

# Simple Pleasures

Back Cove made its newest classic, the 26, to be enjoyed easily by a cruising couple. Story by BRAD KOVACH Photos by GARY JOHN NORMAN

## AT A GLANCE

### BACK COVE 26

Base Price: \$115,000

Flat Out: 25.4 knots

Engine: (1) 200-hp Yanmar 4LHA-DTP diesel inboard





**WHAT LIES BENEATH:** A lift-up hatch provides access to the Yanmar diesel.



The layout is nothing unusual, but it's very well done. There's a head with vanity to starboard, a railroad galley to port and a convertible dinette/V-berth up front. Headroom is 5'7". An overhead hatch and four screened portholes allow for cross-ventilation, plus dockside air conditioning is available as an option. There is a good amount of storage space under the V-berth and in the galley cabinets, but these areas could benefit from pullout storage bins or partitions, and a gel coat finish.

Other notable options for owners include a hardtop, an anchor windlass with bow roller, and choice of four hull and interior fabric colors. Yet even without these frills, a cruising couple will find the new Back Cove 26 a pleasure to operate and to own.

## PERFORMANCE

LOA.....	26'6"
Beam.....	9'4"
Draft.....	2'6"
Disp.....	8,500 lbs.
Transom Deadrise.....	14 degrees
Water.....	30 gals.
Fuel.....	100 gals.

**Test Power:** (1) 200-hp Yanmar 4LHA-DTP diesel inboard w/ZF transmission turning a 18" x 23.5", four-blade, Nibral prop through a 2.03:1 gear ratio. Optional power is a single 240-hp Yanmar.

RPM	Knots	GPH	dB-A
1000	6.3	-	65
1250	7.3	0.8	68
1500	8.2	1.2	74
1750	9.1	1.8	79
2000	10.7	2.6	81
2250	14.3	3.7	82
2500	16.9	4.5	84
2750	19.4	5.3	85
3000	21.8	6.9	86
3250	24.3	8.9	88
3400	25.4	10.8	88

Speeds measured by GPS in the Gulf of Mexico off Dunedin, Fla., in calm conditions w/two people aboard, ¾ fuel and ⅓ water. Fuel flow numbers provided by Back Cove. Sound levels measured at the helm in dB-A.

**Standard Equipment** (major items): Trim tabs; bowthruster; fire suppression system; 30-amp shore power w/50-foot cord; windshield wipers; swim ladder; single-burner stove; fridge; microwave; MSD w/macerator and holding tank; convertible dinette w/table; teak-and-holly cabin sole.

**Optional Equipment** (major items): Choice of hull color; hardtop; anchor windlass w/bow roller; oil-changing system; 7,000-BTU dockside air conditioning; inverter; radar arch; port and starboard aft jump seats; AM/FM stereo w/CD-player; swim platform; cockpit shower.

**Warranty:** Five-year limited coverage on hull and deck structure; one-year limited coverage on parts manufactured by Back Cove.

Back Cove Yachts, (207) 594-8844. [www.backcoveyachts.com](http://www.backcoveyachts.com). Reader service #178.

## Edinburgh in Florida?

With its Spanish moss, charming Main Street and colorful past, Dunedin is Old Florida at its finest. Its name is Gaelic for Edinburgh—evocative of the Scots who were among its first settlers—and athletes from around the world come to “toss the caber” in the annual Highland Games here.

Locals call the seaside community quaint and natural. “We get some traffic from Clearwater and Tampa, but it remains its own little place,” says resident Ron Tucker. It’s the kind of town where you can still find a “Gone fishin’” sign on a closed storefront or a public dog bowl on a downtown sidewalk. Its



Caladesi Island State Park (accessible only by boat) is consistently named as one of the top beaches in the U.S., and its 40-mile-long Pinellas Trail helped Dunedin earn a ranking as the best walking town in America.

Dunedin’s eclectic city center catches the ocean breezes, along with visitors to its sometimes funky, sometimes ritzy string of shops and restaurants. “We’ll go downtown to have drinks and dinner, and never end up at the same place twice,” says resident Mark Reder.

Bon Appétite and Marina Café overlook the Gulf of Mexico and lie across from Dunedin Marina. Chances are you can find a crowd at Kelly’s enjoying pints of Dunedin’s own Lowlands beer after hours. [www.dunedin-fl.com](http://www.dunedin-fl.com).



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oating enthusiasts around the world have long admired Maine lobster yachts. And why not? These vessels are salty yet sophisticated, old-fashioned yet eye-catching. Back Cove Yachts has designed its authentic Downeast pocket cruisers for those who want that Maine-built look in a boat that’s not so big it requires a lot of work or crew to enjoy.

A sister company to Sabreline, itself a maker of New England-inspired express boats and flybridge sedans from 36 to 47 feet, Back Cove was founded two years ago in Rockland, Maine. Its models are built by North End Composites, a well-established company that has also done work for the likes of Hinckley, Shelter Island and Grady-White. Back Cove launched its first model, the 29, in the fall of 2003. The 26 is its newest craft, which is offered at a base price of \$115,000.

Yacht Registry provided a boat for us to cruise aboard in the waters off Dunedin, Fla. (see “Edinburgh in Florida?”). It was rigged with a 200-hp Yanmar diesel inboard. In fact, all Back Coves are powered by economical, single diesels and also come with a bowthruster. The 26 produced a top-end speed of 25.4 knots (3400 rpm) with this power plant and had a range of more than 300 nautical miles when cruising at 16.9 knots (2500 rpm). Sight lines from the raised helm deck were excellent—the 26 runs nearly flat at cruise with-

out the standard trim tabs applied—and the captain is positioned high enough so that visibility is never obstructed.

The 26’s good performance can be attributed to its modified deep-V hull with 14 degrees deadrise at the transom. Wide chines increase lift and stability, thereby helping the boat plane quickly and grip the water for sharp turns at wide-open throttle. Spray rails with a downward angle keep the 26 dry as the graceful spoon bow parts the waves. A shallow prop pocket allows the engine to be mounted low and amidships for enhanced balance, and reduces the draft to 2’6". The hull itself is constructed of strong, lightweight E-glass and Divinycell foam.

The Back Cove 26 is fashioned for capable cruising and entertaining. The aft cockpit is as roomy as those aboard some fishing boats and can accommodate a group of anglers or a number of dive tanks, deck chairs and water toys (some of which can be stored in the lazarette below). A self-draining gutter borders the cockpit—just clean up with a hose—and steps lead up to the wide sidedecks. Optional port and starboard jump seats are available at the transom, as is a sturdy swim platform.

The entire helm deck lifts up on gas struts to expose the engine and related systems. The layout here is impeccable, with lots of room and plaques identifying each major part. At the helm itself, two console seats rest atop storage cubbies with drawers sized just right for holding fishing tackle. The helm gauges lie flat



**THE ART OF CRUISING:** Behind its traditional lines (above), the 26 has a bright and cozy cabin (below and bottom) with cherry wood joinery and a teak-and-holly sole.



above the wheel rather than slanted, where they would be easier to read when seated. An angled panel forward will hold flush-mounted electronics. The single-lever throttle is on the starboard sidewall; the bowthruster joystick is behind the wheel.

The cabin is bright and comfortable, with cherry wood paneling and a teak-and-holly sole to add a touch of luxury. The layout is nothing unusual, but it’s very well done. There’s a head with vanity to starboard, a railroad galley to port and a convertible dinette/V-berth up front. Headroom is 5’7". An overhead hatch and four screened portholes allow for cross-ventilation, plus dockside air conditioning is available as an option. There is a good amount of storage space under the V-berth and in the galley cabinets, but these areas could benefit from pullout storage bins or partitions, and a gel coat finish.

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