

# Fleet Flagship



The new Hunt 52, the legendary  
builder's largest yacht, is pretty,  
fast and elegant.

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Heading down Narragansett Bay at 25 knots in a lingering drizzle and a light chop, I had temporarily forgotten I was driving a brand-new 52-foot yacht. It was handling more like a 35-footer, and a sporty 35-footer at that. But then, superior performance has never been a problem for Hunt Yachts. Indeed, ever since the legendary Ray Hunt introduced the first deep-V hull almost half a century ago, they have excelled at it.

That tradition was certainly alive and well on this late spring morning as I put hull number one of the new 52 through its paces. With me were Peter Van Lancker,

the president of Hunt Yachts, and Ray Hunt, grandson of the founder and head of engineering for Hunt Yachts. The flagship of the company's fleet, which previously ranged from 25 to 36 feet, the 52 is a quantum leap in LOA. But, as I discovered that spring day outside the factory in Portsmouth, Rhode Island, it really is a logical expansion of the Hunt tradition of performance, beauty and quality. Designed by C. Raymond Hunt Associates (with Winn Willard, the CEO, as the point person), this is a boat made by people who know how to make boats. The fact that it's also one of the prettiest boats on the water doesn't hurt — from the steeply raked stem, the slightly flared bow, the long straight sheer (to maintain the Down East lines the company is famous for) to the gentle curves aft and the hint of some tumblehome. And that's before you get to the flawless fit and finish and the elegant touches of a larger yacht — from the custom louvers on the cabinets inside to the molded-in gold cove stripe with the Hunt logo on the hull. The sweeping curved lines in the side windows simply add to the visual appeal and the sense of motion.

Inside, there's a natural flow from the bright, open salon, with 360-degree visibility from the helm, to the aft deck/cockpit, which opens up to one big indoor/outdoor area via



**LOTS OF LIGHT.** The salon (top) is bright and welcoming, with windows all around. The helm (above) is both elegant and user-friendly.

a large sliding glass door, all on the same level. "This is a social boat," says Van Lancker, "built for the way people use their boats today." Meaning the boat provides a safe, comfortable ride to get you where you want to go, in any conditions, and then morphs into a lot of relaxing areas on board once you get there. "It's also a customer-driven boat," he says. "They wanted two staterooms, the accommodations,

the space we have here. But it's built so two people can operate it. We started out looking at a 48-footer, but it grew to a 52 when we put in everything they wanted."

One thing Bob Price, a veteran cruiser, former owner of a Hunt 36 and now an owner of the new 52, wanted was a large garage so he could carry — and easily launch — a good-size dinghy. Hunt not only gave him the garage, but they also designed a custom 11-foot dinghy with a 20 hp Yamaha to put in it. The garage is indeed enormous; there's extra room even when the dink is in there. "I'm sure this is the biggest garage on any boat this size," says John Deknatel, the chairman of Hunt Associates. "But it helps make this a modern cruising boat. This boat is very livable and easy to use."

You open the garage by pushing a button next to the cockpit settee, then the entire middle section of the transom, including the settee and the swim platform, lifts up so you can simply slide the dink out on rollers, controlled by a winch, directly into the water. But wait, take a good look inside; the garage has the same flawless gelcoat surface as the rest of the boat. It also has a nice door/hatch at the forward end leading to the engine room. This serves as an emergency exit from the engine room and as a service door. You can use it to take out the engine oil, for example, without having to go up the steps to the salon (the normal engine room access) and walk through the cabin. It's a nice touch.

From the dock, you board the boat by stepping on the large, curved, teak swim platform. (The side rails also have gates so you can board in the center of the boat on either side.) A stainless swim ladder is recessed under the platform; there's also a hot/cold transom shower. Then it's up three curved steps on either side (which lift up for the shore cord access) to the cockpit and through a stainless gate. The curved settee is inviting enough, but that's before you see the innovative teak table facing it — "an engineer's dream," as Van Lancker says. Van Lancker showed me how, sitting



**SIT AND RELAX.** The cockpit, with its unique multifunction table.

## HUNT 52

### SPECIFICATIONS

<b>LOA (w/swim platform):</b> 57'3"
<b>Beam:</b> 15'8"
<b>Draft:</b> 4'6"
<b>Disp.:</b> 54,000 lbs.
<b>Fuel:</b> 750 gals.
<b>Water:</b> 174 gals.
<b>Contact:</b> Hunt Yachts, <a href="http://huntboats.com">huntboats.com</a>
<b>Base Price:</b> \$1,795,000

### PERFORMANCE

**TEST POWER:** (2) 1,001 hp Caterpillar C18 diesel engines. Speeds measured by GPS in Narragansett Bay off Portsmouth, Rhode Island, in 1-foot waves with three-quarters fuel, one-third water and three people on board. Sound levels measured at the helm in dB-A.

RPM	KNOTS	GPH	DB-A
600	8.0	1.2	70
1,000	11.4	18.4	72
1,500	18.7	41.2	74
2,000	29.5	76.2	79
2,300	34.9	99.8	87
2,330	35.1	104.2	88

### PROS:

- Hunt hull for superior rough-water performance has a fine entry, 20-degree transom deadrise, chine flats for lateral stability and molded-in running strakes for lift. Props are in shallow tunnels.
- Innovative garage with custom 11-foot Hunt tender that's easy to launch.
- Excellent fit and finish throughout.
- Classic lines with modern flair.

### CONS:

- No side door at helm. You must walk around aft deck to get to side decks or bow.
- No overhead grab rail in salon, a problem because of a supersize sunroof, but still a good thing to have in a seaway.

**INSIDE:** ① Large master stateroom in its standard configuration with the berth facing aft. ② Access to engine room is excellent through a hatch near the helm. Cat C18s are easily serviced; fuel and battery management systems are very user-friendly. Brackets for hoses verge on overkill, a good thing. ③ Side decks are wide with molded-in nonskid. They have a terrific hatch in the middle of each side for fenders and lines.





**LIVING WELL.** The Hunt 52, at cruising speed (top), shows off its lines. The master (above left) and guest staterooms (above right) are both inviting.

on two stainless cylinders, the table rises, falls, swivels, expands/contracts (via a teak middle leaf) and does everything except drive the boat. After all this maneuvering, I wanted to stay there and have a cold drink.

You enter the salon through the large, full-length, curved sliding glass door, which joins the cockpit and the salon into one room. "It's all one big party space here," Van Lancker says. It's also light and airy, with a striking bamboo sole and windows all around. The side windows are huge, with front sections that are electrically operated. "They go up and down like in your car," Hunt says. There's also a supersize sunroof overhead, also electric, although we didn't try it on this rainy day. Three large windows in front give the helmsman excellent visibility; the middle one has a vent for extra air (hardly a problem), and the starboard one has a defroster.

The salon is bright and inviting (the cherry interior keeps everything light) with a large settee (with two ottomans) on the port side with a pneumatic high-low dining/cocktail table. The starboard side is primarily a granite countertop

over a built-in wet bar, ice maker, fridge and dishwasher, a hidden TV; plus a very comfortable barrel chair. Forward, opposite the helm seat, the companion seat is large enough for two. The helm seat also holds two, although the wooden wheel is centered, facing a curved two-level dash with a Raymarine E-Series plotter in the middle and plenty of room for other electronics. A joystick for the standard bow and stern thrusters is just to the left of the wheel, as are the shifters. There's a teak footrest for the captain. Standing at the helm, carving turns at 20-plus knots, I was taken with how pretty the view of the boat is — just elegant. On a better day, I would have opted for Block Island for lunch.

Down half a dozen stairs, the U-shaped galley to port is large and built for cruising. Even though it's a galley-down arrangement, it has lots of light coming in from the windshields and the sunroof on top, plus its own opening port. You'll find the usual fridge, freezer, two-burner cooktop,

➤ **ONLINE EXCLUSIVE.** Check out additional photos of the Hunt 52 at our website, [motorboating.com](http://motorboating.com).

TOP: ONNE VAN DER WAL; BILLY BLACK

## They Knew What They Wanted



**A HAPPY DAY.** Bob Price and Judith Funderburk christen hull number one.

A few years ago, Bob Price, an experienced sailor (many Bermuda races), was cruising in Buzzards Bay just below the Cape Cod Canal when a passing powerboat caught his eye. After he tied up in Padanaram, Massachusetts, he found out the boat was a Hunt, and that the Hunt factory was nearby. Soon thereafter, Price was the proud owner of a Hunt 36 Harrier. In short order, Price put 900 hours on the boat, cruising from his home on the eastern shore of the Chesapeake (where he is former commodore of the Tred Avon Yacht Club) up to Maine. "I loved the boat," he says. "I'm a big fan of the Hunt hull, the ride and the seaworthiness."

Price also became friends with Peter Van Lancker, president of Hunt Yachts. "After a while," he says, "Peter called and said, 'What do you think of a larger Hunt?'" Price enlisted another friend, Bob Mathews, who used to be in the boat business on the eastern shore and who, like Price, also is a member of the Cruising Club of America. Price and Mathews met with the designers at C. Raymond Hunt Associates and before long they were talking about a new 52.

"This 52 is probably the smallest size where we could do what we wanted," Price says. Price and Mathews got so involved in the project that they bought part of the company. They both wanted the big garage and a single level for the salon and aft deck. "They both had a lot of input in designing this boat," says John Deknatel, chairman of Hunt Associates.

At the christening of his boat, hull number one, outside the new Hunt factory in Portsmouth, Rhode Island, Price was beaming. "It's easy to operate," he says. "And I like the openness of the boat. It's so bright." His companion, Judith Funderburk, says her sister, Betty Kohn of Marlboro Interiors in Charlotte, North Carolina, helped with the decorating.

Mathews, meanwhile, will soon take delivery of hull number two. "It's been a great experience," he says. "The level of quality is phenomenal, second to none." He can't wait to show off his boat on the Chesapeake. He says, "People will take a second look at this boat, and they'll love it."

microwave and coffee maker, plus lots of countertops, cabinets and storage. There's extra storage under a hatch in the sole and even more in a pantry in the center hall.

Facing the galley is the guest stateroom, an inviting area for one person or a couple with the settee/single berth against the starboard side. When you pull it out to convert it to a double, there's not a lot of extra room behind the two sliding pocket doors. With the doors open, this can be a conversation area or a study. It also has a washer/dryer hidden behind Hunt's megayacht-quality cherry cabinet doors, all with custom molding. A good-size head with a large circular shower (big enough for me, and I'm 6 feet 1 inch) is forward, with doors from both the guest stateroom and from the center hallway, so it also serves as a day head.

The master, forward, is a surprise because when you walk in a large custom bureau blocks the view; the island queen bed is on the other side, with the back of the bureau as the headboard. (Price wanted it this way; you can have the traditional arrangement, if you want it.) But the stateroom itself is large, with two big hanging lockers and lots of storage and light. The master head has an extra-large vanity and a separate shower.

Under way, this boat, with the upgraded Caterpillar C18s (1,001 hp), topped out at more than 35 knots. That's



**GENEROUS GARAGE.** Price wanted lots of room for a dinghy, so Hunt designed a garage wide enough to hold a custom Hunt 11-foot tender.

an impressive performance, considering there are a lot of extras on board. Cat C12s (705 hp) are standard. Pod drives are available with Volvo IPS 900s (662 hp), in which case you get a third stateroom because the engines are farther aft. Whatever you choose, the Hunt hull, the lines and the attention to detail are all the same. "This is an elegant, sophisticated, modern boat," says Van Lancker, "with all the Hunt tradition." And that's hard to beat. ♦

BILLY BLACK