

A HOME BY THE SEA

A Connecticut couple contributes to the design of the first Ocean Series 63 by Hunt Yachts and creates a cruiser on which they are completely at ease

By Jeanne Craig





Each time we go to the Newport show we end up buying a new boat,” says Cindy Cuminale, who lives in Darien, Connecticut, with her husband, Jim.

The couple most recently attended that Rhode Island event in 2017. They went in search of a larger boat to replace the Eastbay 50 they’d owned for a few years. Upon arrival, they made haste to the display of a builder with a new 60-footer, but were disappointed when the design fell short of their expectations. So, Cindy and Jim continued to work the docks. They hadn’t walked far when they found the Hunt Yachts fleet.

“We were already familiar with the brand and the storied history of the Hunt deep-V hull. But at that show, we were able to really see the quality and finish of these boats, and we were impressed,” Cindy says.

At that time, Hunt had a 55- and a 72-footer in its line of offshore cruisers. But the Cuminales, seasoned boaters who have spent most of their lives on the water, wanted something just over 60-feet, which they call their “sweet spot.” This active couple in their sixties can still handle a boat in this size range without crew. That was a goal they had for themselves when they started

looking for a new ride. That, and dreams of the places they could travel to in a long-range cruiser designed for comfort and safety.

As fate would have it, on that day in Newport the Cuminales learned about Hunt’s plans to launch a new line of expedition-style yachts. The Ocean Series would include a 76 and a 63, both created by Ray Hunt Design in New Bedford, Massachusetts, and commissioned in Portsmouth, Rhode Island, where Hunt Yachts shares a home base with its parent company, Hinckley Yachts. The Ocean Series would couple Downeast lines with an athletic deep-V hull designed to cover a good distance at a decent clip. In addition, Hunt owners would receive the same white-glove service afforded to customers of Hinckley.

The 63 was still in the early development stage when the Cuminales learned about it. Even so, they made the decision to buy Hull No. 1, and then became involved in its creation. “We couldn’t physically see the boat when we ordered it,” says Cindy. “Instead, we helped design it, and we’re proud of the contributions we

Top: Jim and Cindy Cuminale at the fly-bridge helm of their new Hunt 63



LOA: 69'6"
 Beam: 18'0"
 Draft: 4'6"
 Displ.: 68,000 lbs.
 Fuel: 1,150 gals.
 Water: 200 gals.
 Power: (2) 1,350-hp Volvo Penta
 D-13s w/IPS



Above: A serene salon is open to the lower helm station.

made." Because it was the first 63 off the line, it took about two and a half years for the boat to be finished. But when it arrived in the U.S. last spring from Taiwan, where the Ocean Series is built, the Cuminales were thrilled with their cruiser. *Defiance* was worth the wait.

Jim and Cindy have been married for 42 years, but they started boating together when they first met in Greenwich, Connecticut, years before they tied the knot. "Boats have always been the center of our lives because we spend most of our time on the water," says Jim.

They were sailors at first but eventually moved over to powerboats, which became very appealing after their daughter was born and they were more pressed for time. They started with a 17-foot bowrider and traded up to a Chris-Craft 31, a Legacy 34 and a Sabre 42 before buying the Eastbay 50. "We kept moving up the chain and enjoyed every single experience," says Jim. For decades, they've spent a few weeks each summer cruising, often to points east of their homeport, including Narragansett Bay, Martha's Vineyard and other popular destinations in the Northeast. In the future, though, they want to travel farther on the 63. Sarasota, Florida, is one goal.

"Back in 2017, we knew we wanted to spend more time aboard, but we thought the Eastbay would start to feel too tight, particularly since we wanted our

daughter and her husband to join us," says Cindy. "A bigger boat made sense. And we liked the idea of being able to cruise if the weather wasn't great. We didn't want to get stuck at the dock."

To ensure that won't happen, the Cuminales chose a boat built on the proven Hunt deep-V hull, a 60-year-old design that's renowned for its ability to maintain high speeds in challenging conditions. The couple is comfortable with this running bottom. Most of the powerboats they've owned had deep-Vs. "But this one is the most perfect in its proportions, with a lot more length and beam than we've had before," says Jim. "It runs through the water beautifully. We've been in rough conditions on *Defiance*, and the boat can handle any kind of sea."

The hull for the Hunt 63 was designed around a pair of 1,350-hp Volvo Penta D-13 engines with IPS pod drives. That package pushes the boat to a top end of 32 knots and a fast cruising speed of 27 knots, at which pace the boat offers a range of 390 nautical miles. For a really efficient ride, the Cuminales can throttle back to 10 knots for a range of 1,000 miles. That's an advantage of this 63: It allows the operator to go fast or slow. "At one point we were looking at a 60-footer with a semi-displacement hull," says Jim, "but at the end of the day we had to



Above: The master suite is one of three staterooms on board; Volvo Penta D13s in the engine room

admit we are 20-knot cruisers, not 10 or 12 knots."

The Cuminales can drive from the lower station in the salon or from the bridge, where there's good visibility. To ease operation, they put a wing station with engine controls in the cockpit. And to stabilize the ride in rough seas, they added Humphree Interceptors, choosing that system over a Seakeeper, which is also offered with the Hunt. "Seakeeper would have been installed under the galley sole, and we didn't want to sacrifice that space. Instead, we devoted the area to a pantry for dry stowage," says Jim. "We had a number of good discussions with the design team when making these decisions. That was an interesting part of the process of building this semi-custom boat."

Accommodations were also carefully considered as the boat came together. The 63 can be ordered with three or four staterooms, plus a crew cabin. The couple chose the three-stateroom layout, which puts the galley down, where it separates the full-beam master suite amidships from the VIP cabin forward. The third stateroom opposite the galley gave them an opportunity to get creative. They customized the space to double as a lounge with convertible settee, table and TV. To separate this area from the galley, they went with a clever pocket door instead of a bulkhead. When the door is open, the galley and lounge are one big entertaining space.

"We'd meet regularly with Peter Boyce of Ray Hunt Design, who was creating the boat with 3D CAD software" says Cindy. "We'd watch as he built it in front of us. It was amazing to see the boat come together layer by layer. It was like building a house, only with radar and electronics."

During those meetings, the Cuminales made countless decisions. They designed their own galley, reconfigured the helm station to accommodate the way Jim



likes to run a boat, and even created a custom staircase leading from the cockpit to the bridge—it's curved, to create more room in the cockpit. "This is our first fly-bridge cruiser," says Jim. "So many boats of this type look like towering monsters, but the Hunt is sleek. We love the lines."

The couple is also happy with the look and layout of the interiors, which are by Martha Coolidge. Cindy and Jim met with the designer often to plan spaces and stowage, and select everything from fabrics and furnishings to drawer pulls and pillows. "She was a huge help," says Cindy of Coolidge, an avid sailor who refurbished her own 6 Metre. "The other boats we've owned looked like boats. The Hunt is more like a home."

Getting the layout on all three levels of the 63 just right was a long process, says the couple, but they now have a flexible boat that can entertain 20, or keep three couples comfortable for an extended cruise. And then there's that hull that can carry them quickly and safely to their next destination. 📍