

## Yachting legend retires from the Pacific Northwest Cruising scene

June 27, 2018, Bellingham, Washington - and 74 year-old legend in the yachting community, is retiring.



Pemberton's iconic status comes from many things: 50 years of maritime experience with an accident free record, pushing boundaries including voyaging along the outer rim of Vancouver Island, exploring further north than Dutch Harbor, and never missing a guest pick up. It is this kind of infallible reputation that has helped continued to propel NW Explorations' reputation forward. And, perhaps one of his most famous initiatives was creating a way for boaters of all ages and abilities to explore the Pacific Northwest by flotilla.

Pemberton purchased the company (then called Grand Yachts Northwest) in 2004 and created the concept of offering charters to sail as a flotilla in "Mother Goose" style, to destinations like Glacier Bay, Ketchikan, and other coastal destinations. And although Pemberton passed the helm over to new owners Ross and Evelyn Tennant in October 2017, the company remains the Pacific Northwest's only full-service, premier yachting company leading adventuresome mariners through relatively untouched BC and Alaska coastline.

Pemberton describes the experience of witnessing huge calving glaciers creating cannon-like blasts when the whole face fell off an iceberg in Prince William Sound. The waves caused the boat to rock. "We couldn't believe we had just witnessed something so monumental it was the experience of a lifetime for all of us."

Voyages undertaken by NW Explorations range from Ketchikan to the Gulf of Alaska, San Juan Islands, Desolation Sound, Gulf Islands, Victoria and Pemberton's favorite trip: "Voyaging up along the outside of Vancouver Island. There are very few boats there and it's more remote, more adventuresome and very welcoming when we pull into small marinas," he says. "We've made friends over the years – marina owners, first nations villagers along the way, and it's always good to reconnect. It's all about the people."

In NW Explorations' early days, the lead boat, a 49-foot Grand Banks yacht called Deception, had less than 2,000 hours cruising time on it. Now there are 16,000 additional hours logged on the vessel. "My blood runs through that boat," laughs Pemberton.

Over the years, under Pemberton's passionate leadership, NW Explorations has grown by providing yacht brokerage, private charters, servicing and maintenance, as well as a variety of powerboat training courses, including women-only courses. An original team of six who started out with the company has expanded to 30 full-time employees and swells up to 50 for the busy summer months. Specializing in high-quality Grand Banks boats has honed the team's talent and expertise in maintaining NW Explorations' fleet to the highest standards.

Pemberton also explains how he has worked diligently to keep the company on course to its original 3-pillar philosophy: having respect for the individual (clients, employees, fellow mariners); maintaining the pursuit of excellence; and doing the right thing by obeying all laws and regulations. New owner, Tennant embodies those same characteristics and it's why Pemberton agreed to sell the company.

Now, with the Tennant's at the helm, Pemberton has more occasion and time to ride his Harley, hit the gym and live life as he always has: with his vision turned toward the horizon.

"I am a fan of the Great Wizard Gandolph," says Pemberton. "He had a great piece of advice: 'The only thing we have to do in life is decide what to do with the time we're given.' Those who choose to cruise with us – we have a special obligation to make their time worthwhile. I want them to say at the end of it: I chose well."