

JUST YOUR IMAGINATION

By Betsy Clayton

Outdoor-loving sidekick nudges family into boating lifestyle.



Children and their imaginary friends get blamed for lots of things, but JoAnne Pastel's son, William, and his made-up buddy, Bur Bur, are different. They get credit for nudging William's family toward the boating lifestyle aboard a Sea Ray 320 Sundancer.

Bur Bur, in fact, has gone from imaginary to being a character in Pastel's multicultural children's book series, "Bur Bur & Friends." An illustration of the outdoorsy kid is displayed on the stern of the boat. Pastel and her husband, Bill Dunlap, share on Lake Minnetonka.

"People always ask about our boat name, and little kids like to see the pic-

ture on the back," said Pastel of suburban Minneapolis. "My son loves waving at people when other boats go by. This is something we can enjoy as a family."

The 320's sleek lines and black hull initially drew Pastel to the model at the MarineMax Wayzata location, only a 15-minute drive from the Pastel-Dunlap home. The spacious cabin, roomy galley and comfortable seating are pluses Pastel counts on when her family invites others aboard.

"We love the layout of the downstairs — it's friendly, especially for having children around," Pastel said.

The multiple flatscreen TVs mean multiple DVDs can play at the same time

when kids of different ages are with them, and the satellite radio is great for the grownups to enjoy topsides, she said. Another bonus: having more than one refrigerator. "My son looks for snacks when we come aboard."

MarineMax sales team member Mike Andersen said the 320 appeals to families such as the Pastel-Dunlaps because of the boat's large feel and its amenities, coupled with the ease of driving and docking it. "You just pull the lines and go — it's at your disposal," he said.

It's also perfect for extending a boating day. With the comfortable upper deck, "Mom and Dad can enjoy the evenings with the kids crashed out in



Owners: JoAnne Pastel & Bill Dunlap
Homeport: Wayzata, Minnesota
Boat: Sea Ray 320 Sundancer
Name: *Bur Bur*

OWNER PROFILES



egrets, eagles, ducks and geese are common sightings, plus the occasional deer and jumping fish.

It's easy to watch for wildlife from the helm because the boat is so easy to drive. Andersen gave Pastel and Dunlap a half-dozen hands-on training sessions after the couple bought the boat in 2007. They had owned other boats, but none as large or as luxurious.

"It's got a very smooth ride," Dunlap said. "It's been trouble-free, too, and the customer service has been good."

Pastel, who didn't grow up boating like her husband did, says she has found the boat easy to handle as well.

"She's a go-getter," Andersen said. "She picked it up quickly."

Maybe it was the spirit of Bur Bur that helped.

The whole idea behind creating the "Bur Bur & Friends" series, which Pastel co-authored with friend Kakie Fitzsimmons who also has a bi-racial child, was to intro-



the cabin with the TV," Andersen said.

"We go after work; we go on weekends," said Pastel, who says she plans to join one of the MarineMax Getaways! next boating season, once her baby daughter, Jacqueline, is ready for her first voyage.

Lake Minnetonka's connecting coves and bays represent the best of boating. "You can go on and on," Pastel said. "You can stay out all day." Loons,

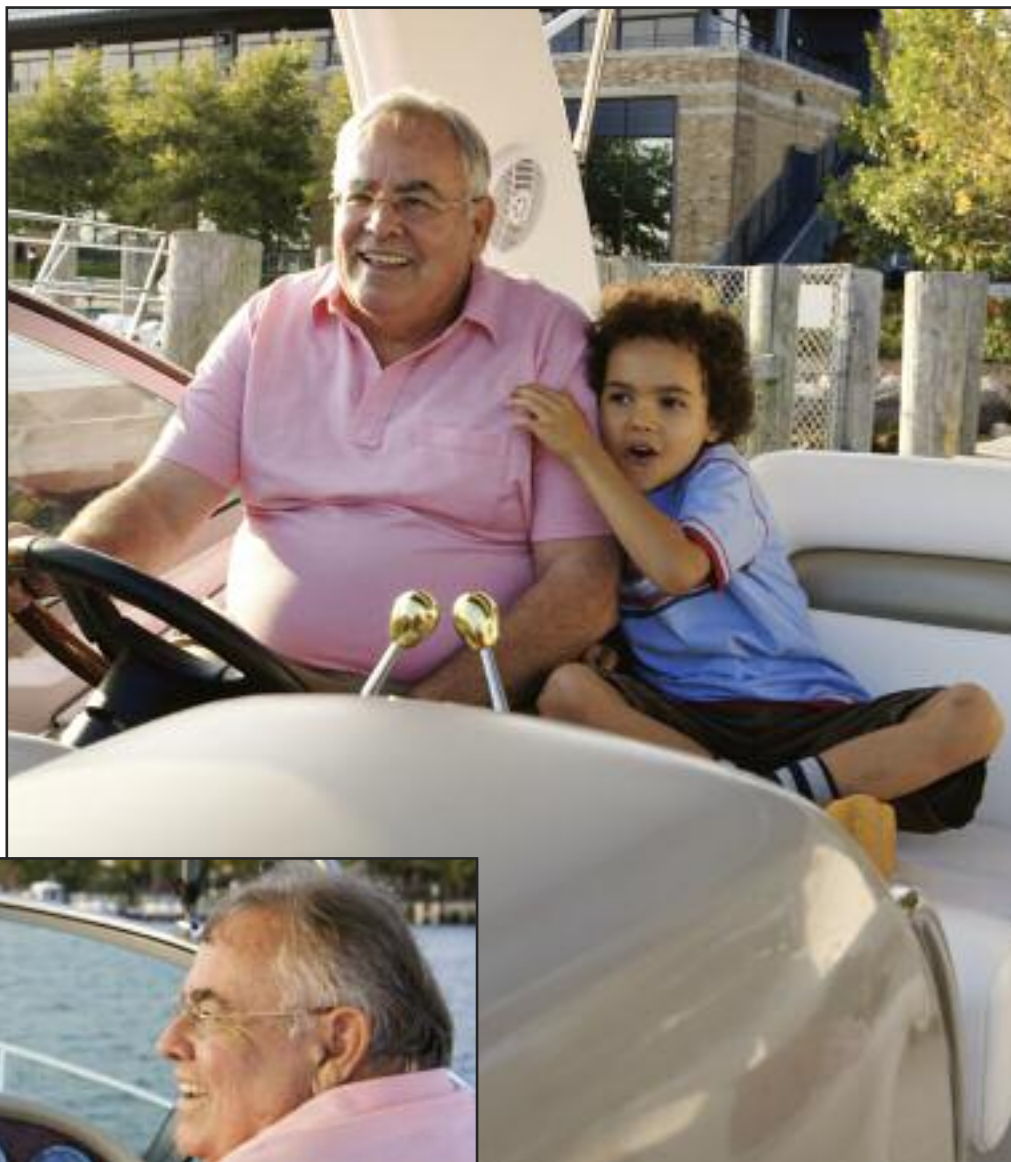
duce children from all walks of life to outdoors activities and sports. The series' first book — developed when William was 2 — is called "Bur Bur's Boating ABC's." In it, readers are invited to join Bur Bur and his parents for a boat ride. Kids learn boating basics, along with all the things they'll see in and on the water.

Feedback from parents and other boating families shows it's working, as the series has taken off. At the Pastel-Dunlap home, they know it's working. William, now age 5, is flourishing into a fine young boater aboard the 320 Sundancer.

No word yet on whether Jacqueline will come up with an imaginary friend that nudges the Pastel-Dunlap clan into a bigger Sea Ray.

"Next summer, she'll start going out," Pastel said. "Our boat is almost like a house ... it's like taking a vacation without leaving town. Whenever I go out, I come back more relaxed."

It's a novel concept for this book author. "We didn't grow up around the water; we learned to love boating later in life."



Inspired by Sea Ray owner JoAnne Pastel's boat name and story?

Get your kids outdoors with Bur Bur & Friends, by Pastel and Kakie Fitzsimmons.

Learn more at
www.burburandfriends.com