

POWER & MOTORYACHT.

ELECTRONICALLY REPRINTED FROM OCTOBER 2006

EXCLUSIVE | MIKELSON 59/63 LRSF



**Mikelson's Nomad is a hard boat to categorize,
especially since every one is different.**

Different Boats for Different Folks

By Richard Thiel » Photos by David Schuller

EXCLUSIVE | MIKELSON 59/63 LRSF



Compare Hull No. 1 (above), which lacks a flying bridge, with *El Jefe* (left). The two boats hardly look like the same model.

MIKELSON 59/63 LRSF

SPECIFICATIONS |

Length overall: 64'7"

Beam: 18'0"

Draft: 5'6"

Weight (dry): 85,000 lbs. (half load)

Fuel capacity: 2,200 gal.

(w/ opt. 190-gal. cockpit tank)

Water capacity: 310 gal. >>>

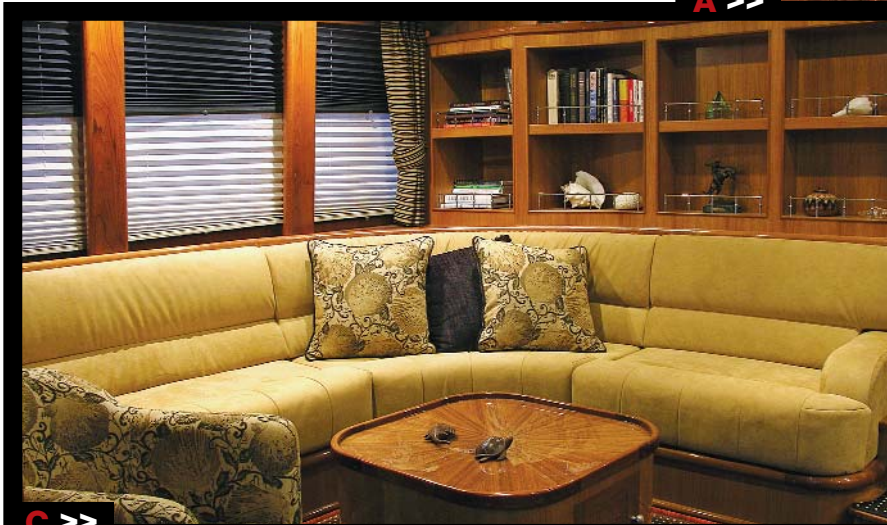
If there's one rule of boatbuilding that's been proven time and again, it's stick with what you know. Even if you really do have the best designers and engineers in the world, don't try to build fishing boats if your forte is aft-cabin cruisers.

Based on that premise, the guys from Mikelson must have rocks in their heads. Over the past 23 years they've created a tidy little franchise building a line of roomy, efficient, soft-riding, West-Coast-style sportfishermen. So why has this San Diego-based duo introduced a long-range cruiser called the *Nomad*? Why not leave that to builders like Nordhavn, up the road in Dana Point?

Well, the first thing I learned when I stepped into the Mikelson offices on San Diego's Shelter Island is that the Nomad isn't your typical long-range cruiser. That is to say, she's not a displacement-style trawler. Actually, I'm not sure what to call her—she's a hard boat to categorize. If you run her judiciously, she can give you great range—better than 4,000 miles—and her round bilges make her easy to power and should give her good seakeeping. But the unusual hull form is about more than just soft chines. Largely the brainchild of Mikelson president Dick Peterson and executed by naval architect Tom Fexas, it allows for considerably more than pure displacement speeds while maintaining good efficiency. At a trawlerish 10.1 mph, our test boat, with full fuel and water, a lot of gear, and a dirty bottom, burned 4.6 gph, for an impressive 2.2 mpg. But at an untrawlerish 11.6 mph, she burned only 9.6 gph for 1.20 mpg. Not bad for a twin-engine, 85,000-pounder (half load). The best part is if you need to get somewhere in a hurry, the Nomad's twin 660-hp Cummins QSM1s can get you there at almost 20 mph, although efficiency drops to 0.31 mpg.

As to seakeeping, I can't comment, since the Pacific was dead

flat on test day. I can only refer you to anecdotal evidence from Nomad owners like Mike Shannon, owner of *El Jefe*, our test boat. He's already logged more than 550 hours aboard her on trips from San Diego to as far as Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, and he raves about the boat's handling in all conditions. Some of that performance is probably due to full foresections that gently





shoulder water out of the way, some to those round bilges and some to the relatively flat aft sections that provide enough lift to allow the boat to efficiently exceed theoretical hull speed. Short spray rails forward make sure the Portuguese bridge stays dry, while all the way aft and just below the waterline, four-foot-long “bilge keels,” a fixture that’s found on many commercial fishing

vessels, are designed to damp roll motion.

Mikelson calls the Nomad an LRSF, for long-range sport-fisher, but that’s not an entirely accurate nomenclature either. Oh, she’s definitely equipped to fish. In her standard 59-foot form, an eight-foot-long cockpit combines with an 18-foot beam to create a real angler’s playpen—and that’s not including the lanai deck. Standard angling equipment includes two huge wells for bait or fish in the 2’6”-deep swim platform, of all places (where it’s a snap to boat fish into them), an in-transom bait-well, a bait-prep center with two cabinets and 12 drawers, and a pair of rocket launchers on the cockpit overhang that are hinged for easy access. If you like to fish with a crowd, the Nomad is also available in a 63-foot version, with all that extra LOA going to the cockpit.

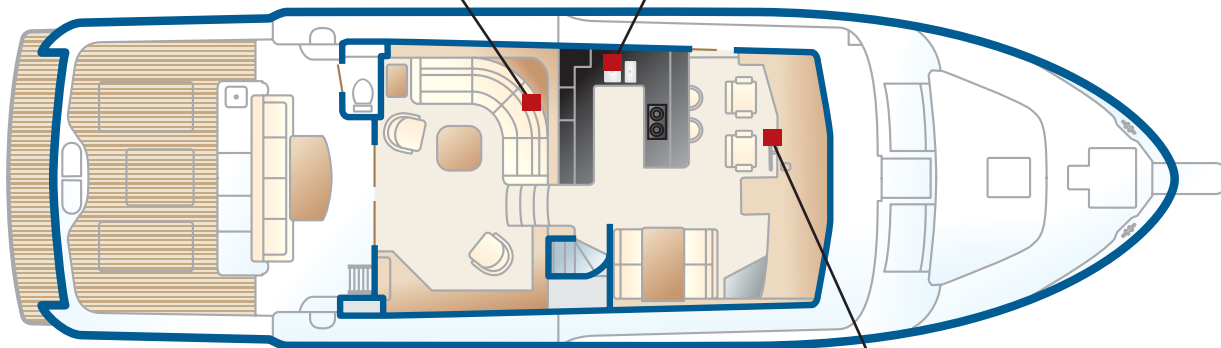
But Peterson says only a minority of Nomad owners are hardcore anglers. Just as many, if not more, are divers, one reportedly telling him that this is the best dive boat he’s ever been on. The biggest group is comprised of cruisers who like to fish, dive, and just hang out. And everyone seems to have one thing in common: They couldn’t find what they wanted in a production



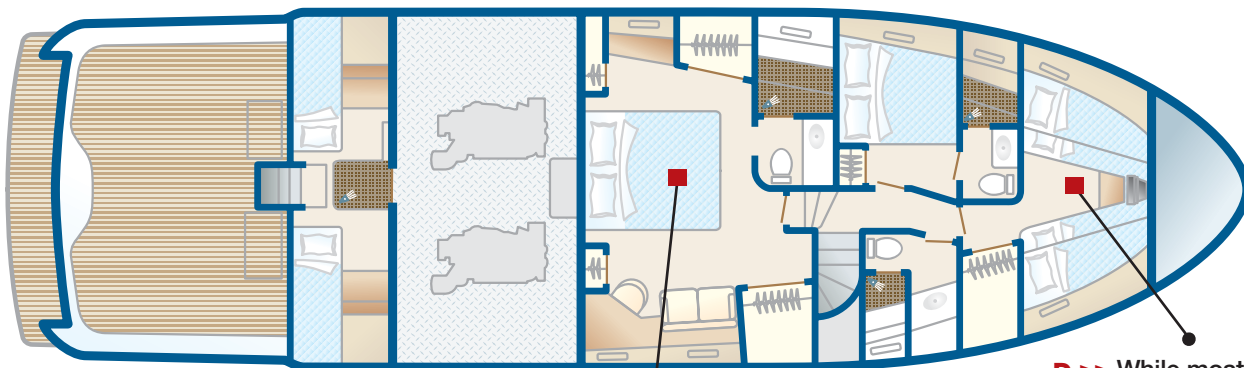
B >>

C >> *El Jefe's* has a two-level bookcase on her forward bulkhead, below the galley pass-through.

A >> *El Jefe's* galley has two Sub-Zero refrigerator and two freezer drawers, allowing for a pass-through to the saloon.



B >> The elevated pilothouse provides great sightlines and lots of headroom below.



E & F >> The full-beam midship master easily accommodates a queen-size berth and a large desk.

D >> While most Nomads have a king-size V-berth, our test boat featured four sleeping spaces.



EXCLUSIVE | MIKELSON 59/63 LRSF

OUR NUMBERS >>>

RPM	MPH (KNOTS)	GPH	MPG (NM/PG)	SM RANGE	NM RANGE	DECIBELS	TRIM (DEGREES)
1000	10.1 (8.8)	4.6	2.20 (1.91)	4,347	3,780	67	0.25
1250	11.6 (10.0)	9.6	1.20 (1.05)	2,382	2,071	72	0.50
1500	13.3 (11.6)	16.2	0.82 (0.71)	1,626	1,414	77	0.75
1750	14.3 (12.4)	23.8	0.60 (0.52)	1,190	1,034	75	2.00
2000	16.9 (14.7)	42.8	0.39 (0.34)	782	680	74	2.75
2225	19.9 (17.3)	64.2	0.31 (0.27)	614	534	77	3.00

CONDITIONS: temperature: 80°; humidity: 70%; wind: 5 mph; seas: 1' or less; load: 2,000 gal. fuel, 300 gal. water, 6 persons, 1,000 lbs. gear. Speeds are two-way averages measured w/ Stalker radar gun. GPH taken from Cummins electronic display. Range: 90% of advertised fuel capacity. Decibels measured on A scale. 65 dB is the level of normal conversation.

STANDARD EQUIPMENT:

16-kW NorPro genset; duplex Racor fuel-water separators; 4/8-D marine batteries in vented boxes; 2,500-watt inverter/charger; Hart Tank Tender; copper plumbing; 4/12-volt Jabsco MSDs; Sealand Tankwatch holding-tank

gauge; Stidd helm seat; interior decor allowance; teak or cherry bulkheads; alarm panel w/ high-water and fire alarms; Kenwood AM/FM stereo/CD player; 27" Panasonic LCD TV w/ DVD player; Cruisair A/C; custom-fitted mattresses; teak-and-holly soles; teak

decking over FRP; 2/five-rod rocket launchers; dual-tank transom baitwell; Muir 2500 windlass
TEST ENGINES: 2/660-hp Cummins QSM-11 diesel inboards
TRANSMISSIONS/RATIO: Twin Disc/2.48:1
PROPS: 34x36 5-blade nibral

STEERING: Hynautic hydraulic
CONTROLS: Twin Disc electronic
OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT ON TEST BOAT: flying bridge; watermaker; electronics; additional Stidd chairs
PRICE AS TESTED: \$2,080,000



El Jefe's overhead rod racks are hinged to keep them out of the way but readily at hand.

port side of the lanai, a Mikelson trademark.) And he reconfigured the galley so that it includes an eating bar and Sub-Zero refrigerator and freezer drawers that allow for a pass-through, aft into the saloon.

But his biggest change was adding a flying bridge, which completely changes the appearance—and even the feel—of the Nomad.

boat. They wanted a boat that could be tailored to their specific needs, and customizing boats is Mikelson's forte.

The basic Nomad has a saloon off the lanai that's sufficiently elevated to provide 6'2" headroom in the superbly laid-out engine room beneath; it's accessed from the cockpit by way of crew's quarters. There's a pilothouse-galley-dinette area a few steps up and a full-beam master and two guest staterooms forward on the lower level. But that's just a starting point. If you compare *El Jefe* (Hull No. 5) with Hull No. 1, Peterson's old boat, they're hardly alike. Shannon enlarged the lanai settee and table and eliminated the stairway from the saloon to the midship master, relying on a single companionway that leads from the pilothouse down to all three staterooms. For this he gave up the standard full-beam master head. He added a third head to the port-side guest stateroom by shortening the V-berth. (Actually, there's a fourth head: a compartment on the

To listen to Shannon and Peterson explain why this boat should or should not have a flying bridge, respectively, is to understand why the Nomad has proven so popular: One boat can't make everyone happy.

In any case, owners have configured the top deck in a variety of ways, including a semienclosed bridge and an open area with a control station and an observation deck. And while all boats have a boat deck that can carry up to a 16-footer, nearly everyone has sliced and diced it to serve their particular needs.

Perhaps most remarkable is how delighted Shannon is with his boat—after all those miles he says he wouldn't change a thing. And this from a guy who's a perfectionist, making his own set of CAD drawings—including exhaustively researched specs for the dinette table based on visits to untold numbers of diners—and traveling to the shipyard in Taiwan three times. He says Mikelson was a pleasure to deal with, and while Peterson admits (and probably gives thanks) that most owners don't get quite as involved as Shannon, he avers that every one has made changes to the original concept and that no two Nomads are alike.

So maybe Peterson and vice president Pat Sullivan don't have rocks in their heads. Maybe they are sticking with what they know. They've always offered the opportunity to customize their boats, and their boats have always been known for their efficiency and soft ride. And besides, they're sold out on the Nomad for 18 months. I guess they must be doing something right. ⚙️

Mikelson Yachts ☎️ (619) 222-5007.

www.mikelsonyachts.com.

SPOTLIGHT ON | An Unusual Hullform

While each Nomad is different from her sisterships, all share the same running bottom, which allows the boat to achieve good slow-speed efficiency and a decent turn of speed (nearly 20 mph). As you can see here, the hull has full foresections for improved displacement-speed efficiency and a fair amount of flair and spray knockers (not visible) forward to keep things dry up top. A fairly deep but shortened keel aids in tracking, and small propeller pockets reduce draft and shaft angle.

But perhaps the most unusual feature are the aft "bilge keels," a feature often

used on commercial trawlers to damp roll at slower speeds. The keels are molded in and relatively shallow—I'd guess no more than a foot deep. Do they work? Peterson says definitely. *El Jefe's* owner says he's not sure. —R.T.





With an accessible, Flat Foredeck and Portuguese bridge like this, no wonder cruisers love the Nomad.

GEAR ONBOARD

WEST COAST FISHING FEATURES >>

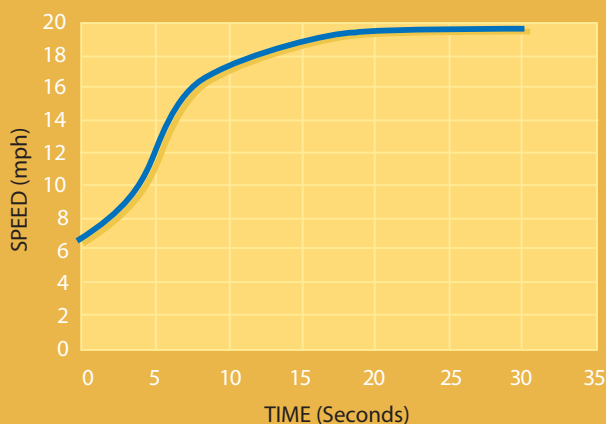
Mention sportfishing boats, and people think East Coast. But some fine fishing machines are built on the West Coast as well, which tend to be different because big fish are far away, like off the southern tip of Baja and beyond. So speed is not as important as range and comfort.

Being at the other end of the continent gives a designer the chance to approach things differently. The Nomad has two features East Coast anglers have yet to adopt but are both functional and innovative. One is the cockpit head compartment (above). In the forward port corner of the lanai deck, it includes an MSD, telephone-style shower, and small sink. Why does anyone need a toilet when the whole ocean lies just beyond the gunwale, or a shower when there's already one in the cockpit? Well, with more women and young people fishing these days, a little privacy isn't a bad thing.

The other feature, below right, is the bait/fish wells in, of all places, the swim platform. On most boats they're in the cockpit, but since the Mikelson's swim platform is an extension of the running bottom (which also increases theoretical hull speed), there's plenty of room to accommodate them. They're perfect for live bait when fishing from the platform; as fishboxes they eliminate jerking the catch over the gunwales, which so often ends in a broken line. —R.T.



MIKELSON 59/63 LRSF



<< Despite her bluewater hull form, the Nomad hit her top speed in just 20 seconds. Bottom left: the manual bilge pump is sturdily mounted deep in the bilge, not terribly accessible when taking on water. Center: The engine-room headroom of 6'4" is remarkable for a 63-footer with a moderate profile.

* Acceleration based on average of 4 reciprocal runs.

