The Back Cove 30 takes a proven design to a new level of comfort and performance.

By Peter A. Janssen
Photography by Billy Black

It's easy to like a boat when you are gunkholing around the midcoast of Maine in the prime of summer. But now, after a couple of days of leisurely cruising, it was time to truly test the mettle of the new Back Cove 30.
Burns says, “and everybody had room to move around.”

“We had eight couples on the boat during the rendezvous,”

and the weather-protected helm deck. The redesigned

to create two separate social areas — the open-air cockpit

which provides easy boarding access from the swim plat-

As we rounded Small Point at the mouth of the

As compared to the 29, the first change I noticed on

I boarded the 30 in Boothbay the previous day, just

by the boat, which is a direct successor to the original

29-footer that launched the Back Cove brand. “We
turned the engine on my time on board. In most condi-
tions, the 30 is an easy-riding boat with

The captain has the option of an adjustable Stidd helm chair on the starboard side; across to port is a raised seat that can hold two people easily or three if they’re friendly. “We wanted to create an area where three people can sit facing forward,” Burns says. This is indeed the prime spot to watch the world go by, but it’s the settee along the port side I consider the most significant addition. “People wanted a sleeping area on the helm deck,” Burns says, as he showed me how the settee pulls out to form a 36-inch-wide bed. On the starboard side of the helm deck is an additional L-shape settee mated to an attractive cherry wood table. A sliding two-piece centerline hatch leads down two steps to the cabin. The upper hatch includes a window to add light to the cabin when it’s closed. Both the galley space and head area are generously proportioned for a boat of this size and style. I had standing headroom throughout, and I’m almost 6 feet 2 inches tall. The single-burner Origo alcohol stove, front-opening refrigerator and microwave give the cook all the tools needed to deliver a hot meal, but given that lunch assembly is a more likely chore, the galley’s standout features are the L-plus feet of linear counter space available for food prep and the ample storage areas above and below.

The forward section of the cabin features a flexible arrangement that allows the V-berth to convert into a three-sided dining area. Throughout, the cabin has a warm nautical feel with a teak and holly sole, a Herreshoff-type wood treatment on the cabin side and a white overhead with cherry strips to match the hardtop over the helm deck.

Back up top, the 30 provides the same wide-side decks and sturdy handrails as its predecessor. But the hull has been redesigned with more tumblehome aft, while the corners of the transom repeat the camber of the hardtop. The spoon bow also has more flare to keep the boat dry, a quality I can attest to based on my time on board. In most conditions, the 30 is an easy-riding boat with 16-degree deadrise at the transom and a small prop pocket that gives a lower, more efficient angle to the drive shaft as well as reducing the draft.

“Running efficiency was a top priority,” Burns says. With bow and stern thrusters, the boat handled easily at the dock and made 16.7 knots and 3,000 rpm while burning only 9 gallons per hour. With the standard 315 hp Yanmar power plant, the boat tops out at more than 25 knots, and engine options up to 380 hp are available.

Engine access is excellent, as the helm deck lifts on two electric struts. Mechanical installations are clean and orderly, and the Racor fuel filter is easy to reach for inspection or cleaning. The battery bank sits in the spacious lazarette, which can accommodate a genset — though our boat was equipped with an inverter, which created additional storage space. A combination of standard and optional features provides all the amenities and comforts needed not only for short trips, but also for extended voyages. “We wanted this to be a social day boat or a cruiser for a couple,” Collins says.

I can easily imagine not only taking the Back Cove 30 around the protected waters of mid-coast Maine, as we did, but also down the waterway to Florida, to the Bahamas or running around the San Juan Islands or the Chesapeake Bay. You’d be comfortable on board, and you’d be happy admiring the lines of your Down East hull if you sat in your dink or stood on the dock. In short, in moving up from the original 29 to the new 30, Back Cove did a very nice job in updating — and improving — one of its classics.