosed head, a useful option to eliminate having to track through the cabin.

Down two steps is the water-level cockpit, with huge hatches in the sole and a console that holds an Electri-Chef barbecue, positioned here so that smoke won’t affect the rest of the yacht.

Two layouts are available for the Out Islander: a three-stateroom/three-head version, and a three-stateroom/two-head design. *Island Bird* has three staterooms and two heads, and this is the layout I would choose, though I haven’t seen the other. For one thing, it gives the master stateroom a full-beam suite with the head (and a very large hanging locker) aft. Having only one forward head allows it to be quite large, so, although it’s shared by those staying in the VIP stateroom and the twin cabin, it’s a very pleasant place with an oversized shower stall.



### QUIET AND QUICK

If this all sounds quite wonderful, well, it's just the frosting on the cake. The real beauty of the Out Islander 64 is in her construction and systems. For starters, Sturgis chose Camargue Yachts as the builder because the company also builds the Offshore line, and he's had a long relationship with them. Most important, though, Sturgis says, "I've seen how they do things, how they vacuum-bag very large components to infuse resin into the Core-Cell, and how finely they finish the interior."

The boat is solid laminate below the waterline, and the cored house and deck contribute to light weight with high strength. Fexas specified 3,500 lb. of lead shot in the keel to provide exceptional stability and a pleasant motion at sea.

The attention to detail continues in the systems, starting with easy access from the cockpit to the generator flat, where a pair of standard Northern Lights gensets (12 and 16kW were upgraded to 16 and 20kW on *Island Bird*) are in sound boxes but are easy to reach. There's also storage in this compartment for "stuff"—spare parts, fishing rods, water toys. Don't worry. You'll fill it.

A watertight door leads to the engine room; this arrangement creates additional separation between the gensets and the living areas. At anchor with a generator running, the master suite is stone silent.

Standard power is a pair of 700hp Caterpillar C12s, but *Island Bird* has been upgraded to 853hp Cat C15s, and other choices include engines from MAN and Lugger. There's nothing flimsy here, with 3-inch Aquamet 22

Besides, as the owner, it's all about me: I want the big master suite.

Private stairs from the saloon lead to the master cabin, boasting a king-size walk-around berth with drawers underneath. A vanity/desk is to starboard, and oversized Man Ship opening ports let in air in fair weather. The owner's head compartment, aft to port, features marble counters and a large shower.

The VIP stateroom is in the bow, with a queen-size berth, lots of drawers, and private access to the head. From the notebook came a request for suitcase storage, and the entire berth hinges up to reveal a capacious bin for just that purpose. The port cabin's clever design features athwartship single berths that are raised to allow hanging lockers, drawers, and an Asko washer/dryer to tuck underneath. Like the rest of the Out Islander, the cabin is beautifully finished in teak, with burlled inlays and impeccable joinerwork. This cabin also can be configured as an office.



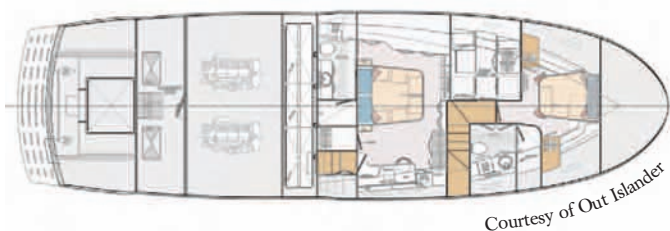
Above left: Upgraded to 853hp Cat C15s, *Island Bird* has an engine room with exceptional access to all sides of the engines and systems. Above: A separate compartment aft holds the twin Northern Lights generators and electrical systems, plus storage for cruising gear.



## OUT ISLANDER 64

LOA	64'
LWL	58' 1"
BEAM	19' 5"
DRAFT	5' 3" (full load)
DISPLACEMENT	108,000 lb. (half load)
BRIDGE CLEARANCE	22' (mast up); 20' 6" (mast down)
FUEL	1,860 U.S. gal.
WATER	400 U.S. gal.
HOLDING TANK	150 U.S. gal.
GENERATORS	Twin Northern Lights (12 and 16kW standard)
ENGINES	Twin 853hp Caterpillar C15s (optional); 700hp Caterpillar C12s (standard)
MAXIMUM SPEED	19.1 knots (with Cat C15s)
CRUISE SPEED	9.5 knots
RANGE AT CRUISE SPEED	1,539nm
DESIGNER	Tom Fexas Yacht Design
BUILDER	Out Islander Yachts
BASE PRICE	Available on request

For more information:  
Out Islander Yachts  
[www.outislanderyachts.com](http://www.outislanderyachts.com)  
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High Strength prop shafts supported by bronze struts with cutless bearings and run through dripless Tides shaft glands with dual cooling lines.

The hydraulic side of the yacht draws from Caterpillar power takeoffs that run the 12-inch, 25hp Wesmar bow and stern thrusters and the Wesmar hydraulic stabilizers.

The engines rest on stainless steel beds with

vibration-dampening mounts, and the exhaust runs underwater to Aqua Quiet mufflers, thus eliminating both sound and soot on the hull. A Delta "T" air-intake and ventilation system keeps out water, and the fuel manifold system between the three tanks has 2-inch crossovers and sight gauges for each tank. Dual Racor filters supply the main engines, while a single Racor filter feeds each generator. Separate Fireboy systems are located in the engine room and in the generator room, and a Reverso oil change system serves the mains. There's even 2 tons of air conditioning dedicated to keeping the engine room cool while you work.

On the electrical side, the standard battery bank includes no fewer than 18 gel cells, separated for main engine, generator, and house service. All are backed up by Newmar battery chargers, as well as 130-amp alternators on the Cats. Skippers faced with bow-in or stern-in docking won't fret, because Marisco shorepower inlets are located both fore and aft. A Xantrex 3,000-watt inverter allows *Island Bird* to have freedom from generator power at anchor.

There must have been a long list of equipment in the notebook, because each Out Islander is delivered with a thoughtful and seamanlike list of standards: a Maxwell 3,500-lb. anchor windlass for the Fortress and Delta anchors, 84,000 Btu of Marine Air air conditioning, a Headhunter blackwater system, dual steering pumps, and a lubrication oil storage tank. Among the upgrades on *Island Bird* are a Village Marine watermaker and a fuel polishing system.

Under way, the Out Islander 64 is as efficient as you'd expect from Tom Fexas, topping out at 19.1 knots and 2300 rpm. That's great if you want to beat everyone to the last good mooring or outrun a front, but the 64 is just as happy at the other end of the speed spectrum.

At an 1100-rpm cruise, the Out Islander eats up the miles at 9.5 knots while sipping fuel at just 10gph. For the math challenged, that's about 1 nautical mile per gallon. With a 10 percent fuel reserve, that sets the range at a bit over 1,500 miles. Drop back to less than 9 knots, and the range jumps to more than 2,200 miles. At those speeds, the sound reading is a whispery 65 decibels in the pilothouse, and just 66 decibels in the master stateroom.

The Out Islander 64 is impressive, not just as a first launch from a new company, but as a turnkey cruising yacht ready to head offshore. Beautifully built, thoughtfully equipped, and arranged to make upkeep and service easy, this yacht should be on your short list of "must sees."

And to think it's all because of a notebook. 