



Waldo Howland,
the conservator, aboard
his schooner, Integrity.

BY TED DANFORTH JR.

"I shall unfold to thee a two-fold tale." — Parmenides

Every boat has its story, the story of how it came to be and who built it — the when, the where, and the why. Some of these stories are more interesting than others. The story of Waldo Howland and Ray Hunt, of the Concordia yawl and the deep-vee hull, surely must be reckoned as one of the best.

It is a study in contrasts, the story of the old vs. the new, tradition vs. innovation, workboat vs. yacht, fiberglass vs. wood, sailboat vs. powerboat, and designing vs. building. Ray Hunt was

the great innovator of the middle of the 20th century, and Waldo Howland, the great conservator.

These two men — straight out of Central Casting for the quiet New Englander — personally embodied both the conservative and innovative traditions of the region. Together and separately they created two classics that at first would seem to be diametrical opposites, but at closer inspection are united by their perfect forms — forms that have endured for a half-century.

The story continues into the present day with the class of 103 Concordias still either sailing or in restoration, and with untold thousands of powerboats with Ray Hunt's deep-vee hull — and

HUNT & CONCORDIA

sheer beauty

A 36-foot Hunt Harrier
and Concordia yawl No. 34.

since 1997 with the new Hunt Yachts designed by C. Raymond Hunt Associates in Boston and built by CCI Composites in Padanaram, Mass. (see accompanying story).

Hunt has been called the New England Archimedes. He was the unsung genius who invented the deep-vee hull that revolutionized powerboat design, as well as the original Boston Whaler, the 110 and 220 sailing dinghies, and the transomless lobster boat, among countless other innovations. Howland was the impresario of boats whose only command was: "Astonish me." Out of this partnership, out of the ideas that had been coalescing in their minds about the nature of a boat, out of a

great sense of camaraderie, and out of lives lived "messing around in boats," came Escape, the first 39-foot, 10-inch Concordia yawl. It was built for Howland's father, Llewellyn, in 1939 — Hunt's unique modernism expressing itself in perfecting the old.

After the coming together there was a going apart — Hunt following the divergencies of his mind from one brilliant innovation to another, Waldo selling and maintaining what was to prove the last classic, the ultimate in the long tradition of the schooner yacht.

Boat-minded from the beginning

Hunt grew up in Duxbury, Mass., and everything he knew about how a boat moves through the water he learned as a boy sailing the shallow waters of Plymouth Bay. As a young man he won many sailing trophies: as an adult he took a world title in the 5.5 Meter Class. A brilliant helmsman, Hunt later took three straight New London-Marblehead races, the Annapolis-Newport, and six out of six races at Cowes on his Concordia, Harrier, with his family as crew in 1955. Powerful and athletic, always cheerful and willing, he crewed on many ocean races before World War II. He loved being out in a blow. A shy man, Hunt was uncomfortable with all the attention his brilliance drew.

Howland learned sailing at his father's knee, out of Padanaram on Buzzards Bay, where the family summered. In the 1920s he was invited to crew on many of the famous boats of the age and met all the great names: Paul Hammond, Clinton Crane, Sherman Hoyt, Percy Chubb, DeCourcy Fales. Perhaps it was his small size and abilities as a cook — a rare skill on a boat — that made him always welcome. He met Hunt when, after the stock market crash that led to the Great Depression, they found themselves as under-employed stockbrokers, hanging out and talking boats.

In 1932 they established Concordia Company as an office in Boston to design, build and broker boats. Their first effort was a frostbiter. The sales tactic was simple: They would appear with the boat at a regatta and, with Ray at the helm, win against the likes of Briggs Cunningham and Cornelius Shields. The boat sold itself. As Howland wrote: "I was the salesman, and Ray was the designer. It was a matter of me selling Ray Hunt."

It wasn't until 1941 that Concordia Company began as a boatyard, with Howland's fortuitous purchase of South Wharf in Padanaram (see accompanying story).

In the straightened times of the 1930s, Hunt and Howland made a business converting Fishers Island Sound 31s (designed and built by Herreshoff) for family cruising in Buzzards Bay, moving the galley aft to the main cabin, which was to become the standard layout of the Concordia yawl. Their biggest commission was to design a 65-foot schooner



There were 103 Concordia yawls built; the writer's Oriane (pictured) is No. 34 built in 1955.

for Hendon Chubb to win the Astor Cup in the 1938 New York Yacht Club cruise. And win she did. Victoria's lines were to be the model of the first Concordia, designed later that year.

Winds of change

Hurricanes form a big part of that first Concordia's story. That fall The Great New England Hurricane of 1938 wrecked Llewellyn Howland's cher-

in comfort, four in a pinch, or a young family; be both a daysailer and coastal cruiser, yet be capable of racing offshore; and above all be spare, in a New England sort of way.

She was first named Escape, though her name was changed to Java after being seriously damaged in The Great Atlantic Hurricane of 1944. Built at the Casey yard in New Bedford, Mass., to a little under 40 feet because of a tax on

"I was the salesman, and Ray was the designer. It was a matter of me selling Ray Hunt."

— Waldo Howland

ished 39-foot Norwegian-built Colin Archer design, Escape, on the causeway at the head of Padanaram Harbor, Mass. He swore he would never sail again. But Hunt and Howland said they could build a boat for him that would, as he requested, "sail on her bottom and not on her sides"; be able to fit two

boats exceeding that length, her hull is the final development in the 100-year tradition of the schooner yacht. After her time, yacht design radically departed from the long keel, heavy displacement model with long overhangs and wine-glass sections that had evolved out of that earlier exemplar. That Hunt the innovator also was the one to perfect the old is a measure of his total understanding of the nature of a boat, bringing together all that Howland, Howland's father, and he had learned in the course of their lives lived in boats — Fishers Island 31s, Victoria, Escape, even the 54-foot 1896 Wm. Fife-designed, Charles Beetle-built topsail yawl of Howland's grandfather.

She was entirely successful, and if imitation is the best form of flattery, the proof was in the rapidity with which the model was copied. Three sister ships were built between 1939 and 1947, but it was with the purchase of hull No. 2 (built by Lawley) in 1949 by Oyster Bay, N.Y., yachtsman Drayton Cochran that Concordia was started as a class. That year, Cochran, or "Draytie" as he was known, went to



Ray Hunt the innovator.

THE PARTNERSHIP
THAT PRODUCED
SOME OF THE
MOST INFLUENTIAL
AND LASTING
DESIGNS OF THE
20TH CENTURY

