

INSTANT CLASSIC THE BACK COVE 29



HIGH AND DRY: A stout pilothouse with tall windows and an overhang protect the owner and crew of the Back Cove 29 on a blustery day.

It was a gusty day on the Tred Avon River as we pulled away from the protection of the Oxford, Md., harbor in the new Back Cove 29. Moving out into the center of the river, I turned upstream and moved the single-lever throttle all the way forward. This hardtop model wasted no time coming onto plane and made quick work of the stiff chop that showed more than a little white water on top.

Coming into a wide section of the river at full throttle, I maneuvered the boat closer to shore and warned my passengers that I was preparing to test its turning capabilities. As I reached for the throttle, Jim Karr, the owner of Oxford Boat Yard (which supplied the Back Cove 29 for my test), suggested I make the turn at a wide-open speed of 27.4 knots. When I did, I was pleased to note that the boat banked just slightly and carved through the turn without a hint of pitching or tripping over its own beautifully curved spoon bow. Then, I slowed to about 22 knots, a very comfortable speed in the conditions we experienced that blustery day.

The boat's excellent handling and per-

formance are the result of a deep-V hull with a sharp entry, 22 degrees of deadrise amidships and 16 degrees at the transom. A shallow prop pocket helps keep the engine mounted low for good balance, and keeps the draft to a minimum (27"). The chine, which has a slight downturn, extends from the transom to the stem; it's wide enough aft and amidships to provide good roll control yet thin forward, where it lifts above the waterline to both look good and knock down spray.

The test boat was powered by a single 315-hp Yanmar diesel. According to factory tests on a Back Cove 29 rigged with the same power, the boat will burn about 10.8 gph at 3300 rpm (22 knots) for a range of approximately 270 nautical miles (that's with a 10-percent fuel reserve).

During my test, the Back Cove 29 produced none of the creaking noises that can be indicative of poor joinerwork or construction. In addition, the hull transmitted a minimum amount of noise. That's due in part to meticulous soundproofing, as well as to the advanced composite used in the boat's construction by the builder, North End Composites of Rockland, Maine.

"North End Composites was founded in 1975 and has a well-established reputation for building, tooling and producing leading-edge laminated hulls, decks and other parts for many major yacht builders," said company President Jonathan Spaulding. "The Back Cove 29 uses a white ISO-NPG gel coat and vinylester backup resin for good looks and optimal protection against osmotic blistering, a vacuum-bagged Divinycell core in the running surfaces for a strong and quiet ride, and multi-axial E-glass to reinforce the structure."

Even with its advanced construction, this design is a classic, Downeast beauty to behold. That spoon bow I mentioned earlier rolls gently down to the centerline underwater almost uninterrupted, while the sheerline forward combines with a cambered and reverse-curved transom that shows a subtle tumblehome. The hardtop model I tested had a solid pilothouse with a modest overhang to protect the bridgedeck from rain, a large clear cockpit and wide sidedecks.

Notable cockpit features included a custom coaming fitting for the flagstaff, a deep locker in the sole for fender and line

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The Back Cove 29 combines a traditional Downeast look with some head-turning performance.

Story by CAPT. JOHN WOOLDRIDGE Photos by JOHN BILDAHL



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Specifications:

LOA	29'6"
Beam	10'6"
Draft	2'7"
Displacement	10,000 lbs.
Bridge Clearance	8'2"
Transom Deadrise	16 degrees
Water	30 gals.
Fuel	150 gals.

Test Power: (1) 315-hp Yanmar 6LP-STA diesel turning a four-bladed Michigan Nibral 20" x 22.5" propeller through a 2.04:1 gear ratio.

Performance:

RPM	MPH	Knots	dB-A
900	5.5	4.8	72
1200	7.1	6.2	75
1500	8.4	7.3	77
1800	9.0	7.8	84
2100	12.3	10.7	83
2400	16.8	14.6	82
2700	19.5	17.0	84
3000	23.6	20.5	85
3300	27.3	23.7	87
3600	31.5	27.4	89

Speeds measured by GPS in the Tred Avon River near Oxford, Md., in choppy water and 10- to 15-knot winds w/three people aboard, full fuel and full water tanks. Sound levels taken at the pilothouse helm in dB-A.

Base Price (w/test power): \$160,000

Standard Equipment (major items): SidePower 40 bowthruster; Marelon through-hull valves; Fire-boy engine compartment extinguisher system; Lewmar overhead salon hatch; four Schmidt opening portlights w/screens; Todd adjustable captain's helm seat; Origo alcohol/110-volt A.C. single-burner stove; dual-voltage refrigerator; microwave; AM/FM/CD stereo w/interior and exterior speakers, plus wired remote; hot and cold cockpit shower; electric toilet w/holding tank and macerator.

Optional Equipment (major items): Todd companion seat to port; 3.8-kW Westerbeke generator w/sound shield; hardtop w/center opening window and two overhead ventilation hatches; anchor windlass; oil changing system; 9,000-Btu air conditioning w/reverse-cycle heat; 1,800-watt inverter; 316 stainless steel radar arch; port and starboard aft cockpit seats w/backrest bolsters and filler.

Warranty: One-year limited coverage against defects in materials and workmanship for parts manufactured by Back Cove Yachts; five-year limited warranty against structural defects in the hull and premature weathering or deterioration of the gel coat below the waterline.

Back Cove Yachts, (207) 594-8844. www.backcoveyachts.com. For more information, contact (866) 626-2846 or www.motorboating.com/motorboat/productinfo.

OPEN AND SHUT: The bridgedeck offers engine



WARM WOOD: Ash strips soften the V-berth (left) and cherry anchors the galley (right).

storage, and molded steps to the sidedecks. The bridgedeck is slightly higher than the cockpit, and it raises with the flick of a switch to give very wide access to the engine compartment. When it is closed, the standard seating layout includes an L-shaped bench to port atop molded storage boxes, plus an adjustable captain's seat. This seat, coupled with a tilt steering wheel, made it comfortable for me to drive standing or sitting. Visibility was first-rate.

With its ash ceiling strips and varnished teak-and-holly sole, the cabin is sure to please those who value boats of a traditional design. But it's a contemporary cruiser, too, as is evidenced in areas like

the galley. In that space, there's a solid surface countertop with a removable section that hides the single-burner stove, plus a built-in microwave and cherry cabinetry.

According to Spaulding, the company plans to display a soft-top version of the boat at this fall's Newport Boat Show. But if you're in the market for a modern pilothouse cruiser that will let you start boating a little earlier in the season and carry on well into the fall, a boat that handles crisply and runs quietly, the hardtop model of the Back Cove 29 will fill the bill nicely. ☺

