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**World Cruisers** — Eric and Christi Grab spent two years cruising aboard their 43-foot Nordhavn, visiting scores of exotic destinations around the world.

## SoCal Cruisers Circumnavigate the Globe on a 43-foot Powerboat.

*Kosmos* allows Eric and Christi Grab achieve their dream.

By Ambrosia Sarabia

SAN DIEGO — Eric and Christi Grab defied many naysayers' expectations when they successfully completed a two-year circum-

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## Circumnavigate

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navigation in May. Armed with limited boating experience and a long-range powerboat, the couple was confronted by many experienced sailors who believed the pair was just a tad too ambitious.

"The simple answer is, yes, we can do this," the couple told the doubters. "We know it will be a challenge, as well as a deep learning experience."

On May 1, the pair successfully completed their journey, covering more than 30,000 miles.

Since 2003, the couple had talked about possibly traveling around the world by plane. The idea of living out of a suitcase, however, did not become a reality until the pair began to consider traveling by boat. There was only one hurdle that the couple had to overcome: cruising experience.

"We had none," Christi Grab said. Their limited boating knowledge was based on the few times they took their 20-foot Bayliner Ciera out on the bay.

When it came time to purchase a vessel that would help them live their dream, the San Diego State University graduates opted for a Nordhavn 43. After deciding sailing was not for them, they researched powerboats and soon learned about the strong reputation Nordhavn yachts have for making scores of successful ocean crossings.

"We wanted something we knew would make it," Christi Grab said.

Since their 43-foot vessel had not yet been built, the couple had four years to gain enough cruising knowledge to see them safely through their voyage. The boating novices participated in boat training courses and seminars, read handbooks, pored over nautical charts and devoured everything else they thought would help prepare them for long-range cruising.

"We found the support from Nordhavn to be outstanding, and the community of (Nordhavn boat) own-

ers has been a valuable resource to help us learn about the boat," Eric Grab explained.

On April 28, 2007, the pair launched *Kosmos* in San Diego and started their voyage around the world.

"*Kosmos* is an amazing boat: not too big, not too small, with all the luxuries we could hope for," Eric Grab said. "Overall, we felt we focused less on the boat and more on the destinations than many boaters do."

Equipped with a water-maker, 120v AC power, a washer/dryer, two refrigerators, one freezer and a trash compactor, the boat offered many of the conveniences of home. The boat's fuel-efficient 105 hp diesel main engine and 27 hp wing engine made for long-range passagemaking ability — and a full array of navigation and communication electronics helped the couple feel safe and confident under way.

"We moved at a consistent pace upwind or with minimal wind, which was a sizeable percentage of the time going around the world," Eric Grab said. "We were stable, and did not live heeled over while under way," as they might have aboard a sailboat.

"The diesel fuel we used to go around the world cost roughly the same as a nice sets of sails we would have needed to do it aboard a sailboat," Eric Grab added.

The couple followed their established course with their first passage from San Diego to Nuka Hiva in French Polynesia. They continued cruising the South Pacific to Southeast Asia, plied the waters of the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea, traversed the Mediterranean, crossed the Atlantic, explored the Caribbean and cruised onward to the Eastern Pacific and Central America, before heading back home.

Unlike some cruisers who spend more time on their vessels than land, the Grabs vowed to spend 75 percent of their trip exploring countries that were new to them.

"We looked at the boat as our home

and means of transportation," Christi Grab said. "We got to a destination and the first thing we wanted to do is get off and go ashore."

On land, they marveled at the spectacular sunsets in Moorea, got acquainted with local customs wherever they went, took in beautiful sights and even climbed up to the rim of an active volcano in Tanna, Vanuatu, where lava shot over their heads. Together, the boaters climbed to the pharaoh's chamber in the Great Pyramid in Giza, enjoyed excellent diving, tasted wonderful foods and met wonderful people, Christi Grab said.

There were a few scary moments at sea — such as the time when Kosmos

was thrashed around during the passage from Suwarrow to Niue. In Apataki, French Polynesia, Kosmos' anchor became stuck on a sunken sailboat; and in Stromboli, Italy Kosmos dragged its mooring.

Now back home, the once non-boaters live aboard the vessel they called home for two years and two days. They are also entertaining the idea of planning another trip.

"There are so many great tools now that make boating relatively easy," Christi Grab said. "You really don't need 25 years of experience."

For more information on the Grabs trip, visit [www.kosmos.liveflux.net](http://www.kosmos.liveflux.net).