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At the time of going to press, many of the summer pointscore series are yet to be completed and there have been some great battles in the various and coveted pointscore series.

Stephen Ainsworth's *Loki* with her tight knit crew ably led by Gordon Maguire have their noses in front of Darryl Hodgkinson's *Victoire* in the Blue Water Pointscore. It is great to see that in our most prestigious pointscore series, a state-of-the-art custom built yacht is holding out a well sailed production 45 footer, while octogenarian Syd Fischer is showing that age is no barrier holding onto third place with his TP52 *Ragamuffin*. This showcases that the IRC rule is definitely allowing some wonderful competition among a mixed fleet.

Greg Zyner's Radford 12 *Copernicus* currently leads the Tasman Performance Handicap series for PHS, whilst *Ragamuffin* is in out front in the ORCi division.

Julian Farren Price's *About Time* leads in the Ocean Pointscore, while Warwick Sherman's *Occasional Course Language* currently leads the Grant Thornton Short Ocean Pointscore by a slim margin.

In the Grant Thornton Short Haul Pointscore, David Champaloup's *Caprice of Huon* leads the IRC division with Patrick and Roberta Easton's *In Cahoots* leading the PHS Division from *Caprice of Huon*.

Over 18 years ago, a few visionary CYCA members including Maurie Cameron, Leigh Minehan and Ian Treleaven had the foresight to develop the CYCA's Youth Sailing Academy (YSA). Now, as one of the first full-time sailing academies dedicated to young sailors in Australia, it is principally sponsored by Audi Australia, together with 10 Elliott boat sponsors and a number of generous regatta sponsors. The goal at its inception was to provide a path for youth to gain sailing skills to fill berths on yachts in the CYCA fleet and it has been achieved – in spades!

Today, the CYCA has a reputation for producing great match racers with superb boat handling skills, excellent tactical knowledge, superior trimming ability and most of all a keen knowledge of the rules and respect for safety.

Our YSA sailors have achieved great results this year, including wins in the Colin Mullins Youth Match Racing Regatta and Warren Jones Youth Match Racing Regatta (Evan Walker), Harken International Youth Match Racing Championship (Jay Griffin),



Centreport International Youth Match Racing Regatta (Jay Griffin) and second at the Hardy Cup Youth Match Racing Regatta (Evan Walker). I would also like to acknowledge our coach Rob Bell who coached the YSA teams for the Hardy cup and the CentrePort and Harken regattas in New Zealand.

The YSA is the jewel in our crown. May I commend all involved in policy creation (past and present), administration and management of our great Sailing Academy. Catch up on all the YSA news later in this issue.

In the Audi Sydney Harbour Regatta conducted last month, the club was strongly represented. *Bandit*, co-owned by Walter Lewin and Immediate Past Commodore Matt Allen was victorious in the PHS Division 1 (Spinnaker); with Larki Missiris in his Sydney 38 *Advanced Buildings* sharing the podium in third place. Another strong placing was achieved by Will McCarthy in the Etchells (third with *North Sydney*), and while Stephen Ainsworth's *Loki* was second to Marcus Blackmore's *Hooligan* in the IRC Division 1. Darryl Hodgkinson's *Victoire* continued his strong form, securing second place in IRC Division 2, with Andy Kernan's *L'Altra Donna* placing second in IRC3.

The planning of the redevelopment of the site continues, with a significant amount of work going on behind the scenes by the Site

Redevelopment Committee and Audit Planning and Risk Committee to comply with some conditions set in the development approval that need to be dealt with prior to any works starting. These include submitting a development application for a remediation action plan which outlines the way the club plans to deal with parts of the site that are deemed to have varying degrees of contamination, and ongoing negotiations with NSW Maritime to secure tenure over the additional area required to accommodate the extension of D arm. Both these processes are now being determined by Woollahra Council and NSW Maritime and we hope to have a determination for both matters soon.

It was with some sadness and a large dose of nostalgic recollection that I learned of the recent tenancy terminations received from both Bob Doel of Rushcutters Ship Chandlery and Kai Blake who has been the backbone of the Marina Canteen. The Doel family has been at the club for some 45 years providing the service of a good old fashioned chandlery that will today be virtually impossible to replace. Kai with her late husband Reg came to Rushcutters Bay 50 years ago. Kai has been a second mother to a few generations of youngsters who satisfied their hunger with her famous sausages. Both businesses and their personalities will be greatly missed.

The annual membership subscription notice will be sent in April. In addition to the subscription notice, there is other important material you will need to action, including this year a membership survey the board has approved. I encourage you all to participate in this survey, the results of which will assist the board to determine the future strategic direction of the club. By completing the survey, you will automatically be entered into the draw for a superb prize.

It was a great pleasure for me to dine on the "Deck" on a recent Thursday evening. Our caterers, L Eat have reintroduced the "Thursday Special". I joined some friends after the Members' badge draw and it was fantastic to see a wide range of club members enjoying one of the best rump steaks I have had for some time. I encourage you to give the new Bistro menu a try and I look forward to seeing you on the "Deck" or on the water in the near future.

GARRY LINACRE  
Commodore CYCA



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**ENSIGN**  
YACHTS

It's an incredible experience seeing a Volvo 70 ocean racer in the flesh – particularly one raised up on the hardstand, visible in all its glory. They are simultaneously sleek and powerful, even intimidating. It's hard not to be impressed by the sheer presence of these mighty ocean racing machines.

On a recent trip to Auckland I got the chance to hang out with Camper Team New Zealand's Chris Nicholson at the Cooksons yard for a guided tour of the new Volvo 70, inside and out. 'Nikko' showed me through the boat as it sat on the hardstand in the Cookson yard, just north of Auckland. There are plenty of design tweaks under the hood of this next-generation ocean racer, which should mean the Camper boat will be the one to beat in the Volvo Ocean Race when it starts in November. Unfortunately a confidentiality agreement prevents *Offshore* from spilling the beans on all the top secret mods, but stay posted as we update you on all the technical details in a future issue. For now, I hope you enjoy reading about a sneak peak in which Nikko gives a first hand glimpse into the tough life aboard VOR70 ocean racer.

Our Cruiser Racer feature wraps up what's on offer from the major brands after a recent spate of new launches. From the sprightly Jeanneau Sunfast 3200 to the \$3.2 million Swan 60 (also reviewed in depth on page 70), we've provided a pretty broad look at the state of play in cruiser racers.

This issue our regular columnist Richard Bouzaid, a professional sailor and sailmaker based in New Zealand with Doyle Sails NZ, has turned his attention to the Farr 40 Worlds recently held in Sydney. Bouzaid takes a look at the yachts lining up to replace this popular One Design class.

With the recent rains across Australia, Lake Eyre is once again filling and for a hardy group of sailors who like to wet a hull in the country's largest salt lake, it's prime sailing season. Sam Tinson spoke to the club's Commodore Bob Backway about waiting for the rains



– sometimes for up to three years.

Also this issue we talk to the top winch brands for their latest products and technologies (page 62), catch up with an Aussie skipper making a living sailing J Class yachts (page 56) and take a look at the weird world of remote Palmerston Island (page 52), where every inhabitant has the same last name.

For CYCA members heading north for Sail Port Stephens, you'll find the official program from page 19 with all you need to know to plan your week sailing one of the country's fastest growing regattas. Our editorial team will be taking some time out to sail the regatta. We hope to see you on the water.

MATTHEW HENRY  
Editor

# offshore YACHTING

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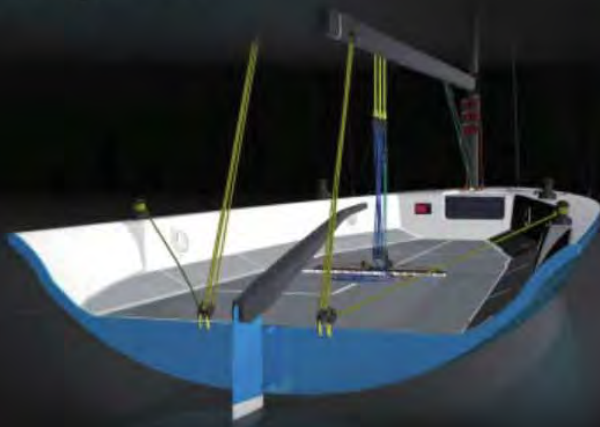
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# SEAMARK

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## ROLEX SYDNEY HOBART

### Another challenge

*Finally Jessica Watson has an answer to the question which has followed her persistently since she returned from her solo circumnavigation: what's next?*

Seventeen-year-old solo skipper Jessica Watson has set her sights on the Rolex Sydney Hobart, and along with a crew of nine young sailors will endeavour to become the youngest crew to ever contest the race.

Altogether their average age will be just 19 and Watson is among a number of crewmembers who will turn 18 this year, just in time to be eligible for a spot on the Boxing Day startline.

Among her crew will be sailors from Australia and the UK, including fellow teen solo skipper Mike Perham who is the second youngest to sail around the world.

Watson will skipper veteran Victorian yachtsman Lou Abramams' Sydney 38, aptly named *Another Challenge*, which has completed the Rolex Sydney Hobart on eight previous occasions.

Chris Lewin has signed on as coach and will put the crew through their paces when they come together in Sydney in October for a full 12-week

program of training. In the week prior to Watson's official media launch at the CYCA, the crew were in Melbourne sailing together for the first time in a week-long sailing boot camp.

"I am absolutely delighted to be working with such a dynamic and motivated group of young sailors," said Watson.

The official launch was conducted at the CYCA and has brought early attention to the 2011 bluewater classic.

"We look forward to Jessica's participation in this year's Rolex Sydney Hobart," said CYCA Commodore Garry Linacre.

"Jessica has been able to bring together a talented and committed crew that includes Alex Paton, an active member of the CYCA's Youth Sailing Academy. It is passionate sailors such as these that are the future of sailing in Australia and we wish them all the best in their training and preparation for Australia's most iconic yacht race."

## CYCA MEMBERSHIP PROMOTION

In May, the CYCA will launch another 'member get member' promotion in conjunction with Mariner Boating Holidays. Current members of the CYCA who propose new members to the categories of full, country or overseas membership between 1 May 2011 and 1 November 2011 will go into the draw to win two places in the French Riviera Yacht Rally to be conducted in September 2012. All proposed members who successfully become new members of the CYCA during the period also go into the draw to win this fabulous prize, valued at over \$15,000.

## Fond farewell

Longstanding CYCA tenants Bob Doel (Rushcutters Ship Chandlery) and Kai Blake (Marina Canteen) have decided to retire after 45 and 50 years of service respectively. The club has wished both a happy retirement and many members will no doubt miss their friendly faces around the club. The CYCA is in the process of finding suitable replacements to maintain both a chandlery and canteen for the convenience of members.

## CYCA survey time

The CYCA will send out its annual membership subscription notice in April which this year will be accompanied by a membership survey, which has been approved by the Board. Commodore Garry Linacre is encouraging all members to participate in the survey, which will assist the Board in determining the future strategic direction of the club. All who complete the survey will automatically be entered into the draw for a prize. More information will be available in members' subscription package and the club website. [www.cyca.com.au](http://www.cyca.com.au)

## Pushed to the Limit

Alan Brierty's *Limit* hung a huge question mark over the state of ocean racing in Western Australia in a dominant display at Geographe Bay Race Week, winning all but two races in IRC Division 1 across the week-long regatta. The Reichel/Pugh 62 placed second in the two races she dropped.

## Globe trotter

Round-the-world cruiser Alex Whitworth, who last year completed a double circumnavigation, has been awarded the Blue Water medal by the Cruising Club of America. The Aussie skipper sailed his faithful yacht *Berimilla* through the treacherous North West Passage as part of his second trip around the globe. The presentation was made at the New York Yacht Club in Manhattan.

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## CYCA SOLAS TRUSTS

## Spreading the wealth

*The CYCA's SOLAS Trusts has found another worthy recipient for a much needed donation.*

The CYCA's Sydney Hobart Yacht Race Safety of Life at Sea Trusts (SOLAS) has made a donation to Volunteer Marine Rescue (VMR) Whitsunday of \$35,705, which will be used to purchase two new outboard engines for *VMR1*, the 9.8-metre Kevlar Cat used by VMR Whitsunday.

"It is organisations like [VMR Whitsunday] that are often first to come to the aid of yachtsmen, commercial and recreational vessels and as chairman of the CYCA SOLAS Trusts I am delighted that we can continue to support search and rescue organisations Australia wide through donations such as these," said Matt Allen.

This is the first time the SOLAS Trusts has made a donation to the VMR Whitsunday, which operates a marine safety net in the Whitsunday Islands. *VMR1* carries out about 60 activations per year, from serious emergency rescue operations where there is real danger to life and limb, to simple towing of members' vessels that have broken down or have suffered relatively minor mishaps.

Robin Salmon, President of VMR Whitsunday, said the organisation would have taken a long time to raise the money needed through fundraising activities and were therefore thrilled to receive the donation.

"The new Yamaha motors have been installed recently and have already notched up ten rescues and a number of training runs, where they have performed perfectly," Salmon added.

**SAFETY CHEQUE**  
CYCA Past Commodore SOLAS Trusts Chairman Matt Allen presents the \$35,705 SOLAS Trusts donation cheque to Robin Salmon, President of VMR Whitsundays.

## MARINASSESS WOMEN'S MATCH RACING REGATTA

### Price is right

*Olivia Price has won the Marinassess Women's Match Racing regatta in convincing fashion.*

Olivia Price and her crew of Nicky Souter, Karyn Gojnich and Nina Curtis, representing the Australian Women's Match Racing team have won the Marinassess Women's Match Racing Regatta, hosted by the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia, without dropping a match over two days of tough competition.

The final was conducted in the vicinity of Rushcutters Bay in perfect Sydney Harbour conditions: seven knots of north-easterly breeze that gradually built up to 14 knots throughout the afternoon.

"It was great to be racing back at my home club and race with all the girls from the Youth Sailing Academy. The improvement in these up and coming match racers was obvious throughout the regatta," Price said.

In the Petit-Final, Scrivenor defeated Abbott 2-1 and as race officer Denis Thompson observed: "Amanda Scrivenor and her crew, Shahrzad Vahebzadeh and Angelique Kear, were the most improved team throughout the regatta. She was able to bring her team of relatively inexperienced match racers together and secure third place; with her crew gaining valuable match racing experience, which is why regattas such as this are so important to young sailors."

In the minor placings, Stephanie Doyle, from Royal Prince Alfred Yacht Club, secured fifth place, finally getting a win on the board defeating Tara McCall from the CYCA who finished sixth. McCall also finished round robin two with one win and nine losses after defeating Doyle in Round Robin One.

### 2010 Rolex Sydney Hobart PHS Results

Due to a technical error in last month's *Offshore Yachting*, a portion of the PHS results table was missing from the printed magazine. While the mistake slipped past the vigilant gaze of our editorial staff, it certainly didn't escape our eagle-eyed readers who competed in PHS! Our apologies, please see below for the full table of results, this time with owners, times and corrected time.

PHS Overall Placing	Yacht Name	Div	Line Placing	Elapsed time	Handicap	Corrected Time	Owner
1	<i>Flying Fish Arctos</i>	2	47	04:05:15:17	0.9972	04:04:58:16	Martin Silk NSW
2	<i>Valheru</i>	2	28	03:23:42:32	1.0606	04:05:30:32	Anthony Lyall TAS
3	<i>CIC Secure Inca</i>	2	64	05:02:26:31	0.8472	04:07:43:58	Noel Sneddon ACT
4	<i>NSC Mahligai</i>	1	30	04:00:09:23	1.1167	04:11:22:40	Murray Owen & Jenny Kings NSW
5	<i>Polaris of Belmont</i>	2	68	05:03:42:56	0.8738	04:12:06:10	Chris Dawe NSW
6	<i>Merit</i>	1	18	03:09:18:53	1.3315	04:12:16:14	Leo Rodriguez QLD
7	<i>She</i>	2	62	05:01:22:34	0.8935	04:12:26:58	Peter Rodgers NSW
8	<i>LMR Solar</i>	2	44	04:04:38:13	1.0808	04:12:46:06	Michael Martin NSW
9	<i>Krakatoa II</i>	1	34	04:01:57:34	1.12	04:13:42:52	Rod Skellet NSW
10	<i>Wasabi</i>	1	33	04:01:50:30	1.1217	04:13:44:56	Bruce McKay NSW
11	<i>Obsession</i>	2	51	04:09:06:57	1.0452	04:13:52:01	Nikita Brilliantov NSW
12	<i>Helsal III</i>	1	26	03:23:17:17	1.225	04:20:43:40	Rob Fisher TAS
13	<i>Dodo</i>	1	32	04:00:26:32	1.3063	05:05:58:57	Rick Christian NSW
14	<i>Abracadabra</i>	2	60	05:01:18:49	1.0543	05:07:54:03	James Murchison NSW



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## Second chance

*A year ago Evan Walker was working as an engineer and a career in sailing seemed to be fading away. Now, the 24-year-old has been given another shot, writes Matthew Henry.*

Faced with the difficult choice between pursuing a budding career or holding onto the dream of sailing professionally, Evan Walker has been agonising over his future ever since he graduated from university in 2009. But recent events have, for the time being at least, made the choice a lot clearer for the talented young match racer.

After taking out the Warren Jones Youth International Regatta in Perth in February, the CYCA Youth Sailing Academy graduate has won the opportunity to compete in some of the most high profile international match racing events of the 2011 calendar, and to test himself against many of the world's top 30 match racers.

"I thought last year was my last chance to crack a good ranking and spend some time in Europe, but last year fell through. This is another opportunity," Walker told *Offshore Yachting*.

Along with his crew of Ted Hackney, Will McKenzie, Tom Scardifield and Henry Kernot, the 24-year-old defeated local hero David Gilmour (the son of ace match racer Peter Gilmour) 3-1 in the final to secure his first-ever Warren Jones International Youth Regatta win after four attempts.

It was a stunning return to form after a quiet year for Walker in which he has slowly slipped down the rankings. With a stricter entry requirement for the regatta this year, Walker and

crew needed to compete in the Collin Mullen Youth Regatta as a qualifier, which they also managed to win.

"We went over [to Perth] not really expecting to take it out, so it was a surprise. In both regattas we just managed to scrape through the round robin phase and make it into the final, but we ended up winning both," he said.

First place in the Warren Jones regatta has earned the young CYCA sailor an entry card to a grade one match racing event in Spain, and entry to the World Match Racing Tour's Danish Open. As the top ranked Aussie, he has also earned the chance to qualify for the Korea Cup and the WMRT season-finale Monsoon Cup in Malaysia.

Combined with an offer to sail Farr 40's in Europe with a German crew, Walker now stands on the cusp of a thrilling year of top-level competition.

"If everything goes as well as possible, I could have four grade one events under my belt which would go a long way towards getting me into the top 30 in the world. If that happens, then I'm more likely to put off work for another year and keep sailing," he said.

Walker departs for Spain in April and is currently gathering his crew to begin training on the Elliot 6's on Sydney Harbour. Looks like engineering's loss is sailing's gain. ⚓

**EVAN SENT**  
Evan Walker (centre) celebrating with crewmates after winning the Warren Jones International Youth regatta.

## YSA NEWS

### Griffin wins

Jay Griffin has won two regattas in New Zealand, with an impressive win at the CentrePort International Youth Match Racing championship in Wellington and another at the Harken Youth International Match Racing Championship, sailed in Auckland. It was the first time a CYCA sailor has claimed the CentrePort title. Griffin's triumph in Wellington was a classic come-from-behind-victory. In Auckland, Griffin qualified in fourth place but then sailed effectively in the light-air regatta to come out on top. Race two was started and then abandoned and after much discussion between the umpires and race committee, due to a lack of wind. This handed Griffin the win. "We won the first race and were pretty happy with that," said Griffin. "Our coach Rob Bell helped a lot and did a good job, the umpires and race committee did really well. It was a good regatta with really tight racing and we were happy to be anywhere in the top four."

### Sailing Scots

The YSA has continued to support local school sailing, with a group of 20 students from Scots College recently 'learning the ropes'. The Scots sailors have been practicing their fleet racing skills, concentrating on race starts and rules of match racing every Tuesday evening during terms one and four.

### Freedman Foundation

The Freedman Foundation Program was run late last year, with CYCA members again hosting students from many outer suburbs schools, most of whom have never sailed before. The students were greeted with rain and up to 20 knots for the twilight race and after some initial hesitation, got used to the deck angles and the quick tacks and arrived back on the dock grinning from ear to ear. This program concluded with a two-day sailing school on the Elliotts. An Advanced Squad coach and four students are on each boat and after two days of sailing, a barbecue and a Freedman Foundation t-shirt, the students go back to school with some new skills in sailing, communication and working together as a team.

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## *at Australia's foremost youth sailing academy*

Internationally recognised as an innovator in ocean racing, the CYCA developed Australia's first full time Youth Sailing Academy in 1993. Since then, young people aged 12-25 years have had the opportunity to experience sailing at all levels. With courses from **introductory through to advanced level**, young sailors learn with **qualified coaches** under **recognised training schemes** in keelboats that are fast, stable and fun to sail. And, with the chance to be selected to represent the CYCA many of our students have gone on to excel in regattas nationally and internationally, as well as joining ocean racing crews. If your kids love the water, are young and enthusiastic, looking for excitement, new challenges, and the opportunity to be part of Australia's premier blue water yacht club, contact the Youth Sailing Academy.

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# OFFSHORE ADDICT

LONG-TIME CYCA MEMBER JULIAN FARREN-PRICE HAS RACKED UP AN ENVIABLE OFFSHORE RACING RECORD WITH HIS COOKSON 12 *ABOUT TIME*, CONTINUING A FAMILY LEGACY THAT GOES BACK TO THE CLUB'S BEGINNINGS. PETER CAMPBELL TRIES TO PICK UP SOME WINNING TIPS.

## So, what's the family connection with the CYCA?

My father was one of the first members and remained one until the 1990s, so nearly 50 years in all. I've been a member since I was 15 and have already racked up 31 years, so I'm not doing too badly either. Dad was mad about motor cruisers. His 50 footer *Ariel* was quite a famous boat around the CYCA in the '50s and '60s and I think she frequently helped with the Hobart start.

## I remember racing against you in the RSYS division for small cruiser/racers.

Yes, I thrashed a Northshore 27 to

within an inch of its life (including breaking three masts) for eight years on the harbour and thoroughly enjoyed it. We were often scratch boat and won or placed in many pointscores. We raced against boats from Bonbridge 27's like your *Hornblower* to Sonata 8's, Clansmen and the ever present *Varuna* of recently departed John Musgrove.

## When did you decide to take up ocean racing, and what motivated the move from harbour to offshore?

I had heard about the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron cruise but the Northshore 27 was too small for ocean passages in my view (although

some go on smaller boats). In 1993 I bought the Northshore 38 *Invincible* from long time CYCA member, the late 'Doctor Dick' Smidlin. For six years we had great fun on what must be the best value 38-footer around. We found the harbour a bit too busy with the bigger boat so we started racing offshore and never looked back. I realised the dream of doing a Squadron Cruise in 1994 and have done every one, bar one, since. It is my favourite week of the year.

## You have had considerable success with your current Cookson 12, *About Time*. Why did you choose that design?

In 1999 I sold the Northshore 38 to get something racier and was going to spend an extra \$15,000 to buy an NSX 38. I wanted a more modern boat, but one that still had a comfortable interior for family cruising. The Cookson 12 *No Fear* was for sale, but we couldn't agree on price. So I called Cookson and asked if they could build a new one. *About Time* has turned out to be everything you could want: well built, robust, good on all points of sail in any weather and basically an evergreen boat. She did end up being a 300 per cent cost increase on the Northshore 38, but worth every cent. I believe the Cookson 12 has the best combination of speed and comfort of any boat under 40 feet.

## Since you bought *About Time* have you carried out any modifications or optimising for its IRC racing?

In 2004 I had a carbon mast made. We lost 90kg as the original was a bit of a tree trunk. This completely transformed the boat with increased stability and she was much nicer to sail. Apart from that she is the original 1995 design and sports the original IMS inspired keel. I use MacDiarmid sails and could not be happier. To win a pointscore you must finish every race and I would rather have something a bit more robust that will last.

## How important is continuity of crew when racing offshore?

Critical! I have a core group that have sailed with me near 10 years. None are in the yachting industry; just a group of enthusiastic amateurs who sail well, and who I like being with. If you don't have a good result on the day you'd better be with people you like or it makes for a pretty miserable experience. Also I don't race the boat too often, so when we do everyone is really looking forward to it and



**TIME TRAVELER**  
Julian Farren-Price and his Cookson 12 *About Time* are happiest outside the confines of the harbour.



pumped, not burnt out and wishing they were somewhere else. The other benefit of long-term crew is that they know the boat and owner. I can go to sleep on a long race confident that everything will be handled the best way possible on deck.

**Are you usually the principal helmsman in the Ocean Pointscore races?**

There are two principal helmsmen, myself and the long serving (or suffering) Max Poyser. Max, together with Murray Chaffer, Sam Dickson, David Eastood and Rhys Jones are the ever reliable backbone of my crew. For tactics David Eastwood has been my right hand man for nearly a decade, but I am also pretty involved myself in the decisions. I watch everything like a hawk.

**What have been your best results with *About Time* in past seasons, including other longer races such as the Pittwater to Coffs Harbour race?**

Well, seeing that you asked ... the last four Coffs she's been 2nd, 1st, 3rd and 1st overall. The last victory was particularly sweet, being the 30th anniversary race and our second win in three years. She was a multiple placegetter in the Audi Sydney Gold Coast races in the early to mid 2000s, and a highlight was winning both the Short Ocean and Ocean pointscores on both IRC and PHS in the 2007-2008 season, a clean sweep. We've also won two Varuna Cups. The elusive one is the Squadron Cruise, which in nine goes we have never won.

We found the harbour a bit too busy with the bigger boat so we started racing offshore and never looked back.

**What are your plans for next season? Any thoughts of doing the Rolex Sydney Hobart?**

Next season will be more of the same with the Ocean Pointscore and Coffs, both of which I need to defend. I would like to do an Audi Sydney Gold Coast race again, we really enjoyed that race. As for Hobart, well I am a bit of a fair weather sailor and it sounds too tough for me. It is a great pity, *About Time* could do really well as she is such a good all-rounder and a tough boat. Tougher than me it would appear!

**You have a young family. Are any of them following in your wake as sailors?**

I have two special girls, Grace (11) and Sarah (8). Grace has been doing the Squadron Cruise since she was eight months old. I remember one cold and wet race we cut a slit in a garbage bag and put it over her head to stop hypothermia. The girls enjoy being on the boat and cruising. I would be lying to say they love sailing, but we will see what happens in the future.

**Finally, what do you think is the key to successful offshore yacht racing?**

The overall answer is consistency. Start with a good boat with good gear. *About Time* is a manageable size and I can afford to keep the maintenance up and particularly the sails. A bigger boat always sounds glamorous, but it's no good if you can't keep it in top competitive order. Then you need to know how to handle the boat, how she responds in different conditions, when she is talking to you, telling you something is not right. This takes time and a good crew. It took years for us to learn the boat's traits and after 10 years we are still learning and will likely never stop. There is just nothing so much fun as surfing down the waves at 15-plus knots in total control with the team working together to get a result. ⚓



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**T**hey call themselves custodians of yachting history. They are the dedicated owners of wooden boats around the nation who have been prepared to pour their time, expertise and money into restoring the classic yachts that graced Australia's waterways a century and more ago.

The first racing yachts sailed in regattas on Sydney Harbour and Hobart's River Derwent back in the 1830s, and while none of that vintage still exist there are fine examples of gaff-rigged, wooden yachts built in the late 1800s and early 1900s still afloat, and indeed, racing. In Tasmania in particular, because of the durability of timbers like Huon Pine, King Billy, Celery Top Pine and Tassie Blue Gum, the wooden boat industry continues today.

The 175th Australia Day Regatta on Sydney Harbour on 26 January attracted just on 50 entries for its special Classic Yachts division, including the little yawl *Killala*, built in 1898 and the Tasmanian One Design *Weene*, wonderfully returned to her best by owner Ben Stoner, an antique restorer.

Another Tasmanian One Design, *Vanity*, has been returned to her home port after being restored in Brisbane by her current 'custodian', Robert Virtue found her in Sydney, her frames and ribs rotting away, her Huon pine planks "held together by

## WOODEN WONDERLAND

IT WAS WOODGRAIN, VARNISH AND POLISHED BRASS AS FAR AS THE EYE COULD SEE IN HOBART FOR THE RECENT AUSTRALIAN WOODEN BOAT FESTIVAL. PETER CAMPBELL JOINED THE 160,000-STRONG CROWD OF SAILING ROMANTICS TO WITNESS YACHTING HISTORY COME ALIVE.

the algae in the water at Pittwater." She made a return to racing, after 40 years, in the Crown Series Bellerive Regatta in February.

The extraordinary interest throughout Australia in boats built of timber – gaff-rigged yachts, dinghies, skiffs, even the venerable America's Cup challenger *Gretel II*, along with fishing trawlers, cray boats and 'cota boats, steam putt-putts, luxurious motor cruisers, the Tasmanian Police boat *Vigilant* (itself 40 years old) – was underlined at the biennial Australian Wooden Boat Festival in Hobart's historic Constitution Dock and around the waterfront of Sullivans Cove in late February this year.

**TOP TIMBER**  
Not a grain of carbon fibre to be seen at the Australian Wooden Boat Festival.

*Gretel II*, which challenged for the America's Cup in 1972 (and should have won) and again in 1977, is a classic example of restoration, with a newly laid teak deck, new mast and gleaming stainless steel deck fittings. Her 1977 skipper Gordon Ingate, now 85 but still an active yachtsman, flew down to Hobart twice to be aboard *Gretel II*, steering her to a line honours win in the Australia Day Green Island Race and back again to be aboard as she took a pride of place at the Wooden Boat Festival.

Old Sydney Hobart racing yachts were there too, including the cutter *Westward* which won the ocean classic back in 1947 and 1948, and *Fare the Well*, which raced three times in 1965, 1967 and 1970, a wonderful example of dedication by her current owner.

Not every boat at the Festival had been restored. Among them was the ageing fishing trawler *Olive May*, but her future is bright as a well-known maxi yacht skipper has bought her as 'his next project' of restoration down the Huon at Kermadie, where he owns an expanding marina and a pub.

More than 160,000 people visited the 2011 Australian Wooden Boat Festival over a perfect late summer long weekend, among them thousands of visitors from interstate and overseas. My advice, if you plan on coming to Hobart for next year's event, is to book your accommodation right now! ↓

[australianwoodenboatfestival.com.au](http://australianwoodenboatfestival.com.au)

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*Welcome to the beautiful Port Stephens region.*

Whether you are here as a first time competitor or participant in the Sail Port Stephens regatta, or if it's a return visit, may your time here be filled with great memories and great sailing.

Port Stephens Council has been a foundation supporter of this event from day one, and we are delighted with the steady growth that the regatta has enjoyed over the last four years and look forward to it continuing to cement itself as a key destination regatta on the annual calendar for yacht owners and crew from all walks of life and from all over Australia.

Our strategic partnership with Events NSW is an important factor in this growth and we thank the NSW Government for their continued support.

We see this event as a fantastic way to show off the wonderful waterways of the Port Stephens Marine Park, and for you to immerse yourself in the laidback lifestyle of the Bay for a few days or a week – and like it so much that you come back for holidays throughout the year to enjoy another slice of Bluewater Paradise.

Importantly, the event delivers a significant positive economic impact of over \$1 million to the region.

On behalf of the Port Stephens community, I'd like to thank you for your support and patronage of local businesses during your stay.

All the best for the 2011 regatta.

**BOB WESTBURY**

*Mayor, Port Stephens Council*



*Events NSW is proud to be a strategic partner of Sail Port Stephens, one of the fastest growing sailing regattas in Australia.*

Since its inception in 2007, Sail Port Stephens has grown into a well-established annual event, drawing a variety of boats, crews and visitors from New South Wales and around Australia. Each year the event demonstrates a positive financial impact on both the Port Stephens community and the state of NSW.

Sail Port Stephens is part of a long list of regional events supported by Events NSW and listed on the NSW Events Calendar including the Newcastle Burton Toyota Surfest, CMC Rocks the Hunter and Ironman Australia, Port Macquarie.

All of these events provide economic and marketing benefits to the region and to NSW as well as providing wonderful benefits to the local communities who help to deliver them.

Events NSW is proud to welcome all participants and visitors to Port Stephens for this major sailing event.

**STEVE KEOGH**

*Event Development Manager, Regional Events, Events NSW*



### Watch out for the dolphins!

Port Stephens is home to hundreds of dolphins, and with the Bay being well stocked with fish at the moment, there's little doubt that dolphins will be seen out and about every day – many with calves as the family units frolic both in and offshore, feeding and socialising.

Seemingly fascinated by boats and the opportunity to check out who's on board, don't be surprised if there's one, two or 10 of these friendly ocean creatures cruising along with you on the race track throughout the day – happily jumping through the wash created by your bow.

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# Winning fans at a rate of knots

SAIL PORT STEPHENS IS RECEIVING PRAISE FROM MORE THAN JUST VISITING YACHTIES AS THE WHOLE REGION GETS BEHIND THIS GROWING REGATTA.

Organised by the Corlette Point Sailing Association, Sail Port Stephens is now in its fourth year, with steady growth since the first regatta in 2008 where 25 boats took part. The future now looks bright for a regatta that has found a permanent place on the NSW sailing calendar.

With a fleet of 85 boats in 2010, 2011 is expected to attract as many boats again, with growing numbers of Sydney-based yachts seeing it as a great opportunity to head to a destination regatta that is still relatively close to home.

Once regarded as a calm port in rough weather for boats racing or travelling up and down the NSW East Coast, Sail Port Stephens has re-launched Port Stephens as a definite favourite for great competitive sailing for a wide range of boats of all sizes.

Furthermore, the regatta itself has reinvigorated "The Bay" as a competitive sailing destination for a number of one-design and dinghy classes throughout the year, with the region recently playing host to the Australian Masters Laser Championship.



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# Get ready to race

WITH INSHORE AND OFFSHORE RACING OPTIONS ACROSS A CRUISEY SEVEN-DAY SAILING PROGRAM IN BEAUTIFUL PORT STEPHENS, WHAT MORE COULD A SAILOR WANT?

**P**rincipal Race Officer, Denis Thompson, together with Corlette Point Sailing Association Commodore Dom Grundy and Regatta Director Paul O'Rourke, work throughout the year to refine the sailing program, with the focus on delivering an enjoyable regatta for everyone across the seven days of the event.

The Commodores Cup kick-starts the week in cruising style from Monday to Wednesday, with three races over three days taking in some scenic pockets of the Bay that many sailors may not have seen before.

One day you might head into the far western reaches of the Bay, and then another you'll be rounding some of the magnificent islands nestled amongst the expansive Port Stephens Marine Park.

Either way, it's three days of cruisey, laid back sailing that the whole family can enjoy. Deck BBQ's were put to good use with beautiful sunny conditions in 2010, and the wafting scent of hotplates full of sausages and onions filled the air as crews juggled lunch and navigating.

Towards the end of the week more marina berths fill up, with the fleet swelling to include the long weekend of racing in the Yachting NSW IRC Championship, the Port Stephens Trophy Racing and Cruising Divisions, along with the one-design action of the SB3s as they battle it out for the highly coveted title of National Champion.

2011 marks the second year that the

SB3 National Championship has been held at Sail Port Stephens.

And on a racetrack regarded by many as some of the fairest waters to sail on the east coast of Australia, the IRC fleet will battle it out over three days, with the region providing excellent offshore sailing conditions, with the opportunity to move the fleet inshore if conditions get too rough.

The Bay has plenty of room to accommodate all divisions, and having everyone inshore creates a great spectacle for tourists and locals alike to watching the racing from vantage points around the water's edge.

## Sailing program

**Monday 11th to  
Wednesday 13th April**  
Commodores Cup (PHS)

**Thursday 14th April**  
Lay Day

**Friday 15th to  
Sunday 17th April**

- Port Stephens Trophy Racing (PHS)
- Port Stephens Trophy Cruising (PHS)
- Yachting NSW IRC Championship
- SB3 National Championships











# Fun for all

IT'S NOT JUST SAILORS WHO GET TO ENJOY EVERYTHING PORT STEPHENS HAS TO OFFER. FOR THOSE SHORE-BOUND FOR THE WEEK, THERE'S A PACKED SOCIAL CALENDAR TO KEEP YOU BUSY.

**R**egatta headquarters is located at d'Albora Marina, Nelson Bay, who are also a supporting foundation partner of the event.

There is a range of social events across the regatta that will give you the opportunity to see the various pockets of the Bay, each offering a magnificent waterfront outlook and a friendly welcome.

Kick off proceedings at Peppers on Monday night with a Welcome BBQ and Cocktail Party – with a free Yachties Bus to get you to and from the venue.

If you're staying in Nelson Bay, you'll be walking distance to a large range of great eating spots both in the town centre and along the marina waterfront – take in some of the Port Stephens hospitality and enjoy a crew dinner at one of the local restaurants – fresh caught local seafood, wood fired pizza, pub meals, café style food or even fine dining.

Shoal Bay Resort and Spa host the Commodores Cup Prize Giving dinner on Wednesday night – again with a complimentary bus service to and from the venue.

**ALL SMILES**  
Port Stephens has plenty of activities on hand to keep the whole family entertained on lay day (above), and there's plenty of fun for the grown ups too with a whole host of shoreside events throughout the week, day and night. Just take your pick!

A lay day on Thursday gives you plenty of time to enjoy the many local attractions, ranging from a 4WD sand dune adventure to a trip for the kids to the Shark and Ray Park – or the world renowned Hunter Valley Vineyards are just 90 minutes drive from the Bay – a day of cellar doors and Hunter Valley food is a very popular way to fill in some time.

Visit Port Stephens Tourism's Visitor Information Centre in Nelson Bay for more information.

With the marina buzzing with people by Friday morning, the social action by Friday night heads to the Nelson Bay Diggers – with a live band, and the theme of dress is come as your favourite classic blonde set to ignite the imaginations of crews, young and old.

Be sure to pack your best Hawaiian shirt, for Saturday night Gone Troppo fun at All Seasons Port Stephens Resort at Soldiers Point – with a fantastic live band and great food.

With Boags the official beer and Tyrrells Wine the preferred wine, there'll be plenty of both everywhere you go throughout Sail Port Stephens.

## Onshore calendar

### Monday night

Welcome BBQ and Cocktail Party at Peppers

### Tuesday night

Crew dinner in Nelson Bay

### Wednesday night

Commodores Cup Prize Giving dinner at Shoal Bay Resort and Spa

### Thursday

Lay day to enjoy the local attractions, from a 4WD sand dune adventure to a trip for the kids to the Shark and Ray Park – or the world renowned Hunter Valley Vineyards

### Friday night

Nelson Bay Diggers – dress as your favourite classic blonde

### Saturday night

Gone Troppo fun at All Seasons Port Stephens Resort at Soldiers Point



### All inclusive prices

- Accommodation
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- Entry fees
- Race management
- Equipment
- Committee boats and staff
- Trophy (the famous bucket)

### Previous Regattas Include

- Sail Port Stephens
- NSW Elliott 7 NSW State Title
- Farr 40 Port Stephens Regatta
- NSW 16 Foot Skiff
- SB3 Nationals
- NSW IRC Championship
- Australian Laser Masters

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# Stay and play

GETTING TO SAIL PORT STEPHENS IS EASY BY ROAD, AIR OR SEA, SO WHY NOT BRING THE WHOLE FAMILY ALONG FOR THE WEEK?

**T**ravelling from Sydney, it'll take you about three hours on the F3 to get to Port Stephens – and with Newcastle Airport being the busiest and fastest growing regional airport in the country, there are a number of daily flights on Virgin and Jetstar from Melbourne, Brisbane and the Gold Coast.

By sea, there are two feeder races to choose from to get you to the event, the first being from Pittwater to Newcastle on 9 April – with an overnight stay at the Newcastle Cruising Yacht Club before heading north on Sunday 10 April for the final stretch in the Newcastle to Port Stephens race.

D'Albora Marina is abuzz with boats settling in for the week, as the feeder race fleet and the

Commodore Cup competitors make their way into the Bay, with a number of boats choosing to berth at The Anchorage Marina, conveniently located at the Peppers Anchorage Resort, or Soldiers Point Marina, in the western reaches of the Bay – perfect for trailer boats, with plenty of room to store trailers for the week.

## WHERE TO STAY

There is a wide range of accommodation to choose from around the Bay, and something to suit every budget, and accommodation prices are not hiked up to "special event rates" during the period of Sail Port Stephens.

From self-contained apartments and holiday houses to resort style and motel style accommodation, there is

## Accommodation

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plenty to choose from.

The regatta's foundation partners offer fantastic accommodation deals for regatta participants.

Want to step from your boat into your hotel room? Peppers Anchorage is the perfect spot to stay. Berth your boat at the Anchorage Marina and take advantage of all the luxury surrounds that are synonymous with the Peppers brand.

All Seasons Port Stephens Salamander Shores Resort has large 3 star motel style rooms nestled in amongst three acres of landscaped gardens on the waterfront at Soldiers Point. With garden or bay views, they offer an attractive bed and breakfast deal for \$109 per room per night – including a cooked breakfast for two.

Shoal Bay Resort and Spa is the ultimate island-style beachfront resort, with 200 luxurious self-contained apartments – perfect for family or crew accommodation. Shoal Bay Resort and Spa overlooks the pristine white sandy beaches of Shoal Bay and Tomaree headland and is just five minutes drive from d'Albora Marina at Nelson Bay.

With a fantastic kids club and Aqua

Spa Wellbeing Facility, this is an ideal choice for families – mums get pampered and kids get to enjoy some great activities across duration of their stay.

Winning Holidays have a huge range of self contained apartments and holiday houses available, and are the largest and longest established holiday accommodation agency in the Bay.

From Nelson Bay to Corlette, Shoal Bay and Soldiers Point, there is plenty to choose from – whether it be a two bedroom apartment for couples, a large house for crew, or even a number of apartments in the one building to accommodate crews and their families.

The Winning Holidays website has an easy search facility on their website and friendly staff available to help you seven days a week.

The Port Stephens Holiday Parks that are ideally located for Sail Port Stephens participants are: Soldiers Point, Halifax and Shoal Bay. There is a range of on-site cabins, ranging from luxurious to budget, or if under the stars is your thing, there are tent sites available too.



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Now ubiquitous across marinas all over the world, the modern cruiser racer has sailed a long way from the IOR-derived race boats and half-tonners of the '70s, with their peculiar bumps and lines. As in the automotive world, the shapes are becoming smoother and the innovations are perhaps a little more subtle. Like sea-going SUVs, these dual-purpose yachts are designed to strike a balance between sporty performance and rugged usability.

The history of the cruiser racer concept is closely intertwined with many of the milestones in offshore yacht racing. The very first Fastnet race in 1925 saw a handful of elderly cruising boats successfully round the famous rock in the Irish Sea, and likewise, the inaugural Rolex Sydney Hobart race (in 1945) also drew cruising yachts to compete and was won by the cruising sloop *Rani*. In the post-war boom years when war driven technologies improved engineering processes, yacht design also blossomed. Sturdy cruiser racers such as the Nordic Folkboats sailed across the North Sea to compete in UK races and many international events took place.

A key moment was the advent of the cruiser racer rule of 1950, issued by the International Yacht Racing Union (IYRU, and now changed to ISAF), to encourage designs that were able to cruise inshore and also race offshore. This rule applied to designs of seven metres upwards and encouraged one design cruiser fleets in many countries. Changes continued apace, and with the advent of the International Offshore Rule (IOR) designers began exploring more radical shapes and the results weren't always pleasing to the eye, nor to the prudent bluewater sailor.

One of the never ending struggles for cruiser racer manufacturers is the battle to control beam and volume, because what works for the weekend family trip (lots of space) doesn't necessarily work when going hard to windward or indeed running at an angle with a large asymmetric flying. Steering heeled-over beamy boats in a straight line can have its challenges so twin rudders are sprouting regularly from these hulls nowadays but their downside can be sometimes found when going astern during that family cruise.

Hard chines and swept-up stern sections are popular ways of minimising beam where it's not wanted (the Elan 350 is a great



## HYBRID HULLS

CRUISER RACERS ARE SO POPULAR IT'S HARD TO IMAGINE A TIME WHEN THEY WEREN'T FILLING MARINAS AND APPEARING ON THE START LINES OF REGATTAS ALL OVER THE WORLD. KEVIN GREEN TAKES A LOOK AT THE EVOLUTION OF THE ALL-PURPOSE CATEGORY AND SOME CURRENT OFFERINGS FROM THE MAJOR BRANDS.

example of this). Another option for getting the family boat hard to windward is to stiffen the hull while lightening it and increasing the bulb weight, as X-Yachts has done on its new Xp range.

Below decks comforts is much less compromised nowadays, with a standard approaching dedicated cruising boats. But yet again, new innovations breed clever ideas, such as removable furniture and honeycombed fabrication so that you can enjoy the stylish lounge seating without suffering the weight penalty.

**FINE BALANCE**  
Purpose built cruiser-racers such as the Huzar 28 pictured above have never been more popular.

Contemporary cockpits are also interesting places with some positive trade-offs on the 'c-r' equation such as twin wheels encouraging hiking while also giving easy access to the stern swim platform; and if you don't mind all the running rigging coming back to the cockpit during cruise mode you can benefit from enjoying short-handed racing as well.

When choosing a cruiser racer, it really depends how much of a cruiser - or how much of a racer - you happen to be, or want to be. Your weapon of choice may vary from an entry-level boat with a slippery hull and aftermarket bolt-ons to a more aggressively proportioned light displacement rocketship.

This rather eclectic mix of cruiser racers covers a wide spectrum, from sporty twin ruddered, hard chine hulled 30 footers such as the Jeanneau 3200 and the new First 30 to the more family friendly, stable larger boats, like the X-Yachts and Swans, that deliver big time on both sides of the equation.

As we take a look at the major cruiser racer franchises on the market, we're sure you will see the evolution of the modern cruiser racer means you can enjoy the best of both worlds and at a budget that suits many pockets.



*IRC optimised boats, near custom finish, high stability ratios and proven pedigree.*

## ARCHAMBAULT

For a small family-owned company, French brand Archambault has made a big impact in Australian racing circles with boats such as the A40 of Rod Jones (*Alegria*) winning the Audi IRC Championships. The line includes the A31, A35 and the revamped 40-footer, the A40RC. The latest addition is the new M34 and Mark Rothfield at Archambault Australia says the first one has just arrived here. Describing the new boat as having 'rockstar' performance but still able to be pulled by a large 4WD, he sees the semi-lifting keeler as an eventual one design boat. It will be at the Sydney Boat Show should aspiring club racers wish to check it out.

### ARCHAMBAULT A40RC

The new A40RC is fully fitted out below decks yet has a very light displacement. Stability is up from 48% to more than 50 per cent thanks to a hefty T-keel below the vinylster (or epoxy) hull, and for tracking, sharp chines define the stern section. Moving up a notch in the horse power stakes involves fitting carbon throughout - rig, twin wheels (or tiller) and rudder. Rod rigging and a hydraulic backstay finishes off the full race spec setup. Accommodation comprises twin aft cabins with a forward V-berth as well as optional pipe berths. A fully appointed galley has a three burner stove oven, deep sink and on starboard a sizable navigation table and bulkhead for instrumentation. A semi-dark wood Moabi finishes off a stylish looking layout.

[www.archambault.com.au](http://www.archambault.com.au)

SPECIFICATIONS	Archambault A40RC
PRICE	\$349,000 inc GST
LOA	11.95 m
BEAM	3.75 m
DRAFT	2.47 m
DISPLACEMENT	6400 kg
ENGINE	Nanni 29 saildrive
SAIL AREA	51 m <sup>2</sup> / 40 m <sup>2</sup> / 134 m <sup>2</sup>



*twin rudders, lack of backstays, tiller steering, and plenty optional upgrades.*

## BENETEAU

Beneteau has been at the forefront of the cruiser-racer concept since the 1970's when the early First 30s began rolling out of the French builder's yard, inspired by the successful half-tonners of the era. The brand has engaged leading edge designers including Marc Lombard, Bruce Farr and for its new First 30, Juan Kouyoumdjian. The new First range covers everything from the entry level trailer sailer F21.7 S with an inflatable transom, to the exciting new F30 and the mid-size boats. The latter include the nimble F35, the highly rated F40 and F45 (proven in successive Rolex Sydney-Hobarts) and the flagship First 50.

### BENETEAU FIRST 30

Vicsail's Brendan Hunt reckons says the arrival of the new First 30 during April will herald the year of the small race boat in Australia. The Juan Kouyoumdjian designed yacht continues the brand's leading edge pedigree. The rig setup has no backstay and swept back spreaders, and the transom mainsheet track should maximise twist. The rig is IRC-friendly, allowing non-overlapping headsails. The two-cabin, double berth layout now has a door separating the forward berths, and a higher standard of finishing looks evident throughout. The F30 looks very compact with Juan K's signature chine on the beamy hull and a full stern where twin externally hung rudders maximise control. Steering is by tiller for pinpoint accuracy, and keeping things upright is a slim cast iron keel with large bulb. The competitive price could allow club racers to add a set of carbons.

[www.beneteau.com](http://www.beneteau.com)

SPECIFICATIONS	Beneteau First 30
PRICE	\$164,000
LOA	9.81 m
BEAM	3.20 m
DRAFT	1.90 m (deep keel)
DISPLACEMENT	3750 kg
ENGINE	-
SAIL AREA	32.90 m <sup>2</sup> / 26.60 m <sup>2</sup>



*High quality build, innovative interior design, semi-custom finishes, performance packages and epoxy or vinyl ester hulls.*



*Fully equipped galleys, functional heads and usable living spaces.*

## DEHLER

Germany's Dehler Yachts has continued to innovate and expand under its new owner Hanse Yachts. The brand isn't synonymous with Australian competitive sailors, but dealer Windcraft expects this to change with leading models such as the Dehler 45, the 35 (recently arrived in Australia) and the new Dehler 41. In recent years boats from the brand designed by Judel/Vrolijk have won several European awards, and Dehler continue to engage top designers moving forward with cutting edge cruiser-racer designs from Simonis/Voogd coming out of its Sauerland factory.

### DEHLER 41

The Rolf Vrolijk-designed 41 is intended to be a versatile performer, aimed at IRC and ORC racing while doubling as a user-friendly family cruiser. The boat has a GRP hull maximised with fine entry and chines stabilising the broad stern sections. The large cockpit is teak clad with twin wheels and all sheeting is near the helmsman. Deck gear is by Harken and a double ended German system controls the main. The 9/10ths alloy Selden rig is keel stepped with an adjustable backstay. Down below two or three cabin layouts are available and unusual features include a companionway system with a light Mahogany finish throughout. The galley boasts a twin burner stove/oven and double sinks. A Dehler Performance Pack includes a lead bulb keel, vinyl ester hull, foam-cored lightweight interior bulkheads and several rig options.

[www.dehler.com](http://www.dehler.com)

SPECIFICATIONS	Dehler 41
PRICE	\$379,000
LOA	12.40 m
BEAM	3.93 m
DRAFT	2.00 m (standard) 2.40 m (racing)
DISPLACEMENT	8000 kg
ENGINE	-
SAIL AREA	54.35 m <sup>2</sup> / 36.80 m <sup>2</sup>

## ELAN

Slovenian builder Elan has been winning over sailors with its contemporary Performance range. The sporty 310 made a big splash back in 2009 with its angular design that heralded a raft of similar boats including the recent award-winning 350 and the newly announced 210. English designer Rob Humphreys has included some facets of his famous Volvo 60 race boats throughout the range that includes the 380, 410 and range topping Elan 450.

### ELAN 350

The Elan 350 epitomises the modern cruiser racer with a beamy hull, twin keels, hard chines leading to steep upswept topsides and enough volume forward to ensure the stern section doesn't submarine the bows when driven hard.

Two or three-cabin layouts are available and the L-shaped galley has twin sinks and gimbaled cooker. Opposite is a traditional style chart table. A clever weight-saver is the option to remove the saloon, galley and cabin cabinets for better racing performance.

Rod Parry of Australian distributor Navsail says the twin rudders really change the character of the boat which can be pressed hard and while riding on the chine you can feel the response from the rudder. The rig features a retractable bowsprit for an asymmetric spinnaker and a 107 per cent roller furling genoa as standard. The wide open race-style cockpit also means plenty of room for a family at anchor while shorthanded sailors can control all the sheets from either of the twin helms. A BP Regatta Version with Grand Prix carbon rig is also available.

[www.navsail.com.au](http://www.navsail.com.au)

[www.gulfgroup.co.nz](http://www.gulfgroup.co.nz)

SPECIFICATIONS	Elan 350
PRICE	\$238,000
LOA	10.60 m
BEAM	3.50 m
DRAFT	2.15 m / 2.35 m
DISPLACEMENT	5350 kg
ENGINE	30 HP
SAIL AREA	35.91 m <sup>2</sup> / 29.68 m <sup>2</sup> / 110 m <sup>2</sup> (genaker)



*Backstayless rigs, lifting keels, hand built production and quality innovative finishing.*

## HUZAR YACHTS

Polish-built Huzar yachts arrived in Sydney recently with the day racer the H28. Distinguishing features of these unusual yachts is the attention to detail and hand-built production process based on designs from Tymon Butkiewicz and industrial designer Wojciech Wesolek at builder EM Yachts. Lifting keels and rudders are offered throughout the range. Hulls are built using hand laid fibreglass and on the larger boats a steel reinforced grid increases hull and rig rigidity.

### HUZAR 28CR

The ultra modern looking Huzar 28CR has been called a 'mini Wally', such is the slick design and attention to detail that likens it to the famous superyachts. The keel stepped alloy Selden rig uses swept back spreaders and optional running backstays. Up front a self-tacking jib can be fitted and for powering up a Code 0 can be set.

The vacuum infused GRP hull has pronounced rocker suggesting a very nimble performer at the start line. A pedestal mounted mainsheet dominates a long open cockpit with flip-up padded bench seats, and a large tiller will suit hiking out. Clever features include a removable cockpit table and transom cockpit shower. Deck gear is from Harken and Spinlock with quality anodized fittings around teak finishes. Below deck features include a drop-down saloon table which increases the sleeping area along the narrow side bunks. Even a tiny toilet is squeezed in, along with a small stove, sink and optional drawer fridge.

[www.huzar.com.au](http://www.huzar.com.au)

SPECIFICATIONS	Huzar 28CR
PRICE	Euro 86,500 for tin keel, Ex Europe + T, D&C charges
LOA	8.55 m
BEAM	2.59 m
DRAFT	1.90 m
DISPLACEMENT	2.50 tonnes
ENGINE	20HP
SAIL AREA	44.00 m <sup>2</sup>



*Good design with high quality composite construction*

## J/BOATS

J/Boats are designed to instill a sense of confidence, even when planing at 10-plus knots, with values such as good design, high quality composite construction and simple, fun handling very much to the fore.

The range includes the J/80, J/92s, J/97, J/100, J/105, J/109, J/111, J/122, J/133 and the lifting keel J/95 and J/108, all with retractable carbon bowsprits and asymmetric spinnakers. In Australia as overseas, J/Boats are enjoying success on the racing circuit. A J/133 finished 2nd in class in the Rolex Sydney Hobart 2010 while a J/122 has dominated the CYCA's short ocean pointscore series for the past two seasons. For skippers who want to leave the crew on the dock the J/Boats are ideal for short-handed crewing.

### J/111

The newly released J/111 is a sleek, speedy one-design 36-footer that J/Boats describes as "the ultimate sailing, racing and weekend cruising sailboat that fulfills a real need in the market". Designed for quick acceleration, owners can expect speeds reaching seven-plus knots going to windward and double-digit speeds downwind.

The J/111 is designed to be the best performing, easiest-to-sail boat of its size on the market. It's all about versatility and the joy of sailing – how to have the most fun out of the time and resources invested.

Hang on to your hats! This sailboat is built for speed, with a generous, high-aspect carbon rig combined with a low wetted surface hull. The J/111 is being promoted as the ideal next generation one-design around-the-cans and offshore racing in Australia and New Zealand.

[www.yachtspot.com.au](http://www.yachtspot.com.au)

SPECIFICATIONS	J/111
PRICE	\$318,000
LOA	11.00 m
BEAM	3.29 m
DRAFT	2.19 m
DISPLACEMENT	4216 kg
ENGINE	21 HP
SAIL AREA	61.6 m <sup>2</sup>





*Entry level cruiser racer, optional race add-ons, user friendly sail plans and comfortable below decks.*

## JEANNEAU

Over the past year this French brand has responded to strong competition and the global financial recovery by pushing forward with new designs. Jeanneau's approach to cruiser racers is to offer performance add-ons so that owners can move up a gear. Hence the 409 can have a 140% genoa and fully battened mainsail while its chined Briand designed hull is built for improved speed. However if your emphasis is more racer cruiser the Jeanneau Sunfast 3200 will supply the need for speed.

### JEANNEAU SUNFAST 3200 OD

The Sunfast was perhaps ahead of its time when it hit the water a couple of years ago with its twin rudders, twin tillers and slab-sided hull. The seasoned Jeanneau designer Daniel Andrieu was conscious of short-handed IRC racing when he penned this boat, which has gone on to achieve substantial fleet numbers in Europe. Locally, importer Performance Boating has been regularly campaigning one at Pittwater. Reflecting the desire for lightness, below decks is basic yet adequate for a race crew with two cabins with cloth doors, mesh storage bins and small table. A two burner stove and 60l ice box with sink comprises the galley. The keel stepped alloy mast can fly both asymmetric and conventional spinnakers and all sheets come to the helmsman in the wide, open cockpit. Hanked on headsails are the standard setup with roller furler an option.

[www.jeanneau.com](http://www.jeanneau.com)

SPECIFICATIONS	Jeanneau Sunfast 3200
PRICE	\$154,692 inc GST
LOA	10.1 m
BEAM	3.48 m
DRAFT	1.9 m
DISPLACEMENT	3400kg
ENGINE	2YM 15HP
SAIL AREA	49.42 m <sup>2</sup>



*Exemplarily built quality, extensive automated systems, pre-preg carbon hulls and race spec as standard*

## NAUTOR'S SWAN

Nautor's Swan specialises in comfortable offshore cruiser racers. The Finnish yard is reporting a solid order book for its elite level boats with several orders in their maxi class (above 60 foot) with in-house architect German Frers penning the new 60 and 80. Swan's current line-up ranges from the one design Clubswan 42 to the superyacht level Swan 130. Swan's philosophy of no compromise quality means signature features such as hidden running rigging, automated systems and high sail area to displacement ratios. Swan Australia dealer Vicsail reports strong interest in the new carbon hulled 60 footer.

### SWAN 60

According to the factory the new 60 is the most technology advanced Swan built, with a pre-preg carbon and foam hull construction, weight-saving interior and relatively lightweight 19,500kg displacement, giving a high power-to-weight ratio for maxi races. The replacement for the 601 model is also intended as a fast passage maker with high volume so plenty of accommodation space across the three cabin layout. Guests have two stern cabins with ensuites while the owner enjoys the privacy forward which includes an offset queen-sized bed. The luxurious fit-out below features brushed steel fittings, louvered doors and teak or oak finishes. The saloon layout has a longitudinal galley and double sized nav station with smarts from B&G and Furuno. The minimalist deck layout includes a hidden hydraulic mainsheet, full carbon Hall Spar masthead rig with rod rigging and Reckman roller furling genoa.

[www.australia.nautorswan.com](http://www.australia.nautorswan.com)

SPECIFICATIONS	Swan 60
PRICE	Euro 2.4M
LOA	18.86 m
BEAM	5.09 m
DRAFT	3.6 m
DISPLACEMENT	18,700 kg
ENGINE	Volvo 110 HP 81 KW
SAIL AREA	125.85 m <sup>2</sup> / 95 m <sup>2</sup>



*Race proven Ker design, near custom quality finish, high ballast ratios and Australian built.*

## SYDNEY YACHTS

The re-emergence of Sydney Yachts under managing director Darren Williams has resulted in two new designs, the GTS 37 and the GTS 43, and a third is understood to be in the offing. The new boats penned by Ker Design have been built with IRC success in mind, and with the recent launch of the first GTS 43 this racer cruiser shows plenty of attention to detail. Built in the company's Nowra yard to ISO quality, both combine performance and below deck comfort.

### SYDNEY GTS 43

Its makers describe the GTS43 as more like a custom boat in construction, with high density foam sandwich laminates and vacuum bagged bulkheads. Points of note include a cast foil with lead bulb, six three-speed primary racing winches and carbon rudderstocks, along with racing rope package and custom-built alloy spars. Options include a Hi Modulus carbon mast from Hall Spars. Cockpit controls include twin wheels on sleek binnacles and bulkhead bench seats leading up to the tear-drop style cabin top with outboard carbon fibre shrouds and smoothed gunwales for comfortable hiking. A fixed bowsprit that can also hinge (for docking) flies asymmetric spinnakers and moves the boat's centre of effort forward at high speed. IRC-friendly non-overlapping headsails are used. Below decks the three cabin layout could sleep a full race crew and an L-shaped galley is good at sea for bracing the cook. Opposite to starboard a full sized forward facing chart table overlooks longitudinal bench seats, with the table offset near the keel stepped mast leaving a passageway for transferring sails.

[www.sydneyyachts.com](http://www.sydneyyachts.com)

SPECIFICATIONS	Sydney GTS 43
PRICE	\$475,000 inc GST
LOA	13.10 m
BEAM	4.09 m
DRAFT	2.7 m
DISPLACEMENT	6700 kg
ENGINE	Yanmar 40 HP
SAIL AREA	65 m <sup>2</sup> / 44 m <sup>2</sup>



*Higher ballast ratio, refined built quality and minimalist deck layouts*

## X-YACHTS

X-Yachts has been synonymous with top-end cruiser racers since the Danish company's inception in 1979 and its latest performance range, named Xp, is intended to carry the marque well ahead of the racing pack. The first two models, the Xp44 and Xp38, are built using the latest epoxy E-Glass vacuum infusion process for strength and stiffness. Also new is a carbon composite hull grid to replace the traditional steel. The Xp44 arrives in April and the Xp38 will make it in time for the Sydney Boat Show in August.

### X-YACHTS XP44

With the highly competitive European racing season getting under way the Xp44 will first see action in French IRC events. But with more than 25 sold off the plan class racing might even be likely. New features of the Xp 44 include a heavier deep bulb keel, long overhangs at the stern and significant weight saving to ensure competitiveness in IRC and ORC events. The masthead alloy rig is keel stepped and can be upgraded to carbon with rod rigging and hydraulic backstay. A removable carbon bowsprit can also be used to set asymmetric spinnakers or Code Zero sails. The clean deck layout has the cockpit mounted main traveller recessed and sheeting hidden under deck beside the twin wheels. Halyards run in channels integrated into the deck structure. Down below the three cabin layout gives the owner a suite up front and twin cabins with toilet. The airy saloon has an L-shaped galley to port allowing all mod cons including coffee maker and microwave.

[www.x-yachts.net.au](http://www.x-yachts.net.au)

SPECIFICATIONS	X-Yachts Xp 44
PRICE	\$550,000 (including duty, GST and commissioning)
LOA	13.29 m
BEAM	4.07 m
DRAFT	2.30 m (standard), 2.65 m (deep)
DISPLACEMENT	8650 kg
ENGINE	40 HP saildrive
SAIL AREA	59.6 m <sup>2</sup> / 47.2 m <sup>2</sup> / 170 m <sup>2</sup>

Xperformance

**NEW**

**Xp 44**



**Stability is king**

X-Yachts is proud to introduce the next generation of cruiser-racer, which will set a new standard of sailing experience.

X-Yachts is the only international yacht builder to control the entire process: from design board to dockside. Serious attention to detail across every element – naval architecture, interior design, engineering and build quality - ensures that the new generation of Xperformance yachts will surpass expectations.

The new Xp 44 is due for launch April 2011, followed by the Xp 38 in August 2011.

# Full-throttle sailing

HIGH-LEVEL YACHT RACING ON SYDNEY HARBOUR AND THE CHANCE TO WIN AN AUDI A1 DREW 321 YACHTS TO THIS YEAR'S AUDI SYDNEY HARBOUR REGATTA, WRITES MATTHEW HENRY.

March in Sydney is just as capable of producing balmy summer-like conditions as it is a positively autumnal chill, and true to form the Audi Sydney Harbour Regatta managed to contain both extremes across its three-day sailing program, from 4 to 7 March. The regatta commenced on the Friday with an afternoon charity race in partnership with the Smith Family, sailing in perfect Sydney Harbour conditions - sunny skies and a consistent nor'east breeze. But with the full schedule of regatta racing starting on Saturday morning, the weather turned and a gusty southerly rolled in, accompanied by grey skies and chillier conditions.

Auckland may have claimed the 'City of Sails' moniker, but for three days Sydney showed that on its day, it's the most spectacular sailing arena in the world. Four-thousand sailors on 321 boats sailed across 23 divisions spread out across the harbour this year, transforming the busy waterway into a kaleidoscope of yachting craft. This year's fleet included J24's, Ynglings, Cavalier 28's, Melges 24's, classic yachts, historic 18-foot skiffs, Adams 10's, Flying Tigers, Grand Prix IRC racers and Etechells.

Drama rocked the Ynglings division on the second day with a protest lodged overnight resulting in seven boats being disqualified from the first race on Saturday. It made for a tense showdown on the water when racing resumed on Sunday morning, but it was the fleet's cool-headed Olympian Karyn Gojnich, who kept up the consistency to take out the win with her team on *Evie*, ahead of *Meridian* and *AUS57*.

Sailing off Bradleys Head with the Harbour Bridge, the Opera House and the Sydney city skyline creating a spectacular backdrop, the Etechells fleet had its share of star skippers including Alinghi team America's Cup sailor Will McCarthy, three-time Olympic sailor Anthony Nossiter and former 18-foot skiff world champion Chris Cleary. But the rock stars failed to fire and local knowledge came

into play with Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron sailor Jervy Tilly helming *Bushfire* into the Sydney Harbour sweet spot to storm home with the series win.

"We had some really interesting and challenging racing against a strong fleet," said Tilly. "We were lucky in the first race of the day, we chose the right hand side of the course and picked up a big band of pressure which carried and we ended up winning that race. In the final race we had a bad start but managed to claw our way back."

Aussie Olympians Mat Belcher and Malcolm Page swapped the 470 for an SB3 sports boat for the weekend, recruiting Olympic bronze medalist Ian Brown and 12-year-old Finn Gilbert for their One Design Sailing campaign. With 11 boats in the fleet, the SB3s delivered all the

While yacht owners typically pick only the best sailing crew for the big regattas, it's not a bad idea to have at least one who's as adept behind the wheel of a car as trimming the main.

grin-inducing excitement for which the class was designed, with tight mark roundings and close racing as the fleet nipped at the heels of the Olympians. But Belcher and Page made it clear why they are Aussie representatives and the current 470 world champions, dominating the series to win all six races.

Outside the Sydney Heads, the IRC ocean racers were tossed by the lumpy seas on Saturday morning as gusts of up to 20 knots from the south east had sailors reaching for their warmer sailing jacket. The ocean passage race was halted two nautical miles off Sydney Heads when the *Ginger* crew lost its bowman Sam Sexton overboard - apparently still clutching the spinnaker pole. Sexton was recovered safely after some snappy work by the crew to get him back onboard in just four minutes.

Jim Cooney's maxi *Brindabella*, also racing in the passage series, teething

problems continued after her recent refit with a torn mainsail forcing her to retire from the regatta. Bruce Hogan's sleek Marten 49 *Perpetual Mocean* was the eventual winner of the two-race series, picking up a second and first to beat Jack Stening's *Stormaway* (second) and Tony Levett's *Eleni* (third) by a clear margin.

Also racing out beyond the heads, the 27 boats competing in the Audi IRC Australian Championship included some of the country's most glamorous racing yachts such as *Wild Oats X*, *Loki*, *Hooligan*, *Living Doll* and New Zealand's *Georgia*. Marcus Blackmore must have taken his vitamins, putting on a dominant display to win IRC Class A and securing his lead in the national championships, which will conclude at Audi Hamilton Island Race Week.

While yacht owners typically pick

only the best sailing crew for the big regattas, crew handy with a car steering wheel are just as valuable as extra helmsmen in this event. With the regatta producing over 20 divisional winners, the final victor of the Audi Sydney Harbour Regatta is traditionally decided on the road with winners invited to nominate either themselves or a crewmember for the Audi Final Drive Challenge. The winner of the Audi A1 was Peter Sorensen of *Philosopher's Club*, who put forward Peter McIntyre as the crew's star driver.

"Peter's the best trimmer we have and he's proved to be the best driver we have," said Sorensen. "Actually, now he's the best trimmer in the universe."

After the success of this strategy, don't be surprised if you see the Stig offered a spot working the bow on a boat in next year's regatta.

[www.sydneyharbourregatta.com](http://www.sydneyharbourregatta.com)

AUDI SYDNEY HARBOUR  
REGATTA



**BLACK BEAUTY**  
The crew of *Living Doll* rug up during a chilly Audi Sydney Harbour Regatta.



### Healthy lead

Marcus Blackmore's *Hooligan* has retained the lead in Class A of the Audi IRC Australian Championship after the second round, sailed as part of the Audi Sydney Harbour Regatta. *Hooligan* leads *Loki* and *Living Doll* coming into round three: the Audi Sydney Gold Coast yacht race, which starts on 30 July. [www.irc.yachting.org.au](http://www.irc.yachting.org.au)

ANDREA FRANCOLINI



FARR 40 WORLDS

## Food for thought

FRESH FROM HIS WIN AT THE FARR 40 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS, GUIDO BELGIORNO-NETTIS EXPLAINS TO LISA RATCLIFF THAT THE SAILING TEAM THAT EATS TOGETHER, WINS TOGETHER.

**M**ost days Guido Belgiorno-Nettis, the newly crowned Rolex Farr 40 World Champion, sits down for a staff business and social lunch cooked by the company chef. Being a first generation Italian-Australian he learnt early in life the power of food when it comes to uniting a team.

Such was his philosophy for the World Championship with breakfasts and dinners at key points in the campaign strengthening crew bonds. "There is lots of chit-chat and business done over a bowl of pasta. An important lesson I've learnt in life is that people will work hard if they want to be there, it's the same in business and sailing."

Belgiorno-Nettis, at 53 the youngest of three sons born to successful post-war Italian migrants Franco and Amina who built an empire from scratch, is regarded by many as the 'sorcerer's apprentice', the child most like his father. The joint managing director of the sizeable family business, Transfield Holdings, his impressive CV portrays a man not adverse to risk. It's befitting perhaps that he met his wife of 23 years, Michelle, at Perisher Valley when she noticed his magnificent leap of faith while contesting an end of season

club ski jumping event.

A generous supporter of the arts (chairman of the Australian Chamber Orchestra) and motor sport fan (competes a few times a year with his 1980s built Formula 1 Ferrari Turbo) Belgiorno-Nettis began sailing at a young age, mucking around in boats but never competing until he joined the Sydney 38 one design class seven years ago. He achieved success in the class before switching to the Farr 40s when Sydney was declared the host city for the 2011 Worlds.

"I joined the Farr 40 class in 2007 and in the first year we decided to have a shot at the Worlds."

Belgiorno-Nettis has a knack for being the glue that binds. Five of the original crew from three years ago were there to share in the spoils after *Transfusion* put enough distance between themselves and *Nerone* (ITA) in the nail-biting final race of the 10-race series. The crew's all-important pre-race pasta was washed down with the sweet taste of winner's champagne at the finish.

The four-day championship, hosted by the elegant Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron, brought 20 teams representing five countries to Sydney. Martin and Lisa Hill's *Estate Master* (AUS) came out swinging on day one but over the ensuing days were

swallowed up by the Italians – the defending champions *Nerone* and the Italian-Australian with a new voice in his ear, winning America's Cup tactician John Kostecki.

Now that life has returned to normal, Belgiorno-Nettis believes that Kostecki, a three-time Farr 40 World Champion, was critical to *Transfusion's* success. "Due to his experience and expectations, he was able to get the best out of the team. We kept lifting and developing." Likewise Kostecki, seeking a platform for success, would have also done his homework before putting his name on the crew list.

Second on the final pointscore two points adrift of *Transfusion* was Massimo Mezzaroma and Antonio Sodo Migliori's *Nerone* on 37 points and third was Jim Richardson's *Barking Mad* (USA) on 62 points.

The next Rolex Farr 40 World Championship will be held in Chicago, USA, in late August or early September 2012 and Belgiorno-Nettis says *Transfusion* will be there to defend the title.

"While ever the class offers up such amazing international venues and has support of a company like Rolex, the future is secure," he adds.

[www.farr40worlds.com](http://www.farr40worlds.com)



**"There is lots of chit-chat and business done over a bowl of pasta. An important lesson I've learnt in life is that people will work hard if they want to be there, it's the same in business and sailing."**

Guido Belgiorno-Nettis

**FAST FOOD**  
Guido Belgiorno-Nettis and the crew of *Transfusion* (above), burn off the calories during the Rolex Farr 40 Worlds.

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# SYDNEY-HOBART VIA STRATIS

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Secret Mens Business 3.5, with a full Stratis sail wardrobe by Doyle Sails, dominated the Rolex 2010 Sydney Hobart to take overall victory and win the coveted Tattersall's Cup.

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SC-1080

## Surviving Sydney Harbour

Sydney Harbour is a very busy waterway at all times of year and competitors in the Audi Winter Series will be sharing it with large commercial vessels, ships and ferries. Large vessels are restricted to particular channels and are also restricted in their ability to alter course, so it's important to stay alert at all times.

Regatta competitors must maintain a minimum distance of 200 metres from the bow of any ferry and 500 metres from the bow of any ship, and no less than 30 metres from the sides and stern of any ship or ferry underway, except for warships which require 200 metres and no less than 60 metres from the sides and stern.

Always be aware of the wind shadow created by large vessels. Additionally, some commercial ferries on Sydney Harbour display an orange diamond shape which grants priority (right of way) over sailing vessels. This is an exception to the 'power gives way to sail' rule and must be observed.

## Quick Tips

- Do not cross ahead of large vessels or ferries unless well clear. Even when hundreds of metres away, your boat may disappear from the ship master's view from the bridge.
- Always keep to the starboard side of a channel.
- Do not cross a channel if you are going to impede a vessel which has to use the channel.

## Understanding shipping sound signals

### One short blast

I am altering course to starboard (right).

### Two short blasts

I am altering course to port (left)

### Three short blasts

I am operating engines astern (stopping).

### Five (or more) short blasts

I'm unsure of your intentions and I doubt whether you are taking enough avoiding action to avoid collision.

NSW Maritime provides more information regarding big ships and small boats on its website, including map sections showing the shipping channels.

Visit [www.maritime.nsw.gov.au](http://www.maritime.nsw.gov.au) or call the info line 13 12 56



AUDI WINTER SERIES

## Cold front

WINTER RACING ON SYDNEY HARBOUR IS AS POPULAR AS EVER WITH A HUGE FLEET OF CYCA BOATS EXPECTED ON THE WATER AGAIN WHEN THE COLD WEATHER ARRIVES, WRITES JENNIFER CROOKS.

**STEAM BEFORE SAIL**  
Dodging the ferries at the Audi Winter Series on Sydney Harbour.

**T**he ever-popular Audi Winter Series began in its current format in the 1950s and has grown over the years to become one of Australia's largest ongoing series, with fleets averaging 130-plus boats last year.

The Series commences each year with the traditional Ladies Day and Great Veteran's Race, followed by the pointscore races and concluding with the final Ladies Day race before many of the boats head north in the Audi Sydney Gold Coast Yacht Race and other east coast races.

The Great Veteran's Race, the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia's annual tribute to those classic Sydney Hobart yachts that sailed south in the 1940s, '50s, '60s and '70s, will be held on Sunday 1 May 2011.

The Great Veterans Race is open for entry to yachts that have competed in a Sydney Hobart Race and are over 30 years of age. The race is a non-spinnaker race and is sailed in a competitive but fun atmosphere around the harbour.

Entries are now open for eligible veteran yachts to compete for the historic Windward Trophy.

The Great Veteran's Race is sailed in conjunction with the opening race of the Audi Winter Series, a non-pointscore Ladies Day race for the Jill McLay trophy. All entrants in the Audi Winter Series can participate in the Ladies Day race just by nominating a lady skipper on their entry form.

The Audi Winter Series pointscore starts on Sunday 8 May





with ten pointscore races for nine spinnaker, two non-spinnaker and a Sydney 380D division. The pointscore series will consist of 10 races, with up to three drops allowed, if all ten races are completed. The opening and closing Ladies Day events on 1 May and 17 July do not count towards a yacht's overall series pointscore.

Whilst some original members of The Breakfast Club retired at the end of last season, a new breed of passionate volunteers have come together with some previous Breakfast Club members, ensuring that crews can continue to enjoy a traditional barbeque breakfast before the day's racing. All proceeds from Breakfast Club sales are used to purchase items for the club house to benefit members, such as new audio visual equipment.

The Bistro will also be open every Sunday morning to serve breakfast and after-race snacks. L Eat also offers a variety of onboard catering which must be pre-ordered. As well as a prize of great Musto gear for the top three in each division, all divisional placegetters go in the draw for the chance to drive a brand new luxury Audi car for the week.

The Audi Winter Series Launch Cocktail party will be conducted at the CYCA on Wednesday 27 April from 6.30pm to 8.30pm for all owners, skippers and crew participating in the Audi Winter Series 2011.

[www.cyca.com.au](http://www.cyca.com.au)

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# Young love

SOME TOUGH, GRITTY ONE-DESIGN RACING IS EXPECTED AT THIS YEAR'S YOUNG 88 NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS, WRITES JODIE BAKEWELL-WHITE.

The Young 88 is as close as it gets to one-design keelboat racing in New Zealand and the class attracts impressive fleet numbers regularly racing on Auckland harbour, as well as other parts of the country. So when the National Championship comes up for grabs each year it is a hotly contested affair. In 2011 organisers are hoping to crack the previous record of 29, and gather together 30-plus boats for the two day regatta on the weekend of 16 to 17 April.

Rick Hackett from the Class Association says they're on target with excellent interest over a month out from the local Auckland fleet and some visitors, including South Island boats, expected to travel up to be on the start line.

In 2010 *Flash Gordon* took the Championship, sailed by a contingent of Emirates Team New Zealand sailors

with Jeremy Lomas at the helm. Hackett names *Flash Gordon* and *Sister Moonshine* as the top boats to beat in the 2011 race.

"I understand that Jeremy and the guys are going to join us again to defend the title they won in 2010," he says. "It looks really positive having sailors with good credentials in the fleet again this year."

Up and comer Phil Robertson of the Waka Racing team, who recently earned themselves a World Match Racing Tour entry card for the 2011 season, will also be in the line-up in April.

The title will be determined after two days of windward leeward racing on the Saturday and Sunday, with up to five races each day. The Royal New Zealand Yacht Squadron once again hosts the event with the race course likely to be set just outside Auckland's Rangitoto Channel.

The Young 88, about 30 feet in length

and with a fractional rig, is a popular multipurpose boat that offers speed and agility for racing, with space and comfort for cruising. The first mould was built by Roger Land in the 1980s, and since then 158 have been built. Of these, 77 are still in the Auckland area, nine in Northland, 13 in the rest of the North Island, 19 in the South Island, and 38 have been exported.

"It's an evenly priced boat and it remains competitive within our cost constraints, and it's still considered a one-design. Even though a few little things change, there's very little between them," says Hackett. "So it's good even racing, with a decent quantity of boats regularly showing up to take part."

New Zealand Young88 National Championships 2011  
16-17 April 2011  
[www.rnzys.org.nz](http://www.rnzys.org.nz)

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“There’s not much light back here, so watch your head,” says Chris Nicholson, ducking under a protruding pipe as we climb into the bare hull’s darkest, most cramped corner. A dim outline of the sprightly skipper is barely visible just a few feet ahead in the gloom, as he treads gingerly from beam to beam through the skeletal insides of Camper Team New Zealand’s new Volvo 70 racer.

The boat is raised up on the hardstand at Cooksons boatyard, undergoing the finishing touches, and ‘Nicko’ is giving us the tour. With no floorboards and tools and workmen strewn throughout the broad hull, it’s an athletic endeavor just to move around down here.

We can hear the thud of boat builders’ boots on the cockpit floor just inches above our heads as we stoop down in the aft quarters, where the team navigator and onboard photographer will reside shoulder-to-shoulder. Echoing down the empty hull is the clamour of sanders and vacuum cleaners as the boat is prepared for its paint job. We’re squatting down in about three or four feet of headroom; it’s already a claustrophobe’s worst nightmare

## BUILT TOUGH

LIFE ON A VOLVO 70 OCEAN RACER IS WET, CRAMPED AND EXHAUSTING. MATTHEW HENRY TOURED THE IN-BUILT CAMPER TEAM NEW ZEALAND BOAT TO SEE WHAT AUSSIE SKIPPER CHRIS NICHOLSON AND CREW WILL HAVE TO ENDURE WHEN THE VOLVO OCEAN RACE GETS UNDERWAY LATER THIS YEAR.

**INSIDE STORY**  
Camper Team New Zealand skipper Chris Nicholson standing inside the main living space of the team’s Volvo 70 at Cooksons in Auckland. The view aft shows the cramped quarters for the photographer and navigator.

and the bulky nav station hasn’t even been installed yet. When the boat is finished, this will be the Camper team’s technical nerve centre, with computer screens mounted on a swiveling workstation which can swing to weather when the boat tacks; even those employed for their brains will be expected to heave their weight once the racing begins.

My mind reels with thoughts of crawling into this dungeon-like space. Who could bring themselves to bury their head in a computer screen

down here? Nicko, meanwhile, seems to be relishing the chance to show a journalist his place in the dangerous game that is the Volvo Ocean Race.

“My eyes roll in the back of my head every time I come back here to look at computers,” he says, with just a slightly perceptible curl of the lip. “When the boat is just hammering along, it gets noisy as down here.”

It sure would be a miserable existence on a typical three-week leg, but it doesn’t get any easier up on deck where Nicko, as the skipper and chief helmsman of the Camper team, will spend much of his time. Anyone acquainted with the Volvo Ocean Race (once known as the Whitbread race) will no doubt call to mind images of green water cascading over the decks, washing over hapless sailors clad in head-to-toe wet weather gear as they struggle to keep their feet on a supercharged ocean racer pacing along with unrelenting speed. These muscle-bound Volvo 70s get pushed to extreme limits, scaling mountains of water only to crash down the other side at 30 knots. At full tilt they create an impressive wake like a ski boat. This is the Volvo Ocean Race: heavy metal sailing.

But it’s all in a day’s work for Chris Nicholson. The tough Aussie ocean

racer has gone into battle in three Volvo Ocean Races so far, and will compete in his fourth campaign with the Camper team in the 2011-12 event, which kicks off in November this year. Nicko's time in the Volvo has seen him take his fair share of knocks, including suffering a ruptured anterior cruciate ligament in a crew tumble in the last edition (2009) and having his boat sink in frigid waters off the North Atlantic in his second race in 2006.

"That tops the list, I suppose," he says, with the laconic understatement only an Aussie could muster. "That was a fairly controlled one. We knew the boat was severely wounded for 36 hours or so, so you had time to collect your thoughts. The big problem is if you get a fast flood inside the boat – which we've also had at a separate time."

The story of Nicko's rapid rise to the top of the ocean racing's pinnacle is a rare tale among his more experienced peers. Born and bred a skiff sailor, his introduction to ocean racing was a veritable baptism of fire, taking up a crew spot with Grant Dalton's 'Amer Sports One' team for the Volvo Ocean Race 2000-01. Dalton, a five-time Volvo skipper and now CEO of Emirates Team New Zealand, was Nicko's biggest backer in ocean racing and still recalls the moment he first scouted the talented Aussie during the 2000 Laser Worlds, where Nicko was sailing 49ers.

"I was sitting on the wall after the race and this guy with Skilled Engineering – I didn't even know who the skipper was – went around the top mark in 25th and just carved them up downwind in breeze and was around the bottom mark, just off the beach, in first place. And I thought at the time, 'I wonder who that guy is, he's obviously real smart'," said Dalton.

So impressed was Dalton he searched high and low until he finally tracked down the mystery helmsman to offer him the chance of a lifetime – a start as a rookie recruit for the Volvo Ocean Race. Within a year Nicko was onboard and was instantly hooked on the demanding race format. He says from the moment he stepped onboard *Amer Sports One* he dreamed of the day he would lead his own campaign – the very position he now finds himself in.

As if to repay the chance given to him, Nicko has this time recruited a talented youngster with paltry offshore experience to the Camper team: world champion match racer Adam Minoprio. His words seem to echo those of Dalton a decade earlier:

**YARD GRAFT**  
The new Volvo 70 racing yacht of Camper Team New Zealand takes shape in Auckland. The hull is designed for outright speed and built to survive the roughest seas.

"Just his straight out driving skill is fully in the elite level," says Nicko. "When you have the fine skills like that, you can normally make the transition to this. He's got the perfect attitude to make this stick. I'm not saying there won't be any hard times, but I have full confidence in that being alright."

allow the boat to wheelie through the waves like a motocross bike.

All around us, the builders at Cooksons are working tirelessly to have the boat ready for painting that afternoon. Considering the punishment it will be subjected to, there's a huge responsibility for the builders to leave no stone unturned.



**"People say, 'it's a 70-foot boat', but our living space is only 15 feet. So it's like putting 11 guys in the average lounge room, feeding them freeze-dried food and working them! Sounds quite rough, doesn't it?"**

**Chris Nicholson**

**A**s we crouch down in the dark under the cockpit floor, there's a sudden clang and a flash of light from back inside the boat's transom cavity.

"That's not you La-La, is it?" shouts Nicko, poking his head through a porthole leading deep into the transom. "Holy shit, how did you fit in there?"

A big bloke emerges, his 120kg's of broad-shouldered bulk barely squeezing through the tiny entry to the aft ballast tank, which will be sealed up behind him once his work is done. When racing, the 1600-litre reservoir can be filled with water to give the boat more weight in the rear. During the rough stuff, the ballast will

Their work to date is impressive. If you've never seen a Volvo 70 in the flesh, it's an awe-inspiring sight. The Camper team's monstrous ocean racer looks like a space shuttle sitting in its hangar. With a transom as wide as a highway and a wedge-shaped hull like a Dorito, the lines converge menacingly at a pointed bowsprit 70 feet down the end of the shed.

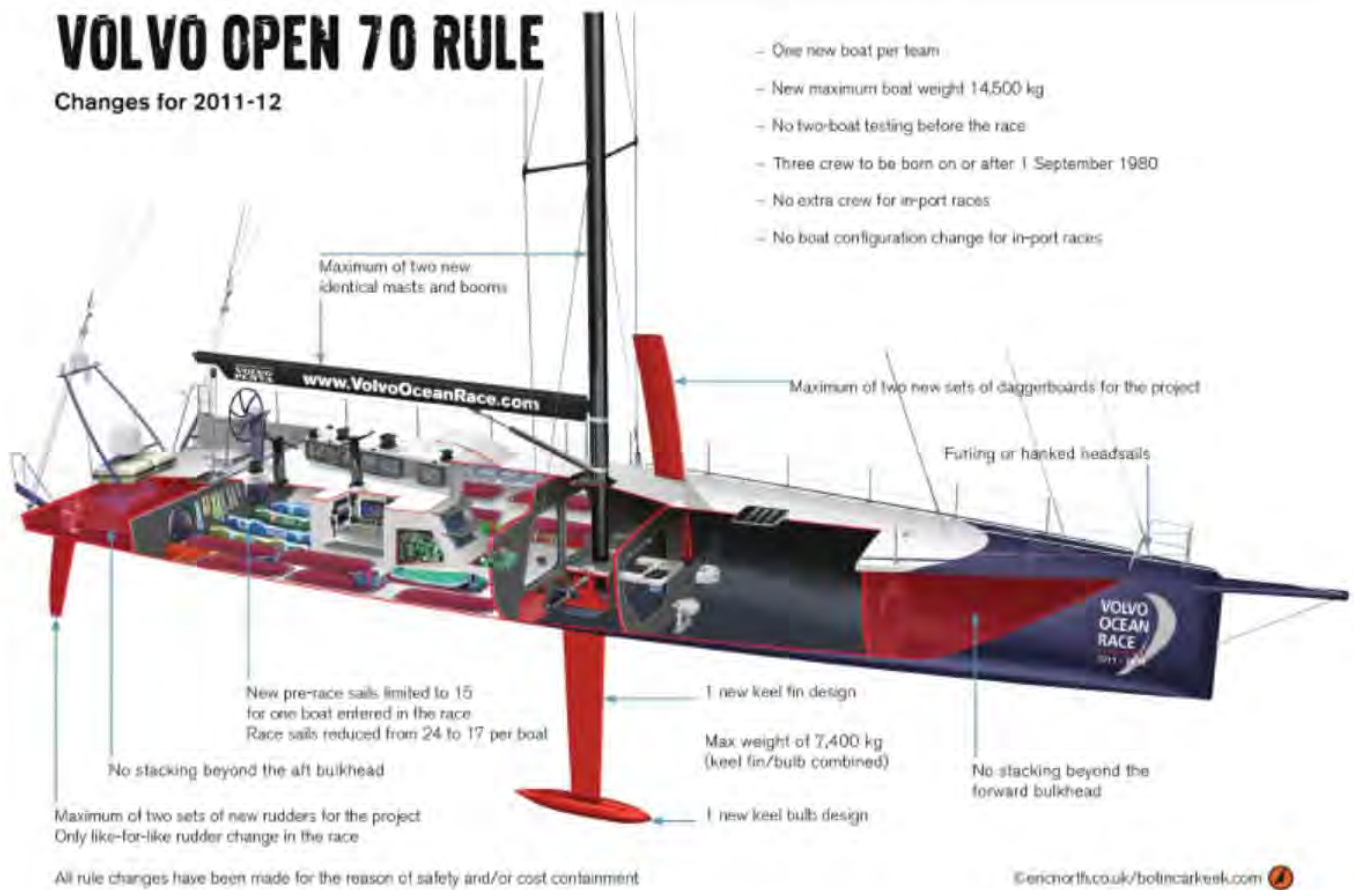
"There's an awful lot of 100-foot maxis running around the world at the moment, and they've all had their crack at 24-hour records – none of them can do it. These boats still hold the 24-hour record, and we should break it again this next race," says Nicko confidently.

Volvo 70s are built like massive sleds with long, flat sections in the hull which make them exceedingly fast, horribly uncomfortable and vulnerable to serious structural failures – not the kind of thing you want to happen thousands of miles from shore. Back below deck, as we walk through the centre of the boat a beefy longitudinal beam runs lengthways from stem to stern like a spine. It's a heavy-duty piece of engineering normally reserved for offshore powerboats.

"We'll be doing some seriously high speeds and our landings will be

# VOLVO OPEN 70 RULE

Changes for 2011-12



greater than those guys," says Nicko. "To be honest, everything looks right. At this stage in other builds, you can start to get concerns about a lack of structure or that you are just pushing things a little too far. I think we've done a nice job of ensuring that structurally we'll be quite sound."

As we move forward inside the hull, we come back into the light and to the place where many of the Camper boat's technical innovations are on display. Unfortunately we can't share any of the 'top secret' mods that the team has planned, but this boat promises to be one of the fastest ocean racers ever built – easier to sail, with less drag for a better top speed while remaining as strong as ever. Each successive generation of Volvo ocean racers has seen a performance boost of between eight and 12 per cent, and this boat is likely to be no exception.

Given the grand proportions of its above-deck space, it's hard to believe we're in the same boat as we move into the amidships area below deck – the main 'living area' for the 11 sailors onboard. This space (the 'main saloon' as you might say on any other boat) is where the crew will

**Volvo 70s are built like massive sleds with long, flat sections in the hull which make them exceedingly fast, horribly uncomfortable and vulnerable to serious structural failures – not the kind of thing you want to happen thousands of miles from shore.**

**GRAND DESIGNS**  
The basic plan of a Volvo 70 ocean racer. Camper Team New Zealand's boat will have some modifications over previous generations, but the basic layout remains the same.

sleep, change out of their wet clothes and do everything else that needs to be done during their off watch (the crew works on a four hours on, four hours off system).

"The guys get by, but it can bring out the devil in some," says Nicko of the cramped quarters. "People say, 'it's a 70-foot boat', but our living space is only 15 feet. So it's like putting 11 guys in the average lounge room, feeding them freeze-dried food and working them! Sounds quite rough, doesn't it?" he laughs.

Sleep is hard to come by, especially when it's rough, and with only four hours at any one time it's never far from interruption.

"You are going over a big wave every four or five seconds, so you have to hang on to the roof to brace yourself. You can just feel every wave; you can feel it coming. The sleep can be pretty poor, but you have your calm days and the quality of your sleep skyrockets – then you have some of the best sleeps of your life."

He points to an empty space just through the bulkhead. "This is the galley," he says. The actual installation won't be anything flash – boiling water is just about the only

thing the crew will have the ability to make in the simple gimballed stove.

"Where we are is a really rough part of the boat, this far forward," says Nicko. "So don't even talk about using the head in a seaway. I try and avoid it as much as possible, there's a perfectly good transom at the back of the boat."

The boat contains five watertight sections and a supposedly impact-proof section. If all else fails, there's a small round escape hatch in the top of the boat.

"You saw La-La before, it's amazing – if you've got to, you'll fit through," says Nicko.

While the Camper skipper has tremendous faith in the Cookson-built boat, he says ultimately it's his crew to whom he will entrust his life. Joining him will be kiwi watch captain and driver Stu Bannatyne, Aussie navigator Will Oxley, Minoprio and a team of talented sailors with Whitbread, America's Cup and maxi racing experience in the mix.

"You've just got to have good guys and that's what this race does, it gets the best ocean racers in the world. There's too much on the line not to." ↓

[www.volvooceanrace.com](http://www.volvooceanrace.com)

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A DRY SALT PAN IN THE MIDDLE OF THE AUSTRALIAN BUSH DOESN'T SOUND LIKE THE BEST PLACE TO GO SAILING, BUT FOR COMMODORE BOB BACKWAY AND THE MEMBERS OF LAKE EYRE YACHT CLUB IT'S JUST A MATTER OF WAITING FOR THE RAINS, WRITES SAM TINSON.



# DRY COUNTRY



**DESERT DINGHIES**  
Boats gather for rare Lake Eyre Yacht Club regatta, at the point where the Birdsville Track crosses Cooper Creek in South Australia.



Lake Eyre, as any good geography student knows, is Australia's largest salt lake and one of the biggest ephemeral lakes in the world. Located some 700 kilometres north of Adelaide in one of the driest regions of the South Australian outback, its two largest sections, Lake Eyre North and Lake Eyre South, occupy almost 10,000 square kilometres of sun-baked mud, topped with a thick crust of salt. To stand on the lake's barren shore, with your boots crunching in the hot saline scab and the dazzling white expanse playing havoc with your retinas, is to stand on the edge of a vast, bone-dry silence. It's the sort of place you expect to find the skeletons of expired camels. It's not the sort of place you think of starting a yacht club.

Unless, that is, you are Bob Backway, founder and Commodore of the Lake Eyre Yacht Club. A keen adventure sailor with many decades of yachting behind him, Bob's love of rag and stick is matched only by his love of the desert. His yacht club occupies a two-storey building with a tin roof next to the General Store in Marree, a tiny outback settlement 100 kilometres south of Lake Eyre. The building stands on stilts and has the customary yacht club trappings: a terrace with small boats stowed beneath, a flag bearing the club colours, a wooden duckwalk and, of course, a slipway. The one thing it doesn't have – and the very thing that most people would consider an essential prerequisite for a sailing club – is water.

**“Often you get becalmed in the middle of the lake at midday. The surface is like a mirror, the water and the sky become one. You get a light sea fog and it's almost like you're floating in a cloud. It's a very beautiful thing.”**

**BOB BACKWAY** *Commodore*

For that, you need to wait. And wait. And wait. On average the water level on Lake Eyre exceeds 1.5 metres – enough to sail a small cat without a daggerboard – only once every three years. Needless to say, the LEYC's regatta calendar is not exactly jam-packed with events.

Luckily, Bob is a very patient man. His love affair with Lake Eyre began in 1997, when the lake flooded for the first time in almost a decade. He and his wife Doreen, who until then had been dividing their holiday time between sailing and outback adventures, saw an opportunity to combine the two. Loading their 14-foot Caper catamaran *Peril* onto a trailer, they towed it 1200 kilometres into the bush until they arrived at Lake Eyre North – or as close to it as they could get. With no slipway and several kilometres of boot-sucking salt flats between them and water they had no option but to resort to hard legwork.

“We dragged the boat out about two kilometres and then had to give up because it still wasn't deep enough,” recalls Bob. “Then we tried Lake Eyre South, and found an easier way to get onto it. We had four days on the lake and just fell in love with it.”

A bit of research led Bob to others who had sailed on Lake Eyre in the floods of the 1970s, and in the ensuing exchange of emails someone suggested the group should form a club. Lake Eyre Yacht Club was born.



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"We started out as a virtual club on the internet at first," says Bob. "It was just a website and mailing list. I was just about to take early retirement and I thought, this could be fun."

Bob had to wait another three years before Lake Eyre filled up enough for *Peril* to wet her hulls again, and this time he took Doreen and their two young children along for the ride. The next few years saw the family sail on the lake whenever conditions allowed – once in 2001, twice more 2004 – but they were hampered by the lack of accurate information on the lake's status. Facts were rare and often conflicting, and with a 3000km round trip from Melbourne at stake the Backways couldn't afford to turn up and find it dry.

"Luckily my wife worked for a quantity surveyor at the time, and someone there suggested using satellite imagery," says Bob. "We pioneered the technique of using Landsat images to get information on the lake's status. Now, sitting here in my study I can tell you how deep the lake is to within 100mm."

With satellite imagery providing his 'tide timetable' Bob has sailed on Lake Eyre seven times since founding the club in 1997, and several more times on the surrounding waterways in the lake's enormous catchment area (which covers one sixth of Australia, or an area the size of France, Germany and Italy combined). In 2006 the club purchased its clubhouse. At first it



"There was a 22-foot trailer sailer there, a 20-foot Windrush, and a 5.3 Farr as well," says Bob. "Cooper Creek flowed into the lake for the first time in twenty years. It was just paradise."

By this stage, the question most people are probably asking is: why? Why go to all the time and trouble to sail in the outback, when Australia is blessed with over 30,000 kilometres of coastline? What's the appeal?

"Experiencing the agoraphobia I suppose," quips Bob. "It's just so completely different. One of the areas we have water in at the moment is over 1000 square kilometres, which is about the size of Port Phillip Bay. You can easily sail around for a week without seeing a soul. It's the solitude that yachtsmen often like."

There are also strange weather phenomena, unique to desert salt lakes, which keep Bob and the other LEYC members coming back for more.

"Often you get becalmed in the middle of the lake at midday, and the surface is like a mirror, the water and the sky become one. You get a light sea fog and it's almost like you're floating in a cloud. It's a very beautiful thing."

The lake's high salt content might make for dramatic scenery, but it does have its downsides. It quickly destroys outboard motors (Bob carries one aboard *Peril* only for emergencies) and leaches oil from the skin, causing finger and toenails to go brittle and break, and resulting in painful sea ulcers on longer trips. Temperatures on the lake can soar to 40 degrees, so exposure and dehydration are also concerns. And then there are the frequent becalmings ("there's always wind at some point, you just have to be



was just somewhere to keep *Peril* between flood seasons, but it has since turned into something of a local tourist attraction.

Membership of the LEYC has grown

steadily, and in 2010 the club held its first regatta on Cooper Creek, one of the three rivers that feed Lake Eyre, with some 58 small sailing boats coming from as far afield as Sydney.



On average the water level on Lake Eyre exceeds 1.5 metres – enough to sail a small cat without a daggerboard – only once every three years.



patient”), which can leave you stuck in the middle of the lake for hours, or even days, waiting for a puff. Bob always takes enough food and water to last him a week, which so far is the longest he’s been out on the lake. Any longer, he says, and the sea ulcers become a problem.



Despite the dangers and discomfort, Bob says he always feels safe out on the lake alone.

“I take a satellite phone, which in the desert I believe is safer than an EPIRB. If something happened to me I’d first ring my wife as she knows the area, and then I’d call the helicopter at the Maree Hotel. Using the sat phone I can get a helicopter to me quickly enough to save me from a snake bite, whereas if I pulled the pin on an EPIRB I’d be dead by the time they found me.”

As well as the snakes, salt, sea ulcers and sunburn, Bob and his fellow members at the LEYC are now confronting another obstacle – red tape. This year, for the first time, the South Australian government has refused the club permission to sail on Lake Eyre, citing native title ownership of the land (despite large companies such as BHP having access rights). Bob is determined to overturn the decision, and at the time

**EYRE HEADS**  
Opposite page: The LEYC clubhouse has become something of a local tourist attraction in Marree, despite the nearest water being over 100km away; Making the most of a flooded Cooper Creek; LEYC members on the shore of Lake Eyre. This page: Deep keel boats are not advised to attempt sailing on Cooper Creek; Commodore Bob Backway on the shore of his beloved Lake Eyre.

of writing there’s talk of an illegal action taking place – presumably an informal regatta of some sort – to protest the issue.

One thing is certain: Lake Eyre Yacht Club will not go down without a fight. It takes a lot of guts, passion

and patience to set up a yacht club in the middle of the desert, and Bob Backway has proved he has all three virtues in plentiful supply. If the battle for sailing rights on Lake Eyre comes down to a waiting game, the smart money’s on the Commodore. ↓

Photo by Ian Mainsbridge



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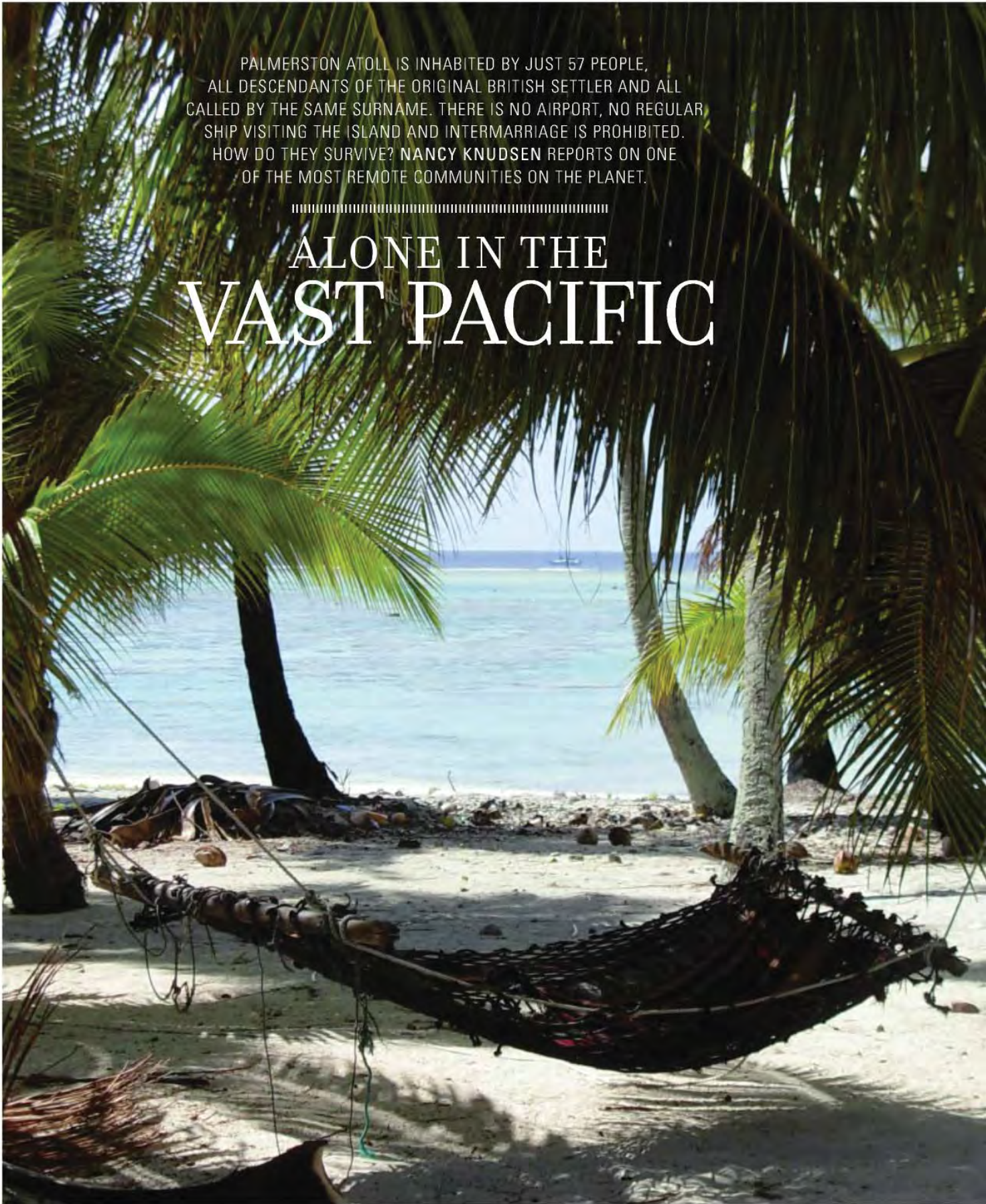
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It's so silent here, with just the sound of soft wind whirring through the halyards. I can hear our tiny courtesy flag trilling a flat song in the 25-knot breeze. It's almost dark now, shshsh, don't make a noise, one solitary light towards land, one anchor light from the only other boat here. Today we arrived in Palmerston Atoll, in the Cook Islands.

wash lazily back and forth.

"Welcome to Palmerston," he smiles broadly. "Be comfortable tonight. You are safe here, and the wind will not change." Refusing to come aboard, he hangs onto our toe-rail, chatting.

He tells us he was the 'great-by-five' grandson of the original William Marsters, an Englishman who settled here in 1861, and recounts something of the fascinating tale of the island. William Marsters was employed as a caretaker of the island, collecting the copra which grew plentifully. He brought his wife and her sister with him. They were later joined by a Portuguese sailor and his wife, who was a first cousin of Mrs. Marsters. Within a few months the Portuguese sailor had left the island never to return, leaving his wife behind.

As the only man left on the island, Marsters decided to declare himself a minister of the Anglican church and married himself to both his wife's sister and to her first cousin.

Thus delivered from the sins of adultery, he proceeded to start three families, one with each of his three wives. Within 25 years he had 17 children and 54 grandchildren, and lived to the ripe old age of 78. He divided the island into three parts, one for each clan, which he designated the 'head', 'tail' and 'middle' families. Paying at least lip-service to avoiding incest, he prohibited marriages within a clan.

His tale finished, Bob Marsters heads off in his runabout, promising to return in the morning. "No, no I shall collect you, the pass into the lagoon is very difficult for a rubber dinghy," he grins disparagingly and we are left to our own devices.

So now as we sit quietly and breathe in the evening, I can't help thinking just how remote we are. If our dinghy were set adrift now, there's nothing between here and the Antarctic to stop it in its flight before the bright north-easterly trade-wind.

As promised, Bob Marsters returns in the morning to escort us and we can't wait to see this Robinson Crusoe style of living. We already know there is no airport and no regular boat service. What would it be like to live so remotely in a community of just 57 people, all of them relatives?

Today it is easier, but not much, to find a spouse you are not related to. A freighter that calls several times a year with supplies is the only way to or from the island. There is no schedule. It does the rounds of the Cook Islands, arriving when it has finished



"In" is rather a misnomer. We are hanging on a mooring buoy, behind a reef, at least 600 nautical miles from our next landfall, in the middle of the South Pacific. My best buddy and husband Ted Nobbs and I are in the last stages of a round-world sailing voyage, and you'd think we would be surprised at almost nothing, but we can feel already that this is going to be different.

Palmerston is a coral atoll, and the islets are not more than a couple of metres above sea level. Below us is 75 metres of water, and just behind us the ocean plunges down a steep underwater cliff-face for an unimaginable 4,000 metres to the sea floor. We've seen other atolls, but we've never been to an island which only has 57 inhabitants, who are all related to each other, and so incredibly isolated.

This afternoon as we arrived out of the vast circle of the sea into the lee of the atoll, guided only by its GPS position, we could see a small aluminium runabout approaching at speed. Breathlessly its only occupant, a thick-set suntanned man shouted, "This way, this way," beckoning us closer and closer and closer to the reef. Expertly, he fastened us to a mooring ball which seems just metres from sharp coral visible as the waves

**CASTAWAY**  
Main picture:  
The simple  
life beckons at  
Palmerston Atoll.  
Above: The local  
'country club', a  
typical example  
of Palmerston  
humour.



in the last port.

A scary ride in Bob's runabout takes us through the shallow pass into the lagoon. The current is strong and it seems impossibly shallow, but he makes jack-knife turns between the coral outcrops, chatting happily while I grip the edges of the boat with whitened knuckles. The lagoon is serenely beautiful, the water changing from sand-coloured to aqua to azure to deep rich blue, back to aqua, in stripes across the stretch of the lagoon. A small white line of surf marks the reef-edge, then above is purple sea to the horizon. Leaving the coral behind, Bob runs the dinghy up on the whitest of beaches. We slop up a shell covered beach, through tropical vegetation then along a sandy

path encrusted with coconut and pandanus palms. In a minute we have arrived at Bob Marsters' home.

Bob's home is not a house as we know it. There is a kitchen under an awning and open on one side, some bedrooms attached, all made of simple corrugated iron and thatching. Water is kept outside in huge barrels, and washing-up happens in the open air on a wide wooden table.

Meals are taken on a long unpainted table under a rough shelter on the white sands near the kitchen. It's a million dollar view from the dining area through the leaning coconut palms across the lagoon. Being at about the same latitude as Fiji, the islanders don't need to worry about winter. Chooks in bright colours

roam around us as we arrive, busily pecking into coconuts on the ground. There are hammocks strung above the sand or nestled into undergrowth. I feel like a cross between Alice in Wonderland and Gulliver in the midst of his travels.

Bob introduces us to his family, his wife, Tupou, and four children, Taia, Goldeen, Andrew and tiny Mehou. They are a shy, bubbly group, eyes alert and curious. The two older girls help their mother with lunch while we sip tea under an awning. In the open kitchen nearby, I can see flour and rice in large vats. Bob, chatting all the while, pushes dried palm leaves into a simple barbecue to cook our fresh fish lunch.

As the morning progresses we learn more about island life. Apart from the freighter, the only contact with the outside world are a few dozen yachties like us who pass through each year on our way from Tahiti to either New Zealand or Australia.

Palmerston Islanders, they tell us, starve for company – as you might expect. So they have secured mooring balls through the coral on the lee side of the reef. Then the families compete to see who can 'catch' the next passing yacht. They keep a continual lookout, and drive out in their small aluminium boats to entice the yacht to safe mooring.

They then play hosts – marvellous hosts – to the crew of the boat they have 'entrapped', and in return most yachties find ways of repaying them. There's no money on the island, so the ways vary: gasoline is always in short supply; fresh fruit and vegetables are like gold.

All islanders have the surname Marsters, even men who come from outside to take Palmerston brides. But there are distinctions between the Marsters. The island is still divided into three, the descendants William Marsters' trio of wives – Matavia, Tepou and Tata.

A double line of coconut trees shows the boundaries, and, listening, I feel there is still a slight feeling of alienation between the clans – they are fiercely protective of their part of the island, even having their own cemeteries. The only buildings to span the three territories are the church, the carefully preserved home of William Marsters, who kept a separate house, and the school with its playground and 28 students.

The houses are simple huts spread among the coconut palms and made homely and clean. Few are painted. Water is from rainwater



**FOUNDING FATHER**  
Above: The gravestone of Palmerston's original settler, William Marsters, from whom all the residents of Palmerston descend.



tanks, carried to each house. Electricity is from a shared generator, and its fuel is the only item on the island for which the islanders need money. There is no shop.

Apart from basics like rice and flour, the Marsters live on fish, lobster, coconuts, papaya, bananas, mangoes and tarot, all in plentiful supply without too much effort to find them. Apart from the tarot, fresh vegetables, they tell us, are almost impossible to grow in the salty coral-sand of the atolls.

As well as the chooks, some families have pigs, giving a variety to their fish and chicken diet. To get modern items such as detergent, flour, rice or ketchup, they send a shopping list to their families in Rarotonga, who buy what they need and it comes on the next freighter.

To earn money, the islanders fish, freeze the fish, and send it to Tonga on the same freighter – “in the old days before electricity we could only dry the fish – now we all have a freezer!” The families in Rarotonga collect the money for the fish, and put it into their accounts.

“Sometimes there is not enough money in our account to pay,” says Tupou, smiling wryly, “and we have to cut things from our list.”

A satellite phone was recently installed on the island, and the pedestrian public telephone booth, powered by solar panels looks sweetly incongruous, alone in its sandy clearing. Maybe Dr Who is about to emerge, I think as Bob shows it to us proudly. Beside it is a small shed which houses a computer connected to the internet. Most of the islanders don't know how to use the Telecom-provided equipment, but the students are being taught.

When work is done – fishing, cleaning, sweeping the sand, feeding the chickens and pigs, all of which we join – they sing together, make baskets and other containers from palm leaves, create jewellery and hair decorations from shell, feathers, fish bones and coral.

Christianity is part of their lifestyle and grace is said solemnly before meals. As we dine luxuriously on deep sea tuna and delicious fried coconut patties, I ask about the chooks running free around the sands.

“Do they lay many eggs?” I ask.

“An egg,” replies 17-year-old Taia seriously, and there's an old worldly wisdom in her voice that belies her age, “will feed one person. If you let the egg hatch, one day that egg will feed four people.”

“Sometimes we eat an egg,” adds her mother, “but not often.”

As we sail away from Palmerston Atoll, an extraordinary experience behind us, we feel privileged to have shared some days here. I can't help wondering where the rest of the world has gone wrong. Why in many ways these are the richest people on Earth. ⚓

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IT TAKES MORE THAN A BLUE BLAZER AND A BUCKET LOAD OF BRASSO TO LOOK AFTER A CLASSIC J CLASS LIKE *SHAMROCK V*. LIA DITTON TALKS TO NICK RYAN, THE ACCOMPLISHED AUSSIE SKIPPER IN CHARGE OF ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST DEMANDING YACHTS.

# ROCK AND A HARD PLACE

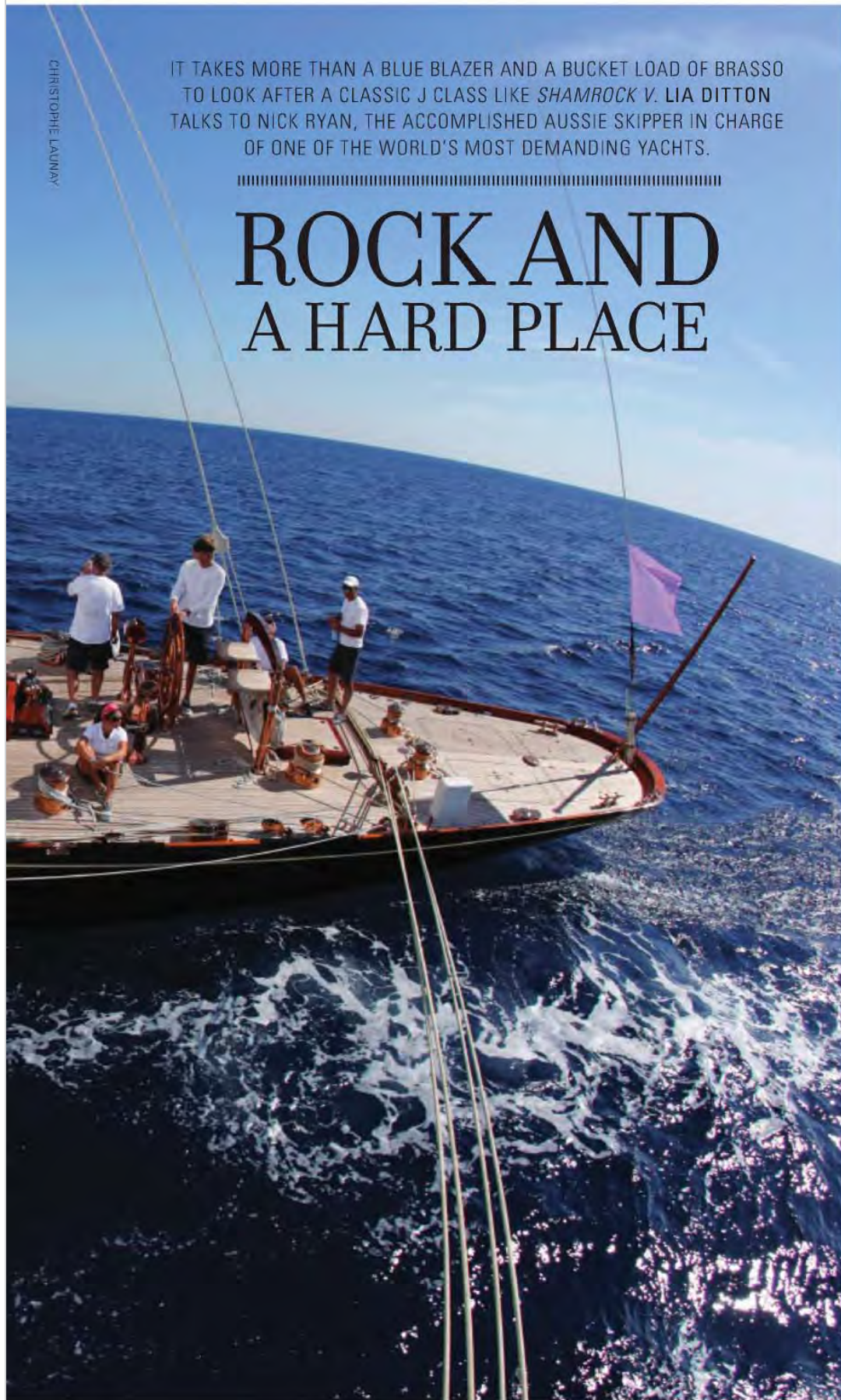
There are many stunning photographs of the great classic yachts, their sails drawing majestic curves from mast to deck; razor sharp bows lancing above the water; heeled over and awash, the teak decks turning a rich red ochre and set against gleaming polished brass.

The shapely profile of the classic J-boat *Shamrock V* has provided a feast for myriad hungry lenses trained on her since her launch nearly 80 years ago. Likewise, the pure pleasure of sailing this powerful raceboat has inspired countless words penned by misty-eyed scribes, love-struck by the allure of the majestic J Class yachts.

But little has been written about what it is like to live aboard and to be entrusted with the responsibility of caring for a 1930's America's Cup boat. Classic yacht captains are more than merely helmsmen, simultaneously wearing the hats of crew manager, charter operator, race skipper and curator of a much-loved piece of sailing history.

We recently met up with the current captain and custodian of *Shamrock V*, Nick Ryan, in Cannes, France. A South Australian by birth, Ryan grew up sailing Opti's, Manly Junior's and 505's until he was 16. It's been a big step up to a 172-tonne, 36.5-metre long-keel J-boat, but the 36-year-old has paid his dues in the art of sailing classic yachts.

At age 20, Nick first moved up into the world of keelboats and within a year had met the owner of the wooden yacht *Suraya* in Sydney, who became his sailing mentor. It was then that Nick fell in love with the classics. But the young sailor was about to have a frightening introduction to the realities of pre-fibreglass-era sailing craft. In a race from the Whitsundays to Vanuatu Nick joined *Suraya's* crew, only for the experience to end in pure drama when some 500 nautical miles out into the ocean, the boat 'sprung a plank.' Nick nervously took the helm while the crew worked to replace the planks and plug the leak. They made it back to Townsville to make a proper repair and despite this brush with disaster, Nick went on to join the



*Suraya* crew for a Sydney to Hobart and two Hamilton Islands as well as the Hog's Breath race, a 500 nautical mile downwind sprint gibing through the islands: "going like a freight train," as Nick recalls.

*Suraya* was Nick's first taste of classic boats – "we're racing as hard as we can but you can't ding the varnish!"

### CLASS OF ITS OWN

For anyone unfamiliar with the J Class of classic yachts, the words majestic, graceful and power come to mind; a surge of power. *Shamrock V*, for example, has a five-metre-draft long keel but above the waterline, she's sleek with a mere 1.2-metre freeboard, beautiful overhangs and surfboard-like lines. With a modest beam, *Shamrock V* fits in easily beside the Beneteaus and other production boats in the Mediterranean marinas.

When these yachts raced in the America's Cup, big teams of sailors were required to turn the winches and lift her enormous sails. Today, *Shamrock V* is run by a considerably leaner complement of nine fulltime crew: the captain plus eight, and all of them wearing many hats like their skipper. With the aim of doing as much as possible in-house, there are two engineers: one mechanical, one electrical. There's a rigger/deckhand, a ship's carpenter/deckhand, a bosun/deckhand/paint specialist, the chef, two interior crewmembers (one of whom is Nick Ryan's girlfriend Aimée, who trained as a naval architect's technician and so can redraw any of the ship's schematics) and then the captain/sailmaker. However, to allow for holidays and to incorporate different skills, Nick reckons that the network of regular sailors is more like 16 in total. The fulltime crew do 'six on, six off' – six months living onboard and six months onshore per year during the winter maintenance period. "We are not expected to live in forepeak all year round"

Avoiding crew turnover is one of the many challenges that Nick has to handle. Proudly, Nick says the first eight crewmembers he worked with were all with him for more than two years; four of whom were still there four years later with one of the stewardesses managing a five-year stint. What is the secret to such onboard unity? "Your crew should recognise their role to help and honour the fact that they have shared responsibility." During races however, there are 18 onboard – nine crew plus nine professional sailors.

On top of that there may be up to 16 guests and so a total of 34 people on deck – just like the old days.

### A LIFE LESS ORDINARY

For Nick, there is no 'normal day at the office'. "The greatest thing about it is that everyday is different," he says. "Different aspects of the boat need troubleshooting. There is crew manning; customs spontaneously stepping onboard – stuff comes out of nowhere. As a commercial vessel, so many documents have to be in place or the boat could be impounded and the skipper sent to jail, or the owner could get in trouble. The boat is high



**CAPTAIN AND CURATOR**  
Captain Nick Ryan aboard the vintage J-Class *Shamrock V*, one of the most high maintenance yachts in the business.

### Counting the cost

Want to buy *Shamrock V*? All it will cost you is a cool \$US15 million, but you'll make a killing in charter fees. The boat charges the following for charters:

- 65K Euro for a week's racing, including deliveries
- 50K Euro for a week's cruising the Med in high season (July to August)
- 45K Euro in low season (May, June, Sept, Oct)

profile. It's a business."

And it's big business. Nick manages a budget of 1.2 million Euros a year (over \$AU2 million) to maintain *Shamrock V*, which includes a contingency buffer. The maintenance program is carefully staggered to factor in replacements (such as the generators), a new set of cruising sails and a couple of race sails every four years, the rig out every four years and non destructive testing performed on the rigging. On top of that, the American Bureau of Shipping (ABS) demands a five-year hull and machinery survey. "If you thought about it, you wouldn't do it because of the weight of the responsibility. But there is time within each day, to have a problem and work it out."

The advertising must also be proactive to get contracts from new clients. "The owner still struggles with the idea that he must pay a charter fee to use his own boat for three weeks a year. But this keeps it legal with regard to the flag and registration."

Nick lists the hardest parts of his job as meeting and coping with deadlines; doing the hours, working until midnight during shipyard periods – but he stresses that it must be fun for the crew as well.

"Work hard, play hard. Wherever we are, we always find things to do – rock climbing, kite surfing, skiing. Just because we've got a disposable income, we're not in the pub everyday at five. That's not cool!"

At 36, Nick and his girlfriend Aimée have just had their first child, Zoe. "In the sense of this programme, the wives have to be tough – as tough as the guys going sailing," says Nick.

On average, *Shamrock V* has six week-long charters per year, although Nick confesses that they would like to do more of them. "They get us out there and take us sailing," he enthuses. But even during the summer sailing season, Nick says that he can arrange accommodation in St Tropez and that spending time with Emmy is "totally doable."

"The nice thing about a cruising boat is that there may be a week or more between charters," he says.

Nick admits that when he was learning to drive *Shamrock V*, he was understandably nervous. "When you get the keys and say yes to the job, you've got to give it a go! You are 100 per cent responsible and you have to direct the crew."

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so the tender driven by the boson is used as a bow thruster. Without the tender, the bow would be lost almost immediately with a beam wind of over 15 knots. In 20 knots, Nick says it would be game over.

His hairiest moments behind the wheel include the start of the “Le Voiles de St. Tropez” regatta last year, when 120 boats including thirty 100 footers were dancing around trying to ping the start! Another ‘close-call’ came off the island of Kia in the Greek Cyclades, when they thought they had found a good bay in which to drop the mainsail and get out of the seaway. The bay was smaller than predicted and fortunately they just got the main down in time, before running out of water.

“Did you close the hatches?” “Is the boat tied up properly?” These are the usual qualms when stepping away from any boat, but (touch wood!) on a classic such as *Shamrock V* our

conversation inevitably turns to fire.

“I read about two boats on fire in every magazine,” laughs Nick, with just a tinge of horror. “With so many electrical points, all it takes is one loose contact.”

Nick recounts an instance when he was standing by the lazarette and a contact failed in the shore power connection. And another only last year, when he was standing near the main electrical panel.

“We are the caretakers of a piece of maritime history. The boat is kept like this for the public. I would hate it to disappear on my watch.”

With six classics lined up side-by-side along the dock in Cannes, I am keen to know what action would be taken if there was a fire onboard. “The fire system is always on and as with any commercial vessel 24-hour security is maintained and so there is always a watch keeper onboard. We would make a wall curtain or throw

the stern lines off and drift off.”

A Brazilian family man, Nick refers to the owner as ‘a romantic,’ ‘a non-sailor’ and ‘the greatest owner in the world.’

“Travelling, racing – it’s all pretty exciting stuff. The camaraderie, crew friendships, I get to meet likeminded people.” Nick could consider running another J Class in the future or he might go back to race boats. “I’m definitely happiest when I’ve got wet hair.”

It may have become a running joke – “watch the varnish” – but you can see that Nick is quite smitten with the vintage race boat, *Shamrock V* and her wild lines.

“She’s such a cool boat, a real rhino chaser. A big paddle in and we’re off,” he says. And while there are invariably stresses and strains with managing so much money and people, Nick Ryan takes it all in his stride. ⚓



## How to sail *Shamrock V*

While cruising, the boat is sailed under main, Yankee-cut jib, staysail and a light wind asymmetric spinnaker (A1) socked with no pole. For racing, the wardrobe comprises of the A1, a heavier wind asymmetric spinnaker (A2), a Genoa with spectra (soft) hanks, small jibs # 3 and 4 for upwind, plus a blade jib.

It takes five and a half minutes to change between the Genoa and blade jibs.

The racing sails live in the North Sails loft. All sails are designed by Mike Toppa of North Sails Florida. Originally, the main would have been run up the mast on a (high-friction) boltrope. Today, a car on track system is used and the main is flaked into lazy jacks.

### TALL ORDER

Above: The graceful shape of *Shamrock V* as seen from the top of the yacht's towering mast.  
Right: Captain Nick Ryan takes charge at *Shamrock's* perfectly polished helm wheel.



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SELECTING THE RIGHT WINCH CAN SET YOU ON THE PATH TO FAST AND EFFICIENT SAIL HANDLING, WHETHER YOU'RE CRUISING OR RACING. BUT WITH THE MYRIAD CHOICES OUT THERE, WHICH WINCH IS FOR YOU? MATTHEW HENRY PREPARED THIS GUIDE TO BUYING THE RIGHT WINCH.

.....

# SPIN KINGS

I can still remember my first ever race manning the headsail winch – what a disaster. In the space of just 90 minutes on the racecourse I managed to make every single rookie error in the book: I wound the sheet onto the winch the wrong way, let it go before it was secured sending the jib flogging, got into a tangled mess which took most of an upwind leg to unravel and, to the great amusement of my sailing buddies, thrashed about with furious energy while winding the sheet on in the low gear. Whoever said sailing was a relaxing sport should spend some time grinding on a winch for a day of round-the-bouys sailing or sprint races. Quickly raising a new headsail or sending a spinnaker shooting up the mast at race pace (often under the ‘gentle encouragement’ of wiser heads at the back of the boat) can be an exhausting process, but having the right equipment can make the whole exercise a lot more bearable.

#### ELECTRIC FEEL

Once the exclusive preserve of sailing superyachts and 4WD bull bars, powered winches are making their way onto the decks of production cruising and racing yachts at a rapid rate. Not only are the big European boat builders installing powered winches at the factory, major winch manufacturers now offer affordable upgrade kits for boat owners to motorise their existing winches for that electric feel.

The benefits of powered winches speak for themselves – push-button sail handling that takes the hard yakka out of yachting. Electric winches make it possible to sail with fewer (or less experienced) crewmembers and are particularly popular with cruising couples to improve ease of handling on larger yachts.

So far, it's not racers but cruisers who have most enthusiastically embraced powered winches. Harken says up to 90 per cent of electric winch sales are for the purposes of kitting out yachts for cruising.

“A lot of cruiser-racers are installing one electric winch for the halyard and most of the time they won't use the motor while racing, but the owner might flick it on for the weekend when he goes cruising with his wife. This way you don't need anyone on the mast, and it's all done with the push of a button,” says Harken operations manager Greg Butchard.

That's not to say racers aren't using powered winches at all. Particularly for owners of larger production

racers in the 50- to 60-foot range, a popular option is to install a single pair of powered winches for halyard and mainsheet operations. These are typically one-speed units, but the major brands also offer two-speed models – just like a manual winch. Winches with ‘rewind’ or ‘backwind’ functions are also finding their way onto the market, featuring a reverse gear for slackening off tension without having to manually release the sheet from the self-tailer. Another innovation improving ease of use (and safety) is load sensing, which stops a trigger-happy trimmer from doing major damage to the sails or rig by overwinding the electric winch. All of these improvements mean that step by step, electric winches are coming closer to matching the traditional manual winch for speedy sail handling without raising a sweat.



#### MANUAL LABOUR

Powered winches may be on the rise, but for the average production racing yacht there's still nothing that can beat a brawny bloke on the end of a winch handle for swift sail changes and sheeting in the jib in the heat of battle. The combination of ease of use, reliability and value for money has ensured for the majority of mid-size monohulls and multihulls, manual winches are still the number one choice.

While racers love manual winches for swift sail handling, there's still much to be said for cruising yachts with manual winches as well. The sound of metallic pawls gently clicking with each slight turn of the handle as sail trim is adjusted can take on a peaceful, almost hypnotic, quality. Nothing can break the ‘cruising Zen’ more abruptly than the sound of an electric motor kicking in each time you want to adjust trim. Feel is important too. Just as cars with the first power steering felt ‘remote’ at the wheel, push-button electric winches

remove the feedback (and pleasure) a good trimmer gets through feeling the sail load as the force comes back through the winch handle.

Manufacturers may be spending considerable time and treasure on developing their powered product ranges, but they have not neglected the manual segment. Harken launched its Radial winch line in late 2009 after a five-year development process which saw it redesign its winches from the ground up. Lewmar has also updated its product line up as of last year with the launch of the revamped Evo series, an update of its popular Ocean winch launched in the '90s. Lewmar is still investing in R&D and will one day fully update its Evo range.

With the advance of technology seemingly unstoppable, it raises the question: will muscle ever be completely replaced by machines? There's no doubt powered systems are becoming more affordable (and are even popping up on smaller yachts each year) but the major manufacturers seem to agree that for the foreseeable future, manual winches are here to stay. For now at least, it might be best to keep a muscley crewmember onboard to wind the winch.

#### WHICH WINCH?

When buying new manual winches, it's a good idea to investigate the ease with which it can be upgraded to electric in case you want to ‘power up’ at a later date. Lots of manufacturers are offering simple upgrade kits for their new models and even kits to motorise older models. Most of these kits can be installed without too much drama by a mechanically minded owner, but it is still recommended to seek the services of a professional to install new winches.

Once a novel technology, the vast majority of winches are now of the self-tailing variety – in fact, it's hard to find one that isn't. Perhaps the biggest decision you will face will be your choice of finish: chrome or alloy. While many will argue chrome has a longer life, there are plenty of 20-year-old alloy winches still holding their own after decades of abuse.

Once you've selected your brand and finish type, the next big decision is size...

#### IS BIGGER BETTER?

Winches are simply rotating levers and as Archimedes famously said, “Give me a lever big enough and I shall move the world”. While it's not surprising that manufacturers are the

**DAILY GRIND**  
Choosing a slightly larger winch than the minimum required for your boat can make trimming much easier, and is well worth the small increase in boat weight.



first to say 'bigger is better', there's some wisdom behind the mantra.

"There's a saying among anyone who sells winches: 'you never hear a customer complain their winch is too big,'" says Lewmar's Andrew Brown. "You can get away with a four-cylinder engine in a Land Rover but for most applications you'd be better to opt for the turbo diesel."

According to calculations published by Harken, for most people the maximum acceptable load on the end of a winch handle is 15.9kg. But many production boats come equipped with winches that bestow loads of up to 20kg on the poor grinder's biceps. Apart from telling them to hit the gym, upsizing the winches is the easiest way to make the trimmer's job easier (and safer).

Of course winches are expensive, ranging in price from \$600 to well over \$4000 for serious grand prix racing yacht gear. It's no surprise then that many owners, in the interests of keeping a lid on costs, choose to go for the smallest winch suitable for their application.

Manufacturers all have their own

guides to match their winch models to your rig and sail plan, but there are benefits of choosing something slightly over the bare minimum. The most obvious boon conferred by a bigger drum is the added mechanical advantage, which makes the sail trimmer's job a whole lot easier. An additional upshot is that a bigger drum has a greater surface area in contact with the sheet per turn of rope, so trimmers can use fewer winds around the winch for the same amount of grip. Particularly for trimming spinnakers, where fewer turns on the winch helps release the sheet quickly, this can translate into better trimming and ultimately more boat speed. And while every kilo might count on a TP52, for the majority of production racing and cruising yachts a bigger winch might only incur a weight cost of a few kilos.

**POWER PLAY**

Winch power is measured in ratios, such as 40:1 or 60:1. The higher the ratio, the more powerful the winch. For example, in the case of a 40:1 winch, 25kg of effort at the handle is

multiplied to approximately 1005kg of pull on the sheet.

There are other ways to increase power without upgrading winches, but they should be carefully considered. For mainsheets, adding a turning block can compound the mechanical advantage. Some catamaran owners have experimented with turning blocks on the sail tack for a two-to-one power boost, but a block hanging from a flogging sail can be lethal.

One easy way to increase winch power is to add a slightly bigger handle. While this will require a wider arc to complete a full revolution, an increase from a eight-inch handle to a 10-inch handle will yield around 20 per cent gain in torque – something which will be well appreciated by the crew for a negligible cost to the owner.

But at the end of the day, nothing beats having the winch best suited to your rig and sail plan. The products on the next page represent the latest offerings for the production cruiser-racer and catamaran market from the top brands. ⚓

Nothing can break the 'cruising Zen' more abruptly than the sound of an electric motor kicking in each time you want to adjust the trim.

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1.



3.



5.



2.



4.



6.

### 1. LEWMAR EVO WINCH

One of the great benefits of Lewmar's new Evo range is its ease of serviceability – it can be stripped down and put back together with no tools required. Offered in a choice of three finishes and easily convertible to electric, Evo winches are a tried and tested product with worldwide service and support in just about any port across the world – ideal for cruisers and racers alike. [www.lewmar.com](http://www.lewmar.com)

### 2. HOLMATRO PERFORMANCE

Holmatro's Performance winch increases efficiency by splitting radial and vertical grip on the drum, simultaneously offering maximum radial grip for sheeting power and vertical run allowing the rope to easily slide upward on the winch surface. Made from forged aluminium (rather than cast), Holmatro claims at least 20 per cent more strength in the drum, while the spindle and gear shafts are all heavy duty stainless steel. [www.holmatro.com](http://www.holmatro.com)

### 3. HARKEN RADIAL

Redesigned from the deck up, Harken's new radial winches were launched in late 2009 and represent the most major update for the brand in 20 years. Strong and lightweight, the Radial winches feature diagonal ribs rather than a gripping surface to increase gripping power. The self-tailer can be rotated after mounting and Radial winches are easier to service and maintain. Built into the design of the Radial winch is easy conversion to electric. [www.harken.com](http://www.harken.com)

### 4. HARKEN UNIPOWER RADIAL

It's now easy and relatively affordable to upgrade your yacht with electric winches, but one of the unanticipated trade offs is having a winch motor hanging below the deck, cluttering up your cabin space. For those who want all the benefits of an electric winch without sacrificing cabin head room, Harken's Unipower system has a compact motor partially embedded within the Radial drum so only 105mm protrudes below the deck. [www.harken.com](http://www.harken.com)

### 5. ANDERSEN MEGA YACHT

The Danish company's range of powered megayacht winches have all the latest features including self-tailing tops, variable speed and backwind. These top-of-the-range polished stainless steel winches combine the best of modern technology with a traditional look suitable for the deck of a fully custom superyacht. Andersen offers a custom titanium coating which it says will 'never show wear and tear'. [www.andersenwinches.com](http://www.andersenwinches.com)

### 6. ANDERSEN 40 ST FS

With stainless steel drums ensuring a corrosion free, smooth surface, Andersen says its shiny winches also increase the life of sheets and halyards, and the winch itself. The 40 ST FS is a performance product with a compact two-speed electric motor which it claims uses between 30 and 50 per cent less power than conventional electric winches. [www.andersenwinches.com](http://www.andersenwinches.com)

## How to use a winch

**Before you start, remember that winches hold heavy loads and are unforgiving on jammed fingers.** Keep your hands clear at all times.

Always wind the sheet onto the winch in the right direction. Winding it on incorrectly will get you into all sorts of trouble.

**To avoid loading the sheet in the wrong direction,** get into the habit of giving the winch a quick half-spin in your hand before you load it to remind yourself which way it turns. This will become second nature after a while.

**For ladies (or longhaired blokes) make sure your hair is tied up well out of the way of the winch.** Getting your hair stuck in a winch is one of life's less pleasant experiences.

Likewise, rings, necklaces and watches can become dangerous snares around winches where heavy loads are involved. It's best that these are taken off.

**Consider how many winds on the winch you will need before you start.** More winds will give you more power, while fewer winds will increase feel and allow more controlled release on the line but can slip in higher loads. Three or four winds is usually a good place to start for a jib sheet in light weather, more when the wind is blowing. Spinnakers are often trimmed with fewer winds for quicker release to allow the sail to fill.

**If sharing a trimming role with another crewmember, work out a system for storing the winch handle.** Does each winch have its own dedicated handle? Do they ever swap sides of the boat? Have a system to ensure the handle is always where it should be and within reach.

**Sheeting a sail is like winding in a screw – hand tight first before you reach for the tool.**

For the fastest sail handling, first bring in the slack by pulling the sheet around the winch by hand. When tension comes onto the sheet, slap a handle on there and start grinding! Watch what you are doing. Always keep an eye on the sail you are trimming or raising for snares or jams. You don't want to tear the sail.

**If you are on your own, wrap an extra wind on the drum and use the self-tailer as you turn the handle.** If you have a trimming partner, it's quicker for one to tail and the other to wind the handle.

**Use the gears.** Winches typically have two speeds depending on which direction they are turned. Use the fastest gear until you can't turn it any further, then wind in the opposite direction to engage the easier gear for final adjustments. Yes, this part is meant to be hard.

**Don't let go!** Finish the job by ensuring the sheet or halyard is wound securely around the self-tailer or locked in a jammer.

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With upcoming race weeks and the IRC circuit in full swing, some delivery skippers may be looking for some extra hands to help deliver boats home. For eager offshore sailors, deliveries are a brilliant opportunity to get valuable experience, sometimes sailing on the top yachts with a crew of highly experienced ocean racers. But whether delivering a grand-prix ocean racer or a production cruiser, it is important not to forget safety given the inherent risks of ocean passage making. Much damage and injury has been sustained during trips home or on passages to new racing venues, when a more relaxed attitude can lead to disaster.

## CLEAR AND PRESENT DANGER

Unless cruising in company, return delivery crews can face a considerably more dangerous and isolated run than racing crews sailing in the midst of a large fleet. With fewer boats in the vicinity to quickly stand by or offer assistance in the event of a high risk situation, no one should underestimate the danger if a catastrophe strikes. On top of sailing without the support of other yachts, deliveries also lack the benefits of the heightened safety management provided by the Race Committee during an offshore racing event. For example, in the Rolex Sydney Hobart, a number of committee vessels shadow the fleet and marine rescue stations constantly monitor emergency and race radio frequencies. Vessels are on stand-by in Eden and

Tasmania to assist in an emergency in Bass Strait; the mandatory race reporting, as well as the Yacht Tracker website, provide authorities with a good awareness of the progress of all yachts within the fleet, including boats which have retired and are returning to a safe port.

We recommend that delivery trips be logged in with the relevant coastguard or marine rescue stations along the way. Contrary to popular belief, this does not mean that you need to radio in a number of times each day (and to each coastguard) covering your passage. You can advise the first coastguard which station you intend to log in with and an ETA, which can be easily changed if required. If you choose not to log in with the coastguards, then at the very least make sure that you advise family or friends of your intended passage and ETA.

## WEATHER WITH YOU

On the plus side, unlike racing crews, delivery crews have the luxury of

being able to plan the passage in accordance with the weather. There is little point bashing into a gale force headwind. Firstly, it is uncomfortable and secondly, and more importantly, the aim is to get the boat to its destination in one piece.

Boats have sustained serious damage during deliveries to and from racing destinations where delivery crews have not properly planned their passage. Owners and crew should have realistic timeframes and built-in flexibility which permits delays for appropriate weather windows – either at port or at a safe anchorage along the way. It is better to sit back and have another glass of red at anchor rather than try to break the boat in a large seaway. Build in some leeway in any holiday leave – it can be pretty difficult to phone the office from the middle of Bass Strait or 10 miles out to sea to say you won't make it into work today as promised.

## SAFETY FIRST

Yachting Australia (YA) recommends that cruising skippers comply with the Blue Book. At a minimum, this means complying with the safety equipment required for Category 2 races for any offshore sailing. If planning to travel significantly offshore, consideration should be given to the Category 1 race requirements.

"Before leaving, the skipper should always give a safety briefing to new crew. If they don't, you should ask for one. If a skipper tells you not to worry about it, I advise students to get off the boat," says Terry Wise, principal of the Pacific Sailing School. The safety briefing should include the location of all the key equipment and how to use them, EPIRBs, radios, liferafts, retrieval slings etc and of course, man overboard procedures.

## BUCKLE UP

It took a while to change our attitude towards seat belts in motor vehicles but these days few people would think twice about clipping in. Similarly, attitudes in the sailing community are changing towards wearing Personal Flotation Devices. Unfortunately there are still too many tragic accidents on our waterways where a person goes overboard while their PFD is hanging uselessly on a hook below decks.

At a minimum, crew should adopt the YA recommendation to wear PFDs at night and during times of heightened risk. Delivery crew should therefore be prepared to wear the PFDs provided on the boat for

lengthy periods of time. If you are not comfortable with the particular PFD provided, you might consider investing in your own PFD.

And don't be afraid to clip on with your tether – especially if working up the bow of the boat.

#### BEACON OF HOPE

It is more likely that Personal Locator Beacons are not provided on the boat as most racing crew purchase or hire their own. It is well worth purchasing or hiring one for a delivery trip – preferably a model equipped with GPS.

Crew with PLBs must be aware of the consequences of inadvertently activating a PLB. It can have serious ramifications, including initiating a Search and Rescue operation. If one is inadvertently activated, it should be switched off and the skipper notified so that contact can be made with relevant authorities.

Again, a PLB is not much use if you end up in the water undetected and your beacon is nice and dry in your crew bag on the boat.

#### HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE

As an inexperienced offshore sailor it pays to check out the credentials of your skipper, fellow crew and the boat. Life threatening situations can, and unfortunately do happen during deliveries. It is vital that your skipper has the experience to anticipate and lead in challenging situations.

"I tell my students to make sure they get references before agreeing to help deliver a boat," says Wise. "While it is unlikely on the top racing boats, some delivery stories make your hair stand on end. One young woman

was basically left on her own when the rest of the crew, including the skipper, got seasick. She went across a bar in 35 knots thinking it was best to try to find shelter from the gale."

#### FINALLY, HAVE FUN

Deliveries are a great opportunity to learn and develop your sailing skills in, hopefully, a more relaxed environment than a full-on offshore race. Crew often get to do much more on a delivery than they would during a race. For example, there is likely to be plenty of opportunity to helm.

As long as safety remains uppermost, it is also a good chance to stop and smell the roses while enjoying our stunning coastline from a vantage not many people get to see.

And with enough experience, you may even get invited to join the race crew at some stage. Many sailing students have made the transition from delivery crew to offshore racing crew and have never looked back. ↓

*For further information or to register for a sail training course, visit the Pacific Sailing School website [www.pacificsailingschool.com.au](http://www.pacificsailingschool.com.au)*

### 5 delivery tips

**1. All delivery crew should have undertaken a Safety and Sea Survival Course.**

Although everyone hopes never to need it, the information is invaluable for dealing with emergency situations at sea

**2. Consider other sailing courses** Coastal navigation and practical courses such as RYA Coastal Skipper

**3. Sign up to a Crew Register at your sailing club or school.**

This will provide a list of available crew and passes on email requests for delivery and racing crew

**4. Consider investing in your own safety gear.** At night make sure you are wearing a PFD and carrying a PLB, strobe, dye-marker, cyalume stick and a personal torch and locator beacon.

**5. Learn as much as you can on each delivery.**

Don't be afraid to ask for advice or call for help when uncertain how to handle a situation – it is better to ask than risk colliding with a container ship off Newcastle!

# No Skidding for Sailing & Boat

No Skidding® Anti Slip NS5200B Black and NS5100GRL are being widely used throughout the sailing community on six continents. No Skidding Anti Slip is being used by many different classes of sailing boats from seven of the America's Cup teams to thousands of Farr 40's, Farr 30's, TP 52s, GP42's, maxi yachts, etc.

#### NS5100 Series, Black, Clear & Colours - Slip Resistant Safety Tape

NS5100 Series Safety Tape is a hard wearing product specially designed for application on racing yachts. The contact adhesive has excellent bonding to clean, sound surfaces with good instant grip. Recommended for high traffic areas where wet or slippery floors may expose the user to slip injury. Consists of a hard wearing aluminum oxide grit profile, bonded to a tough substrate. The surface of the tape is resistant to water, grease, detergents and oils. Simple, quick application. Self adhesive, just peel off the release liner and place into position with firm pressure.

#### Recommended Uses:

- Cockpit
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- Stairs and ladders
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A Swan yacht is considered by many sailors the world over to be the ultimate in oceangoing performance sailing, the result of the company's uncompromising approach to design and build quality. This, combined with a firmly entrenched belief that onboard luxury doesn't have to come at the cost of race-bred performance, has given Swan the edge over its rivals for many years.

Swan yachts have always been about pedigree in both cruising and in racing guises. This ethos traces its origin right back to the day in 1966 when Nautor's Swan's founder, Pekka Koskenkyla, enlisted the services of Olin Stephens (of Sparkman & Stephens fame) for the very first design. The Koskenkyla and Stephens partnership produced some great results for the fledgling brand. Who will ever forget the historic victory



WITH ALL THE PLUSH LUXURIES YOU WOULD EXPECT OF A PRESTIGE YACHT, AND BENEFITING FROM A QUANTUM LEAP IN LIGHTWEIGHT CONSTRUCTION, SWAN'S TRIMMED-DOWN 60-FOOTER LOOKS SET TO KEEP THE MARQUE AMONG YACHTING'S MOST DESIRABLE BRANDS, WRITES BARRY TYLER.

AS LIGHT AS A  
FEATHER



of *Sayula II*, a stock-standard Swan 65, in the first Whitbread round-the-world race (now called the Volvo Ocean Race) in 1973/74?

The company has since undergone a changing of the guard. In 1979, German yacht designer Frers took over as chief designer (a relationship which continues to this day) and then in 1998 Koskenkyla and his backers sold Swan to Leonardo Ferragamo and a group of investors – the ‘Italian connection’. It signalled a shift in focus and direction for the brand and the new regime responded quickly with the Swan 45, the Club Swan 42 and the one-design Swan 601 – the racey predecessor to the new Swan 60. Together with the new 80, the Swan 60 represents the next generation of design and technology from the brand, raising the bar in both style and performance over any Swan in their wake.



#### LIGHT IS RIGHT

State-of-the-art construction technology has been applied to great benefit in the Swan 60. It's a surprisingly light displacement 60-footer at just 18,700kg, remarkable considering it carries 7700kg of ballast payload. Substantial weight savings can be credited to the use of the SP Systems' Sprint technology, with carbon fibre used for the hull and decks, spars and rigging. Another cutting-edge weight-loss technology is the CAN-Bus electrics 'station' system, which significantly reduces the amount of wiring needed to run the electrical systems.



#### BRIGHT IDEAS

**Top:** The master cabin, forward of the saloon. **Middle:** Comfort and luxury for the skipper in the spacious saloon, which is filled with light. **Bottom:** the sensibly placed navigatorium.

All the weight saving adds up and racers will be pleased to know that while the Swan 60 has a wider beam, greater stability and more ballast, it is also faster and rates better than its predecessor. With a very low 'drag' from the keel and rudder (which both extend to the same depth so as to provide better directional precision) she is also a lot more slippery underneath than before.

From a cruising perspective, the Swan 60 is also hard to match, with some very clever thinking evident in her ergonomic layout and the host of easy-to-use technologies. Features such as the 'magic-trim' mainsheet, which allows for quick 'dumping' of the main, the genoa furler and the totally electric winch and furling setup would be appreciated by any short-handed skipper or cruising couple, as would the hydraulic boom guy, the easily adjustable sheet car system and buttons on the helm console, which fine-tune vital aspects such as the main, the halyards, the down-haul, the forestay and the hydraulic backstay without even leaving the helm wheel.

#### CLEVER BY DESIGN

Aesthetically, the Swan 60 has a distinctly European influence that many will find immediately endearing. There's the magnificent teak-covered deck and cockpit; a nice mix of business and pleasure. The array of instrumentation, buttons and the twin helm wheels will delight the consummate skipper, while the clever cockpit layout provides pleasurable seating for up to 10 adults. A raised



platform at the stern allows for a generous-sized tender garage and converts to a large swim platform when lowered.

Below decks, it is another world: finished to a high level of luxury and with furnishings of fine wood veneers, metal, gelcoat and leather, the Swan 60 holds true to the marque's reputation for ambience and practicality. The cabin offers an open, high-volume interior purposefully designed to maximise space, comfort and live-aboard pleasure. There's plenty of light thanks to numerous hull and deck windows, ports and hatches, and the saloon includes a cruising-orientated, well-appointed galley to portside and a salubrious eight-person dining setting.

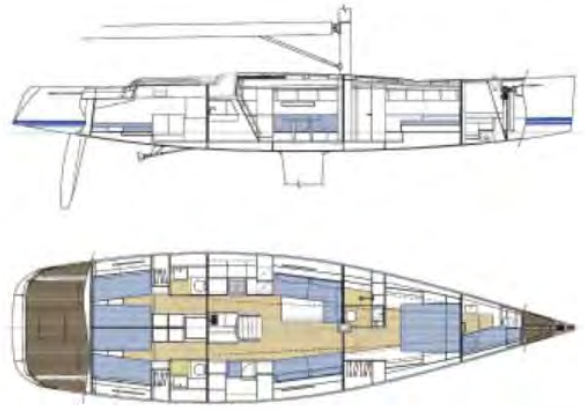
Hidden away down in the saloon within the staircase module is the engine room, housing not only a single 110-horsepower Yanmar Sail-drive, but also a 9.3kW (32,000btu) air-conditioning unit, 500-litre fuel tanks, an inverter and a 9.4kVA genset which feeds the (4 x 120Ah) battery bank providing power to the numerous onboard luxuries.

For the guests, accommodation is located either side of the engine room module: two spacious twin single cabins complete with ensuite bathroom, which with the addition of an infill can be quickly transformed into two queen-size berths. For the owner there's an elegant and spacious master stateroom, with a queen-size berth arranged fore and aft, an ensuite bathroom located aft on the port side.

A twin Pullman-style, single-berth crew quarters is installed in the fore-peak ahead of the owner's suite. If the owner prefers to do without a crew quarters then the stateroom can feature a king-size berth and a convenient wall lounge opposite. The ensuite bathroom is then located ahead of this, effectively in what was the fore-peak void.

As an impressive entertainer, a long-range cruiser or as a superbly equipped performance cruiser, the Nautor's Swan 60 has few peers. ⚓

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LOA	18.86 m
BEAM	5.90 m
DISPLACEMENT	18,700 kg (dry)
DRAFT	2.90 / 3.60 metres
MAX SPEED	8 knots
CRUISE SPEED	8 knots
ENGINES	100hp Yanmar SailDrive
SAIL SURFACE	216m <sup>2</sup>
ASSYMETRIC SPINNAKER	329m <sup>2</sup>
PRICE AS TESTED	Euro 2,400,000 (excl. tax)

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1



3



5



2



4



6

### 1. B&G ZEUS MULTIFUNCTION DISPLAY

This earned B&G an Innovation Award from the National Marine Manufacturers Association, and with good reason. Designed specifically for sailors, it offers full integration with GPS, Broadband Radar, AIS, entertainment and digital switching. Available with 8 and 12-inch LED-backlit displays, the Zeus includes weather animation, chart overlays and Wind and TimePlot histograms. RRP: from \$5995

[www.bandg.com](http://www.bandg.com)

### 2. GILL PRO TOP

Ideal for dinghy racers, this breathable top offers complete protection from the elements. Featuring a neck seal made from soft PU fabric, the design has an inner gusset with zip closure and Velcro tabs. Adjustable cuffs are also made of PU fabric and the neoprene adjustable waistband provides a figure-hugging seal. Available in Berry, Ash and Silver Grey colours. RRP: \$179

[www.gillaustralia.com](http://www.gillaustralia.com)

### 3. GILL DINGHY ONE DESIGN TRAPEZE HARNESS

Slim and light but offering plenty of support and comfort, Gill's new harness has neoprene panels for a perfect fit. The single-handed waist adjustment makes donning a breeze, and removable lumbar support can be adjusted for comfort. The seat has rugged panels to protect against wear, and there's a pocket for a harness rescue tool. RRP: \$199

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### 4. BURKE MARINE YACHTSMAN'S RT BACKPACK

Made from tough PVC-coated fabric with welded seams, this handy pack has a waterproof roll-top closure, padded shoulder straps, nylon webbing grab handle and a transparent zip pocket. Inside there's a pouch for keys and wallet. Zips and closures are non-corrosive, and a name panel on the side makes it ideal for crew use. RRP: from \$66

[www.burkemarine.com.au](http://www.burkemarine.com.au)

### 5. GME GX660 HANDHELD RADIO

This marinised handheld is fully waterproof and buoyant, boasts all the features of top of the line portables and runs on a 1400mAh Lithium Ion battery pack that will keep you on air all day. The large screen is easy to read in poor weather, and the colour-coded keypad can be used even with gloves on. The set offers full 5-Watt RF output, switchable to 1 Watt for battery preservation and inshore use. RRP: \$299.

[www.gme.net.au](http://www.gme.net.au)

### 6. HENRI LLOYD FLARE ZIP

Henri Lloyd's popular fleece has Polartec technology to provide warmth without restricting airflow. The knitted shell offers style and function, whilst the polyester internal layer retains body heat. The garment has a front half zip and an open mesh collar for increased comfort, and welded pockets on the main body and the sleeve. Available in Carbon and Grey. RRP: \$180 (men's) \$175 (ladies)

[www.burkemarine.com.au](http://www.burkemarine.com.au)



**W**ith the Farr 40 Worlds staged in Sydney this year, speculation over the future of the class has been the topic of many conversations, and these naturally lead on to the question of which class will be the Farr 40's successor.

The Farr 40 Class, the first boats of which were launched in 1997, has probably been the predominant One Design racing fleet for the last decade with large numbers racing globally. One of the main features of the class that has sustained its appeal is that the boats have to be owner driven, keeping the class accessible and affordable at club and international levels. Over the past few years the numbers have started to dwindle at the larger international events with 20 boats competing at this year's Worlds compared to fleets closer to 30 or more in earlier years. The Rolex Farr 40 Worlds move to Chicago next, and hopefully we will see a strong entry list. However, as the desire for development and change sees owners looking for the next new thing you have to wonder what the future holds for what has been one of the premier One Design classes of late.

The emerging classes in the next generation of boat ready to eclipse the Farr 40 all exhibit similar characteristics to each other: fast, fun and simple. Spinnakers on poles have been replaced by centre line prods for flying asymmetrics; the boats are set up to be sailed with

## REGIME CHANGE

THE RACING AT THE RECENT ROLEX FARR 40 WORLDS WAS AS GOOD AS EVER, BUT EVEN THAT COULDN'T SILENCE WHISPERS THAT TIME'S NEARLY UP FOR THIS VENERABLE ONE DESIGN CLASS, WRITES RICHARD BOUZAID.

fewer crew; and hull designs allow for blistering downwind sailing in the right conditions. The performance sportsboat concept is definitely influencing owners' decisions on choice of class and is being embraced by designers and builders. The purchase cost and resale value are major factors that can help dictate the size of the fleet and with this in mind the successful builders are aiming to keep prices at a minimum.

One of the most popular and steadily growing One Design classes at the moment is the Melges 32 fleet. Following on from the hugely successful Melges 24 Class this is again owner driven and a reasonably economical class: the boats are very easy to transport as they can be trailered around. The class has taken

**FADING STAR**  
Farr 40s racing in the Farr 40 Worlds. The popular One Design class is due for a replacement.



*Richard Bouzaid is a professional sailor and the head sailmaker at Doyle Sails NZ.*

off at club level in the US and Europe as well as at elite international level with some of the top sailing teams and many of the top names in the sport competing.

J Boats' recently launched J111 has seen almost instant success on the US market with a rapidly growing fleet. I have been involved with the sail development programme for the J111 and they are certainly an exciting boat to sail. The performance of the boat means that it will probably be hugely popular on the club racing scene but may not generate huge interest at top flight competition level.

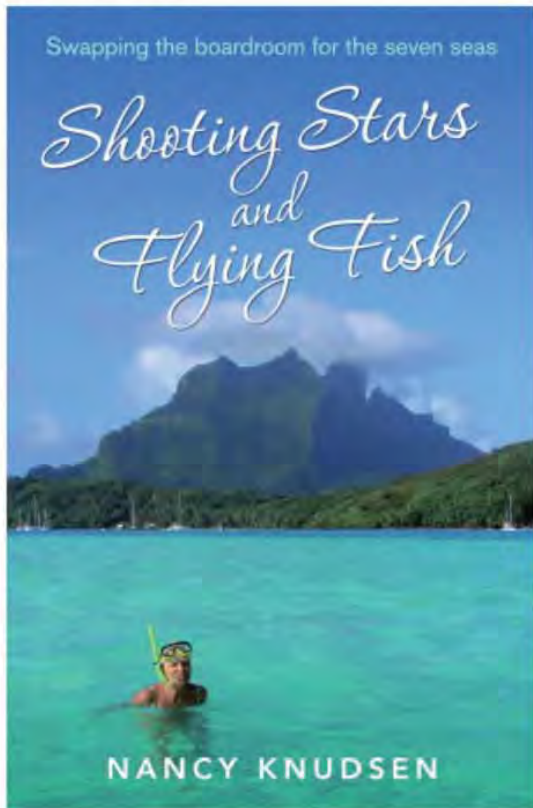
Conversely the RC44, another owner-driver class has had success internationally at the elite level but, because of the price point of the boat and campaign costs, will probably not set the club racing market on fire.

The Farr 400 is also lining up as a contender; again a pretty exciting boat similar to the Melges but a bit bigger. It has probably the best potential of being the next big 40-foot class as it looks like a reasonably cost effective boat to campaign.

In Australia, McConaghy are building the McConaghy 38 One Design as a high performance class suitable for racing internationally and at club level. The first boat arrived in Sydney in mid February and the boatbuilder has a number of confirmed orders and a high level of interest internationally.

In Australia and New Zealand One Design racing is nowhere near as popular as it is in the US and Europe. Maybe this is because the independent, pioneering spirit of antipodeans means that they are constantly striving for individuality! As strange as this generalisation sounds, I think there may be some truth in it. Watching sailors from this part of the world sail in international competition you notice that the emphasis is always on using down-the-line boat speed to win rather than tactics, techniques or technical tweaking. This thirst for speed can be expressed most naturally in custom built boats rather than the restrictive confines of One Design classes. The success on the international race scene of custom race boat builders such as McConaghy Boats and Cookson Boats is testament to this.

It will be interesting to see how any of the newer One Design classes will be adopted in this part of the world, particularly now that production techniques are helping to cut costs making competitive racing more affordable to the local sailor. ⚓



## Living the dream

With her new book, Nancy Knudsen has produced an informative, entertaining and inspirational memoir for anyone who's ever dreamed of giving up everything for a life on the ocean wave.

### Shooting Stars and Flying Fish

Author: Nancy Knudsen

Publisher: Allen & Unwin

328-page paperback

Price: AU\$29.99

Where would you rather be – sitting in a boardroom meeting, or fighting to save your yacht from breaking apart on a coral reef, in the middle of the night, in the Maldives, with no engine?

It's not a question that author and cruising sailor Nancy Knudsen would have asked herself when she and her architect husband Ted Nobbs decided to jack in the corporate merry-go-round to pursue their dream of sailing around the world.

But a few chapters into this candid and warmly entertaining account of their subsequent voyages aboard their trusty Petersen 46 *Blackwattle*, as Knudsen describes every seaman's worst nightmare unfolding in a chaos of dragging anchors, misfiring flares and uncooperative coastguards, you realise that her book's evocative title is only one side of the story. (Granted, *Fouled Props and Flare Burns* doesn't have quite the same ring to it.)

This is not to say that *Shooting Stars* is all doom and gloom – far from it. Knudsen's narrative sparkles with wry humour, often mined from the couple's onboard domestic spats, which include disputes over the boat's name, whose idea the voyage was in the first place and the correct

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collective noun for seagulls. The numerous colourful characters they meet on their travels are sharply observed, and Knudsen's descriptions of ocean crossings, foreign ports and the universal camaraderie among cruising sailors will soon have you yearning for blue horizons.

The couple's steep learning curve as their adventure unfolds is as informative as it is entertaining, and anyone thinking of embarking on their first long cruise will find plenty of value here. From how to avoid the frightening scenario on the reef to what to do when your tender davit drops off the stern in mid ocean (and even how to tell a novice cruiser from the size of their towels) *Shooting Stars* is a treasure chest of practical tips, all conveyed in Knudsen's easy, conversational style.

The author has a pleasing talent for making the extraordinary appear everyday, and the everyday extraordinary. When *Blackwattle* makes a passage through the Suez Canal, Knudsen describes the world's most fought-over man-made shipping route as "nothing but a

big ditch in the sand". Whereas the dreamy tedium of a long stretch at sea crossing the Indian Ocean is conveyed in the following bizarre husband-and-wife exchange:

"Ted, do you know...if all the water in the sea evaporated suddenly, we would fall six kilometres before hitting the bottom."

"Mmm."

"You know what we would hit at the bottom?"

He looks up. 'Coca-Cola cans?'

'Fish. Thousands and thousands of fish that have fallen before us in a great rain of fish. It would be like falling through the hatch of a trawler into slithery piles of salmon.' I pause.

'Well, what do you think about that?'

He stares at me before replying. 'I think you should get out more, Nance.'"

Intimate little vignettes like this reveal a lot about the reality of day-to-day life on an ocean cruise, but Knudsen is perhaps at her best when the adrenalin starts to flow. Her account of *Blackwattle's* near-wrecking in the Maldives occurs

eight months into the voyage, and is a turning point in the book:

"We are on the reef and the swell is crunching the boat with every wave... Ted starts the engine and it kicks, the boat launches forward, but then the engine immediately stops and won't start again. The boat drifts back and collides with the reef again, alternately lifting and crashing.

'My God, we're going to lose the boat,' Ted shouts as the milliseconds stretch into slow motion. 'Get the staysail out!'"

That chapter is called The Lessons We Learn, and it's a title that could be applied throughout the book. Nancy and Ted enter an unknown realm when they cast off from Sydney's Royal Prince Alfred Yacht Club, and by the time they complete their circumnavigation they are changed people, having learned more about the sea, and themselves, than they could ever have imagined when they set off. The joy for the reader is that Knudsen carries us along with her every step of the way. ⚓  
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# FINDING REST BENEATH THE WAVES

SO GREAT IS THE BOND THAT FORMS BETWEEN A SAILOR AND THE OCEAN THAT MANY CHOOSE TO MAKE THEIR FINAL REST BENEATH THE WAVES. CHRIS CASWELL REFLECTS ON A PERSONAL TALE OF BURYING A LIFELONG CREWMATE AT SEA.

There was a burial at sea a few days ago. I've been to several, and they always seem to move me deeply in a way that doesn't happen on land. Perhaps it has to do with the symbolism of the eternal sea or the endless waves but, somehow, a church or even a pastoral cemetery is never quite as final.

My first was for a woman who had been a sailing legend, and it was her wish to continue as a part of the sea that had played such a role in her life. My second was for a friend who had died suddenly and young, but who had been passionate about sailing during those short years.

This one, however, was for a man who had lived a long and full life, and the sea had been in his blood. He had, in fact, run away to sea as a young man, working his way up through the ranks of the merchant marine on tankers and later on famous ocean liners. A world war had interrupted

his sea time and he moved into the sky, using his familiarity with wind and weather in bombers over Europe and the Pacific.

He never quite returned to the sea after the war. A wife, a son, a mortgage, and the press of everyday life kept him ashore, but his pale blue eyes always seemed to reflect faraway horizons.

When he returned to the sea, it wasn't to tramp freighters rolling down to Rio, but to sailboats that combined his passion for the sea with his love of the wind and sky. He bought his son a sailing pram and found himself caught up in the sport as well.

As the boy grew, the pram was traded for a racing dinghy and the man crewed for his son. As a team, they brought home shelves of trophies and sailed to championships, and the two respected each other for their talents. In today's psycho-babble,

they bonded. The father was allowed a cigarette only when the smoke was necessary to find a zephyr of wind; the son was allowed to swear only when they were over at the start.

As the son moved into racing dinghies that required a more athletic crew, the father found himself beached again but kept his hand in by becoming a well-known race committee chairman. In between, the entire family cruised together on a variety of boats and the man raced with friends on everything from Six Metres to offshore racers, where his navigational skills were a valuable talent.

Burials at sea were once commonplace, particularly in the days of sailing ships when it might be weeks or months to the next port. Back then, the ceremony consisted of a few words by the captain or a shipmate, a tilt of the plank, and a splash.

It won't surprise you that it's more likely these days that only ashes are scattered at sea, although you may not know that there are environmental rules that must be followed. The regulations cover everything from the distance offshore (usually three miles) to the flowers that can be left on the sea (they must be biodegradable).

The burial at sea a few days ago was a quiet affair, on a sunny day with light winds. A few words were said, there was a moment of silence, and then the boat turned back toward the harbour, leaving a dusting of ashes on the long Pacific swells that had been so familiar to the man.

The one thing that bothers many people about a burial at sea is that there is no grave marker, no headstone. How can you possibly remember a person if there is no neatly trimmed monument?

The answer is that the sea is the gravestone, the waves are the flowers left on its edge. The wind in the rigging is the music. So the sea is his memorial, and I can remember this man whenever the bow rises to meet a swell or the surf crashes on the shore.

So long, Dad. We'll sail together again one of these days. ⚓

*With more than 40 years as an award-winning boating journalist and as a former editor of both *Yachting* magazine and *Sea*, Chris Caswell is a well-known racing sailor in the USA with silverware in everything from Lasers to ocean racers. The author of six books on boating, Caswell is a dedicated sailor who says he's owned more boats than he wants either his banker or his wife to know about.*



# RACES AND REGATTAS

## INTERNATIONAL DATE COUNTRY

### APRIL

Oyster Regatta	11-16 Apr	Grenada, SPA
2011 Audi Soling World Championship	22-30 Apr	Prien, Germany
Commodore's Cup Race – Jersey to St Malo	22 Apr	Jersey, British Isles
Subic Bay Commodore's Cup	27-29 Apr	Philippines

### MAY

Puerto Rico Vela Cup	27-29 May	Humaco, PR
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### JUNE

2011 Annapolis to Newport Race	3 Jun	MD, USA
Detroit Sperry Top-Sider NOOD Regatta	3-5 Jun	MI, USA
Melges 24 Austrian Open 2011	3-5 Jun	Litzlberg, Austria
International Fireball World Champs	11-24 Jun	Sligo, Ireland
Melges 24 Bavarian Open 2011	11-13 Jun	Germany
Pfingst Cup 2011	11-13 Jun	Flensburg, Germany
Sandhamn Open	11-12 Jun	Stockholm, Sweden
Cleveland Race Week	18-26 Jun	OH, USA

### JULY

2011 Around Australia Ocean Race & Rally	1 July	Freemantle, AUS
Nautic Life Beneteau Regatta	1-3 Jul	Mangalia, Romania
Rolex Ilhabela Sailing Week	3-9 Jul	Sao Paulo, Brazil
The Leukemia Cup Regatta	14-17 Jul	OH, USA
Sail Indonesia	23 Jul	Indonesia
Cowes Week	31 Jul – 10 Aug	Cowes, GBR

### AUGUST

Rolex Fastnet Race	14 Aug	Plymouth, UK
Rolex Int'l Womens' Keelboat Champs	29 Aug – 1 Sept	Rochester, NY, USA

### SEPTEMBER

Maxi Yacht Rolex Cup –		
Mini Maxi Rolex World Championship	5-10 Sep	Porto Cervo, Italy
Rolex Big Boat Series	8-11 Sep	CA, USA
Beneteau First 36.7 North American Champs	8-11 Sep	Toronto, Ontario, Canada
NRV Championsweek 2011	8-11 Sep	Germany International Albacore
Championship	16-23 Sep	Toronto, Ontario, Canada
2011 Melges 24 World Championship	20-24 Sep	Palma Mallorca, Spain
Oktoberfest Trophy 2011 Melges 24	24-25 Sep	Starnberg, Germany
Swiss Open Melges 24 2011	30 Sep – 2 Oct	Luino, Italy

### OCTOBER

China Coast Regatta	Oct	Hong Kong
TP 52 Audi World Championship	3-9 Oct	Porto Cervo, OT, Italy
J 22 World Championship	9-15 Oct	New Orleans, LA, USA
Rolex Middle Sea Race	22-28 Oct	Valletta, Gzira, Malta
2nd Catamarans Cup International	22-29 Oct	Saronic Gulf, Greece

## AUSTRALIA DATE CLUB

### APRIL

Sailing Clinic feat. Farr 40 World Champs,		
Guido Belgiorno-Nettis & Martin Hil	6 Apr	MHYC
Audi Sydney Offshore Newcastle		
Yacht Race (SSI)	8 Apr	CYCA
Sail Port Stephens	11-17 Apr	CPSC
63rd Brisbane to Gladstone	22 April	QCYC
Melbourne to Port Fairy	22-25 Apr	ORCV
125 State Championships	22-26 Apr	GBYC
Pelican Easter Regatta	22-26 Apr	GBYC
VIC Youth & Junior Regatta	23-25 Apr	SSCBC

### MAY

Audi Winter Series Great Veterans		
and Opening Ladies Day race	1 May	CYCA
Melbourne Two Handed	1 May	ORCV
Audi Winter Series – Race 1	8 May	CYCA
Melbourne to Apollo Bay	14-16 May	ORCV
Audi Winter Series – Race 2	15 May	CYCA
Audi Winter Series – Race 3	22 May	CYCA
Audi Winter Series – Race 4	29 May	CYCA

### JUNE

QLD Championships	4-5 Jun	MSC
Audi Winter Series – Race 5	5 Jun	CYCA
NSW East Coast Championships	Jun	TBA
Audi Winter Series – Race 6	12 Jun	CYCA
Lion Island Series	14 Jun	RPAYC
Audi Winter Series – Race 7	19 Jun	CYCA
Lion Island Series	21 Jun	RPAYC
Audi Winter Series – Race 8	26 Jun	CYCA
Lion Island Series	28 Jun	RPAYC

### JULY

Around Australia Ocean Race & Rally	1 July	ORCV
Melbourne Winter Series	2 Jul – 10 Sep	ORCV
QLD Youth Week	2-5 Jul	RQYS
Audi Winter Series – Race 9	3 Jul	CYCA
AOST Training Camp	6-8 Jul	RQYS
Audi Winter Series – Race 10	10 Jul	CYCA
Chris Lee Trophy Closing Ladies Day	17 Jul	CYCA
Audi Winter Prizegiving	22 Jul	CYCA
Audi Sydney Gold Coast Yacht Race	30 Jul	CYCA

### AUGUST

Club Marine NSW Youth Match		
Racing Championships	6-7 Aug	CYCA
Airlie Beach Race Week	12-18 Aug	
Audi Hamilton Island Race Week	19-27 Aug	HIYC

### SEPTEMBER

Magnetic Island Race Week	1-6 Sep	
Melbourne to Geelong	10 Sep	ORCV
Open Day, Parade and Blessing of the Fleet	11 Sep	CYCA
CYCA Boat Owners Forum	13 Sep	CYCA
Grant Thornton Short Haul Race	18 Sep	CYCA
Bluewater Pointscore Bird Island Race	23 Sep	CYCA
Ocean Pointscore Lion Island Race	24 Sep	CYCA

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