

# Fast, Fun



# & Fearless

Is the Hunt Harrier 29 the best  
cruising day boat ever?

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**ROOM FOR FUN.** *The Harrier's seating capacity (above) means you can bring a crowd. Entertain them with the innovative wet bar (below).*

I'll admit it; I'm a pushover for pretty boats. I'm particularly a pushover for pretty boats that come from good families, go fast, handle well and have enough, well, eye candy appeal to turn heads wherever you take them. Welcome to the new Hunt Harrier 29.

Peter Van Lancker, president of Hunt Yachts, took me through the boat at the dock when it was introduced at the Newport, Rhode Island, boat show this fall. It certainly got my attention then. A few weeks later when I drove it on Narragansett Bay off the Hunt factory in Portsmouth, Rhode Island, I didn't want to stop. During that trip I rode with Ray Hunt, the grandson of the company's legendary founder C. Raymond Hunt (one of the most acclaimed designers of all time), who is also the company's head of engineering. This was fun — really fun. It was a full New England autumn morning, with a good chill in the air, but we were protected by the wrap-around enclosure, which really didn't matter. What did matter was what was under our feet. And this Hunt hull, like every Hunt hull I have experienced, delivers. Ray carved turns at speed. I carved turns at speed. We smiled;

we had fun. Regardless of the windchill factor, this is what boating should be all about. Is driving a Porsche fun? Well, try the Hunt 29.

I'm no stranger to Hunt Yachts. In fact, in the past few years, I've driven a Hunt 33 from Palm Beach, Florida, up to the Chesapeake; another around Nantucket, Massachusetts, and Martha's Vineyard; and a Surfhunter 29, the cruising version of the current Harrier 29, for five days from the factory up to the outer islands of Maine and back (see our May issue). During these trips, I've



encountered almost every sea condition — from calm to awful — and I’ve never failed to be impressed by the boats’ handling. Last summer, running up Buzzards Bay, Massachusetts, and the New England coast in a stiff head sea, I was worried about myself and the other two guys on the Surfhunter 29. The boat, with its fine entry and classic Hunt deep-V hull, was solid as a rock and seemingly ready for more, long after we were ready to pack it in.

Hunt Yachts have always attracted attention. I remember one spring morning in Georgia I was trying to get an early start, but a couple from a brand-new Down East boat on the next dock climbed aboard the new Hunt 33 I was on for an inspection. I also remember the summer afternoon in Menemsha on Martha’s Vineyard, Massachusetts, when, after a run over from Nantucket, I had just started to lie down on the bench seat in the cockpit to catch some rays until another, very knowledgeable, boat owner politely asked for a tour. Hunts are boats experienced boat owners want to know more about.

The 29 we were on this fall day was the new Harrier model, which is meant to be more of a day boat than the Surfhunter. It has a much larger cockpit for seating and entertaining, and therefore a smaller cabin for overnighting. The company decided to build it when the Harrier 25 became so successful; owners of that boat would find the move to the larger platform of the 29 an easy choice. Knowing this, I still was surprised at the plethora of seating on the 29, which, if I counted correctly, could handle 10 or so easily (that’s assuming you want to go boating with 10 of your best friends). There is room for everyone. The helm seat is wide enough for two (Ray and I didn’t get in each other’s way), the L-shaped settee to port could hold four or five, the aft-facing seat in the cockpit behind the settee is good for two, while the settee stretching across the transom counts for three more. You certainly don’t have to leave anybody standing on the dock. Climbing

aboard is easy, too, with a teak boarding step on each side leading into the cockpit and (surprise!) a center door from the swim platform once you remove the middle cushion on the settee.

Under way, the boat is dry (at least while we were running at 30 knots up and down the bay). The cockpit is

## HUNT HARRIER 29

### SPECIFICATIONS

**LOA:** 29'6"

**Beam:** 10'6"

**Draft:** 3'

**Disp.:** 9,000 lbs.

**Fuel:** 150 gals.

**Water:** 28 gals.

**Contact:** Hunt Yachts, [hunt-yachts.com](http://hunt-yachts.com)

**Base Price (w/standard power):** \$265,500

### PERFORMANCE

**TEST POWER:** (1) 370 hp Volvo Penta D-6 diesel engine, jackshaft with aluminum stern-drive. Speeds measured by GPS in Narragansett Bay off Portsmouth, Rhode Island, in 15-knot winds and 1-foot seas with four people on board, three-quarters fuel and one-third water. Sound levels measured at the helm in dB-A.

RPM	KNOTS	GPH	DB-A
600	3.7	1.1	66
1,000	6.2	3.9	73
1,500	8.9	13.0	73
2,000	14.4	23.5	80
2,500	21.9	34.0	83
3,000	28.4	49.0	85
3,500	33.8	71.0	88
3,600	34.2	78.0	89



**INSIDE:** ① The seat on the port side of the cabin is part of the berth extension, if you want to spend the night or just take a midday snooze. ② The helm is almost perfect in its elegance and simplicity. ③ The wet bar makes the Harrier a cocktail cruiser, as well as a rough-water boat. ④ Remove the center section of the aft bench seat and you’ll find a transom boarding door leading to the swim platform.

#### PROS:

- Iconic Hunt deep-V hull for great boat handling in all conditions.
- Fine entry and extra flare in the bow keeps the boat dry.
- The supersized cockpit and extra seating can hold a crowd.
- A user-friendly boat, everything from the compass to the boarding steps is in exactly the right place.

#### CONS:

- The side decks are fairly narrow and the standard boat comes without side rails (to keep the clean, sleek looks), so walking forward must be done carefully.

## A Rich History

C. Raymond Hunt, who died in 1978 at the age of 70, was one of the most influential figures in the history of recreational boating. His work lives on today both in the production of Hunt Yachts, as in the new Harrier 29, and in the hulls created by C. Raymond Hunt and Associates, the design firm he started in Boston in 1966. Hunt's fame, continued to this day, was in the design of the deep-V hull, which revolutionized a boat's ability to cut through blue water, even in rough conditions, at speed and with maximum maneuverability.

A quiet, modest man, Hunt grew up sailing in Duxbury Harbor, Massachusetts. He won his first national championship when he was 15, his last when he was 55. He raced JBoats and 12-meters and everything in between. He also designed the Concordia yawl in 1939, one of the most beautiful boats ever to hit the water.



Equally at home with powerboats, Hunt designed the Boston Whaler 13 on the back of an envelope in the mid-50s. With its triple-sonson, unsinkable hull, it was a radical departure at the time. Then Dick Bertram, while practicing for the America's Cup, saw Hunt racing through rough water on his first V-hull powerboat. Bertram asked Hunt to design one for him for the 1960 Miami-Nassau race, and Hunt came up with *Brave*

*Moppie*, which not only won the race but also launched Bertram Yachts and the fabled Bertram 31.

The original Hunt Surfhunter, a 25 with a 23-degree deadrise at the stern, came next. In the following years Hunt Associates designed boats from 9 feet to more than 100 feet for a wide range of boat companies — Grand Banks, Grady-White, Hinckley, Four Winns, Wellcraft, Burger, Lee Wilbur and Palmer Johnson, to name a few — all with the same rough-water performance and dry ride of the original Hunt hulls.

Hunt Yachts itself produces boats from 25 to 36 feet. John Deknatel, who runs the design firm and was Hunt's first "associate," credits the company's work on patrol and pilot boats for keeping them up to date on what works and what doesn't, even in horrible sea conditions. Next up: A beautiful Hunt 52 motor-yacht this fall. Stay tuned.



**HUNT'S LEGACY.** C. Raymond Hunt, one of the world's best boat designers (top). The original *Brave Moppie* (middle), and the stunning Hunt 36 (bottom).



**HARD AT WORK.** The Hunt Harrier 29 (above) is designed to handle all kinds of conditions. Peter Janssen (right) on a good day.

generally free of spray because of the hull shape, while the raked windshield and side windows protect the bridge even without the enclosure. The centrally located single engine (gas or diesel, your choice, but a Volvo Penta D-6 370 hp diesel stern-drive in this case) also opens up the cockpit and the stern of the boat for other uses. The heart and soul of every Hunt boat, of course, is its deep-V hull. C. Raymond Hunt first designed it for Dick Bertram and his 30-foot *Brave Moppie* that won the Miami-Nassau race in 1960, giving birth to the Bertram 31.

The Hunt Harrier 25 was a pure deep-V with 23 degrees of deadrise aft. The designers wanted to give the 29 a little more stability aft (to hold the crowd) and also to offer a variety of engine and drive packages. The resulting 29 has a 20-degree deadrise, and the chines are wider farther aft. It also has a generous flare in the bow, making for the dry ride and helping with buoyancy when running upwind. The standard bow thruster, with joystick, takes the hassle out of docking.

The Harrier has a flat foredeck (no trunk cabin, as on the Surfhunter) for a low, sleek look. Van Lancker calls it “the ultimate cruising day boat.” There’s even a full bar setup behind the helm seat with a teak and Corian counter, sink, cutting board and bottle and glass holders in a pullout drawer, plus a fridge/freezer and built-in trash bins. The cockpit and bridge deck are all on the same level, so you don’t have to worry about stubbing toes or tripping over a step, and there’s teak everywhere. The teak wheel, dash and outboard glove box are standard; the teak toe rails, coaming boards, steps, transom overlay and



windshield are options. This boat had it all, and it looked great. There are also folding teak louvered doors leading below. A varnished teak hatch slides to the right, under the console hood, to make the entry to the cabin extra easy. There was no stooping to go below, even for me, at 6 feet 2 inches, which is unusual on a 29-foot boat.

Down two teak steps to the cabin, with a faux teak and holly sole, you’ll find a single seat on the port side that converts into an extension of the V-berth for overnighting. A big opening hatch is overhead for light and ventilation. An enclosed head with a shower is to starboard, with a shower curtain, sump pump and hot and cold pressure water. It’s not quite high enough for me to stand up in, but then it’s a 29-foot day boat. And the fun is on the outside.

After a few hours on the bay, Ray and I brought the boat back to the dock. We were still smiling. In fact, I was smiling all the way home on my drive to Connecticut. The new Hunt Harrier will do that to you. ❖