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## SUPERYACHT TIMES



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CLIENTS QUEUING UP AT  
OUR DOOR ARE GONE...  
WE NEED NEW BUSINESS  
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# THE SAILING ISSUE

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# LOVE EVERY SECOND: RIBELLE

When a young Paola Siniramed, freshly graduated - magna cum laude - from Milano University's Law Faculty, met Salvatore Trifirò, already a brilliant young lawyer, the two ambitious Italians quickly fell head over heels in love. Salvatore, already a passionate sailor, was quick to introduce his soon-to-be bride to his love for the water, taking weekends to sail on his 7-metre sailing boat on Lake Como, close to their home city of Milan. Paola "quickly realised the wonderful possibilities that come with a life on the water," and after undertaking some serious studying and training at sailing schools, included a tricky celestial navigation course, so began what would become a lifetime affair with yachting.

BY GEMMA FOTTLES

Specialising and practising family law for some years, once married Paola made the decision to dedicate more time to the couples' quality of life, investing her energies into the practicalities of enjoying a busy schedule. "Salvatore does not have much free time, and this is the problem with all yacht owners," she says. "Of course, they are yacht owners because they work incredibly hard, they have reaped the rewards of a high-intensity professional life. I optimise my husband's time so that we enjoy our time together to the maximum level. Our beloved boats are always the most important objects in our lives. Work is our priority, our way of sustaining ourselves and our lifestyle, and the second most important is following our passion whenever we can."

Taking the traditional route of steadily climbing up the size ladder, following their passion is exactly what Paola did, and the next 20 years saw the Trifiròs go from 7-metres to 21-metres in several stages, cruising the wonders of the Italian, French, and Greek coasts extensively whenever they could. The spirit of sailing had the Trifiròs hooked, and as Paola explains, "Sailing is a dream. It allows you to really discover the world, to happen upon secluded beaches and coves that you can't do otherwise. We're always looking for hidden places to explore. It's a fantastic experience."

The thirst for exploration eventually let the Trifiròs minds wonder to more distant shores, and with that, a boat capable of voyaging a little farther than the waters of their homeland. And so they made the jump to superyacht, with the purchase of the 25 metre Jongert-built *Happy Taurus II*. This, Paola explains, was the first chance they had to really get out there and experience sailing in a way that harks back to the ages past. "We bought her from a German owner, and 25-metres was already much bigger than anything we had had at this time. Jongert built very strong, beautiful boats, so I told my husband that now, we can really pass Gibraltar and go out towards the world. Enjoying navigating as Columbus did, to acquire and better our knowledge, or to discover something new and exciting."

Exploring much of Europe, including the British coast, the rest of the world soon beckoned. "From *Happy Taurus II*, we went on to a semi-custom, 31-metre yacht, *Anamcara* in 2001," continues Paola. "She was also a Jongert and just beautiful. With these two boats, still now in our hearts, we did some fantastic cruising all over the world, from Cornwall to Norway, and to the East Coast of the States. We touched Nantucket with a big emotion, we entered New York and Savannah, we passed



Ribelle's wonderfully light interior

Panama many times, and really enjoyed Baja California. We moored in Seattle and navigated the cold, unique waters of Alaska. It was fantastic."

Exploration kept the Trifiròs occupied for an additional four years before they discovered the regatta scene, in 2004, in Porto Cervo at the renowned Rolex Cup. Paola soon had another project in which she could savour learning every aspect - all for the maximisation of their enjoyment of the prized possession. "We had never considered racing, but as soon as we saw the passion for racing, the thrill of the sport, we decided to go for a yacht that was thinner, quicker, and give racing a shot!"

Paola was true to her word, and within the year the Trifiròs were the proud owners of the 40-metre Dubois-designed *Kokomo of London*. Never one to do anything by halves, the first regatta the Trifiròs competed in saw Ed Dubois himself at the wheel of *Kokomo of London* ("Ed was an extraordinary man and friend, we had a mutual understanding and my respect for him still remains strong today," Paola says) taken over by serial yacht owner and influential sailor Neville Crichton after a family emergency forced Dubois to hastily return to shore.

Always with an eye to the future, once the Trifirò's racing appetite had been whetted the search for their next sailing boat began, which led to the commissioning of the 49.7-metre *Zefira* to be built at the New Zealand shipyard, Fitzroy Yachts. Choosing the exterior designer and naval architect was easy, Paola says, with Ed Dubois and the team at Dubois Naval Architects undertaking the project from the word 'GO'. The interior, however, was a little more problematic. Having recently been on board the 52.3-metre Perini Navi ketch *Squall* where Paola was immediately taken aback



Salvatore and Paola Trifirò



Ribelle in action in Porto Cervo

by the high-quality of her Rémi Tessier designed interior, that, as they say, was that. It had to be Tessier. Tessier, however, was much more focused on residential design projects in Miami at the time, and having recently welcomed his fourth child into the world, was less than enthusiastic about the prospect of working on a new yacht on the opposite side of the world.

So he answered a gentle 'no' to Dubois' request. But, as testament to the wonderfully Italian, persuasively charming lady that is Paola Trifirò, she would not take no for an answer. "I called him," she smiles. "It was lucky for me that I speak French quite well as a second language. I convinced him to come to Milano, just for a short meeting. When he arrived, dressed all in white and looking every bit the handsome man, he started admiring our ultra modern penthouse in the heart of the city, close to the Duomo. He stepped in, looked around and said, 'Okay. I think we can work together.' He sat down at the table and said, 'Tell me what you want.' One week later he sent us a design. For the first time in my life, I had nothing to say! He understood everything we wanted. I am not an easy lady



at times, but we had such respect for each other. He is the best." The perseverance for perfection paid off, and *Zefira* went on to win a number of awards upon completion in 2010, including Sailing Yacht of the Year 2011 and Best Sailing Yacht 45m+ at the World Superyacht Awards 2011.

The collaboration with Tessier continued onto the next new build sailing superyacht for the Trifiròs, their current 32.6-metre Vitters-built *Ribelle*, completed last year. This time the Trifiròs opted for a smaller yacht and, enlisting the help of Malcolm McKeon for her naval architecture and exterior design, managed to create another winning vessel with the awarding of Best Interior Design - Sailing Yachts in the BI International Design & Innovation Awards. Looking at *Ribelle's* interior, it's certainly not difficult to see why she is a worthy winner, with a level of comfort, luxury and style that is unfortunately not often synonymous with sailing yachts. Paola agrees: "We have a very quick, ultra modern, all-carbon and titanium racing boat with a fantastic, luxury interior. By luxury, I am not referring to the shiny, expensive things on board. I'm referring to the big loves of life, what you want on the boat to ensure the best life experience onboard. It's very 'luxury' to be surrounded only by the things that you love, to have the space, the light that we do. I





BUYING VS CHARTER

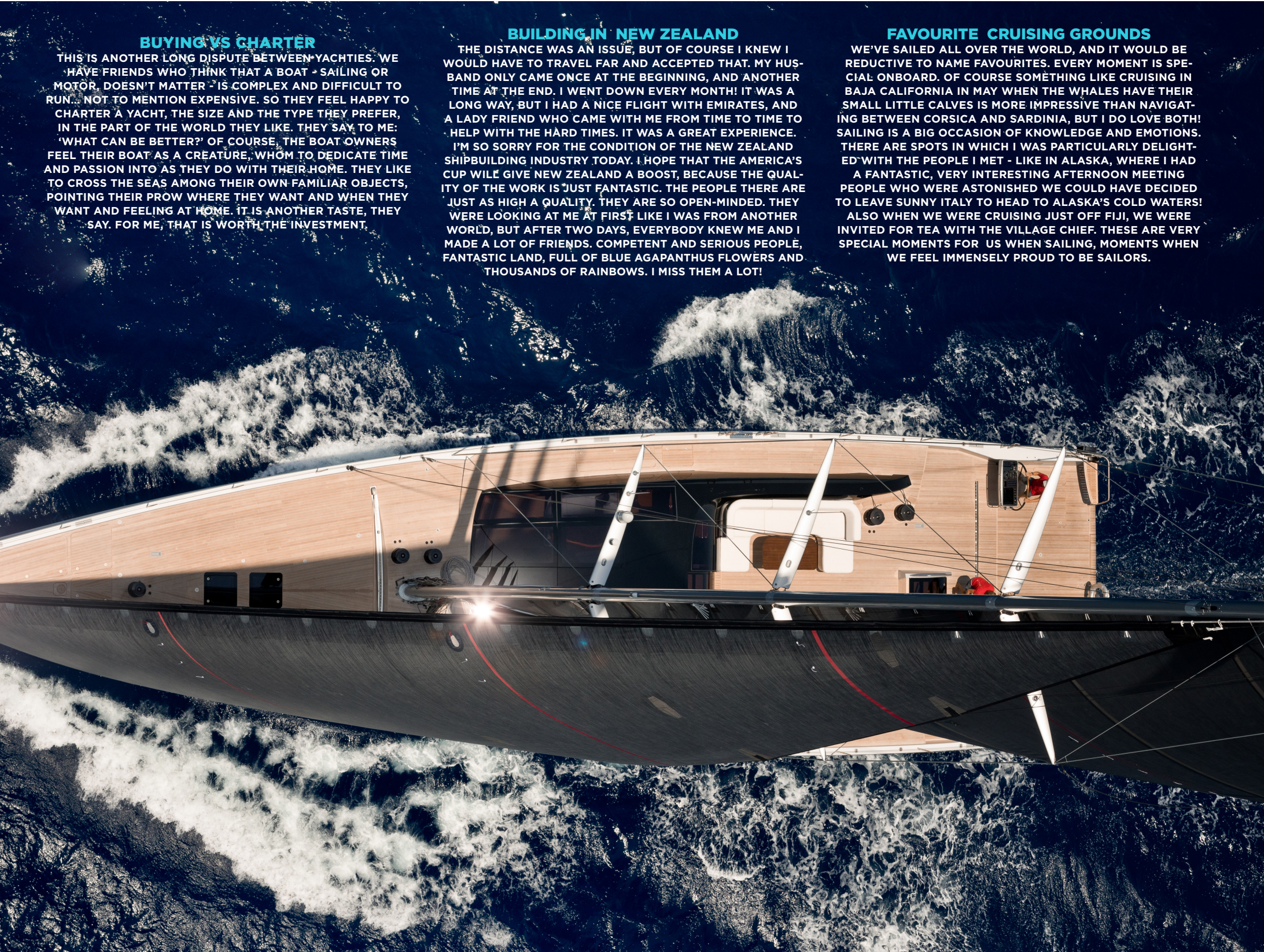
THIS IS ANOTHER LONG DISPUTE BETWEEN YACHTIES. WE HAVE FRIENDS WHO THINK THAT A BOAT - SAILING OR MOTOR, DOESN'T MATTER - IS COMPLEX AND DIFFICULT TO RUN... NOT TO MENTION EXPENSIVE. SO THEY FEEL HAPPY TO CHARTER A YACHT, THE SIZE AND THE TYPE THEY PREFER, IN THE PART OF THE WORLD THEY LIKE. THEY SAY TO ME: 'WHAT CAN BE BETTER?' OF COURSE, THE BOAT OWNERS FEEL THEIR BOAT AS A CREATURE, WHOM TO DEDICATE TIME AND PASSION INTO AS THEY DO WITH THEIR HOME. THEY LIKE TO CROSS THE SEAS AMONG THEIR OWN FAMILIAR OBJECTS, POINTING THEIR PROW WHERE THEY WANT AND WHEN THEY WANT AND FEELING AT HOME. IT IS ANOTHER TASTE, THEY SAY. FOR ME, THAT IS WORTH THE INVESTMENT.

BUILDING IN NEW ZEALAND

THE DISTANCE WAS AN ISSUE, BUT OF COURSE I KNEW I WOULD HAVE TO TRAVEL FAR AND ACCEPTED THAT. MY HUSBAND ONLY CAME ONCE AT THE BEGINNING, AND ANOTHER TIME AT THE END. I WENT DOWN EVERY MONTH! IT WAS A LONG WAY, BUT I HAD A NICE FLIGHT WITH EMIRATES, AND A LADY FRIEND WHO CAME WITH ME FROM TIME TO TIME TO HELP WITH THE HARD TIMES. IT WAS A GREAT EXPERIENCE. I'M SO SORRY FOR THE CONDITION OF THE NEW ZEALAND SHIPBUILDING INDUSTRY TODAY. I HOPE THAT THE AMERICA'S CUP WILL GIVE NEW ZEALAND A BOOST, BECAUSE THE QUALITY OF THE WORK IS JUST FANTASTIC. THE PEOPLE THERE ARE JUST AS HIGH A QUALITY. THEY ARE SO OPEN-MINDED. THEY WERE LOOKING AT ME AT FIRST LIKE I WAS FROM ANOTHER WORLD, BUT AFTER TWO DAYS, EVERYBODY KNEW ME AND I MADE A LOT OF FRIENDS. COMPETENT AND SERIOUS PEOPLE, FANTASTIC LAND, FULL OF BLUE AGAPANTHUS FLOWERS AND THOUSANDS OF RAINBOWS. I MISS THEM A LOT!

FAVOURITE CRUISING GROUNDS

WE'VE SAILED ALL OVER THE WORLD, AND IT WOULD BE REDUCTIVE TO NAME FAVOURITES. EVERY MOMENT IS SPECIAL ONBOARD. OF COURSE SOMETHING LIKE CRUISING IN BAJA CALIFORNIA IN MAY WHEN THE WHALES HAVE THEIR SMALL LITTLE CALVES IS MORE IMPRESSIVE THAN NAVIGATING BETWEEN CORSICA AND SARDINIA, BUT I DO LOVE BOTH! SAILING IS A BIG OCCASION OF KNOWLEDGE AND EMOTIONS. THERE ARE SPOTS IN WHICH I WAS PARTICULARLY DELIGHTED WITH THE PEOPLE I MET - LIKE IN ALASKA, WHERE I HAD A FANTASTIC, VERY INTERESTING AFTERNOON MEETING PEOPLE WHO WERE ASTONISHED WE COULD HAVE DECIDED TO LEAVE SUNNY ITALY TO HEAD TO ALASKA'S COLD WATERS! ALSO WHEN WE WERE CRUISING JUST OFF FIJI, WE WERE INVITED FOR TEA WITH THE VILLAGE CHIEF. THESE ARE VERY SPECIAL MOMENTS FOR US WHEN SAILING, MOMENTS WHEN WE FEEL IMMENSELY PROUD TO BE SAILORS.



did the layout with Malcolm, incorporating all the smart naval architecture tricks to get the very best result. He is a great designer - he always listens and never tries to impose ideas that are not suited to that specific owner. His suggestions, experience and competence are absolute."

Did you ever consider building a motor yacht, I ask? "Well, the dispute between sailing and motor yacht owners is long and without an end. As far as I'm concerned, since I had the honour to be called as a Judge in the BI World Superyacht Awards since 2011, I was presented with the task of visiting many boats, the majority of them motorboats. So I started getting to know them better, and I must admit that many are splendid creatures, unbelievably perfect machines with many possibilities to enjoy life, starting from the elegance of the interiors, to the magnificent swimming

pools, to the cinema saloons. But let me say, sailing for us 'addicts' is also about experiencing the taste of the sea, to glide on the water, and just to listen to the wind and the swish of the sail. It is a totally different way of yachting."

Demonstrating their fierce passion for the sailing way of life, as soon as *Ribelle* was ready to go the Trifiròs took her on three back-to-back regattas. The aim? To show the world that it is indeed possible to create a performance-orientated sailing yacht that is beautifully designed both inside and out. "In 2017, the first year for *Ribelle*, we won the Rolex Cup in Porto Cervo," Paola tells me proudly, "so we proved our idea of a very fast boat with a fantastic interior which looks like a luxury superyacht but is, in reality, a racing boat. People may think she is severe because she is a racing boat, but she is not only so. I am a passionate

sailor, and I love to have the best interior on what many consider a severe vessel. The most beautiful thing is to stay on your boat and love every second, breathing in the sea life. It doesn't have to be such a contrast between the performance boats and luxury boats, and that is very important to me."

With *Ribelle* still relatively new to the Trifirò' fleet, what's the next project for Paola and Salvatore? Despite that fierce loyalty to sailing, the ultimate dream is the rebuild of a 1930s classic yacht. "I have a dream to find a narrow, sleek motor boat of the 30s, and to refit it perfectly. The 1930s was a period of yachting I very much admire, so I would love to refit it and take it around the Mediterranean. Perhaps I am glamorising the idea, thinking of a movie style cruise around the Med on this glorious classic

yacht, but I would really enjoy that refit process. One of my favourite things to do with boats is to think about the every aspect of the construction of my dream." If Paola's previous dreams are anything to go by, this could certainly be one to watch out for in the future. - G.F.



The 49.7m Zefira

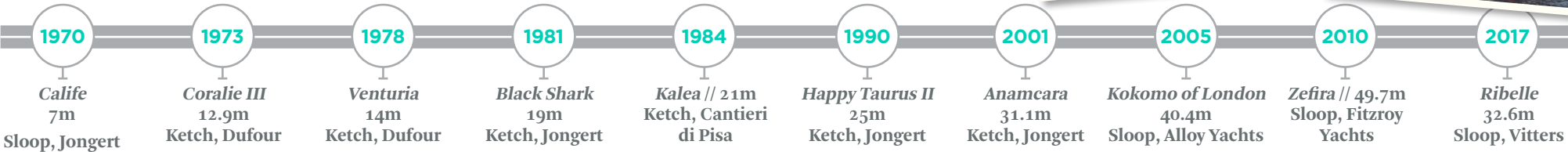


Kokomo of London, now called Zalmon

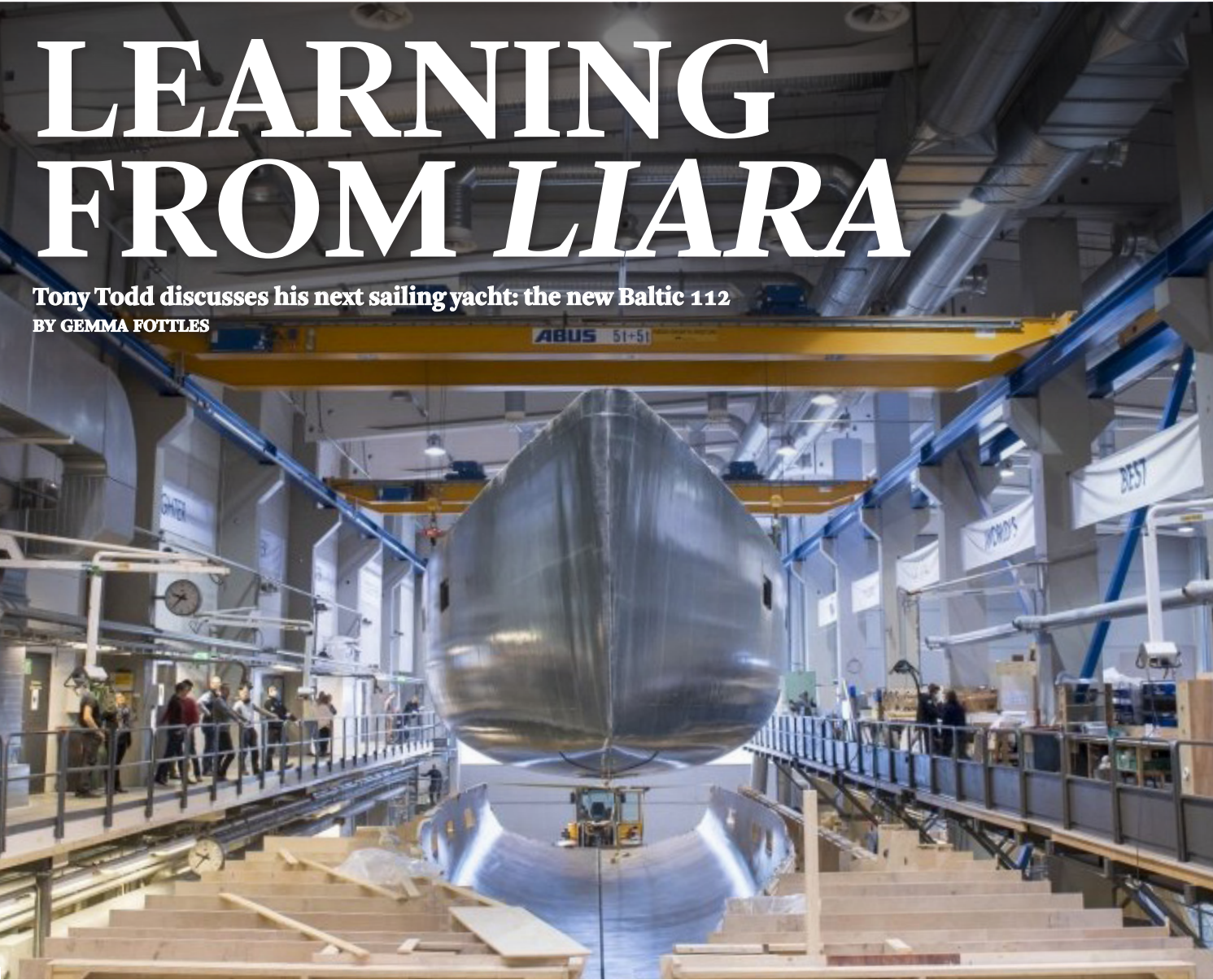


Ribelle being transported through Holland during her construction

OWNERSHIP TIMELINE







# LEARNING FROM LIARA

Tony Todd discusses his next sailing yacht: the new Baltic 112  
BY GEMMA FOTTLES

Finnish shipbuilder Baltic Yachts have had a busy couple of years, with recent sailing superyacht deliveries including the 23.7-metre *Bill and Me* and the highly-anticipated 53.7-metre *Pink Gin VI* last year, and the regatta favourites, *My Song* and *Nikata* (39.6-metres and 35-metres respectively) delivered in 2016 and 2015.

Looking forward, Baltic's sheds are keeping just as busy as in previous years. Currently taking shape at their facilities in Jakobstad in western Finland is an exciting addition it's the growing Baltic fleet: the new Baltic 112 Custom. Coming in at 34-metres and named *Liara*, the owner and his knowledgeable team tapped the extensive experience of Malcolm McKeon Yacht Design for her exterior design and naval architecture, with Adam Lay Studio responsible for her interior design.

Designed for both comfortable, extended cruising around the world as well as for participation in the occasional regatta, just some of her standout features include a large sail plan with square top mainsail, telescopic lifting keel and a high righting-moment configuration. Furthermore, an updated version of Baltic's proven retractable propulsion unit will be installed to further increase speed by reducing drag when it is in racing mode.

But what really makes the Baltic 112 Custom special is the dedication of her owner and his team, who have learned over the years to take their time when designing and building a new boat, making sure that the final result ticks all of the boxes. Here we talk to her owner, the British sailor Tony Todd, ahead of her scheduled delivery in spring 2019, to hear about his experience building sailing yachts and his plans to cruise the world with the new *Liara*.

Upon completion, the Baltic 112 will be your fourth yacht sailing under the name *Liara*. What's the significance of the name?

Well, we have twins: Liam and Lara, so, put them together and you get *Liara*. This could be my last boat, actually. I'm 70 years old now - I can't go on forever!

The previous *Liara* built by Southern Ocean Marine was 30m, and the Baltic *Liara* will come in at 34m. Did you ever consider a larger sailing yacht?

No, not really. This size range is plenty big enough for me for the rest of my life. She'll easily allow me to do the things that I want to do. The Baltic *Liara* is really a progression from the last boat: it's a learning process. We were originally designing at 32-metres, but by the time we had the drive leg and all other requirements in we ended up at 34-metres. I also wanted two more guest cabins, and having the 34-metre allowed me to do that.

You're a big regatta guy, and have competed in numerous races around the world for decades. How do you optimise for both comfortable cruising and performance?

I think the design of the Baltic 112 is the lightest boat you can have with all the creature comforts I want to take with me to the other side of the world. Performance boils down to design. We were very keen to fit this new retractable propulsion system, the first of which was seen on the Baltic yacht *My Song*, in a combined effort between Baltic and Hundested. We were also very keen to try and create a system where we could cruise silently all through the night - but with air-con on. Our solution is one variable speed generator, a high voltage DC bank, and a generator running off the back end of the main engine. It's not totally unique, but there are not many similar systems out there.

We've worked very closely with Cape Horn for CFD work, and North Sails and Southern Spars on the Baltic 112, so it's very much a team effort of designers, builder and suppliers along with the project manager and our captain. They have extensive knowledge in the

racing and cruising scene and are always on top of the latest ideas, so we've adopted quite a lot of these small innovations. Small, but they all add up!

What do you enjoy about racing?

It's really the adrenaline kick that attracts me to regatta after regatta. No matter how many times you've done it, that adrenaline kick is there. It's not too serious, not too 'life and death', just a lot of fun! We'll probably do two regattas a year from now on.

Aside from regatta participation, will you spend a lot of time on board?

My wife and I hope to spend a lot of time on the boat now that our two children are off at university. We're planning on taking her down to New Zealand for the 2020/21 America's Cup. Having built a boat already in New Zealand, I've got a fair bit of experience in the region, so it's a great opportunity to properly cruise there - which we never did before. We'll likely take part in the regattas around the time of the Cup... We'll see!

You've never built a boat in Finland before - what attracted you to Baltic?

I've always wanted to build a boat with Baltic, and after sending the project to tender, we soon realised they were head and shoulders above the rest. The way that they approached the project and the level of professionalism is fantastic - it was a relatively easy decision!

With high expectations considered, how has your experience been so far?

As the saying goes, I am absolutely over the moon. I've got a truly fantastic team behind me, and Baltic are very much part of that. We don't have confrontations, instead we work together on solutions to challenges. I am so impressed with them.

Malcolm McKeon designed the new *Liara* - did you previously have experience with McKeon?



LEFT: The new Baltic 112 Custom construction progresses at the yard; The previous *Liara*, now sailing as *Danneskjold*, at the 2018 St Barths Bucket;

Rendering of the Baltic 112 Custom, *Liara*

Malcolm and I go back a long way - he designed a 50' race boat for me back in '93 called *Eagle*. We worked with Bill Dixon on a previous *Liara* and he's a great chap and we love his work, but we just wanted to give Malcolm a go this time.

In regards to the rest of the team, my captain stayed on from the previous boat, John Walker, who is a fantastic lad and has been very involved with the project along with our Project Manager, Sebastian Allebrodt of A2B Maritime. Together with Malcolm they were responsible for drawing up the specification for the yacht, which they put a lot of work into. They really did their homework - we've learned the lesson the hard way in the past, where we had pressed the 'GO' button too early... so it was great to have that experience and make the best decisions for the project this time round.

Have you visited the yard over the construction process?

Well, I don't do snow, you see... I bloody hate it. So, until my recent visit a couple of weeks ago, I hadn't been to the yard since September 2017. The first time I went there was in June, so of course there's not a lot of darkness or freezing cold weather in Scandinavia at that time of year. But I'm kept up to date with daily photographs, I'm kept abreast of every meeting they have with the minutes. John, Sebastian and I talk a lot, so I'm so happy to tell you that this build is a very painless process. From June onwards I'll go there every six weeks or so until she's finished.

So you've already told us that you probably won't build another sailing yacht... Have you ever considered a motor yacht?

In a word: no! It's just not my cup of tea. With a sailing yacht you're presented with a total challenge - you have to actually do something. I've always found that for me, going sailing was the only way I could really switch off from an intense career. Yachting was - and still is - the ultimate unwinder.

There's also an incredible sailing community, and I've formed real, amazing friendships with industry professionals and my fellow yachties over the years. I'm not sure if you would get the same with motor yachting. - G.F.





## GERMÁN FRERS

YEARS IN THE BUSINESS:

50

NUMBER OF BOATS DESIGNED:

750

FAVOURITE DESTINATION:

TURKEY

ON THE DRAWING BOARDS:

SWANS OF VARIOUS SIZES, 44M WALLY SLOOP, 85' SIRENA MARINE PRODUCTION MOTOR YACHT, 72' OQS CAT, 30' SAILBOAT, 30' MOTOR BOAT, HALLBERG RASSY, QUEEN LONG PRODUCTION 60' AND MORE!



Favourite yacht: *Unfurled* and the 1973 *Scaramouche*



Favourite regatta: *Copa del rey*



Favourite yacht: *Elife* and *Adele*

I have always loved boats and life at sea, and today that has also manifested itself in a strong passion for yacht design, a field I have worked very hard in over the past four decades. I started sailing early in life, cruising with my family and racing dinghies before I later entered the offshore scene as well. As a result, I have gained an intimate knowledge of what works and what doesn't, what you want and what you do not want, when sailing or cruising, as well as actually living on board both sailing and power yachts. My experience has taught me that clients in search of true pleasure sailing are better off developing a project below 50 metres in length. The sailing yacht market has in recent years been calling for new projects that are characterised by unique design cues, filled with innovative solutions. I don't feel this is the desired solution to significantly improving the sailing yacht market, as several of these features would only appeal to real tech heads or serious racers, and provide little value to the cruising class, which covers the vast majority of the market share. The way I see that we can improve the demand for sailing superyachts is to design and build superior projects that meet each unique owner's brief, and for me, the best projects are the ones where the owner and his group are involved, passionate, and trust my design process by including my recommendations wherever possible.

# DESIGNING SUPER

Sailing yachts are highly advanced machines with months of research and development going into each project to make it either as fast around forget, however, that the design process is not always about mathematical equations, decimal measurements and complicated fluid dynamics what designing super sailing yachts mean to these creative individuals, we gathered four world-class designers who have become known for direction they would like to see this niche market head into. Here these respected designers and naval architects share some valuable thoughts



## ANDRE HOEK

YEARS IN THE BUSINESS:

35

FAVOURITE DESTINATION:

ALASKA AND ANTARCTICA

FAVOURITE REGATTA:

SUPERYACHT CUP PALMA

ON THE DRAWING BOARDS:

A 99.9M YACHT, A 50.2M SAILING YACHT, A 57.9M AND 77' MOTOR BOAT, AND A 77' AND 33.8M SAILING YACHT. WE ARE ALSO WORKING ON A SECRETIVE 68.5M SAILING YACHT.



First sailing yacht project: *Kim*



We started to design small boats and then gradually grew bigger. We didn't start by designing 200-foot sailing yachts, we started with 20 footers, and gradually built it up into bigger and bigger boats over the next 20 years. Many people think that when you enter the superyacht design arena that you don't do 'normal' sized boats anymore. This certainly doesn't count for us, as we still do everything and enjoy creating a beautiful 40-footer as much as we do working on 200+ foot superyacht projects. There are a number of projects that we had a really great time, just to design the boat and also to optimise it, engineer it and then after that to build it.

But if I have to choose one of my favourite projects, it has to be *Adele* – one of our biggest superyacht projects to date. It's not only the boat itself that is so special to us, but we also became good friends with the owner with whom I have sailed on board several times. A trip that will always stand out to me is sailing in Antarctica on board *Adele* which was a life-changing experience for me. The surroundings are all larger than life and even on a big boat like that that you feel very small. A sailing yacht is one of the best ways to experience the beauty and ruggedness of our natural world.





PHILIPPE  
BRIAND

YEARS IN THE BUSINESS:	NUMBER OF BOATS DESIGNED:
40	300+
DREAM PROJECT: 150M HYBRID MOTOR SAILOR	FAVOURITE REGATTA: 70 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

ON THE DRAWING BOARDS:  
THE NEXT JEANNEAU MODEL, A PRELIMINARY OF A SCALE DOWN AC 75, A 50M SAILING YACHT, A 78' IRC SAILING YACHT, A 55M MOTORYACHT EXPLORER, PRELIMINARIES OF 50, 56, 65 AND 90M MOTOR YACHTS



I was pretty much born into sailing yacht design - I actually sketched out my first design at 11 years old! Today the Philippe Briand design studio has designed around 12,000 boats and counting, which I'm proud to say makes us one of the leaders in this sector. I am a passionate sailor and very much enjoy racing, so just one of my own personal favourites is the America's Cup Project for which I designed eight boats over the years. It was a very exciting project to be a part of and a movement that is now more important to yachting than ever. The developments surrounding the event have made the sport exciting to follow for many people around the world and the technology from that could very possibly be applied to the superyachts of tomorrow. But it's not all about racing and I think a positive and sure way to secure the future of the sailing market is by focusing on the eco aspect of it. Sailing is one of the greenest modes of transportation and it offers a very exciting way to explore the world on. The yachting industry in general has noticed this explorer craze, especially in the motor yacht segment. Cruising extensively, especially outside of Mediterranean and Caribbean waters is something that these yachts are made for and can also easily maintain over long periods at sea. A motor yacht relies on power generated by its engine alone, but when you step on a sailing yacht, it is impossible to deny this magical connection you experience with nature, as if it was an animal.

SAIL SUPERYACHTS

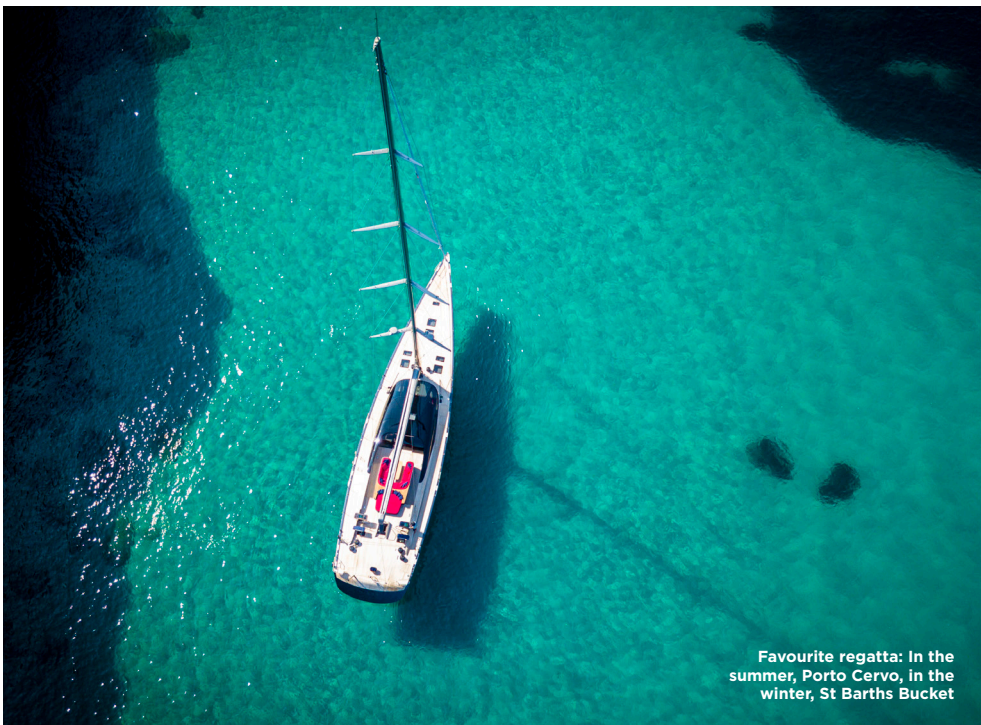
the race course as possible, or as technically advanced while dressed in an old-school camouflage as they cruise around the world. We often equations; something that rings true, arguably, even more so when it comes to sailing yacht designers. To get a clearer picture about their work in the sailing yacht industry and asked them what the process is all about for them, where their inspiration comes from and which on the business for any aspiring designer looking to find out what exactly remains when all the fluff is stripped away. - CHARL VAN ROOY



MALCOLM  
MCKEON

YEARS IN THE BUSINESS:	NUMBER OF BOATS DESIGNED:
37	200+
FIRST SAILING YACHT: AQUEL WAS THE FIRST SUPERYACHT	FAVOURITE DESTINATION: FIJI

ON THE DRAWING BOARDS:  
IT'S ALL SECRETIVE, BUT WE'RE CURRENTLY WORKING ON THREE SAILING YACHTS ALL IN EXCESS OF 57M!



My love for sailing began when I was living in Fiji as a child. I dragged father to the local yacht club to get a little P Class boat, and I taught myself to sail. We moved to Hong Kong when I was 12, and I progressed to sailing keel boats, mainly Dragons, and then the Admiral Cup boats. I met Ed Dubois through the Admiral Cup, and started working part-time for him when I was studying naval architecture in Southampton, going on to become equal partner in Dubois Naval Architects for 30 years before I set up shop on my own. The first person to ring me was Neville Crichton, whom I had designed a lot of boats for over the years with Ed. We had started the design on a 46-metre motor yacht, and he asked me to finish it. From that, people knew I was in business again, and I received a number of enquiries which lead to my first project: Missy. The last few years haven't been so great in terms of the sailing yacht market. I've had a lot of enquiries, but they've been very slow to moving to signing at a shipyard. We are now seeing a lot of the second hand boats being taken off the market which will drive new build sales, but one of the problems is that the boats have become very expensive. On the plus side, we are seeing a resurgence in sailing from the younger generation. Where I live there is a massive Optimist fleet, which is amazing. The most important thing is just getting people on the water - an Optimist or a superyacht, motor or sail, I don't care, the most important thing is igniting that passion.



# EXPLORING THE SAILING SUPERYACHT MARKET

**The sailing yacht sector has weathered a turbulent past decade, with a reduced number of orders and the loss of several significant builders but, fortunately, there is still much to be positive about when looking to the future.** BY ELLIE BRADE

Today sailing yachts make up 16% of the superyacht fleet and just 7% of the construction book with 29 projects of 30m+ currently underway. This is a big shift compared to 10 years ago, when an average of 20% of both the fleet and construction book were sailing yachts, and average annual deliveries were almost equal to the entire construction book today. It is important to note, however, that while sometimes the sailing construction book might paint a somewhat gloomy picture when compared to peak years, one or just a couple of orders can sometimes alter the overall stat-set dramatically, both for the positive and negative.

Taking a quick look at what is in build, the average LOA of the sailing construction book is 44.1-metres, the busiest size bracket is 30-40-metres, and the 81-metre *Project 400* in build at Royal Huisman is one of the biggest orders underway. Sloops are the most popular rig style, followed by ketches and schooners, with these three rig types making up 98% of all sailing yacht projects.

While smaller entry level yachts (and, indeed, sub 30-metre yachts) remain popular, one newer trend is that there has also been an increasing number of larger sailing yacht projects seen with recent large launches, including the 86-metre *Aquijo*, 70-metre *Sybaris* and 142.81-metre *Sailing Yacht A*. "Although the majority of activity for us is between 40 to 60 metres, the focus for Royal Huisman has also shifted towards bigger sailing yachts with our recent deliveries of the 58-metre *Ngoni* and the 56-metre *Aquarius* both good examples of the increasing average size through the years," says Royal Huisman's Jurjen van 't Verlaat.

## KEY CHALLENGES

The main question to ask when looking at sailing market activity is why have the numbers of new builds declined? When speaking with members of the sailing fraternity it is clear that there are three key challenges the sailing sector has faced, and still faces. First the GFC's enduring knock on effect on order numbers; with a smaller number of sailing yachts versus motoryachts, the drop in sailing yacht orders has been felt more keenly. Second, a lack of new owners entering the sailing sector. Third, the increased expense in building/operating a sailing superyacht as focus has shifted to performance. We address these main topics here.

## EFFECTS OF THE GFC

"The 2008 crisis had a time release effect on the sailing superyacht market, growing

in intensity after the first few years as the brokerage market seized up", says Bill Tripp of Tripp Design. "Before the crisis this market was on a tear and after it, as yachts came on the market to no buyers, this smallish market clogged and has taken time to clear." Yards too are open to admit that the effect of the GFC was hard. "The market has gone through some very tough times with increased and more aggressive competition, a tendency towards fixed priced projects and a need for high levels of brand investment," says Kenneth Nyfelt, Sales Director at Baltic Yachts

"All the challenges are due to the Financial Crisis, really, and we're still in the aftermath of that," agrees Malcolm McKeon of Malcolm McKeon Yacht Design, stating that a lack of buyers and subsequent huge price drops to second hand sailing inventory had the triple effect of second hand yachts proving extremely affordable when compared to a new build, owners not wanting to sell due to a huge drop in value of their asset, and owners unable to begin a planned new build because of being unable to sell their current yacht. "People are only slowly getting the confidence back to spend the sort of money needed for building sailing yachts."

This hurdle acknowledged, many companies believe that things are on the up, and there are signs of an upturn in sailing yacht orders. "The biggest challenge has been that 2017 was the peak low of the GFC for the superyacht market, but since then we have seen a large uptick in enquiries and contracts signed," says Paul MacDonald, Founder and Superyacht Sales Manager at Southern Spars. "There are still a good number of buyers with specific projects in mind, such as world circumnavigations, looking for high-quality yachts to be tailor made for their needs," agree Southern Wind Shipyard (SWS).

## RISING COSTS

Many in the sailing sector believe that the evolution of sailing yachts into performance focused machines was a big factor in the drop in new orders. "There is a perception that it is expensive to enable a boat to sail, hence a number of owners have headed off down the powerboat path," says MacDonald. "The drive for increased performance is a double edged sword as while it has created yachts that are better to helm, sail and handle, that comes with a cost," says Matt Bridge, Superyacht Sails Co-Ordinator at Doyle Sails. "That can sometimes be off-putting for potential new entrants if that's what



they think they need to invest in order to participate as a sailing owner."

McKeon agrees: "The cost of building sailing boats has skyrocketed compared to the early days when we were building fairly simple sailing boats," he says. "The increased demand for performance has meant boats have just got a lot more sophisticated and as a result more expensive. That has scared a lot of owners off because when you compare a performance-focused sailing yacht to a similar sized motoryacht you can buy the latter at a fraction of the cost and get more volume."

Some redress has been seen in trying to spread the message that expensive, performance-focused sailing yachts are not the only way, and the growing popularity of the Corinthian class (owner/driver) and Voile Blanche Class in the Bucket regattas is an indication of this. Yards are also working to ensure there are offerings for buyers in all price brackets. "We believe that it is important to find the right balance between customisation, quality and price," say SWS.

It is important to acknowledge that while the evolution of sailing yachts has seen build costs rise, this process has prompted the creation of some incredibly exciting boats, which can only be a good thing. "Superyacht sailing customers are passionate sailors and are generally

very experienced and knowledgeable, challenging us to deliver projects using advanced materials and technical innovations," says Nyfelt. "I think the move towards better all-round sailing boats is to be applauded as people are now concentrating on the quality and performance of the boats rather than just building the biggest boats you can," says Bridge. "15 years ago sailing superyachts were not fun to sail or helm from a purist sailing view and that has definitely changed now and long may that continue."

## ATTRACTING NEW OWNERS

Of those we spoke to for this article all were unified in their belief that the lack of new owners entering the sailing sector is the greatest hurdle to overcome. "In general the clients that had the passion for sailing are getting older, and there are not new generations following," says Bill Dixon of Dixon Yacht Design. "The biggest challenge is to promote to the next generation that sailing is a wonderful form of boating, and one that does not have to be pursued at a frenetic pace."

There are several avenues that could be fruitful in the pursuit of new clients, and this includes the marketing of sailing as a family affair. "Ensuring that the younger generation and families can easily experience the joy of sailing are key





requirements,” says Nybelt. “We should also provide for those looking for a smaller yacht and help nurture their ambitions to enter the superyacht sailing world.” Involvement in sailing at a young level has proved a sure way to inspire the owners of the future. “Our local yacht clubs are getting more and more kids into sailing, there are a lot more corporate events that are getting people out on the water and experiencing what boating’s all about and that has generated a lot of interest in the last five years,” says McKeon. “It’s all about exposing more people to yachting.”

“Yachting needs to be seen as fashionable and exciting and some things I am sure will help this is the onset of the likes of the Prada Cup for the next America’s Cup,” says MacDonald. “These sort of events highlight yachting to many new circles of people and will hopefully drive them to get involved in yachting.” In the same way, superyacht regattas are the perfect platform for potential clients to trial the sailing community. “The relaxed atmosphere of a non-commercial event like the Bucket is the perfect environment to showcase sailing,” says van ‘t Verlaat.

Targeting new avenues is also key. “I’ve always believed we need to look harder at the charter market to reach new clients,” says Bridge. “If you look at people who charter sailing yachts they often don’t have a lot of experience but want to enjoy the experience of sailing – they are already a qualified sales lead, and it would be a smart idea to look at that chain more.” Tripp believes the solution to reaching new owners lies in celebrating what is exciting and inspiring about sailing, and the fact that it is participatory and interactive at all levels. Selling this

prospect and adventure to clients is crucial: “Our clients come to us with an idea to create something and participate and immediately it is about putting a dream into play,” he says. “The inherent creativity in building a boat, and the participation in sailing one, needs to be shown; these sailing superyachts are not showrooms - they are dreams and opportunities.”

LOOKING FORWARDS

There is much to be positive about and in recent years there have been exciting steps in yacht design and construction, and there is good energy around the sailing sector as a whole. “The industry today is far more alive with new projects and prospects,” says MacDonald. “Next we will have a shortage of superyacht builders which in some ways will be good as it will create pressure for owners to book building slots.”

Yards are continuing to invest in their ranges and team, and in creating exciting prospects for potential owners. “Royal Huisman pays a lot of attention to building relationships with its clients as well as to constant learning and the knowledge transfer to the next generation of specialist craftsmen and women,” says van ‘t Verlaat. “This approach guarantees continuity and has led to a well-filled order portfolio.”

Telling an engaging story about the sailing lifestyle is crucial in the quest to grow order numbers. “Sailing is one of the most ecological forms of boating, and this should be included in the marketing of sailing,” says Dixon. “Sailing is one of the most sustainable ways to explore the world and to enjoy nature and wildlife,” agrees Nyfelt. “People increasingly want to escape their hectic lifestyles and relax with family and friends and we provide the vehicle and opportunity to explore the world and connect with the most remote locations in both a comfortable and safe manner without compromising performance.”

The role of the media is also important in achieving this. “Sailing superyachts compete against the powerboat side in the media, which is sometimes confusing as these two markets are quite different and don’t always belong together,” says Tripp. “Most sailing magazines are for smaller boats, and absorbed and adored by their readers, while sailing superyachts fight for covers in their own media, and then too often are treated with powerboat critiquing to become about the interior. A dedicated media sector seems an obvious place to showcase the real strength of sailing superyachts.”

Numbers of sailing yacht orders may be small, but their followers are adamant that this is the greatest type of superyacht to own. Potential for growth is certainly there, interest in smaller entry-level yachts remains, and the potential of untapped markets is promising.

“The sailing sector in smaller yachts has not diminished in the last 10 years, like the superyacht sector,” says Dixon. “In China sailing is not promoted very strongly, and that can only bode well for that part of the world.”

“I’m feeling more positive about the future because we’ve been working on quite a few projects over the last few years and getting the owners to the table and signing with shipyards is now starting to happen,” concludes McKeon. “While we will never compete with motoryachts, people have talked the sailing sector down - and they shouldn’t.” – E.B.

QUICK LOOK: SAILING FLEET EVOLUTION

770

SAILING YACHTS OVER 30M  
ARE IN OPERATION TODAY

SAILING YACHT COMPLETIONS PER YEAR

