



GARMIN

CHALLENGER

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compiled by
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LOCAL BUILDER SETS THE TIME TO BEAT IN THE PY PACIFIC CHALLENGE

47H:5m

*The record has been set. Who will
take up the challenge next?*

by ROGER MCAFEE

A Washington boatbuilder is the first person to successfully complete *Pacific Yachting's* Pacific Challenge—and he's no stranger to ocean challenges.

Larry Graf, founder and president of Aspen Power Catamarans skippered one of his 32-foot Aspen C100s on a non-stop 557 mile (1,068 kilometre) circumnavigation of Vancouver Island in 47 hours, five minutes.

Graf was the first builder to respond to *Pacific Yachting's* challenge to boaters to travel non-stop around Vancouver Island without refueling. The challenge was a way to get boaters, boat builders and engine manufacturers excited about pushing the boundaries of what you can do in a powerboat, and also to inspire boaters to get out and use their boats in new and exciting ways.

This wasn't, however, Graf's first response to a marine challenge. In 1995, when he was the president of Glacier Bay Catamarans, he became the first builder to successfully complete the Bermuda Challenge, a 632-mile run from New York to Bermuda. That open ocean run took him 36.5 hours in a 26-foot Glacier Bay powered by a pair of 90 horsepower outboards. ▶

With the challenge now complete, Larry Graf and co. have thrown down the gauntlet for the next group of adventurers.



"We did the Bermuda run in response to a challenge that was designed to show boaters of modest means that small, inexpensive, outboard powered boats could be seaworthy and capable," Graf said. "And we took on *Pacific Yachting's* Pacific Challenge to prove that a small, relatively inexpensive family cruiser can operate safely and efficiently in one of the most beautiful cruising areas of the world."

The Crew The three-man crew was composed of Larry Graf, 57, founder and president of Aspen and no stranger to open-ocean powerboating, his 31-year-old son Nick, who works with his dad at Aspen and Dave Bonar, 55, who is a principal of Bosun's Yacht Sales and Service, a business with offices on Granville Island and in Sidney. Bosun's is the B.C. Aspen dealer. Dave, a boater all his life, has extensive cruising experience in B.C. waters.

The Journey Extensive planning went into the circumnavigation. Larry's experience in the open ocean is extensive but limited when it comes to navigating the tides and currents common on the Inside Passage—Bonar's experience cruising the coast was definitely an asset. As skipper, Larry wanted to know just how much fuel would be needed to complete the trip.

"My first project was to understand how the C100s fuel economy would be affected under very heavy load conditions. In a test at the Anacortes Trawler Fest we had full fuel, half water and 2,265 pounds of cargo (people) on board. This approximated the trips beginning fuel weight as well as spares, food, safety equipment and the estimated weight of our expedition tank."

This test proved that the challenge could be completed even if the handling—especially

when docking—was a little more sluggish than usual.

At 14:55 on Friday, June 20, the crew aboard *Gateway II* left the public dock in Victoria's Inner Harbour heading north, counterclockwise around the island.

They encountered relatively calm weather for the 270-mile Inside Passage portion of the trip and other than running over one medium-sized tree in the dark, south of Campbell River at 23:20, it was without incident.

However, the wind built as they rounded Cape Scott and headed into the open Pacific Ocean, at the northwest corner of Vancouver Island. While it was nothing like the previous evening's 60-knot winds, the 35+ knot winds made things difficult as the team worked their way south around the Brooks Peninsula.

The sea state on this section of the north coast included a ground swell of five to eight

The crew aboard the *Gateway II* had to remain vigilant for just over 47 hours, and only experienced one potentially serious incident.

feet rolling in from a storm in the Gulf of Alaska, combined with a southwest swell of two to three feet, as well as a brisk south-southeast wind chop of three to five feet flowing right up the island's coast line.

"It was something to see. The seas were so confused they simply imploded on each other creating vertical curling spouts five-feet high," said Graf. "This was something I've never seen in 30 years of boating in three oceans, and our course took us straight into them."

These seas were worrisome for two reasons. The first concern was fuel consumption, which nearly doubled owing to having to climb waves and rough water. If these conditions

The *Gateway II* prepares to leave Victoria's Inner Harbour.

continued for the balance of the trip the record could have been in jeopardy. The second concern was that if the wind built to the 65-knots of the night before, the team's safety would be in question. "That portion of the coast has no easy night-time access hurricane holes," said Graf.

But the rough weather didn't last and the final lonely stretch along "the graveyard of the Pacific" was completed without incident. Crew and boat made it back to Victoria at 14:00 on June 22 with 60 gallons of fuel to spare.

The Boat For the trip the team used an Aspen C100 catamaran, which is a wave-piercing displacement cat built of fibreglass in Burlington, Wash.

"Nordic Tug, one of the best glass builders in North America produces our hulls," Graf says. "More than a dozen of the 32s have been ordered since the model was introduced two years ago. It is a single engine, proa catamaran, with the starboard hull, the one housing the engine, being volumetrically 35 percent bigger than the port hull."

This pedigreed construction came in handy when the team hit the floating tree at 17 knots, and thanks to Kevlar reinforcement at the bow of each hull, two-inch-thick hull bottoms, and watertight, foam-filled crash bulkheads, the boat came out unscathed.

"We did slow down a bit after that though," said Graf.

The vessel, the *Gateway II*, is owned by



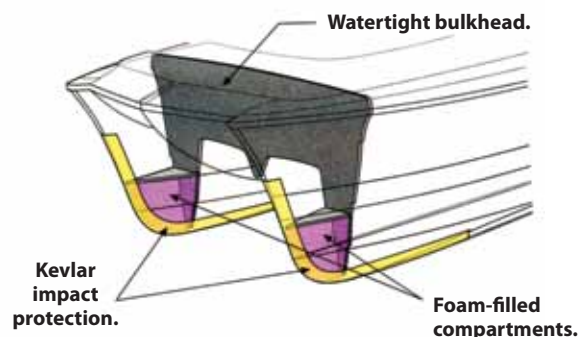
Gateway Yachts, an Anacortes, Washington, yacht brokerage specializing in a fractional ownership program. *Gateway II* owner Nate Martin, said that he had complete confidence in both the vessel and the crew.

"We know the quality of the Aspens and with Larry's hands-on previous experience I was satisfied they could complete the challenge successfully on their first attempt."

To increase the vessel's range, they fitted what Aspen calls its expedition fuel tank,

which expanded the boat's standard fuel capacity by 245 gallons. The total fuel carried on board was 325 gallons.

What's Next A number of parties have already expressed interest in trying to best the Aspen crew's time, and *Pacific Yachting* is looking forward to seeing more applications. For more information on the challenge contact Dale Miller at editor@pacificyachting.com. 📧



THE NUMBERS

Total distance travelled:	557 miles / 1,068 kilometres
Total time travelled:	47 hours, 5 minutes
Departure Location:	Victoria, B.C. Causeway Marina
Return Location:	Victoria, B.C. Causeway Marina
Diesel Fuel used:	267 USG / 1,010.7 L
Mileage:	2.086 miles/USG
Speed (average):	11.82 Knots / 22.67 km/hr

BOATING BC ASSOCIATION ANNOUNCES NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Boating BC Association has announced the hiring of a new executive director.

"We are very excited to announce that Lisa Geddes has been appointed to lead Boating BC Association's business affairs moving forward," said Don Prittie, president of Boating BC.

Lisa is no stranger to the recreational marine industry having spent many years at

Mustang Survival where she began in product development and ended her time there as director of marketing. More recently, Lisa has been involved in senior positions with the Rick Hansen Foundation and Peace Arch Hospital Community Health Foundation. As a founding member of Boat for Hope, a special event created to share the experience of boating with special needs

children, Lisa understands the passion and joy of getting people of all walks of life out on the waters of B.C.

Boating BC Association is the voice of the recreational marine industry in British Columbia. Working with other industry groups locally, nationally and internationally, and at all levels of government, to provide a strong and consistent voice for the boating community, their

mandate is to promote recreational boating in B.C. and to ensure a positive atmosphere of growth for all members.

In addition to owning the Vancouver International Boat Show, Boating BC actively pursues opportunities to promote boating in British Columbia and provide value to its members.

For more information contact: Don Prittie at donprittie@shaw.ca