

This Photo: At anchor in the northeastern Abacos. **Right:** Once schoolwork is done, out come the Legos! **Bottom Right:** Picking up trash on the beaches is a daily after-school routine.



Family Ties

HOMESCHOOLING
CHILDREN AT SEA,
AND NOT LOOKING BACK





The demographics and fiscal realities of the power-cruising life are no secret.

Most people who cruise even part-time aboard their boats are doing it in the later years of life, waiting until they have the time and means to make the lifestyle possible. But not everyone follows this script, and one exception is the family onboard *Cortado*.

Born and raised in Indiana, far from the smell of salt air, Lynne Rey will freely tell you that living aboard a boat was far from a dream of hers. So how does this artist and mother find herself schooling two children and managing family life aboard a classic power cruiser?

Tony Rey comes to this boating life a little more naturally, having grown up on Long Island Sound. Tony had an early start racing sailboats and going on summer cruises aboard his family's boat. Tony took that love of sailing into a career and today races sailboats professionally. The life of a professional sailor requires considerable travel. Over the years, Lynne and their oldest daughter, Sydney, traveled with Tony during some of his races, and Lynne home-schooled Sydney during those trips. When their youngest two children, Sophia and Oliver, were 10 and 8, Tony and Lynne thought it would be good to expose them to a broader world, teaching them in what would become known as "adventure school."

Racing sailboats didn't give Tony the opportunity to make boating a family experience, so they decided to buy a boat and live

part of each year on board. The opportunity would give Lynne, Sophia, and Oliver a small taste of Tony's life at sea, and provide learning opportunities that couldn't be matched in any classroom.

With Lynne's nervousness of the open water and the restricted living space of medium-size sailboats, it didn't take long to realize a comfortably sized power cruiser would be more suitable for their purposes. Tony also added: "I go 7 knots in my day job, so I wanted a bit more speed and freedom. I wanted to share all aspects of the water with my family, including safety, fishing, navigating, co-existing in a small space, maintenance, and cleaning. It has been much easier to accomplish all this without heeling over at 25 degrees!"

Around the harbor of their home in Newport, Rhode Island, Tony and Lynne were introduced to every type of boat imaginable. They found themselves drawn to the classic, aesthetic-forward styles, as they wanted a boat that was both functional and attractive. Classic Huckins cruisers quickly rose to the top of their list, and their search eventually took them to Florida to see a 1973 Huckins Sedan 40. A family with two children close in age to theirs had restored it to Bristol condition.

Not only had it been restored, but it had been modified to suit a young family of four. The galley had been moved up to the saloon level, which Lynne liked better than boats she had seen



with the galley down. Two generously sized bunks were added where the galley had once been. The saloon and galley open up to a covered area leading to the cockpit. This boat also had a flying bridge covered by a Bimini. The elevated helm platform would give them better judgement of water depth in the shallow tropics, not to mention a great place for an out-of-the-way afternoon nap. Additional sleeping quarters, a bright, airy galley, and plenty of covered spaces made this boat a

perfect liveaboard. The previous owner had even repowered her with twin Cummins diesel engines. Tony and Lynne added a complete suite of modern electronics.

It's important to note, the Reys are not independently wealthy. They both work hard, trying to live within their means, and buying a boat was always going to be a sacrifice—a sacrifice that they felt would pay dividends.

THE ADVENTURE BEGINS

The Reys began their new life aboard *Cortado*—which got its name from their favorite Spanish coffee drink—in November 2014. Over that first winter they cruised from Jacksonville to Key West, Florida, and back, exploring and learning the ways of their new lifestyle. The long-range plan is to live aboard during the winter months and return to their home in Newport for the summer. Realizing they really could do this, they planned to venture farther for the following winter school season, setting the Abacos as their destination.

They spent most of the winter between Miami and Key West, waiting for a weather window to cross to the Bahamas. That time finally came, and in late March, as a family and team working together, they crossed over the Gulf Stream between Florida and the Little Bahama Bank, dropping anchor at Great Sale Cay. Everyone agreed the effort and wait were worth it. The Reys then spent the months of

Top Left: Family outing on *Pipa* (dinghy) to snorkel and explore hard-to-reach beaches on Elbow Cay. **Above:** Sophia finds a quiet place to read. **Below Right:** Reading, paddling, exploring are daily pastimes on *Cortado*.



April and May 2016 exploring the Abacos archipelago.

LESSONS LEARNED

So much of the stated goal of their floating winter home is to expose Sophia and Oliver to different cultures and the inherent education that comes along with adventure. Lynne said, “We have learned there are many types of home-schooling families. We don’t seem to fit into most categories we have found, though. We are home schooling, just mostly not at home. We are not running from a failed system, we are not overtly religious. We just want to travel, learn more about the world, and educate our own curious children along the way, which is why we call it “Adventure School.” Lynne adds: “There are many uncertainties and obvious challenges. Travel and adventure schooling is not for everyone; it is not easy, and no, we are not on vacation! But for those who are able to make it work, the rewards are significant. It is the passion for life, travel, and our small family that keeps us going. We love being together—growing, learning, changing, and supporting each other.”

“Living on our boat has noticeably changed us. It is palpable; we can feel the change in our ways and attitudes. Our time in Florida and the Bahamas was a slow-burn balance of extreme beauty, quality family time, and nature. We found it necessary



to readjust our expectations in the areas of weather (most unpredictable), school time, and overall pace.

Lynne goes on: “We are embracing an unfamiliar path and willing to take the risk associated with that. In the spirit of adventure, we are allowing ourselves to be vulnerable, try new things, meet new people, go new places. And we are happy. Could this type of educational path work for more families? I say, emphatically—yes!”

For this school year, the Reys will repeat their schedule of the past two years. They will spend seven months living on board and cruising south Florida and the Bahamas on *Cortado*, and the remaining five they’ll return home to Newport.

TIME WON’T WAIT

Tony and Lynne remind me of the words of author and artist, Debbie Millman, who once wrote: “If you imagine less, less will be what you undoubtedly deserve. Do what you love, and don’t stop until you get what you love. Work as hard as you can, imagine immensities, don’t compromise, and don’t waste time. Start now. Not 20 years from now, not two weeks from now. Now!”



Top Left: Oliver with a visiting manatee in Hopetown Harbor. **Above:** “Recess” often involves jumping in the water. (Little Harbor, Abacos) **Below:** Joining local sports is a priority - playing soccer with new friends in the Bahamas.

VINTAGE HUCKINS

There aren’t many boat manufacturers with a richer past or brighter future than Huckins Yachts. They have built boats for a wider selection of uses over a longer period of time than many brands combined.

The term Sport Utility Vehicle hadn’t been coined when *Cortado* was built in 1973, but at the time you couldn’t have found a boat that more closely represented a marine SUV .

As a modified version of their popular Ortega model, this 40-foot Sedan was ready for any activity. The design extended the house structure to increase the living space but left enough open cockpit for fishing or lounging. All of these features are on a hull form proven to handle serious coastal conditions.

When hull number 414 was stamped into this boat’s transom, Huckins had long since proven they knew how to build a quality boat, and 43 years later, the Rey family can attest to that quality and timeless design.

