



Tom & Susan Dabney with Katie from Marinalife.

Cruising the Hudson River

BY TOM DABNEY, MARINALIFE MEMBER SINCE 2008, AS TOLD TO KATIE O'CONNELL.

Marinalife member Tom Dabney and his wife, Susan, were lured to New York's Hudson River by its unspoiled scenery and charming small towns. For the summer of 2008, Marinalife helped them chart a week-long itinerary along the historic waterway that would let them take in the best the area has to offer.

LEG 1: NEW YORK CITY TO CROTON-ON-HUDSON (36 NM)

In the middle of June last year, Tom steered his 45-foot Ocean Alexander Boundless under the Verrazano Bridge into New York Harbor. He was a long way from his homeport of Sarasota, Florida, and his arrival in New York meant that he'd completed the first part of his two-year Great Loop cruise, which he'd begun the previous month. "We could see the Statue of Liberty straight ahead," Tom remembers. "The skyscrapers of Manhattan were in the distance and Brooklyn was immediately to our right. There were ocean-going ships of all shapes and sizes—ferries, commercial tugs, fishing boats, and recreational craft. To see these vessels coming and going at the same time, up the river, down the river, and across the river, was an amazing sight."

After several days enjoying the exciting chaos of New York City, Tom and Susan set sail on their Hudson River jaunt. Heading north, they cruised by the Palisades—a series of stunning cliffs that stretch from New Jersey into New York—and beneath the Tappan Zee bridge. The leg ended at Half Moon Bay Marina, a 173-slip deep-water facility adjacent to tranquil Croton Point Park (home to one of the best, sandiest beaches on the river).

LEG 2: CROTON-ON-HUDSON TO STONY POINT (24 NM)

From Croton-on-Hudson Tom pointed Boundless toward Stony Point, the site of a Revolutionary War battle and now a quaint hamlet on the west bank of the river. "After tying up at Stony Point Bay Marina," Tom said, "Dave the dockmaster loaned us a car to pick up groceries. The spot was very relaxing and the staff were friendly."

LEG 3: STONY POINT TO NEWBURGH (19 NM)

Rested and revived, Tom and Susan headed northward to Newburgh. Along the way, Boundless glided by Bear Mountain State Park, so-named for a mountain that has a profile resembling a reclining bear, and the United States Military Academy at West Point, the oldest of the U. S.'s five service academies, which sits on a scenic spot high above the Hudson. A few miles north they passed Pollepel Island, known for its ruins of a European-style castle built in the 19th century by a nostalgic Scotsman.

In Newburgh, Tom and Susan docked at Front Street Marina, a 142-slip property in the middle of the town's waterfront district. "The area is filled with restaurants and fun places to hang out," says Tom. "We walked up the hill to the historic section and took pictures of some really neat old homes and churches, including Ebenezer Baptist Church, which was built at the beginning of the last century."

LEG 4: NEWBURGH TO KINGSTON (29 NM)

The next stop was Kingston, which turned out to be one of the highlights of the trip. The Kingston Municipal Dock, where Tom and Susan tied up, is in the heart of town. As luck would have it, their June 26 arrival coincided with the

free, three-day Kingston International Jazz Festival, which would kick off along the riverfront the next day. "The marina staff were great," Tom recalls, "and there were nice shops and boutiques around the nearby square. Lots of folks had come in early for the jazz festival, so the town was in a festive mood. We had an outdoor-patio table reserved for 8 p.m. at the Mariner's Harbor Seafood Restaurant, known for its fresh seafood and raw bar, and only about 50 feet from our dock. They had a live band playing, and there were even some Hollywood stars in the place who got up to sing with the band. All the locals we met during our stay in Kingston were friendly. We had a great time."



Hudson River - Rondout Lighthouse, Kingston, NY



Hudson River – Athens Lighthouse near Athens, NY

LEG 5: KINGSTON TO CATSKILL (22 NM)

Next Boundless headed to Catskill, past some of the Hudson River Valley's most picturesque towns. The Catskill Marina, where Tom and Susan docked, has a leafy, parklike setting on the Catskill Creek. The center of the bustling village is an easy two-block stroll away, and has well-preserved Victorian buildings and a Main Street U.S.A. vibe.

LEG 6: CATSKILL TO CASTLETON (24 NM)

To wrap up this part of his Great Loop cruise, Tom steered Boundless toward Castleton—a few miles south of Albany—where he and Susan would reconnect with friends who live nearby. Enroute they caught a glimpse of the Hudson-Athens



Municipal Marina & Downtown Kingston, NY



The Verrazano Bridge

lighthouse, a stately 1874 beacon that's a commonly used point of navigation for river cruisers. After stopping for lunch at the waterfront Yanni's III restaurant in Athens, they tied up at the Castleton Boat Club, a member-owned and–operated facility that's open to transients.

AND BEYOND...

After Castleton, Tom steered Boundless through Albany to Waterford and then onto the Erie Canal, rather than heading north toward the Champlain Canal. After going through the Erie Canal and Oswego Waterway, Boundless crossed Lake Ontario and spent the rest of the summer exploring the popular Thousand Islands area at the mouth of the St. Lawrence River. He also completed the “Little Loop,” which consists of the St. Lawrence Seaway, the Ottawa River, and the Rideau Canal.

“The first half of the Great Loop was incredible!” Tom says. “I can't imagine doing this trip without Marinalife. They gave us great advice, picked the best marinas in each town and always performed as professionals.”

Tom's Ocean Alexander spent the winter securely tucked in a heated storage facility in the Alexandria Bay area of the Thousand Islands. When the weather warms up, Tom plans to continue his second half of his Great Loop adventure, which will include the Trent Severn Waterway, Georgian Bay, and Lake Michigan. After Labor Day he'll head south from Chicago. ❖