



by Deborah Bach

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Capt. Vincent Pica's 25-foot, 2006 Parker 2520 XL at a dock in Montauk on Long Island, New York.

On Three Sheets Northwest we typically only profile boats owned by boaters in, well, the Northwest, since that's the area we cover. But we're making an exception this time to highlight the 25-foot, 2006 Parker 2520 XL owned by New York resident Capt. Vincent Pica.

Pica's boat, which is homeported in Westhampton Beach, New York, is variously named MaRuNa when it's not under U.S. Coast Guard orders and #251384 when it is.

Beyond being a regular Three Sheets Northwest contributor, Pica is chief of staff for the First District, Southern Region, United States Coast Guard Auxiliary — volunteering his boat, his time and his expertise to help keep fellow boaters safe. Capt. Vin, for all you and your fellow auxiliarians do, we salute you.

Tell us about your boat's name.

MaRuNa is after Mariel, Rudi and Natalie, our children. When under orders, her ID converts to 251384, which in USCG coding means she is 25 feet long, has a type-1 engine (outboard) and her sequence# is 384. She is usually hailed by USCG watchstanders as "AUX 384" or just "384."

Have you owned other boats before this one?

Yes. I have owned a 46-foot Ocean yacht, whose keel was laid in 1984, and I sold her in 2007. She was called *SeaPipSea*, a play on words on my wife's nickname — Pipsey.

I also owned a 25-foot Chris-Craft launch which was sunk by another boat that had broken off its mooring during a four-day nor'easter in October 2005. My boat, also called *MaRuNa*, was in the same mooring field and a large wave washed the at-loose boat on top of her. I replaced her with the 2006 Parker. I also owned and sold a 2005 46-foot Leopard catamaran, which I sold in 2010 and replaced with a 38-foot Leopard cat. These boats were/are chartered out in the Caribbean.



Pica and his crew ferrying divers to Moriches Reef, where a plaque was placed on the reef to commemorate a USCG Auxiliarist who passed away.

Tell us the story of how you found your boat and what makes it special to you.

When *MaRuNa-I* was sunk, I walked around for two days like I had lost a kid. Then I woke up. Hey, I have insurance. I was then and still am a member of U.S. Coast Guard Forces as an Auxiliarist. I determined to replace *MaRuNa-I* with a boat better served for running maritime observation missions for the Coast Guard — and a pilothouse boat is perfect because it lets us patrol over virtually the entire weather spectrum of the Northeast U.S.

She is well known now “out east” by the many private boaters and commercial fishermen, some of whom she has been involved in assisting from danger. “Hailing ’384” is often heard on Channel 16 as boaters, salvors and USCG forces seek to get her involved in some assistance.

What’s the history of your boat?

As you can tell from the photos, ’384 is an active vessel. Since going into service in May 2006 as an operational facility within U.S. Coast Guard boat forces, she has logged more than 700 hours under her keel while observing, assisting and saving boaters from the sea, the sea from boaters and the U.S. from all comers. Her crew has ranged from trainees to active-duty captains and USCG Auxiliary commodores, including the national commodore.

She is sea-kindly due to three factors — she is a bit beamier than the average 25-footer at 9’6”; she has her engine outboard of the transom on the swim platform itself (rather than from the transom via a cut-out) which ends up acting as a large trim tab; and third, her well-trained crew of auxiliarists that have been trained to USCG active-duty standards. She has gone to sea with two crew and with eight — and still handles herself in the trying waters of the Northeast region.

What do you like best about your boat?

She brings her crew back, dry. The pilothouse not only creates a dry, warm environment but it also acts as a breakwater for green water coming over the bow and then running down gunnals and out, rather than into the cockpit.



Pica, right, teaches crew members including his son Rudi, far left, the proper way to prepare a line before throwing it to someone in the water,

What do you know now about your boat that you wish you'd known when you bought it? Would that have changed your mind?

I would buy this boat again.

What's your favorite story involving your boat?

A few months ago we were scheduled to conduct a "clean-up" patrol of about 25 outstanding private-aids-to-navigation (PATONs) that had not yet been reviewed for station-keeping and characteristics in conformance with the "Light List," a USCG publication with information on all of the buoys, markers, ranges, etc. that have lights — and their characteristics.

We had two pretty senior crewmen aboard — the just-retired national commodore of the Coast Guard Auxiliary and the district captain for all Coast Guard activities on Long Island, New York. It was a beautiful day, save for the 25-knot winds blowing out of the west. In the pre-underway briefing, I told the crew that we'd have a Nantucket sleigh ride on the outbound leg (all the PATONs were to the east of us) and a tough slog home. I was willing to call the mission in favor of the crew's comfort or concerns. The consensus was to get underway and see how it goes.

There are two pinch-points in the patrol area — between Robbins Island and the Southampton shores in the Great Peconic Bay and then between Noyack Point, Cedar Beach Point and Shelter Island itself. Six-

foot standing waves can be found there regularly as the tidal forces from the Peconics, Shinnecock and Gardner bays all collide at different times and at different rates. So, off we went, and with a steady hand at the helm, she performed as advertised. Even the commodore said, “She’s sea-kindly.”



Pica and a fellow auxiliarist awaiting additional crew.

Describe the most challenging situation you’ve experienced on your boat and how it performed.

See above!

Tell us a little about your boating background.

Blue- and brown-water navigator/tactician in a sailboat racing crew out of Pt. Washington, NY, and Newport, RI, for eight seasons in the '80s/'90s. On the water all my life — creeks, bays, rivers, sounds and oceans. Added powerboating to my portfolio in mid-'90s. Joined USCG Auxiliary in response to 9/11/01. Certified as crewman and then coxswain shortly after joining. Have logged more than 1,000 hours at the helm and been responsible for USCG Auxiliary patrol missions since.

Where do you plan to take your boat? Do you have a dream destination?

One day, we'll do the Great Loop with her...

If someone gave you \$10,000 that you could only spend on your boat, what would you do with it and why?

She is already well-found so I am not sure what I'd add — two VHF radios, radar, chartplotter, AIS, FLIR on the electronics side. Propane space heater for comfort. Self-bailing deck. What else can you ask for?