



BUILDING A BIGGER COMPASS

WHEN RANGE, REDUNDANCY, AND BLUEWATER CAPABILITIES MATTER MORE THAN LOA AND CREATURE COMFORTS.

BY DAVID SCHMIDT
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANDREW ULITSKY

For Paul Hawran, the key to a successful retirement was exploring with a capable offshore yacht.

“ON A BOAT, I CAN DIAL IT DOWN,” SAYS PAUL HAWRAN,

owner and captain of *Argo*, his new Outer Reef 880 Cockpit Motoryacht, about boating’s physical and psychological benefits. “That’s my medicine. I enjoy the rough seas as much as the calm.”

Given that Hawran spec’d *Argo* for serious high-latitude cruising — including his intended passage around Cape Horn this December — there’s no question that his new steed will see weather. Rather, for Hawran and his family-turned-crew (including brother-in-law Andy Ulitsky, son Michael and nephew Chris Holodny), the challenge in the next few years is to see how much scenery, sea life, diving and boating adventure they can experience. Their dream expedition started with a shakedown cruise to Alaska and will likely end in Fort Lauderdale sometime in 2018, but not before *Argo* has thoroughly explored Central and

South America, the Galapagos and the Caribbean.

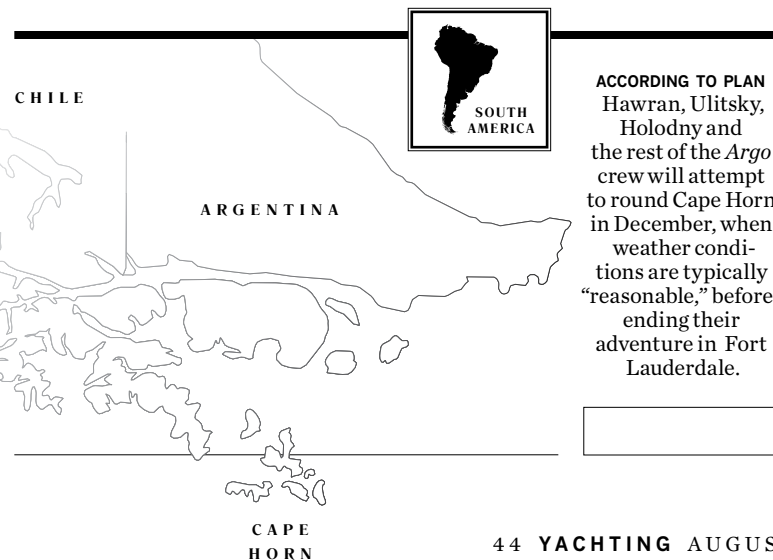
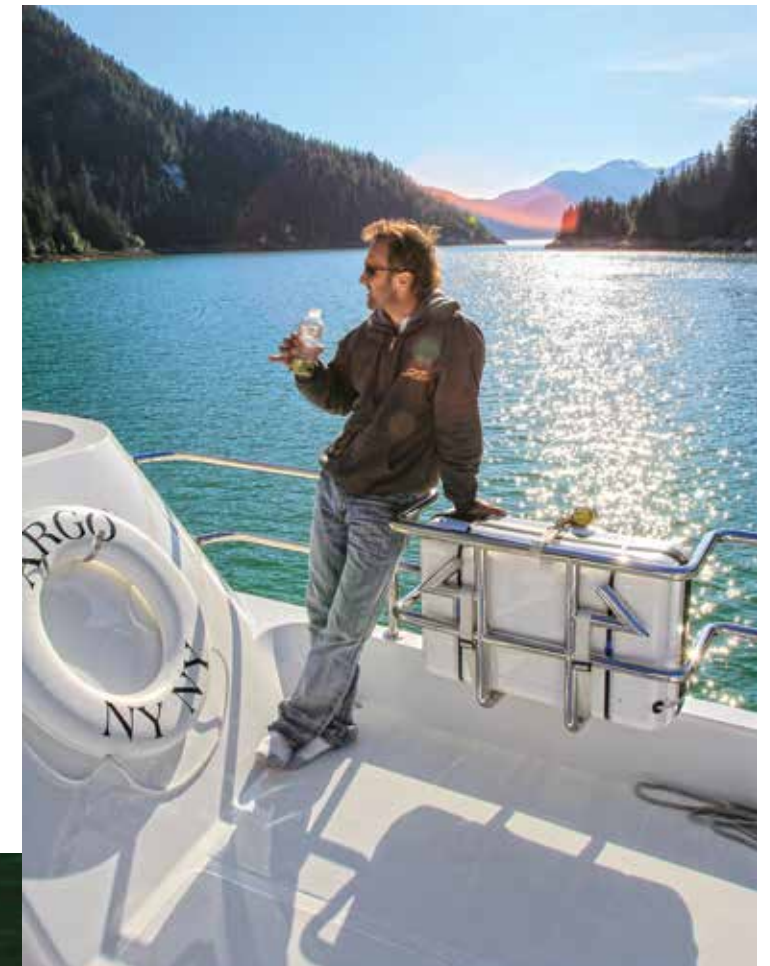
Hawran, 64, is originally from New York City and now summers on Bainbridge Island, Washington. Boating has always been about spending time with his family and friends. In 1973, at age 21, Hawran and some college friends purchased a 20-foot Mako; since then, he has owned a variety of boats, including a 60-foot Hatteras Sportfish, an 82-foot West Bay SonShip, a 94-foot West Bay SonShip and now *Argo*. In fact, Hawran’s experiences watching his son Michael (now 27) become fascinated with fishing as a boy encouraged him to buy his Hatteras in 1996 and, ultimately, to attempt his lifelong ambition of rounding Cape Horn on his own keel.

“Even in the New York days, water calmed him down,” Ulitsky says about his self-described type-A brother-in-law. Hawran always seemed to juggle two phones and a computer during his career running biotech firms in southern California.

While plenty of CEOs have yachts, few know how to run or operate their vessels sans professional captain and crew. Yet for Hawran, a hands-on owner who retired in 2012, boating’s greatest challenges and rewards come from problem-solving, self-sufficiency and the ability to spend time with select guests away from land-based distractions.

“I’ve always had a curiosity about what makes something tick,” Hawran says. His life résumé also includes building additions on houses, felling large-diameter trees and repairing marine diesel engines — jobs that require an understanding of mechanics, tools and real-world physics. “I don’t want to go boating with strangers; I want to be with my family,” says Hawran, who holds a U.S. Coast Guard 100-ton captain’s license and prefers to boat without professional crew. “When I can’t operate [the boat] myself, I’ll get something smaller.”

Hawran’s previous boats were near-coastal vessels with much shorter ranges than *Argo*’s enviable 3,000-mile reach. Still, those boats played an important role in shaping his vision for his retirement yacht. Ulitsky says that the crew was enjoying a diving trip on Hawran’s 94-footer when the conversation turned to other diving locales that they could visit within the vessel’s range. Paper charts appeared, and the group used a divider compass to help visualize their range by drawing circles on



ACCORDING TO PLAN Hawran, Ulitsky, Holodny and the rest of the *Argo* crew will attempt to round Cape Horn in December, when weather conditions are typically “reasonable,” before ending their adventure in Fort Lauderdale.

Argo’s shakedown cruise began in Victoria, British Columbia, and immediately headed north to Alaska.

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Cruising Alaska in a comfortable yacht such as *Argo* allows you to bring nature into your salon.

the chart. “What if we just get a bigger compass?” Ulitsky remembers querying his brother-in-law. “You wouldn’t have to worry about [re-provisioning].”

But a position as CEO of a biotech-diagnostics firm tempted Hawran out of his early retirement. The 94-footer was sold, and Hawran spent the next several years without a yacht.

“A good friend told me, ‘You’ve got to get a boat — you’re the most peaceful when you’re at sea,’” Hawran recalls. Shortly thereafter, he began thinking about long-range yachts and his retirement dream of rounding Cape Horn. Norma, Hawran’s wife of 33 years, had long dreamed of renting an apartment in Paris to celebrate her retirement — a goal that she accomplished last year — but she now jests that she might also join *Argo* for the voyage around South America’s bitter end.

Hawran interviewed expedition-grade yacht-builders and then chose Outer Reef Yachts thanks to feedback from Bunker Hill, his marine surveyor of 20-plus years. Hawran flew Hill to Taiwan to evaluate the manufacturer’s operations and build quality. Hill signaled his approval, and Hawran’s bigger compass started to take form.

“I believe in two of everything,” says Hawran, who explains that *Argo* sails with two anchors, numerous GPS units (hardwired and handheld), Kevlar-reinforced bow sections, an extra 1,000 gallons of fuel capacity and oversize stabilizers and generators, as well as 500 gallons of freshwater tankage and an offshore-worthy watermaker.

Additionally, Hawran outfitted *Argo* with a commercial-grade electronics package that includes multiple Furuno NavNet 3D black-box multi-function displays, touchscreen monitors, dual Furuno radars (25 kW and 12 kW), a Maretron vessel-monitoring and digital-switching system, dual KVH satellite domes (one for TV, the other for communications), a FLIR thermal-imaging camera, a cruise ship-worthy Carlisle & Finch Co. searchlight, a Class A AIS transponder, an IMO-level satellite compass and an extra powerful horn.

An air compressor and four scuba tanks are in heavy rotation, but Hawran admits that he barely uses his satcomms dome. “When we’re out there, we’re out there,” he says. “There haven’t been too many times when we’ve needed it.”

While these are impressive words from a man who used to multitask phone and email conversations constantly, they are proof positive that *Argo* is already fulfilling her design brief.

In addition to redundancy, Hawran’s boating experience taught him the value of a thorough shakedown cruise. He, Ulitsky and Holodny took delivery of *Argo* in Victoria, British Columbia, in March 2015 and immediately headed to Alaska, pressing as far north as Skagway. After watching grizzly bears pluck king salmon from wild rivers and glaciers calve into the sea, they swung their bows south and delivered *Argo* to San Diego for final troubleshooting before heading south again this past February.

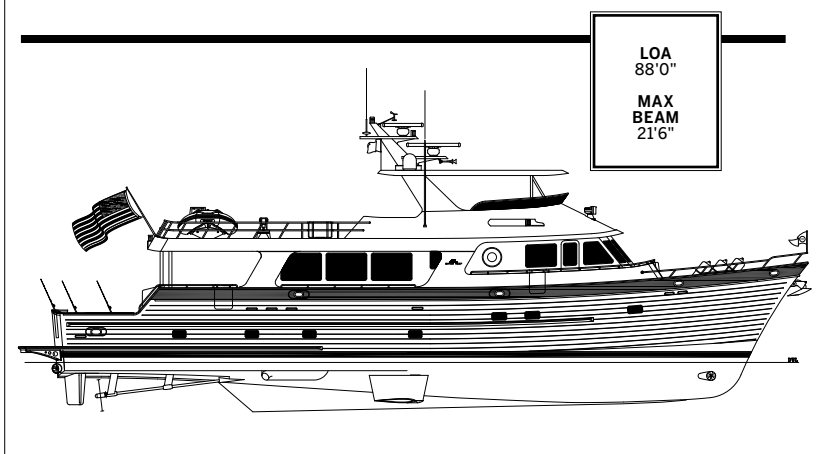
Given Cape Horn’s notorious weather, Hawran plans to attempt the passage in December, when conditions approach “reasonable.” The schedule leaves almost a year to explore Central and South America’s west coast — including a bluewater jog to the Galapagos Islands — before reaching Ushuaia, Argentina, in time to shop for weather windows.

“If the weather isn’t just right, we’re not going,” Hawran says. “I’m beyond *Victory at Sea* stuff. I did that with my other boats. I want to see the rest of Argentina, maybe the Falkland Islands, Brazil, the Amazon River and the Caribbean, and I’m going to spend a couple of years doing it right.”

After returning to Fort Lauderdale, Hawran plans to downsize yachts — but not until he has had a chance to draw some impressive circles on the world’s charts using his expedition-size compass. ♣



BALD EAGLE SIGHTING
While bald eagles are a classic symbol of America, they are a fairly rare spot in many states and regions. Not so in the Pacific Northwest and Alaska. These magnificent birds are a common sight along coastlines and perched in treetops.



RIGHT: PHIL LOWE