

Hunter 50CC

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By John Kerr

Sell the cottage, heck, sell the house because you could easily live in this boat...it is a blue water cruising beauty!

With current memories of spending a full week with five of my dearest friends on an older Westerly 45 cruising the western islands of Scotland, I was introduced to the newest Hunter, a 50' center console. Talk about a time warp.

First impressions were somewhat exaggerated but this boat has so much to give. I was immediately impressed by how the modern technologies – we use and rely on today to make boating enjoyable and fun – have been accelerating exponentially of late. Being now in a more modern yacht with its wonderful headliners, interior treatments, glasswork, fittings and easy-to-use hardware so quickly after 'roughing' it, really made me think just how far we have come.

This is a big boat; it looks big and at the dock the twin transom stair access is a real eye catcher. This boat is built on the former 49 hull. However, it did not seem like it. Once sailing, the 50CC seems so much bigger both above and below decks. Perhaps the bonus 6' 8" headroom below contributes to its sense of size.

I have always had a bias for the traditional rear cockpit configuration, but I must say that the Hunter design team has started to convince me of the practicality and comfort dividends available by pushing it forward and having it a tad higher than traditional cockpits. Under sail and without a dodger, we were high and dry and needless to say the visibility was perfect. Watching Toronto-based True North's Alan Mestel back the boat through a narrow gap and effortlessly and practically parallel park with a full range of view is testament to not only the visibility quotient but also to the practical nature and control characteristics despite the windage and prop wash issues we have all had to deal with with bigger boats. The center helm had all the controls right at hand, including the bow thruster directional stick control that I strongly recommend now because they are so reliable and effective.

Coming aboard from the aft, you immediately see one of the first luxuries. Imagine a place where you can escape on a boat: a perfectly placed, aft facing cushioned backrest support seat complete with removable cockpit table. This boat has many escape zones, as I call them, places where you can just go to zone out. This is one of the great ones, but wait, read on, there is one below decks that will blow you away.

The cockpit is graced with the traditional Hunter arch; our test boat came with three electric Harken winches, two primaries and one on the cabin sole. Control lines that lead aft were easily in reach of any of these making single-handing a breeze. A double-ended mainsheet, also accessible, ends by one of the primaries and on the cabin sole.

The scope and impressive deck size provides wonderful forward access especially with the high life lines, easy to grab handrails and an extra step to compensate for the highness of the cockpit. Storage abounds from the forward locker to the aft lazarettes so no panic when you need to load up on the extras you might need spending time aboard.

The classic B&R self-furling mast with its swept back spreaders allows openness aft – free of the traditional backstay one would expect. The in mast sail furling/reefing system worked effortlessly – a marked improvement on previous systems. This boat comes with several sail and mast options including a tall rig. I loved the self-tacking intermediate headsail and its large overlapping sail forward that fixed on a standard easy-to-use Furlex furling system. Though we did not have the intermediate with us on our test sail, it is a nice touch that will pay dividends upwind.

The sailing characteristics for a boat of this size and type are impressive. The 50CC is not a performance cruiser and, in fairness, was not built to address that niche, so any comparison here is not worthy. With the 50CC, you will find a solid, comfortable feel steering upwind and I was able to adopt my favourite steering perch on the side with no problem. Sailing right behind the steering pedestal was great too, with easy view of the related Raymarine instruments. Upwind in 8 knots, we tacked through 80 degrees though I must admit I was guilty of trying to sail too high – it's the racer in me I guess. The boat is easy to get into a groove as far as feel goes. An impressive 5+ knots average speed in medium to light breezes was more than I expected for a boat of this size until I remembered its designer and the fact the hull was based on the 49 hull.

Below is where this boat continues to shine and boasts benefits and great live aboard style and comfort. The high headroom is one of the big contributors to the volume and size below. It is certainly a welcoming and a wonderful space to live in. Cherry veneer and excellent joinery work combined with wonderful hardwood trims are just a few details that will attract you. The configuration boasts a wonderful table to starboard surrounded by a luxurious settee. Together, they convert to a double berth (if needed) though to port there is great sea berth as well. Below is well lit and the use of LED cabin lights and the large windows accent this. Of course, the (now) obligatory flatscreen TV is mounted on the forward bulkhead complimented by a Bose sound system. Simply put, this is great living space that few boats offer so well.

Right below to port is the nav station – a place I migrate to immediately – with its large captain's chair and more than adequate treatments in space for electronics and storage.

Opposite, the galley is a wonderful space with huge galley counter surface made of Karadon and offering

a three-burner stove. Refrigeration is made easy with its front opening fridge/freezer combo and a bonus top-loading freezer. The storage and cupboard configuration is generous.

Forward, a head (with separate shower and head) separates the main cabin from the forward cabin. Our boat was set out with a wonderful queen-sized island berth. Storage abounds here with drawer space below the bed, cedar-lined closets and wonderful tongue and groove wall paneling. Neat reading lights above reinforce the inset LED lighting.

Moving aft, a set of doors right behind the nav station open to a complete washer/dryer set – something you would rarely expect to see. It's well mounted and easy to get at.

Aft, the owner's cabin provides the wow factor. It's a well-balanced collection of features that can't ever disappoint. From its walk-in, cedar-lined closet to the welcoming chaise lounge, to the walkaround bed boasting a Jet Spa tub cleverly located below the bed, one can imagine lounging in this comfort zone anytime. The Jet Spa tub is easily accessed through what Hunter calls a smart flip top mattress that's a snap to fold up. Randy Hoffman, a new Canadian owner had this converted to a set of drawers and related storage compartments. I sense I would default to the tub.

I can't stop thinking how wonderful the features have been put together in this boat. There are too many that you need to see and experience it for yourself. This boat has so much to offer for those that want to live aboard, be comfortable and know they have all the creature comforts of home...and probably more.

Owner's Comments

Randy Hoffman, a proud new owner of the Hunter 50CC just loves his boat. "I had a 43 CC before and have had four boats so far and this one is just great," said Hoffman. "We have had this boat out in 20+ knots and have had no problem hitting 7.5 knots easily. It just ploughs through the waves so easily". Sailing out of Doral Marine Resort in Midland, Hoffman and his family are cruisers enjoying the live aboard lifestyle and destinations that Georgian Bay offers. "The one thing I love most is this boat's performance under sail. The 110 Yanmar is also perfectly matched so that I never feel the boat pushing the engine too hard when we must opt for power." Hoffman has worked closely with both Hunter and True North Yachts to tweak a few things along the way like opting for storage instead of the jet tub and replacing the coffee maker for more galley storage.

Specifications

LOA 49' 11"/15.21 m

LWL 43' 10"/13.36 m

Beam 14' 9"/4.50 m

Draft (shoal/dp.) 5' 6"/7' 0"/1.68/2.13 m

Sail Area (100%) 1,056 sq. ft./98.1 sq. m

Ballast 12,500 lb./5,670 kg
Water 194 gal./734 l
Fuel 162 gal./613 l
Engine 110-hp. Yanmar
Designer Glenn Henderson
Base Price \$380,000

Boat supplied by
True North Yachts
www.truenorthyachts.com

Other Centre Cockpit Models
45CC
www.huntermarine.com

Photo Captions:

Photo 1 - the Hunter 50CC - Great Ready for Luxury Plus

Photo 2 & 3 - The owner's cabin offers a well-appointed collection of features that can't ever disappoint. From its walk-in, cedar-lined closet to the welcoming chaise lounge, to the walkaround bed boasting a Jet Spa tub cleverly located below the bed.

Photo 4 - The galley is a wonderful space with huge galley counter surface made of Karadon and offering a three-burner stove.

Photo 5 - Cherry veneer and excellent joinery work combined with wonderful hardwood trims are just a few details that will attract you.

Photo 6 - Forward, a head (with separate shower and head) separates the main cabin from the forward cabin.

