

## Back Cove 34

# User Friendly

From the spoon shaped bow to her gently sloped transom, the design elements of Back Cove Yachts speak to a Maine lobster boat heritage. Yet below the surface are modern V-hulls and inside a layout that is roomy and inviting.

The Maine boat building industry has, for centuries, produced rugged, sea going vessels and today the popularity of the down-east motor yacht continues to grow worldwide, with builders such as Back Cove leading the way.

The Back Cove story began in 2003 when Back Cove Yachts and the design team from her sister company, Sabre Yachts, collaborated to create and introduce a simple but elegant power boat range, answering concerns from the market that too many companies were designing

increasingly larger boats. They obviously did something right as by the end of 2012 they had launched their 500th boat.

The styling was to be reminiscent of the Maine lobster boat: a spoon bow, a gently sloped reverse transom and a touch of tumblehome in the topsides were blended to create a striking and elegant style. From a practical perspective, systems were to be simple and efficient to minimise the cost of ownership. A single diesel engine propulsion system and standard bow thruster were chosen for efficiency and manoeuvrability in tight spaces.

These practical design features continue to strike a chord in the marketplace and the Back Cove 34 is an outstanding example of what the company has achieved.

**THE BACK COVE 34 IS AN OUTSTANDING EXAMPLE OF A DOWN-EAST-STYLE BOAT.**



**THE GRACEFUL SHEERLINE AND SLIGHTLY REVERSED TRANSOM WITH JUST A HINT OF TUMBLEHOME GIVES THE BACK COVE 34 A CLASSIC DOWN-EAST LOOK.**

TEXT BY BARRY THOMPSON

If you enjoy inviting lots of friends aboard to share your boating fun, the Back Cove 34 could be for you. There's plenty of built-in seating in both the deckhouse and cockpit – no need to perch on the gunwales or carry folding deck chairs. Below, you'll find a comfortable U-shaped lounge that converts to a berth for overnighting. A single diesel makes the Back Cove 34 economical; lightweight construction makes her fast.

**Entertaining Cockpit**

The cockpit area of the Back Cover 34 is very suited to the Kiwi and Aussie cruising scene, from the wide boarding platform to the generous seating. There is a transom door on the starboard side that leads into the spacious cockpit

from the full width-boarding platform. If you are into fishing then utilising the space outside the transom is probably best. A rod holder mounted bait station would be an easy addition.

The cockpit is centred around seating, where there is an L-shaped bench seat and a foldaway aft-facing seat, affording comfortable lounging while underway or when anchored in a peaceful bay. There is also a removable cockpit table between the two and moulded steps either side lead up to the wide side decks. Cockpit hatches allow ease of access to the lazarette area. While our boat was finished with an antiskid fiberglass moulded cockpit sole, you also have the option of teak. This is also possible for the transom boarding platform.

**BELOW TOP: THE COCKPIT AND HELM DECK FORM ONE HUGE AREA WHICH CAN BE DIVIDED BY DROP COVERS.**

**BOTTOM: THE DEEP-V HULL DESIGN IS BASED ON DOWNWARD-TURNING CHINES AND LONG SPRAY RAILS TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL LIFT.**







**TOP: THE HELM DECK IS AIRY AND BRIGHT, WITH OVERHEAD HATCHES, OPENING SIDE WINDOWS AND A CENTRE-OPENING WINDSHIELD.**

**BELOW: A GOOD SIZE HELM THAT IS CAPABLE OF TAKING MULTIPLE MFD SCREENS.**

**Open Helm Deck**

It's a step up to the saloon level and with no solid aft bulkhead the transition between indoor and outdoor living is seamless. A soft canvas curtain can be fitted to offer some internal privacy. The helm deck is airy and bright, with overhead hatches, opening side windows and a centre-opening windshield.

The saloon or helm deck area is divided into three zones, with the cherry timber finished galley and helm to starboard and raised dinette to port. The inlaid table is a fine example of this Maine boat builder's craftsmanship and tradition, evident throughout the Back Cove 34. The table can be dropped down to convert the space into an extra sleeping area.

A Stidd helm chair provides comfort for the helmsman underway and forward of the dinette, a double mate's seat is a comfortable perch for your guests.

The fore-aft galley features a deep stainless steel sink unit set into a solid surface countertop, with two-burner cooktop, microwave, plus plenty of storage in lockers and dovetailed drawers. The fridge/freezer units are located below the helm and mates seats.

It is nice to see the helm station big enough for multiple MFD units, which in the case of our boat was all left to a single 15" Simrad NSS MFD screen. Even with the VHF, rocker switches, bow thruster toggle, autopilot display and SmartCraft electronic controls there was still space for plenty more.

**Down Below**

The Back Cove 34 is essentially a single-cabin boat, but does have provision to sleep up to six people. Below deck is a large and comfortable island berth forward and a convertible L-settee which can be isolated from the cabin with a curtain. This effectively gives you two cabins forward, plus the convertible dinette.

I was surprised at the nearly 2m headroom, which certainly gives the impression of a much larger space. Side ports and deck hatches provide extra light and ventilation, with a 'teak and holly' high pressure laminate sole adding a classic 'ship' appeal.

To starboard, behind the draw curtain that divides off the main cabin is a cedar-lined hanging locker with a TV mounted on a swivel bracket above. The centre island berth has drop-in storage spaces and drawers below. With another hanging locker on the starboard side, there is no shortage of places to stow gear. The moulded composite hull liner is framed by beautifully executed minimalistic interior woodwork – subtle, yet classy.

The Back Cove 34 has one head, but it's generous in size and even features a completely separate shower stall with bi-fold doors. Again, continuing Back Cove's criteria for a low-maintenance interior, the moulded surfaces ensure the head/shower space is easily cleaned. The finish is enhanced with a cherry wood bulkhead and solid surface vanity.







**Performance**

Back Cove's are available with a single engine only, although the parent company, Sabre, does offer a range of Sabre-branded down-east-style cruisers from 11.5m to 16.5m with twin engines.

The deep-V hull design is based on downward-turning chines and long spray rails to provide additional lift. Construction is based on resin infusion, with Airex foam used as a core material to reduce weight, as well as engine and exhaust noise. Tests carried out showed a very acceptable 76dBA @ 22 knots and 84dBA @ WOT at the helm.

Access to the engine room is extraordinary and certainly

makes it easy if you need to get into the area to work on the machinery. With the flick of a switch, the helm deck, including the port side dinette, lifts hydraulically to expose the yacht's mechanical systems below.

Standard power is a single Cummins 380hp diesel, but the first Back Cove 34 to arrive in New Zealand has been upgraded to the 480hp QSB9, which is based on the same block as the smaller engine. Any new boat being ordered today would probably be fitted with the new QSB 6.7-litre engine, which replaces the existing 5.9-litre engine, which was not available when the order was placed for the current 34 we reviewed.

**TOP:** BELOW DECK IS A LARGE AND COMFORTABLE ISLAND BERTH FORWARD AND A CONVERTIBLE L-SETTEE.

**BELOW:** THE L SHAPE SETTEE CAN CONVERT TO A SECOND BERTH WITH A PRIVACY CURTAIN.



**THE HELM DECK, INCLUDING THE PORT SIDE DINETTE, LIFTS HYDRAULICALLY TO EXPOSE THE YACHT'S MECHANICAL SYSTEMS BELOW.**





With the Cummins 380hp, the Back Cove 34 turns a very respectable cruise speed of 18-20 knots and top speed of 25 knots. The upgraded 480hp engine moves the 34 to a cruise in the 22-24 knot region and top speed of close to 30 knots. Range at 22 knots is around 250NM and at 24 knots this drops marginally to around 240NM. At WOT @ 3450

rpm and 29.8 knots, the range is still a respectable 188NM. Conversely if you are happy to cruise at a sedate 9 knots then you can expect around 380NM.

NZ agent James Purvis made a few changes to the standard package by adding a low rpm Kohler genset, due to the boat running all-electric appliances as opposed to gas and he also had the water tankage upsized by 90 litres to closer to 400 litres. "When you're cruising, there's nothing worse than running out of water and unlike the USA where people use marinas to tie up overnight, Kiwi cruising doesn't have the same option, so having plenty of water aboard is essential", says James.

Also located in the engine room is the Marine Air reverse cycle air conditioning main unit which feeds the pilothouse but not the cabins. Again, this is an option and the choice of the owner. The boat is also available with an Eberspagher diesel heater.

**Summary**

The Back Cove 34 can be summed up in two words – usability and low maintenance! For a boat of just over 10m, it is exceptionally spacious, thanks especially to the 3.66m beam. With the popularity of the down-east motor yacht growing, Back Cove has secured a genuine space in the market and its sales success, especially in Australia and now hopefully New Zealand, is evidence of that.

You can't fault the finish and only the very best fittings and highest quality equipment is used throughout. Back Cove has spent the past 10 years establishing an enviable reputation as one of the world's leading builders of down-east-style boats and in the new Back Cove 34 you'll find no better example.



**30 KNOTS ON A SINGLE ENGINE OR CRUISE AT 25 KNOTS WITH GREAT ECONOMY.**

**FUEL & PERFORMANCE DATA**

**Back Cove 34' - Cummins QSB 5.9 (480hp) rpm**

knots	L/h	L/NM	range	NM	dBA
600	4.2	1.9	0.45	1398	63
800	5.3	3.4	0.64	980	70
1000	6.2	4.9	0.79	794	73
1200	7.2	7.2	1.00	631	74
1400	8.1	10.2	1.26	499	73
1600	8.9	14.8	1.66	380	73
1800	9.9	21.6	2.18	289	74
2000	12.0	28.8	2.40	263	74
2200	14.0	34.8	2.49	253	76
2400	17.0	41.6	2.45	257	77
2600	19.5	48.5	2.48	254	79
2800	22.0	56.0	2.55	247	81
3000	24.8	66.6	2.69	235	82
3200	26.8	81.8	3.05	206	83
3400	29.4	96.5	3.28	192	84
3450	29.8	99.9	3.35	188	84

**Fuel capacity = 700 litres**  
**Range is based on 90% of the fuel capacity**  
**Noise in decibels (dBA) was measured at the helm**

**TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS**

Boat design name:	Back Cove 34	Drive train:	Conventional Shaft	Head:	Bemis
Year launched:	2012	Propeller:	24"x31.5" ZF 4-blade NiBrAl	Woodwork:	Cherry
Designer:	Back Cove Yachts	Generator:	Kohler	Trim tabs:	Lenco LectroTab
Builder:	Back Cove Yachts	Inverter:	Xantrex	Helm chair:	Stidd 500N
LOA:	11.45m	Air conditioning:	Marine Air	Upholstery:	Sunbrealla & Ultraether
Beam:	3.67m	Bow thruster:	Side-Power	<b>ELECTRONICS</b>	
Draft:	0.94m	Anchor winch:	Quick	Autopilot:	Simrad
Displacement (dry):	7.5 tonnes	Anchors:	Ultra 16 kg	GPS/plotter/sounder:	Simrad
Max speed:	29.8 knots	Steering:	Sea Star Hydraulic	VHF:	Simrad
Cruise speed:	24 knots	Engine controls:	Electronic	Radar:	Simrad
Construction:	GRP	Lighting:	LED	Entertainment systems:	Jensen
Fuel cap.:	700 litres	Paint (antifouling):	International	Base price of boat (approx.):	\$A376,000 (\$NZ479,000)
Water cap.:	380 litres	Hatches:	Lewmar	Price as tested (approx.):	\$A470,000 (\$NZ599,000)
Engines make:	Cummins QSB 5.9 @ 480hp	Wipers:	Imtra		
Gearboxes:	ZF 85A	Windows:	Nomod		

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