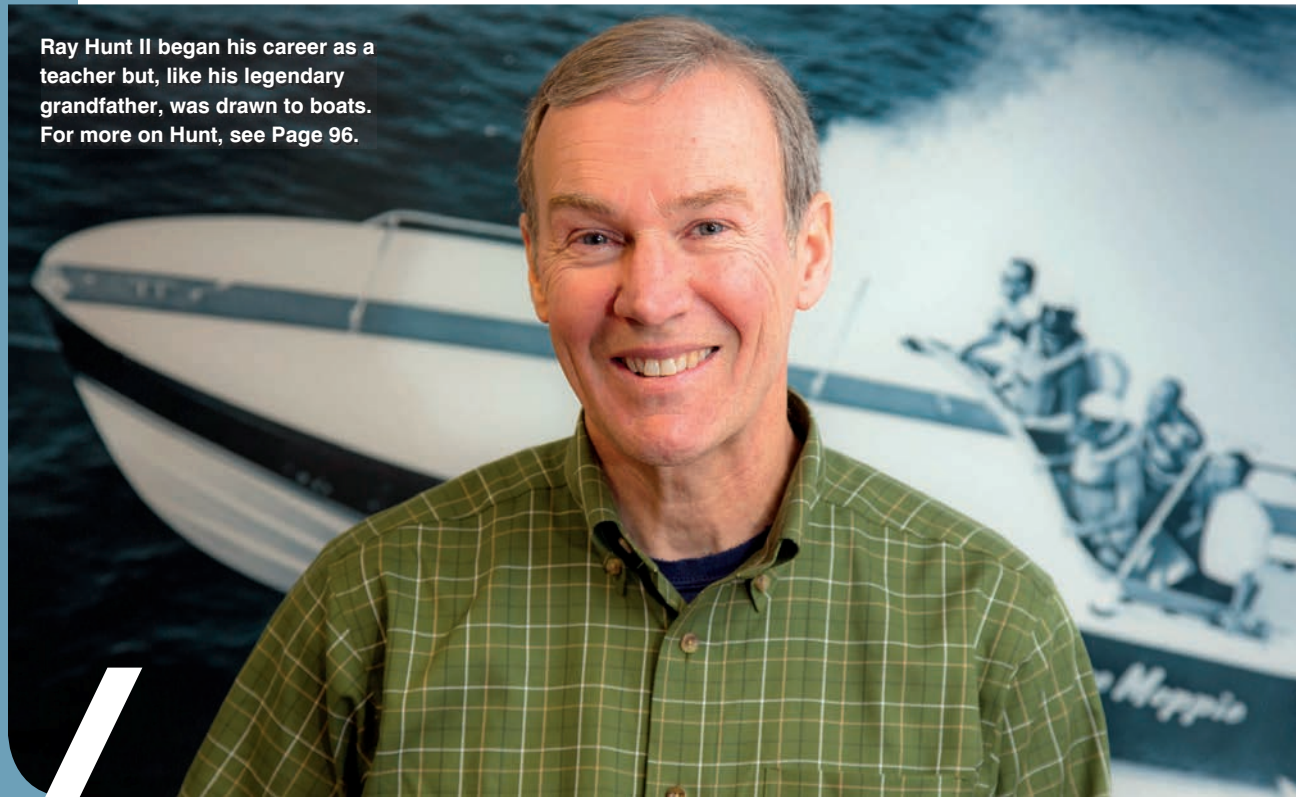


Ray Hunt II began his career as a teacher but, like his legendary grandfather, was drawn to boats. For more on Hunt, see Page 96.



# V-EE—AS IN VISION

THE HUNT DEEP-VEE REVOLUTIONIZED POWERBOAT DESIGN, BUT THERE'S SO MUCH MORE TO THIS STORIED COMPANY AND THE MAN WHO STARTED IT ALL BACK IN THE 1930S



By David W. Shaw

**T**hick fog swept in fast, reducing visibility to zero. Charles Raymond Hunt II, 16, stood at the helm of a 32-foot sloop rolling in the swells of Rhode Island Sound and wondered what to do next.

As the skipper, he was in charge of the boat, a demo O'Day 32 on loan from his father, "Sham" Hunt, an executive at Bangor Punta Corp., which owned O'Day Corp., Cal Yachts, Luhrs Boats, Starcraft and many other companies. If anything happened to the O'Day, both Hunts would be in more than just plain old pea soup.

Hunt and two 15-year-old friends were en route from Point Judith, R.I., to Block Island. The boat was brand-new and no electronics had been installed except a depth sounder with a transducer not yet mounted. The year was 1976, long before GPS and chart plotters. Hunt II figured that if he could get soundings, it would help his dead reckoning. "We used duct tape to attach the transducer to a mop handle, and it worked, to a point," Hunt says with a laugh. "We thought we were pretty clever."

After spending the night anchored in 90 feet off what they later figured out was Montauk (N.Y.) Point, the intrepid crew made it to Block Island. "That was my first real adventure," Hunt II says. "My dad was incredibly trusting

to let me take that boat out, but we were all sailors in my family. That's just how I grew up."

It's safe to say boats run in the Hunt family's blood. Ray Hunt II, 52, is the director of manufacturing and engineering at Hunt Yachts ([www.hunt-yachts.com](http://www.hunt-yachts.com)), builder of a wide range of high-performance RIBs, center consoles, day cruisers, coastal cruisers, coupes and express sedans to 68 feet. The company's two most popular models are the 25-foot Harrier, with a base price of \$161,000, and the 29-foot Surfhunter, with a base price of \$269,200. Its 44-footer, which is on the cover of this magazine, won the 2012 AIM Marine Group Editor's Choice Award for Best Down East from 35 to 45 feet.

The boats are designed by C. Raymond Hunt Associates ([www.hunt-designs.com](http://www.hunt-designs.com)), a naval architecture company based in New Bedford, Mass. Hunt II's grandfather, C. Raymond Hunt, founded the firm in 1961 with John Deknatel. In the late 1990s the company teamed with Concordia Co. to build its own designs, forming what eventually became Hunt Yachts, which is based in Portsmouth, R.I.

## Sailboats and powerboats

It's a bit of a twisty path, tracing how Hunt Yachts came to be what it is today. The story goes back far beyond the establishment of the nation's first boatbuilder operated by naval architects in the late 1990s and a naval architecture studio that got started in the early '60s. It goes back to the days of the Great Depression and the dawn of C. Raymond Hunt's career as a naval architect that ultimately led to his invention of the deep-vee hull, a design that forever changed high-performance powerboats for the better.

At age 24, after a brief stint under naval architect Frank Paine, Hunt formed Concordia Co. in 1932 with his friend Waldo Howland. Hunt designed the now classic Concordia yawl, which the company introduced in 1938-1939. In the same period it also launched the ballasted fin keel International 110, a racing sloop that was totally radical at the time. An avid sailor, Hunt was no stranger to racing, having won the Sears Cup twice before he turned 18. He later competed aboard the J Class yacht Yankee.

Ironically, Hunt's greatest achievement had nothing to do with sailing. It was the deep-vee. The breakthrough hull resulted from a series of designs for "Huntform" lobster boats in the 1940s and recreational powerboats in the '50s. He also was instrumental in perfecting an innovative trihull design for the 13-foot Boston Whaler introduced at the New York Boat Show in 1958.

Hunt was constantly tweaking hull shapes to improve speed and performance, realizing that traditional planing hulls with sharp bows and flat sterns lacked stability and ran hard in any kind of sea. They were tough to handle in following seas, tended to pound in a chop and were difficult to control in tight turns. He knew there had to be a better way to go

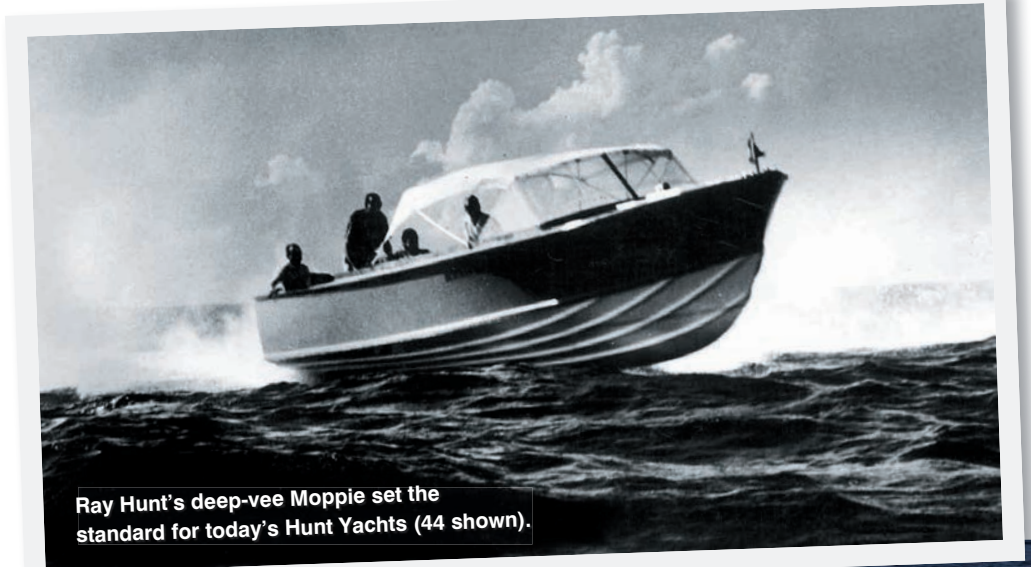
fast under power, and he was determined to figure out how.

"My grandfather studied nature first," Hunt II says. "By studying and understanding nature and having a good sense of the effects of the water on a hull, he came up with the concepts behind the deep-vee. His ideas didn't come from formal study; they came from his gut."

Hunt built the world's first wooden deep-vee hull in 1958. The 23-foot boat was used as a tender during an America's Cup summer, turning heads in Newport, R.I. Proud of his accomplishment and not thinking of the business implications, Hunt provided drawings of the hull for publication in a boating magazine. He thought little of it at the time, but that decision eventually cost him the opportunity to patent his design. Under patent law, he had only one year to file after publication of the drawings. Two years later, when his deep-vee hull created a stir in boating circles, it was too late.

"I'm a very nuts-and-bolts kind of guy. I'm very detail-oriented," Hunt II says. "I focus on the small pieces and parts, and I'm always conscious about how all those pieces go together. My

*continued on Page 59*



DANIEL FORSTER (TOP)

BILLY BLACK (BOTTOM)





Scan this with your mobile device for video of the Hunt 44.



# SEA TRIAL: HUNT 44

## THE SMART DESIGN AND SMOOTH RIDE MAKE IT AN OFFSHORE WINNER

By Eric Sorensen

I spent some time on the new Hunt 44 last summer and came away impressed for a number of reasons. This Down East express cruiser is a real machine in the best possible sense.

Its hull is superior to every other boat I've run, except perhaps the Hunt-designed Grand Banks Eastbays. The ride is so absurdly smooth, safe and comfortable in 3- to 5-footers at 25 knots — the boat's full-load cruise speed — that an owner will have the latitude to use the boat with very little restriction from April through November anywhere along the East Coast. No ruined plans because your boat is a blunt-bowed scow below the waterline.

It looks like a Hunt, only tempered by softened corners and curves. And she's practical, with 360-degree helm sightlines, tall rails, good engine-room access and a clever tender garage. Euro styling doesn't trump common sense anywhere on this boat.

The layout forward is conventional, which is to say the builder followed a formula that works nicely in a boat-shaped living space. The master stateroom on our semicustom test boat is forward, with a bit of a twist: The owner-specified bed has an Asian-inspired, privacy-enhancing headboard aft to sleep with feet forward.

There's also a frameless glass window directly above the berth, letting sunlight flood into the space. This is really neat because you can keep an eye on Polaris from a warm bed. The en-suite head is to port, with a separate shower with seat and an opening port light.

Aft and to starboard is the second stateroom. However, this owner opted to make the room open to the galley opposite, with a sliding faux-rice-paper-lined pocket door (a sliding bulkhead, actually) mating with a hinged door to close the space off for use as a private stateroom. The second head, also to starboard, is adjacent to the second stateroom, and you can order the boat with a door providing direct, private head access.



The galley, to port, is open to the saloon above, with the windshield dash cutaway letting in lots more sunlight and mingling the two areas for conversation and transferring food and drinks. Now for the surprise: Raise the companionway stairs, and voila! Here we find a small third stateroom with enough room for a single berth and a few storage lockers. A hatch directly overhead provides access to the saloon next to the helm seat.

The saloon is open and inviting, and its cherry joinery is much more interesting to these eyes in terms of color and variety of grain than the monochrome, straight-grained teak plywood veneer one often sees these days. You're surrounded by glass on all sides, and overhead is a large sunroof that opens wide. There's a screen to keep out the bugs.

To port is an L-shaped settee with a twist; the forward "L" section has a seatback that flips to forward- and aft-facing positions, and the L seat section forward raises a foot electrically to provide the copilot with a clear view of the proceedings ahead. There's also space on the countertop under the windshield forward to serve as a chart table.

The helm is comfortably laid out with room for two large electronics displays forward of the wheel, and the Volvo IPS joystick is right where I'd put it myself ergonomically. Electric windows like the ones in your car, made in-house by the builder, provide cross-ventilation as well as direct communication with line handlers.

BILLY BLACK



### The engine room

The engine room is beneath the saloon, and the space would make Feadship's or Viking's engineers proud, with 57 inches of headroom and plenty of fluorescent lighting. The Volvo D-6 diesels are directly below the saloon on this boat, with jackshafts connecting them to the IPS pods in the stern. The jackshaft arrangement, with the engines well forward in relation to the pods, in turn provides room for the tender garage back aft, which opens directly to the water via a power transom trunk.

Despite the forward engine location, which also helps this boat come up on plane and run with minimal bow rise — itself an unexpected and pleasant anomaly for any pod-powered boat — noise levels in the saloon directly above were below 70 dBA at cruise. The common-rail Volvos are quiet to begin with, but the 6-inch-thick saloon deck-insulation sandwich and whisker-close hatch clearances really get the credit. Between the Hunt ride and the quiet, it doesn't get any better than this.

The elevated cockpit back aft is on the same level as the saloon. You're not going to be gaffing many stripers from the cockpit, but it's really nice having a flush deck from transom to saloon. The high cockpit deck also provides the room for the tender garage, and there's plenty of headroom when working around the Volvo pods. There's a big lounge seat aft and custom cabinetry forward in the cockpit; our test boat had a refrigerator to port and a grill to starboard in stylish fiberglass cabinets.

I called this boat a machine in part for its ability to run nonchalantly in heavy weather but also because of its cutter-like practicality. The side decks are wide and flat, and the bow rails are 31 inches high, made of 1.25-inch polished stainless, and supported by closely spaced stanchions, making them unyielding to the hand. Cockpit rails are a fortress-like 36 inches high and blind-bolted, the work of metal artisans.

A rocker switch near the grill controls the hood for the tender garage, which makes launch and recovery a non-event while eliminating both the potential for rogue wave damage to the dinghy and visual clutter. It takes up interior volume, but it's an intelligent trade-off. In general, you don't get the feeling that things are crammed aboard this boat, which makes it more relaxing.

### The ride

Our test ride was a revelation for the reasons hinted at ear-

**LOA:** 45 feet, 10 inches  
**BEAM:** 14 feet, 6 inches  
**DISPLACEMENT:** 35,000 pounds (half load)  
**TANKAGE:** 450 gallons fuel, 120 gallons water, 40 gallons waste  
**POWER:** 2 x 600-hp Cummins with Mercury Zeus pod drives (Volvo Penta 435-hp IPS600 pods also available)  
**SPEED:** 29 knots top, 25 knots cruise  
**PRICE:** \$1.35 million  
**CONTACT:** Hunt Yachts, Portsmouth, R.I. (401) 324-4201. [www.hunt-yachts.com](http://www.hunt-yachts.com)

lier; it's just astonishingly smooth if you are used to the majority of the brands that Hunt competes against. The short, steep 30-inch chop on Rhode Island's Narragansett Bay produced a barely discernible flutter underfoot at 28 knots. I have been on a number of 45- to 60-footers that pound relentlessly in a 12-inch chop at 25 knots; shame on those builders for presenting such inept and limiting designs to an unwitting public.

Back to the Hunt. She slid up and over the hump with no fuss at all. No doubt, the forward placement of the engines is partially responsible for this uneventful transition to plane, which is unusual because pod power's horizontal thrust and the engines' usual position well aft tend to send the bow skyward.

The boat heels just right for the turn rate, what Volvo calls a "true turn." Just like riding a bike or flying in an airplane, you feel centrifugal force in a turn directly downward through your feet rather than sideways.

Back at the dock, the IPS joystick performed as advertised, working the boat into a tight slip with grace and certitude. There is little challenge to docking one of these boats, with IPS taking the fun out of boat handling.

Led by David Chang, Global Yachts — the yard that builds the larger Hunt models in Taiwan — loves a challenge. It could build almost anything made of metal, composites or wood that goes on a boat if asked, and whatever it makes probably would work better than anything you can buy off the shelf.

The yacht's fittings are a marvel. The railing stanchion bases are machined from solid stainless-steel billets because castings can contain contaminants that bleed rust. The varnished-teak cap rail has S-joints with blind fasteners for a clean appearance and fewer gaps and splits over time.

When Hunt Yachts president Peter Van Lancker told Chang, in his colorfully unambiguous way, that the original stainless-steel sliding

cockpit doors left a lot to be desired, the next hull came with a Global-made door with a far smoother mechanism and multiple position stops. Same with the vertical sliding saloon windows, made in-house by Global, which also makes some of the finest props in the world in terms of efficiency and smoothness. It's good to see that Yankee ingenuity is alive and well in Taiwan.

People who have owned six or eight high-end boats may appreciate a Hunt the most because we can only judge well and truly by close comparison. Although she's a pretty picture at the dock, the Hunt 44 is most at home well offshore — gentle on the bones, quiet, predictable, ruly. Be sure to run other boats first; you'll feel that much better about buying the Hunt. ■

### Did you know?

The Hunt 44 has won several awards, including the 2012 AIM Marine Group Editor's Choice Award for Best Down East (35-45 feet) and Best New Powerboat at the 2012 Newport International Boat Show.





# A HISTORY OF EXCELLENCE

1908

Charles Raymond Hunt is born in Duxbury, Mass.

1932

Hunt leaves his job with Boston-based naval architect Frank Paine to form Concordia Co. with Waldo Howland.

1938-1939

The partners introduce the Concordia yawl and the 24-foot International 110 with a ballasted fin keel and sloop rig.

1940s

Hunt tinkers with lobster boat designs and comes up with the Huntform series, a forerunner of deep-vee powerboats.

1946

Hunt introduces an early version of the deep-vee hull with Sea Blitz.

1957

Hunt, Dick Fisher and Bob Pierce dream up an innovative trihull shape that becomes the famous 13-foot unsinkable Boston Whaler. The boat debuts at the New York Boat Show in 1958.

1958

Hunt produces the first wooden deep-vee hull, with lifting strakes and 24 degrees of deadrise. The 23-foot boat is used as a tender, turning heads in Newport, R.I. Dick Bertram notices and orders a 31-foot version.



Bertram 31



Concordia Harrier



Huntform 37



Lucky Moppie

1960

Dick Bertram's 31-foot Moppie, built as a Hunt deep-vee, sets a record in the 1960 Miami-Nassau Race. Bertram soon begins production of the Bertram 31 in fiberglass. It's a huge hit, making Dick Bertram a wealthy man.

1961

Hunt founds C. Raymond Hunt Associates in Boston, with partner John Deknatel. The naval architecture firm is formed to deal with the massive influx of design projects resulting from the popularity of the Bertram 31. The company is incorporated in 1966.

Early 1960s

Hunt attempts to secure patents on the deep-vee hull, but the patent is denied on a technicality. Other companies copy Hunt's design without compensating him.

1966

C. Raymond Hunt Associates incorporates as a company and introduces the Surfhunter 25, which soon gains popularity because of its superior stability and handling.

1978

Hunt dies at age 70.

1990

Deep-vee hulls from C. Raymond Hunt Associates go on duty for the Coast Guard, law enforcement agencies and rescue operations.

1998

Hunt Yachts is founded to build designs from C. Raymond Hunt Associates, establishing the firm as the only U.S.-based boat-builder operated by naval architects.

2003

The Hunt Harrier 36 wins a National Marine Manufacturers Association award for innovation, the industry's highest honor.



The Hunt 52 is built by Global Yachts in Taiwan. Peter Van Lancker (below) is president and CEO of Hunt Yachts.

HUNT from Page 55

grandfather was a thinker on a grand scale. He wasn't interested in the details. He was always thinking outside the box."

Dick Bertram saw Hunt's 23-foot tender perform well in nasty conditions near Newport and promptly ordered a 31-foot version, which he called Moppie. He entered it in the 160-mile Miami-Nassau Race in 1960, and the boat set a course record. Like the tender, Moppie's hull form featured 24 degrees of deadrise; a rounded, bell-shaped vee; and lifting strakes to promote planing and reduce spray.

Bertram was quick to note the inherent stability of Hunt's hull in rough water at high speeds, and the enhanced tracking and turning ability. The boat was simply more comfortable and easier to handle, all major pluses Bertram knew would appeal to the burgeoning powerboat market as fiberglass construction was getting real traction in the early 1960s. Bertram based the enormously popular Bertram 31 on Moppie's design, and without patent protection, other boatbuilders copied Hunt's hull.

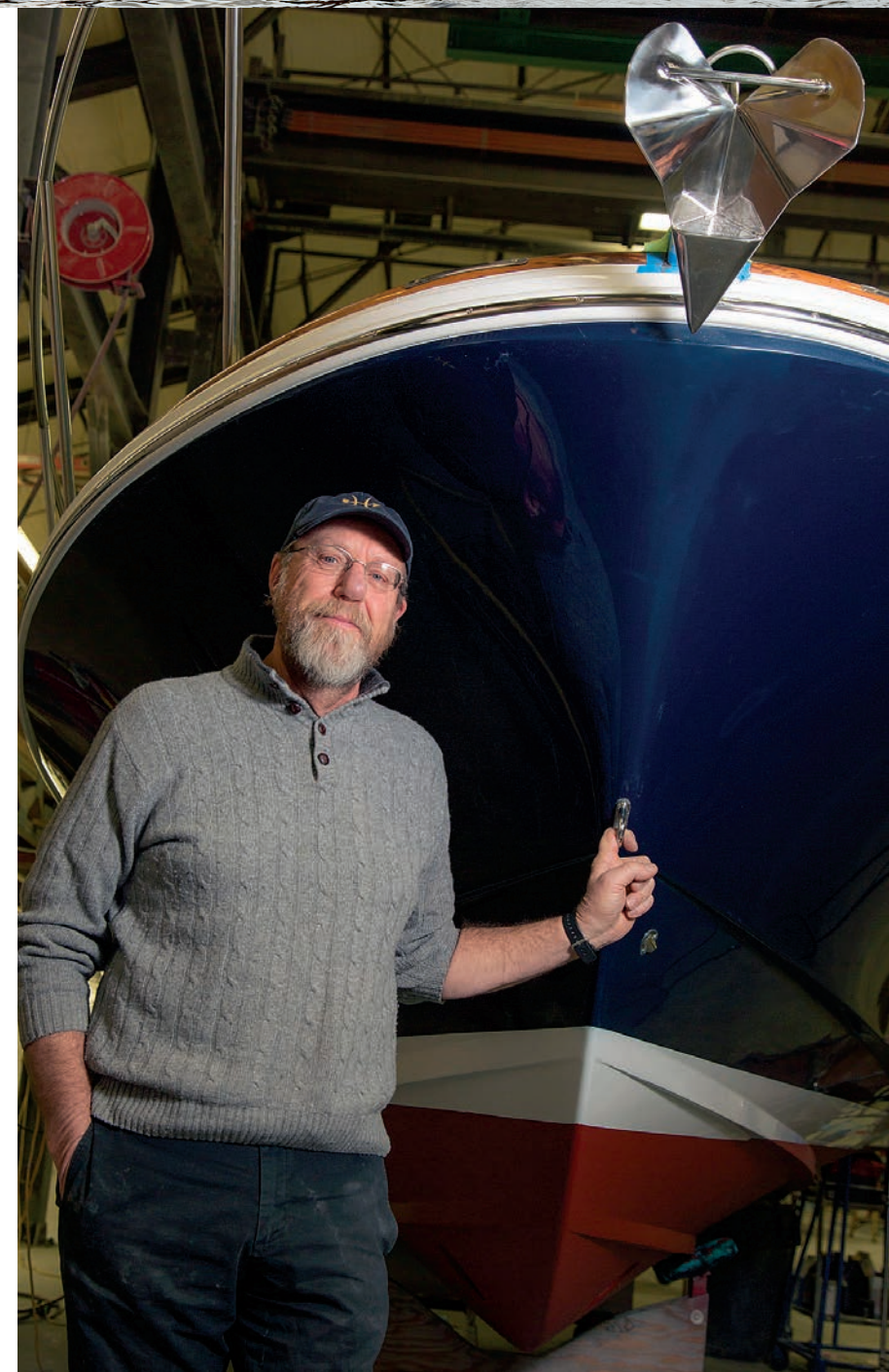
"Hunt's deep-vee hull marked a paradigm shift," says Peter Van Lancker, president and CEO of Hunt Yachts. "There was a clear difference between the deep-vee hull form and everything that preceded it. It still remains the hull shape of choice in the industry."

Grady-White, Boston Whaler, Alden, Pearson, Hinckley, Palmer Johnson, Lyman Morse, Chris-Craft, Garwood and many other builders incorporated Hunt's deep-vee into their boats and, as Van Lancker says, most of the leading builders today still do.

Hunt, who died in 1978 at age 70, lacks the name recognition of the famous Herreshoff clan, but among high-performance powerboat enthusiasts he's considered the father of the form. "To me he was just my granddad, but I knew he was pretty remarkable. You could tell just by being around him," Hunt II says, recalling times he spent with his grandfather.

The family trade

In his later years, Hunt spent much of his time at the family farmhouse in Tilton, N.H., a spacious home more than two centuries old set on 26 acres. "When I knew him best, my grandfather was studying trees, tree rings, the growth of trees, all the nature that was around him," Hunt II says. "We spent a lot of time in the



PETER BOYCE; DANIEL FORSTER (FROM TOP)



**A FINE FLEET:** The Surfhunter 25 center console is available with a variety of power options.



woods together. Wherever he was he seemed to be able to tune in to nature in a way that's very unusual. He'd see things in nature that no one else saw. He was always curious about everything."

Although Hunt II has always loved sailing, just like his grandfather and father, he originally planned to teach after graduating from Hampshire College in Amherst, Mass., in 1983. "I thought I'd do something a little different. You can see how that worked out," he says.

Hunt II tried teaching for a few years, but eventually he found himself drawn to boatbuilding. He landed a job at Concordia Custom Yachts in South Dartmouth, Mass., an offshoot of Concordia Co., which seemed fitting. In a sense, Hunt II had come home. He learned the boatbuilding business from the ground up at Concordia

Custom Yachts. "I was building high-end composite racing machines from Kevlar, epoxy and carbon fiber. I learned a lot about the technology of composite building," he says.

When C. Raymond Hunt Associates hooked up with Concordia Co. to build boats of its own design, Hunt II joined the new enterprise, the forerunner of the present-day Hunt Yachts. "In the early days I did a lot of boatbuilding," Hunt II says. "I'd be out there with the guys on the floor, and slowly that transitioned as we developed more product to doing more manufacturing engineering."

Van Lancker joined the company in 2000 after working for such companies as Boston Whaler and Outboard Marine Corp. "I'd hired C. Raymond Hunt Associates to do design work for me from way back," Van Lancker says. "I was their customer from a design point of view and the relationship just continued."

In the early days of Hunt Yachts, Van Lancker worked to streamline the manufacturing side of the business, then moved on to do the same thing with sales. Today Hunt Yachts continues to thrive, turning out high-end performance boats in keeping with Hunt tradition.

"I always remember my grandfather talking to me about maple seed pods," Hunt II says. "He was fascinated that nature could create a seed pod that flew like a helicopter."

Hunt II laughs and recalls how his grandfather would hold the brown oblong wing up to the light and examine it for a long moment.

"He'd look at the veins and say the pod would make an interesting structure for a sail. He'd see the simplicity in nature and extract lessons from it for his designs. He was an interesting man that way." ■

BILLY BLACK