



REVISITING THE RENDEZVOUS

Endeavour Catamarans Shows How It's Done
By Judy Massman Koetitz

RENDEZVOUS IS A FRENCH WORD MEANING "MEETING PLACE." In boat speak it's a great excuse for boat owners and cruising enthusiasts to get together, share destinations, tell stories, and just plain have fun.





GENE KOEITZ

The full range of Endeavour powercats participated in the event, from the newest 48-footer to the popular 38-footer.

Florida-based Endeavour Catamarans seems to have rendezvous hosting down to a science. This is the company's third annual "after-the-Miami-boat-show" outing, and they plan to stage the event every year. The Keys were chosen for the 2007 rendezvous, and my husband, Gene, and I caught up with the participants in Islamorada, just after they had arrived.

Right off the bat, we had a chance to talk with company principal Rob Vincent and his cousin Eric Mac, who were jointly leading the Endeavour rendezvous. Bob and Alice Vincent, Rob's parents and the owners/founders of the company, always make a point to be a part of these gatherings. In fact, Alice is credited as the "idea person" who started the Endeavour rendezvous, and she still does much of the planning. Unfortunately, a family illness had called them away.

Seven Endeavour Trawlercats were taking part. Every model was represented, from the spacious new 48 to the very compact and comfy 38. Several more boats were expected to join up for the final leg of the cruise, down to Bahia Honda State Park, just south of Marathon.

Gene and I were invited to take a tour of the boats and had a chance to chat with their owners. We found out several interesting things. It is a diversified group, ranging from full-time cruisers to those who do just a few trips each year.

To a person, not only are they passionate about their own boats, but they also have very high regard for Bob Vincent and the yard crew at Endeavour, most of whom have been with the company from the beginning.

For example, Bill and Mary Beth Jones were able to customize their 38-footer, *Last Resort*, to precisely fit their particular lifestyle, and they couldn't say enough nice things about the men who built her. We were also impressed that

the owners of the new 48-footer *Lady Belle*, George and Suely, knew so much about powercats in general. That this boat is their second Endeavour represents high praise for the Vincent family and the way they run their company.

Madelyn and Dan Hajjar don't live aboard their powercat *Dream Away*, but she is their extended vacation home, and after taking part in last year's Endeavour rendezvous, they made sure that their cruising plans included the 2008 event.

Over a dinner get-together, we queried Eric about what works—and doesn't work—in organizing a successful owner rendezvous. Here are the recommendations we came away with:

- Put someone with good organizational skills in charge, and make sure everyone involved knows who that "go-to" person is.

- Make the schedule detailed but flexible. Remember, we are talking about boats and cruising folks here.

- Always have a Plan B or even C in case weather or other unforeseen factors become a problem.

- Make sure the "coconut telegraph" works. Everyone should be kept informed of the organizer's plan for the day—and any last-minute changes in that plan.

- If the rendezvous involves the participants and their boats moving from place to place, don't plan to go too far too fast (three hours of cruising time each day is about right).

- It seems obvious, but leave plenty of time for socializing. Group get-togethers are important: Coffee in the morning, happy hours in the afternoon, meals together, and even group sightseeing events are the glue that make the memories stick. They are a time when cruisers can meet like-minded boat owners and reconnect with old friends.

Endeavour does not have an owners' association. The company stays in contact with its customers through its website. The rendezvous represents a great opportunity for the Vincents and other personnel to "meet and greet" both veteran Endeavour owners and new ones.

Everyone at the event agreed that the reason they participate is to be with others who are "in the same boat" (pun intended). The men usually talk about how things work (or don't) and gather ideas on how to make them work better. Members of the distaff side often trade galley secrets and simply have a chance to bond with other women who truly enjoy cruising under power.

As more and more of us take up the boating lifestyle, the rendezvous will play an important part in the growth of cruising, and it appears that the folks at Endeavour Catamarans are already ahead of the game.