

TO BUILD THE LARGEST HUNT YACHT TO DATE, THE COMPANY EMPLOYED

Generation



ONNE VAN DER WAL COURTESY HUNT YACHTS

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A FEW NIFTY TRICKS AND A NEW YARD. BUT IS THIS 52-FOOTER STILL WORTHY OF THE MONIKER?

GEORGE SASS, SR.
FINDS OUT ON A SHAKEDOWN CRUISE
FROM RHODE ISLAND TO MARYLAND.

Crapp



“When you ask these workers if they can do something, they never say ‘no.’ They figure out a way to do it, and they do it with a smile,” says Peter Van Lancker, President of Hunt Yachts of Portsmouth, Rhode Island. Van Lancker was referring to the workers at Global Yacht Builders in Kaohsiung, Taiwan, where the all-new Hunt 52 is built.

Until the 52’s introduction, Hunt Yachts, known for their rough-water capability, have ranged in size from 25 to 36 feet and have been built in New England. Encouraged to build a larger version by current Hunt owners, Van Lancker saw the advantage of building a vessel of this size overseas.

“Because of the number of hours that go into building a 52-foot yacht, it would cost significantly more if this model was built in the States. Most important, the quality of this yard in Taiwan is as fine as our facility here,” says Van Lancker.

Having owned a Hunt-designed boat, I was anxious to join Van Lancker and Bob Price, owner of hull number one, on a two-day voyage from Hunt’s facility in Portsmouth to Price’s home on the Eastern Shore of Maryland.

The design office of C. Raymond Hunt and Associates originated the high-deadrise, deep-V in the late ’50s, and the concept became a huge success with the introduction of the Bertram 31. Over the years, it has been refined and continues to be the design of choice of several premium boatbuilders. The hull’s ability to run in rough seas at high speeds has also made it popular with commercial clients, government agencies, and the military.

A sharp entry forward minimizes pounding, and because there is no deep forefoot, bow steering and the fear of broaching are reduced. The deep-V gains stability as its speed increases, because as the hull begins to roll, more surface comes in contact with the water, resisting further roll.

Perhaps one of the downsides to the deep-V is that it needs a lot of power to get up on plane. Hull number one of the Hunt 52, *Godspeed*, has power to spare, as Price chose the optional 1,005-horsepower CAT C18 diesels in lieu of the standard 705-horsepower CAT C12s. Van Lancker is also planning to build a Volvo Penta IPS version.

In the late ’90s, C. Raymond Hunt and Associates had developed a single-engine, 33-foot design that was aimed at the yachtsman who wanted a capable weekender. The boat would deliver good speed, fuel economy, and the famous Hunt ride.

But when no builder showed interest in building it, investors started Hunt Yachts. The Hunt 33 was a success, and the line grew to seven models.

Outgrowing its facility in Padanaram, Massachusetts, Hunt Yachts moved to the Melville Marine complex in Portsmouth, Rhode Island, in 2006. This facility also provides Hunt owners with a service department, indoor storage, and dockage.

Godspeed made a strong first impression when I saw her at the fuel dock in Portsmouth. Her sleek, low-profile design has a touch of Euro-elegance, especially with the treatment of the side windows, which utilize a sweeping, curved frame that replicates the design of smaller Hunt soft-top models. (The owner of hull number two has chosen a more traditional, classic window treatment.)

The gently curved, reverse transom softens the overall look aft. From the large teak swim platform, two stairways lead to the aft deck, which features a built-in settee and a unique, multi-position table. Spoofing a Billy Mays TV infomercial, Van Lancker demonstrated how the table is transformed from a dinner table to a cocktail table of various heights and sizes. It is pure engineering ingenuity. He wasn’t kidding when he said GYB’s workers could build anything.

From the swim platform, a transom door opens to a tender garage, in which a handsome 11-foot, Hunt-designed hard dinghy is stowed. Reminding me that C. Raymond Hunt also designed the original Boston Whalers, Van Lancker promised to launch the tender at the end of our trip and demonstrate its “Hunt ride.”

Sliding open the glass door that leads to the salon, the appeal of the yacht’s single-level deck design became obvious. With the door open, the combined area of the aft deck and main salon becomes one—perfect for taking a dozen or more guests on a scenic day cruise. A powered sunroof and opening side windows provide a bright, airy feeling, making the salon seem more spacious than it is.

The real pleasure of a Hunt Yacht comes from driving it, and the 52 is set up with a well-thought-out helm and navigation area. There is a good, all-around line of sight at the helm, and the finely crafted Hunt steering wheel is a work of art.

This single-level, express layout allows the helmsman to be near his guests while underway, and it fits how Price will be using his yacht—taking friends and family for cruises on the Chesapeake Bay.

The U-shaped galley is below and is equipped for preparing easy meals and snacks. The Hunt 52s built with conventional drive systems have two staterooms, while the optional IPS model is able to fit in a third. *Godspeed*’s accommodations are a reflection of Hunt’s ability to customize, as Price had a number of unique requests. The master stateroom features a queen-size island berth, but unlike con-



BOB PRICE AND JUDITH FUNDERBURK ENJOY THE VIEW FROM THE HELM (TOP). THE HUNT-DESIGNED TENDER SLIPS INTO A DISCREET GARAGE IN THE STERN (ABOVE). PART OF THE SALON DINETTE EASILY CONVERTS TO COMPANION SEATING (OPPOSITE).



UNLIKE PRICE’S CUSTOM DESIGN, THE STANDARD LAYOUT INCLUDES AN AFT-FACING BERTH IN THE MASTER STATEROOM.

RPM	KNOTS	GPH	dB(A)
780	8.6	14.0	67
1000	10.2	18.6	69
1750	22.5	60.0	75
1950	27.0	76.0	78
2075	29.5	83.0	79
2300	34.0	107.6	82

TEST CONDITIONS: Speeds were measured by GPS in Narragansett Bay with flat seas and light and variable winds, with a full load of fuel and water, and five people onboard. Fuel consumption was calculated by the CAT electronic monitoring system. Sound levels were measured at the helm.

LOA: 57’3”
LWL: 48’
BEAM: 15’8”
DRAFT: 4’6”
DISPL.: 54,000 lb.
FUEL: 750 gal.
WATER: 150 gal.
ENGINES TESTED: 2 x 1,005-hp Caterpillar C18 diesels
PRICE: \$1,950,000

the idling diesels, “I built it!” They responded, “Beautiful boat, sir! Have a nice day!” And off they went.

We arrived in Cape May nine hours after leaving Portsmouth. While the calm seas and comfort of *Godspeed* contributed to the enjoyable ride, the opportunity of talking shop with Van Lancker added an extra dimension to the trip. He’s a hands-on boat guy who

has a contagious enthusiasm for the boats he builds.

It felt good to be back in Cape May, a place that has often signaled the beginning or end of a Sass family cruise. There’s an authenticity to Cape May that hasn’t changed over the years, and it is comforting to see the same landmarks on the waterfront—the commercial fishing fleet, the Lobster House Restaurant, and the fish-cleaning truck parked at South Jersey Marina, to name a few.

Before getting underway the next morning I spent an hour in *Godspeed*’s engine room, gaining access through a small hatch in the main salon. The vertical ladder makes going up or down with tools or spare parts a bit difficult, but once you’re down, there’s space to move between the engines. These are large engines, and with a 16 kw generator, plus all the systems and equipment normally associated with a yacht of this caliber, space is at a premium. But the engineering and quality of installation is topnotch—a sign of close collaboration between the Hunt folks and Global Yacht Builders in Taiwan.

The trip up the Delaware Bay was uncharacteristically pleasant, in part because the seas were absolutely flat and in part because our cruising speed of 25 knots got us to the C&D Canal in just over two hours. As we approached the Chesapeake Bay Bridge, the seas and wind finally started to show signs of life, and by the time we reached Bloody Point Light, the Hunt was able to show a hint of its true character. With a nasty, stacked, three-foot chop abeam of us, *Godspeed* held steady with little roll at 25 knots, and when we turned the corner, she ran over the lumpy, following seas as if they weren’t even there.

As we entered the Wye River, *Godspeed* was met by Price’s friends in smaller boats who were anxious to see the yacht they had been hearing so much about, and upon reaching his home, a series of loud cheers could be heard coming from more friends and family members gathered on his dock. The process from concept to delivered yacht had taken over a year, but the proud look on Bob Price’s face said it all. The hunt for his dream yacht was a resounding success. □

Hunt Yachts, Inc., (401) 324-4201; www.huntyachts.com



FROM LEFT: ONNE VAN DER WAL, BILLY BLACK COURTESY HUNT YACHTS

GEORGE SASS, SR.