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Photo by
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Editor's Letter

Owning a boat will test your patience, your wallet and your resolve—and it'll be the best decision you ever made.

BY ANDREW PARKINSON



For the LOVE of the LIST (and the LIFE)

Somewhere, someone is about to fall in love. It might happen this fall, walking the docks at a boat show. Or online, browsing listings deep down a brokerage rabbit hole. Or aboard a friend's boat, when the genoa pops, the water turns to mercury, and that little voice inside says, *More please.*

If that someone is you, I won't talk you out of it. But I will say this: Boat ownership is not all smooth sailing and sunset anchorages. It's a floating to-do list. It's a crash course in trouble-shooting, a master class in delayed gratification. It's 90 percent chaos and 10 percent magic, and somehow, that math works.

You'll encounter new tools, new smells and new words—most of them expensive. But somewhere along the way, you'll also discover a part of yourself that thrives on challenge, adapts under pressure, and finds meaning in every hard-won nautical mile.

Boats are demanding. They break. They leak. They never ask how your day is going before they throw something new at you. And we love them all the more for it.

When my family bought our first boat, I didn't fully appreciate what we had signed up for. I just knew I wanted to sail. What I didn't expect was how attached we, as a family, would get to *all* of it: the clatter of halyards in the yard, the smell of wet teak, the pride of knowing the boat inside and out because we'd rebuilt or rewired half of it ourselves. Our first cruise wasn't flawless, but it was unforgettable, and that's the currency of boat ownership.

Sure, as a boat owner, you might question your decision more than once. But then comes the moment—maybe on a perfect



Currently between boats, I borrowed a little magic aboard my friend Nico's Pegasus 50. It was a timely reminder that all that sweat equity really is worth it.

beam reach, or alone on the hook with coffee at sunrise—when the chaos subsides, the boat steadies, and you feel it: *This is exactly where I'm supposed to be.*

Boats also connect us to one another. How many dockside friendships have started with, "Hey, I noticed your solar panel setup," or "Mind if I borrow your heat gun?" This is a community that rallies, whether to share knowledge, lend a hand, or swap stories over sundowners. Owning a boat brings you into that fold.

If you're heading into boat-show season and hearing a little voice—*Am I ready? Is it worth it?*—this issue has your back. In our Hands-On Sailor department, Behan Gifford of Sailing *Totem* pulls back the curtain on marketing lingo like "turnkey" and "ready to cruise." She also explains how to separate dream from delusion. On the other side of the coin, *Avocet's* Marissa

Neely unpacks what it really takes to prep a boat for sale, both emotionally and practically. She offers insights for sellers and future buyers alike. You'll also find a pair of boat owners' stories that remind us what this lifestyle is all about—seen through a purpose-built passagemaker and an Atlantic crossing that tested not just the systems but also the soul of the journey, and from a solo sailor who wrestles with 3,000 miles of ocean and finds clarity on the other side. These stories matter because the boat-ownership experience isn't just about the boat. It's about what the boat

makes possible. Boating is a platform for self-reliance, growth, escape and return, and everything in between.

If you're staring down your first haulout, chasing that elusive "perfect boat," or trying to make sense of what "needs a little love" really means, we welcome you. No, you're not crazy. You're embarking on a journey that can be extraordinary.

In my experience, there's always been that moment—after the bilge has been cleaned, the leaks hunted down and sealed, the errant halyard finally led fair—that you step back, wipe the grime from your hands, and catch a glimpse of your boat at rest. Maybe the sun is just beginning to arc low across the anchorage. Maybe you hear the soft *clink* of rigging in a light breeze. In that quiet instant, you remember why you fell in love with this life in the first place.

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UNDERWAY

The BEST of the CRUISING LIFESTYLE

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Skip That Task, and Set
Sail Sooner

Bathed in stillness beneath the brooding evergreens of the Pacific Northwest, the Jeanneau Sun Odyssey 509 *Kāhola* rests at anchor—its smooth lines mirrored in the placid water, a scene of quiet that belies the transformation it has undergone. After years of ocean miles and worn-out canvas, a new suit of sails has breathed fresh life into this veteran cruiser. In the story “New Sails, New Life” (page 28), longtime voyager Tor Johnson recounts the journey from frustration to performance, as cutting-edge sail design—courtesy of a Kiwi America’s Cup veteran—redefines how *Kāhola* sails through gusts, tacks and time itself. Out here, cradled by steep forested hills and still airs, the boat seems reborn, ready for whatever lies beyond the next headland.



Seaworthy

Two shirts, 20 years and a boatload of memories: How a wardrobe of wreckage became my badge of honor.

BY CRAIG MOODIE

CONFESSIONS of a RAG SAILOR



I'm a lifelong, card-carrying rag sailor. But the sail I hoist isn't the only reason the term fits. I know that, like wine, sailing clothes improve with age.

Take my two sailing shirts: both long-sleeved Lacostes, one navy blue, the other white. The backs of both have enough holes to rival cheesecloth. The cuffs are tearing away from the sleeves. The darker material of the blue one masks most of its stains, but the white one advertises them—slashes of green bottom paint, rust-colored blotches, speckles of varnish, a grease stain of unknown origin.

I've worn these shirts as long as we've owned our 12-foot catboat, *Finn*—almost two decades. They've become old mates of mine, and the rips and stains and frays testify to the many years of service they've seen aboard our yachtlet. Catch a whiff of them in their postsail state and, if you're like me, you'll

relish their aroma of seawater, salt, sunscreen and sweat (and perhaps Pilsner Urquell).

Indeed, though they were once crisp shirts-about-town, the well-marinated state they've reached makes them boat-wear only. My wife, Ellen, sees to that.

She knows my penchant for wearing sailing clothes that are, if not technically rags, at least comfy to the point of scruffiness. Polos, chamois shirts, swimming trunks, hats, shoes.... How many times over the years have I tested her goodwill by wearing clothes that should have been donated to Goodwill?

This tendency to look like a seagoing hobo came early to me. By age 5, I was a connoisseur of rumpled khakis and baggy jeans. I still remember how pajama-like one pair of khakis had become. My mother ironed patches on the knees several times over, and I loved wearing them rolled up pirate-style, as I did with my jeans.

One of my favorite articles of sailing clothing when I was a sea pup aboard the boats we chartered and owned was a white sweater with a Swiss cross on its front. I wore it as much as possible, maybe because I equated it with my father's Swiss Army knife that I coveted. I slept in it, burrowed away in a cramped forward berth. I probably even got my hair cut in it—the signature crew cut my father administered with clippers and buzzers. (Dad also used to summon me home to dinner by blowing on a conch shell Hawaiian-style, and I'd come running, likely in those same khakis—the knee patches muddled and grass-stained.)

I've never seen another sweater like it. I'm still looking for a similar one—an attempt to embrace my sailing roots, I suppose—even though long ago I lost the Swiss Army knife that my father bequeathed to me.

When I was a commercial fisherman, I lived in codfish-bloodied jeans, a hand-me-down blue-plaid flannel shirt, a pair of canvas sneakers bought at Kmart for \$3, a royal-blue oil-splattered down vest with rusty snaps that I found at a thrift store and, on trips offshore, rubber deck boots and orange Grundéns oilskins—the true uniform of the trade. Those too bore blood flecks, scrapes and raggedy cuffs.

When my mom got gussied up before a night out, she said she was putting on her “glad rags.” I feel the same way when I put on my sailing shirts. I'm getting ready to party on the water with friends.

Clothes are mere objects, I realize, and yet they're companions of a sort too—crewmates that have embraced me on sails

spanning from the sublime to the scary.

Being a rag sailor binds me, as it does all of us who sail, to sailors from St. Brendan and Columbus to Cook and Melville. I wonder: Did they too forge bonds with their attire?

Henry David Thoreau appreciated the importance of old clothes. In a journal entry from 1858, he writes: “Dec. 26. Call at a farmer's this Sunday afternoon. I surprise the well-to-do masters of the house lounging in very ragged clothes ... I am glad to know ... the actual life of these New England men, wearing rags indoors which would disgrace a beggar...”

I still mourn the tattered khaki baseball cap emblazoned with “Salty”—the name of our beloved yellow Lab—which got swept overboard during an unintentional jibe. No amount of searching could retrieve it.

And I believe that while sailing clothes might not improve in looks as they age—if you fancy the spiffy and the spotless—they *do* grow richer in character and comfort.

I will continue to trot out my shirts and my current battered sailing hat the way I did my last pair of Top-Siders. They were blue ones that turned powdery slate with countless rinses in salt water and developed such huge holes in their sides that the last three toes on both my feet waggled free.

One day, these two old friends, derelict at last, will disintegrate. Or someone in our household, namely first mate Ellen, will deem them too disreputable for wear even on the water, and I will consign them to the deep to mingle with the remains of my long-lost cap. 🌊

Sun-faded, salt-stained and still in rotation—these old shirts have logged serious miles aboard the author's catboat, *Finn*.

A woman with blonde hair is seen from behind, lying on a large white inflatable cushion on the deck of a boat. She is holding a white cup and looking out at the ocean. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and blue, indicating sunset or sunrise. In the distance, there are silhouettes of islands. A black mast with a silver base is visible on the right side of the frame.

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Boat Life

From community building in remote anchorages to carving out space for self-care, this cruising mom chooses presence and purpose to transform life aboard—and beyond.

BY ASHLEY BURKE

A year before we became liveaboard cruisers, another family came through town and took us on a daysail. It was the first time our whole family was on a sailboat together. We were hooked. The encounter took us from “we might do this whole live on a boat” thing to “heck yeah, let’s go.”

We thanked them for taking the time. They said that as payback, we could look them up when we started cruising. “Life out here requires a lot of intentionality,” they said. “You have to work hard at building the connections.”

Nearly three years later, two of them on the water, that conversation sticks with me. The word “intentional” might as well be tattooed on my arm. I’m a cruising mother of two. I am an expert at ferreting out other “kid boats” to make play dates. I’m intentional in finding relationships for all of us. Without it, this life would still be incredible but missing the kind of vibrancy that comes only with sharing joyful experiences.

A few months ago in the Exumas, we were eager to escape the crowded anchorages and head south to the rugged beauty of the Ragged Islands, but we were also a little hesitant to go it alone. I posted in chat groups, updated our location on the noforeignland site, and started polling nearby kid boats: “Who’s up for an adventure?”

To my delight, three other boats were in. What followed were two epic weeks of exploring together, capped off



ANCHORED by INTENTION

by a beach bonfire I’ll never forget. Freshly caught lobster grilled over open flames and devoured with bare hands, a ragtag group of kids and adults laughing, sharing stories, and talking about our hopes for the season ahead. That night was pure magic. And it happened because I had made the effort to connect, to gather and to go together.

Over time, my partner and I have become intentional in so much else too. We are educating our children by using the environment we are living in. We are not glossing over our experiences as just some fun. This adventure is the richest education they’ll ever receive, but only if we are intentional about it.

We’re also intentional about self-care, even when—especially

when—it’s inconvenient or feels selfish. Living in a small space with two kids means there’s no such thing as easily tapping out of togetherness. But over time, my partner and I have learned to recognize the signs in each other: the shorter fuse, the tight shoulders, the quiet resentment that creeps in when one of us has gone too long without a break.

For me, that break often looks like running. I get up early and slip out into the quiet streets of whatever town or island we’re anchored near. Some mornings, I’m back in a half-hour, just in time for the day’s chaos to begin. Other times, I stretch it longer, soaking up the space and stillness that I don’t always get on the boat.

At first, I felt guilty coming back to find my partner juggling

breakfast and the morning routine. But he reminded me—and helped me believe—that the version of me who returns after those solo miles is closer to my best self. That time isn’t selfish; it’s necessary.

We’ve come to see these moments not as indulgences, but as maintenance. Just as essential as caring for our boat itself. On a journey like this, your emotional reserves are part of your tool kit. And if we’re not caring for ourselves, we can’t fully show up for each other.

Last, but by no means least, we are intentional about how we live on a floating piece of fiberglass. We are intentional about safety, about maintenance and about monitoring weather.

I now see intentionality as a critical part of all facets of our life. What started as a mindset for making cruising work has slowly become something more foundational. That same intentionality has crept into how we raise our kids, how we treat each other as partners, and how we simply exist in the world. It’s not just the key to thriving out here. It’s also the key to building a life anywhere that feels true.

And it doesn’t take much to start down this route. Put one intentional effort into practice today, and build on it for the future.

We’ll see you out there. 🌟

Ashley Burke is a coach and full-time liveaboard cruiser raising two kids aboard Dawn Treader. She shares reflections on intentional living at sea at beyondthebreak.substack.com.

A beach bonfire in the Ragged Islands brought together kid boats and kindred spirits—lobster, laughter and lasting memories included.



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On Watch

When prepping a boat for sea, knowing what not to do can matter more than doing everything you imagine you might need.

BY LIN PARDEY



The TYRANNY of the WORK LIST

Gusting winds drive clouds of spray right across the bay. Deluges of rain blast across the long jetty that leads past the workshop and out to *Sahula's* berth. I watch through my office window as the boat surges against its mooring lines. Tropical Storm Tam has moved south to cover our part of New Zealand and is now officially a cyclone, one that is forecast to linger for another two or three days.

I am making little progress on the article I am trying to write. Yes, the window-shaking gusts of wind are a distraction. But the real culprit? A sheet of paper titled "*Sahula's* Work List." It lies right next to my computer.

It has been 16 months since we last made an ocean passage, south from a season in New Caledonia to my home base in New Zealand. Earlier this year, we decided to set sail and cross the Tasman Sea. Our goal: a leisurely meander through the islands and waterways of Australia's Great Barrier Reef. Now we are just five weeks away from our planned departure, and *Sahula's* work list still has 27 items on it. Most of them require relatively calm weather.

Yesterday, I printed out a copy and showed it to my partner, David. "Here's what I need to get done before we set sail," I told him.

"Need to or want to?" he queried.

His words echo through my mind as I try to work on an

article about one of the yachts that my husband, Larry, and I delivered to finance our early cruising days.

Back then, much of the cruising fleet was made up of smaller boats sailed by cruisers who looked for ways to earn as they wandered. Thus, there was a lot of competition for delivery jobs. When the owner of a big

US-flagged ketch put the word out in Mallorca, Spain, that he needed someone to sail his boat back to New Orleans, a half-dozen cruisers wanted the job. The owner asked for a fixed price quote, one that would include the time and expenses of getting the boat seaworthy enough to set sail after having been sitting unused and

neglected for two years.

We really wanted the job. Our cruising kitty was getting low, and we welcomed the chance for an affordable visit to friends and family back home. We worked hard to come up with a competitive bid. We did a careful survey of the boat. The potential work list kept expanding: Haul the boat to remove a 2-inch mat of barnacles and growth, renew the upper shrouds that had broken strands just above the lower swages, repair two of the three bilge pumps, create a temporary whisker pole (the original had been lost in a blow). There was almost a whole page filled with faulty electrical items. The engine needed attention. By the time we sat down to work out our quote, the list was three pages long.

"OK, let's be logical," Larry said. "We need to ensure that the boat stays afloat, the water stays out of the boat, the mast stays up, the sails go up and down, the rudder works, the stove works, and we can get fresh water out of the water tanks. Everything else is either a convenience or a luxury."

Then Larry began circling the items that fell into his "essential" category. With his cut-back list, we figured it would take us about 15 days to get the boat underway, and 65 days to make the passage. The results: Our quote won. We got the boat to its owner within the time frame he'd requested. We had



Before the cyclone arrived, David had already gone up the mast to do an inspection and to secure new spreader end caps to protect the sails.



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to do some jury-rigging along the way. We did put up with some inconveniences. But a few months later, we returned to where *Seraffyn* lay waiting near Mallorca, with enough “freedom chips” to cruise onward for another year.

I often think of that delivery trip when I meet people who have had their cruising dreams delayed or missed weather windows or even abandoned their plans because of “the work list.” That is why, when Larry and I presented seminars called “Priorities for Successful Cruising,” we would end the day by saying: “Two weeks before your planned departure, sit down and write out a complete work list. Add every job you think you should do. Then, go out on deck and let the wind blow the list away. Rush below and write down the first six things you remember. Those are probably the most important ones. Get them done and go.”

That is the reality of caring for a boat, which is both your home and your adventure machine. There will always be things that could be done



across the 1,300-mile width of the Tasman Sea. Even with unfavorable winds, it is unlikely we will be at sea for more than 10 or 12 days. With these thoughts in mind, I become determined to get something useful done despite the stormy weather.

I pull up my electronic copy of the *Sahula* work list. I put a check mark next to the items I know are essential to having a safer voyage: Add nonslip and paint the deck; sort the port vang line block; set up and test the Iridium Go for at-sea weather forecasts.

An “M” (for “maybe”) goes next to a few other items that I really would like to get done if possible: Put trim over the new wiring in the loo, paint the compass, strip and varnish the companionway surrounds.

I reluctantly put an “X” next to items that I realize might never get off the work list: Make a cover for the panel next to the companionway; add trim at the far end of galley. The list ends up with only seven check-marked must-do items and five marked “M.”

As I am obviously not in the mood to write, I decide to brave the wind and rain, and head down toward the jetty. Though the wild weather precludes working on any of the check-marked jobs, there are two on the “M” list that I can do in the workshop.

As I begin cutting the first piece of foam which will ensure that my wineglasses and porcelain teacups will survive even the roughest sea, I think of David's words.

He was right. I was letting myself feel trapped by a work list cluttered with want-to's. Cutting back to the need-to's set me free. 🌟

After cruising more than 240,000 miles, US Sailing Hall of Fame inductee Lin Pardey is headed to sea again. Her latest book, Passages: Cape Horn and Beyond, encourages folks to go simple, go small, and go now.



to make the boat easier to use or prettier. Things that might make life afloat “better.”

The truth is, during all my voyaging life—which has included 100 or more ocean passages, included sailing with

Larry on two different boats, doing delivery trips and, more recently, sailing with my current partner, David, on *Sahula*—there was only one time when every item was crossed off the predeparture work list. That

was only when I agreed to sail with Larry on board 29-foot, engine-free *Taleisin* from the Atlantic to the Pacific around Cape Horn. The one condition I had: Everything had to be checked off the list when we made our attempt.

This was important to me for several reasons. It was highly likely we would face extreme weather. We might have to stay at sea for up to a month at a time. Our gear, our stamina would be severely tested. Crossing the very last item off the list just before we left Mar del Plata in Argentina and headed for The Horn helped ease the last concerns I had. (That last item? Put two changes of clothes plus a clean towel in vacuum-packed bags for emergencies.)

But the voyage I am now contemplating is not a bash around a great southern cape. It is the sixth time I will be sailing

Though my skills are limited, because of necessity I have become the resident woodworker on *Sahula* (top). David and I have been cruising together for nearly eight years (above), and I am still coming to terms with the complexity of his boat.



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SEPTEMBER 2025

Sails & Rigging

NEW SAILS, NEW LIFE

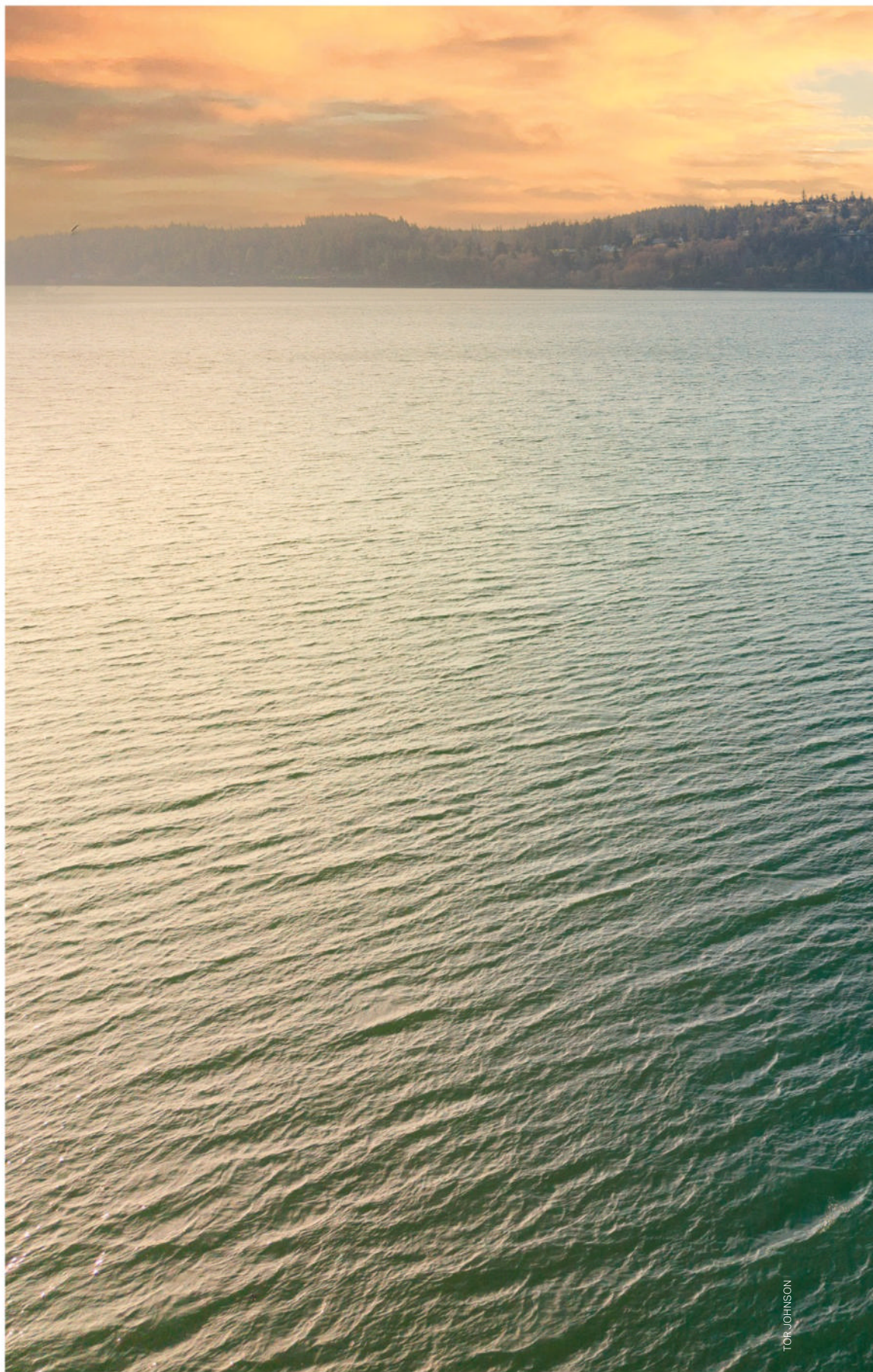
A veteran cruiser trades out tired Dacron for smart, modern sails—and gets a whole new sailing experience in return. By Tor Johnson

If sails are the engines of the sailboat, my engines were sputtering. After 13 years of use, including crossings of the Atlantic and Caribbean, my original Dacron factory sails had seen their day. Restitching and replacing the UV covers had helped, but the sun had eventually gotten to the cloth, and the wind had made them sag. Our in-mast furling mainsail presented particular problems. Bagged out in the wrong places, it bunched up when furling.

I tried all the tricks, like varying the boom height and the pressure on the outhaul while furling, but unless I furled it with some wind in the sail, it jammed in the mast and became so difficult to unfurl that I swore like a bosun.

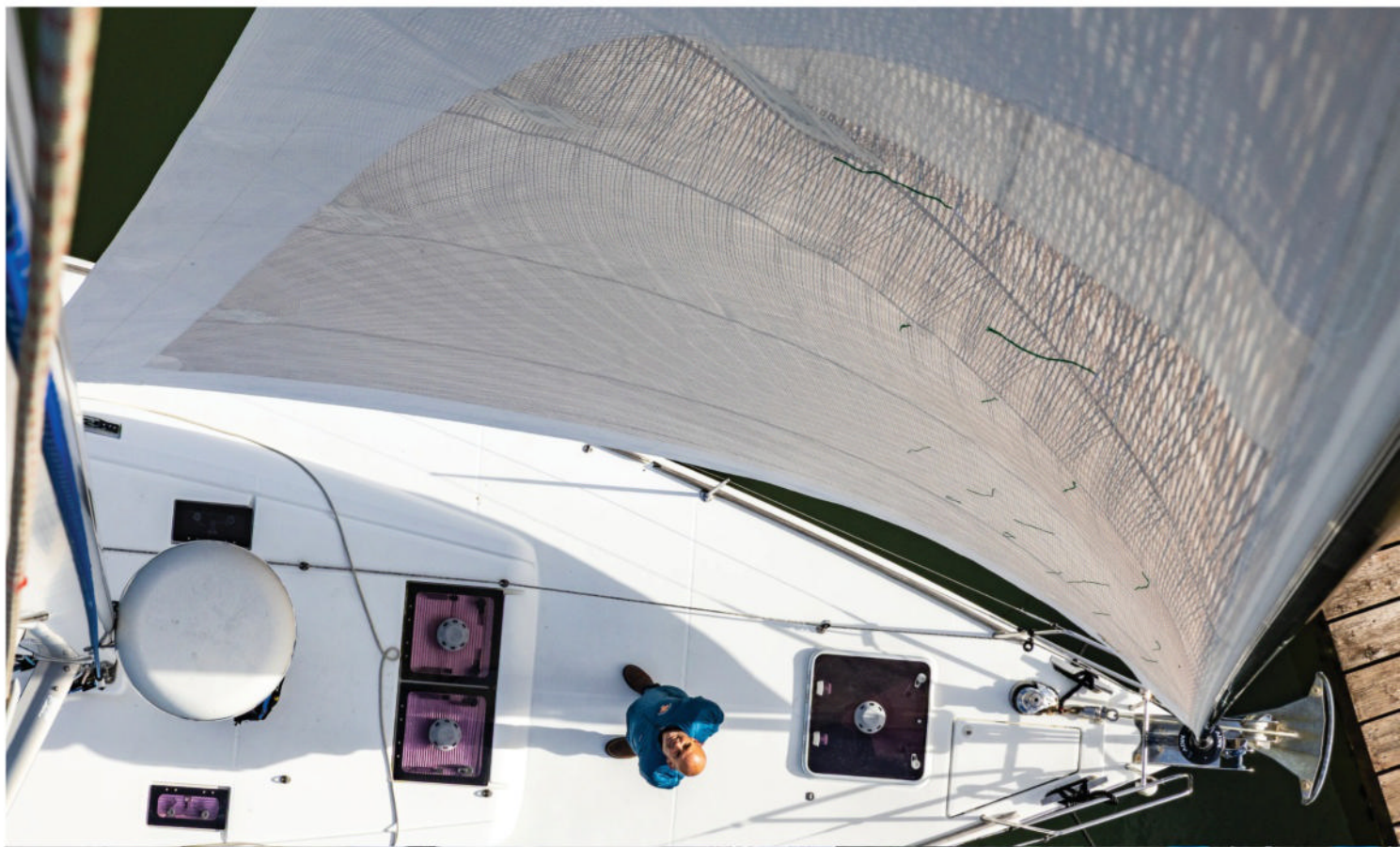
From my berth in La Conner, Washington, I sailed out Deception Pass, stopped at Bowman Bay to watch a spectacular sunset and even better sunrise, and then cruised down to Admiralty Inlet to see the crew at Port Townsend Sails. Globe-spanning sail trainer John Neal claims he's gotten as much as 100,000 miles from a single mainsail that Port Townsend Sails built for him, and it's fair to say that these women know their work. They pointed out some dry

Kāholo stretches its legs on Puget Sound, powered by a new set of offshore-ready sails.



TOR JOHNSON





Working with Doyle Sails' David Armitage, the author experienced the full process firsthand—from computer-modeled sail designs and offshore-ready materials to a meticulous on-site fitting and real-world trials in the breezy boat-testing waters of Puget Sound. The result was improved performance, greater confidence, and a smoother furl every time.







The bigger lofts—such as North, Doyle and Quantum—have their own manufacturing facilities to create composite, higher-end sails for racing and high-performance cruising. Sails are now designed on a computer, like most things, and the days of laying out everything on a table are pretty much a thing of the past. Composite sails are made on huge purpose-built tables, where load-bearing fibers are laid out along the load paths of the sail, radiating out from the corners.

Depending on the purpose of the sail, the composition will be different. For example,



With a sailor's eye and a designer's precision, Armitage makes final adjustments dockside, turning CAD renderings into a finely tuned cruising rig.

and brittle areas of sun damage on my sails. They patched them up as best they could for the season, but they gently recommended replacing them before any offshore passages.

I began to shop around for new sails. To say that the art of sail construction has changed over the years is an understatement. I learned that the cheapest sails are predictably built in the Far East, with consulting and sales done by American dealers such as Precision Sails. They tended to steer customers toward Dacron as a material, for its robust strength and lower cost. They do build sails with low-stretch composite cloths, but at twice the price, they sell less of them. I looked at some of the sails they'd made, and they seemed strong and perfectly serviceable—a go-to solution for budget cruisers.

racing sails, where rigidity and light weight are key, will be made largely with carbon fiber, whereas cruising sails might have a higher component of high-strength durable fibers such as Technora, which is similar to Kevlar. So a sail could be composed of an infinite variety of materials, with a higher density of those materials for bigger loads, less stretch and longer life. A UV- and abrasion-resistant scrim is usually added to protect the surface, and the sail is laminated under high heat and pressure.

With such a huge variety of materials and unlimited options for combining them, I found myself in an information overload. Then, out of the blue, I got a call from a guy named David Armitage, who was interested in buying a sistership to my boat, *Kāhola*, a Jeanneau Sun Odyssey 509. He wanted to know how the boat had held up to the open ocean. Having sailed *Kāhola* across from Portugal to Panama, as well as offshore in the Pacific



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A sailboat named 'SHAMBHALA' is shown on a calm body of water under a clear blue sky. A person is relaxing in a green hammock strung between the boat and a nearby structure. The boat's reflection is visible in the still water.

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Northwest, I was able to fill him in on a few common issues, although the boat has proved itself quite reliable.

As luck would have it, he also happened to be a sail designer at Doyle Sails. A New Zealander who came to the United States with the successful Kiwi bid for the America's Cup in San Diego, Armitage is still a keen racer. Like many Kiwis, he also happens to be a passionate cruising sailor. He lives aboard his fairly tricked-out Beneteau 473. And he had already done some preliminary sail designs for the Jeanneau 509.

We talked about the challenges and how to overcome them.

In-mast furling mains like mine present real challenges. They refuse to furl and set once the sail stretches out, and they have a less-than-optimal aerodynamic shape with a negative roach and cupped leeches. Unsurprisingly, many cruisers say they'd never go offshore with one.

As for myself, after numerous ocean crossings as a delivery captain using every sort of furling system, I've actually come to appreciate the furling main. Sail shape might not be ideal, but at 2 a.m., when I am the only one on deck and I suddenly need to reduce sail, I like the safety and convenience of a main that I can reef alone, easily and quickly, to the exact area I want, from the safety of the cockpit, even off the wind. Shaking out the reef is even easier—when it works.

Armitage suggested a laminate specifically designed for offshore cruising, using high-strength Technora threads with some carbon to help reduce stretch. Vertical battens would support the leech, giving the sail better shape. Although early efforts to add battens caused jamming in narrow mast openings, Armitage explained that low-profile batten pockets can now be laminated into the construction of a low-stretch and less-bulky sail material. With less friction, the sails roll more easily into narrow mast openings. The battens also allow the leech to twist off for better sail shape, and support a slightly positive rather than a negative roach along the trailing edge of the sail.

Doyle is not alone in this. Other major sailmakers, like North, which produces the vast majority of sails worldwide, are now adding battens to furling mains. Technology has improved and, like the furling jib, furling mains are now common, with many quality boatbuilders even supplying them as standard equipment.

Armitage also recommended vertical battens for a new 105 percent furling jib. He sent over some computer-generated sail designs, showing the shape of the sails from several angles and the load paths

along which fibers would be laid out. I decided to move forward with a new main and jib.

His designs then went to their manufacturing facility in New Zealand, where the sails were laminated. Finally, they were sent to their loft in Rhode Island, where the panels were joined and the detail work was done on areas such as the head, tack and clew.

Armitage seemed to have taken a personal interest in my project. Despite a busy racing schedule, he flew out from Rhode Island to Washington to fit my sails. I quickly saw that I'd added a real "sailor's sailor" to my crew.

He grew up outside Auckland, sailing Optimists as a kid up an estuary where they could sail only at high tide. Eventually, after the Kiwis won the America's Cup in San Diego, he stayed in the United States, designing sails—that is, when he isn't off racing competitive Grand Prix series aboard full-on racing yachts like TP52s.

I was curious about another of his roles: building sails and trimming aboard megayachts, where service-oriented Doyle has a substantial market share. As a trimmer, Armitage says, it is extremely stressful sailing, with massive carbon rigs and 2-inch-thick jib sheets loaded to tons of pressure. Walking around the deck with a remote control around his neck like a crane operator, he is constantly aware of what could happen if one of those sheets were to get loose during a tack and hit someone.

My sails looked slick when hoisted, but because of the higher tack point on an aftermarket Harken jib furler I'd added, we found that the sheeting angle wasn't quite right. This was, of course, no challenge for Armitage—just a simple adjustment compared with maintaining sail inventories for major racing campaigns. He had the sail recut and right back up in the air.

We took *Kāhola* out for trials in breezy conditions in Puget Sound. Watching a gust roil the water to windward, my first thought was to depower, and maybe even reef the main. After years of offshore sailing on the boat, I've become familiar with how it handles. But despite a slightly increased sail area, the boat stayed on its feet, sailing through with less heel than I'd anticipated.

I could feel a big change in *Kāhola*. The boat pointed higher and sailed faster, given the conditions, than it ever had. At the end of the day, both sails furled away, the main sliding into the mast with some resistance—but no swearing.

If sails are indeed the engines of a sailboat, I'd just repowered with some surprisingly smooth and efficient motors. ⚙️



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Maintenance

FAILURE IS NOT AN OPTION

If it's been a while since you checked your transmission's jacket clamp, then you probably have a few more things on the to-do list as well. By Steve D'Antonio

The internet is replete with guidance—some of it accurate—on the subject of auxiliary diesel engine maintenance and upkeep. There is, however, far less discussion on the subject of marine gears, otherwise known as transmissions.

Transmissions commonly run into problems too. For instance, the control cables. They're the traditional connection between the shift lever in the cockpit and the gear down

the jacket is allowed to move, then shift control will be lost (and possibly stuck in gear).

The connection of the core to the shift lever must rely on proprietary parts from the cable manufacturer, including proper jaws, clevis and split pins. Don't use common nuts and bolts. Check the interfacing parts for wear, a task that requires disassembly. Ensure that cable-end locknuts are tight. Make certain the cable is adjusted properly so that

leaking. Hydraulic gear coolers, because the pressure is much higher, will leak oil into cooling water initially. Coolers used on hydraulic gears can become clogged because they rely on small-diameter tube bundles.

Damper plates, also called torsional couplings, connect the engine's flywheel, or output, to the gear's input shaft. This system uses springs or a flexible, rubber-like insert to absorb shock when shifting. If the springs break, or if the flexible material cracks or

with metal or moisture.

Hydraulic transmissions usually call for replacement every 500 to 1,000 hours, which is an eternity for most sailing vessels. It's either the number of hours or every six to 12 months, whichever comes first.

Make certain you use the correct lubricant for your gear. Some systems require straight weight (not multiweight) motor oil, while others use automatic-transmission fluid. Also check the level correctly. Most



in the engine compartment. This system is a telegraph of sorts. Pushing it forward or aft mimics the same movement on the gear's own shift lever.

The cable, which is made up of a steel core and a steel wire jacket covered in plastic, is fairly reliable unless it gets wet. Then it can rust and seize. The jacket can also melt if it comes into contact with a dry exhaust component. More likely failures involve various ways that the cable jacket may be immobilized and how the core is attached at each end.

The jacket clamp is critical. If it's a gate style, then it should be safety-wired into place. If it's a saddle, then it should be secured with self-locking or double nuts. If it loosens and



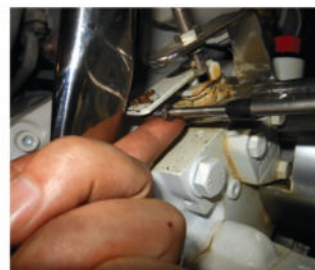
when it is in gear, the lever is fully engaged. Also be sure you know how to engage the lever manually if necessary.

For the coolers, be aware that there are two types of marine gears: mechanical and hydraulic. Up to about 100 hp, most engines are mated to a mechanical gear. Larger engines often utilize hydraulic gears.

Many, but not all, of the mechanical gears use an oil cooler that is bolted to the gear housing. It removes heat through the case wall without ever coming into contact with the oil.

Hydraulic transmissions utilize a traditional heat exchanger with oil on one side and seawater on the other side.

Coolers used on both types of gears are prone to corrosion and



disintegrates, you might lose all propulsion, or it simply might get very noisy. (Some plates are fail-safe; they will maintain contact but lose all damping ability.)

If you notice a change in noise when shifting, or if you notice rubber or metal fragments under the after end of the engine, it might be an indication of a failing damper plate. Some bell housings (the cover that surrounds the damper plate) have ports that will allow for limited inspection without disassembly.

Finally, check your marine gear's oil. This lubricant isn't subject to the same sort of combustion contamination and heat degradation as engine crankcase oil, but it does wear out or shear, losing viscosity. It can also become contaminated



hydraulic gears call for checking the level while running warm at idle and in neutral. By contrast, the mechanical gear oil level is checked at rest. Follow your manufacturer's instructions.

Because the sump capacity is usually comparatively small, the cost of changing this oil annually is also small and offers a good return on investment. Ideally, have the oil analyzed as well. If your gear is hydraulic, it may have a filter (internal or external), and it probably has a suction screen. Remember to change or clean these too. ⚙️

Steve D'Antonio offers services for boat owners and buyers through Steve D'Antonio Marine Consulting (stevedmarineconsulting.com).

Left to right: Check your gear oil regularly, and use the correct type and grade. Remember to change or clean filters and suction screens as well. Examine shift-cable parts for wear, and replace only with approved components. When serviced properly, mechanical marine gears offer reliable performance.



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**Boathandling****THREADING THE NEEDLE**

When space is tight and eyes are on you, smart boathandling—and a little humility—can go a long way. By Gary Jobson

At the end of a long pier at SUNY Maritime College in New York are two clusters of piles used to protect the *Empire State IV* training vessel. The pier was adjacent to the swift tidal currents



of the East River, and before each day's practice, I would make a point of sailing in a figure eight around the pilings. This simple exercise improved my boathandling skills in close quarters.

It doesn't matter whether I'm someplace like that, daysailing through a mooring field, closing in near a marina, or lining up on a crowded starting line for a race. The goal is to navigate safely in close quarters

while enjoying the sights.

I enjoy waving to mariners on other boats and to people on the dock. Everyone waves back. People are friendly on the water. But you need to be careful: The most important

On watch and alert—safe boathandling begins with awareness and control, especially in tight quarters.



A fleet sails in close formation. Mastering sail trim, speed and communication is essential when space gets tight.

Don't be shy with the crew. Ask everyone to stay low so that there is adequate visibility for the person at the helm. Avoid loud chatter, which will allow everyone to concentrate on assigned duties. Turn the rudder slowly so that the boat keeps momentum. This is important when approaching a dock or a mooring buoy.

I find that a boat is easier to steer when there is a slight lee-ward heel. The position of the crew's weight is important.

Keep a lookout for other boats or objects. When hailing a warning to the rest of the crew in the cockpit, be sure to turn toward them so that you will be heard. Establishing eye contact helps communications.

Things can go horribly wrong in close quarters. I watched a horrifying video recently of a small cruising

factor in this type of sailing is to control your boat's speed. If the boat is stopped, there is no maneuverability.

There are three important factors when handling a boat: rudder position, sail trim and

weight balance. Make sure your sheets are ready for trimming. Have the lines in hand, not cleated. Check that the sheets are coiled neatly so that they can be eased or trimmed at a moment's notice.

The helmsman should constantly communicate the next maneuver to the crew. Crews do not like surprises, like a sudden jibe where the boom flies across the deck or a fast turn that puts everyone off balance.

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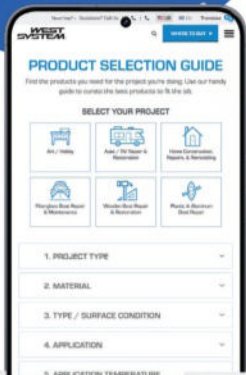
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boat struggling to stay clear of a pier extending out into the Pacific Ocean. The helmsman kept heading up to avoid hitting the pier. The action put the boat in irons with no steerage at all. Eventually, the boat smashed into the pier and broke its mast.

The solution for this unfortunate sailor should have been to head down, trim the sails and accelerate. Just 2 or 3 knots of speed would have made the difference, allowing the boat to tack out of harm's way.

If the boat is slow, head down to gain speed. Your speed will increase in just one boatlength. A sailboat will accelerate quickly when you bear off if you ease the sails out. Avoid overtrimming the sails. If you head up, trim the sails in as you turn toward the wind. The trimming action on the mainsail will help the boat turn up, allowing you to use less rudder. A fast turn forces the rudder to drag and slow the boat.

If another boat is sailing

toward you or in close proximity, give a hail so that they hear you. If you must make a maneuver, then make a deliberate course change of at least 15 degrees so that the other crew will see your action. The important thing is to avoid any chance of a collision. Keeping the VHF radio tuned to Channel 16 is also a good practice.

Continuously take mental bearings with your surroundings. Observe the object you are heading for, and use that line of sight with a distant object. The change in bearing between the near and far objects will help you be sure that you are sailing the correct course.

Understanding the direction the wind is coming from is essential in close quarters. Use every available source. My favorite wind indicator is the masthead fly. I glance at the top of the mast frequently to see the direction of the wind. You can also observe the masthead wind indicators of other boats in the harbor, as well as

flags onshore and pennants flying from shrouds or from the mastheads of other boats. Best of all, you can see the sail trim and course that other boats are steering in the vicinity—even if the enclosed waters make it hard to see wind ripples on the water.

Be careful not to sail too fast. Your hull will make waves, which annoys sailors at dockside or anchor. I find it best to pass to leeward of moored or anchored boats to avoid fouling the anchor line. This technique also ensures that your mast will not get entangled with another rig. Try to maneuver in open waters. Most boats can make a comfortable turn in one to two boatlengths. In particularly tight quarters, it is acceptable to have the engine running in case you need it.

You can practice maneuvers using a single buoy as a reference point. Tack and jibe around the buoy to get a feeling about the distance it takes to bear off or luff up. Experiment

with fast and slow turns to get a better feel for your boat. This is what helped me with the two piling clusters off the Maritime College pier.

A word of caution: Don't be a showoff. I recall a 12-Metre skipper who was inspired to entertain a wedding party taking pictures on a floating dock. The skipper misjudged the speed of the boat as he was attempting to land. He hit the dock at about 4 knots. Luckily, no one went into the water, but the bride and groom looked horrified.

Too many of us have done similar things. When I was about 17 years old and skippering a speedy E Scow, I decided to show off by flying into the harbor at about 20 knots. At the last second, I rounded the boat hard into the wind. The boat came to a stop, and the sailors watching my antics erupted in applause. The only person not clapping was the boat's owner. His comment a few minutes later was, "Son, that wasn't cool." ❄

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Boat Ownership

SELLING THE DREAM

From staging and pricing to letting go, here's how to prep your boat—and yourself—for what's next. By Marissa Neely

There's an old saying among sailors: "The two happiest days in a boat owner's life are the day they buy their boat and the day they sell it." While my husband, Chris, and I can confirm the unbri-dled joy of buying our beloved 1979 Cheoy Lee 41, *Avocet*, we're not quite ready to test the second half of that theory. After years of pouring sweat, love and bottom paint into her, we've promised to keep her for the long haul.

That said, we've been crew on the emotional roller coaster of friends preparing to sell their boats. Trust me: It's a ride with plenty of ups, downs and the occasional splash of regret.

To demystify the process and help sailors prepare for what can feel like the nautical equivalent of sending your child off to college, I turned to two experts: yacht broker and sailor Josh Hannigan, as well as our pal and long-range cruiser Peter Metcalfe. They shared their wisdom, and a healthy dose of reality, on how to sell your boat while (mostly) keeping your sanity.

THE RIGHT TIMING

Let's rip off the bandage: The right time is now. "If you're ready to let go, just do it," Hannigan says. "Boats aren't like real estate. They're not investments that appreciate. Every day your boat isn't on the market is a day the perfect buyer isn't seeing it."

Hannigan is more than a longtime yacht broker. He's also a captain involved with yacht

surveying, sailing instruction, and providing specialized services for watermaker systems and custom sails. He offers insights as an active sailor, instructor and liveaboard boat owner. He's also an associate surveyor with the Society of Accredited Marine Surveyors and an instructor with NauticEd, making him a trusted adviser on boat ownership, maintenance and sales.

For Hannigan, boats are less

like houses and more like relationships: There's someone out there who will love your boat just as much as you do. But timing, he says, is everything: "The right buyer might be waiting for a promotion, selling their property or finally retiring. If your boat is out there when they're looking—and it's the best option—it's game on."

The trick, as with most relationships, is patience. Boats can take time to sell, and the

seasons of the sailing world often dictate when interest peaks. But Hannigan says a well-prepared boat can sell at any time of year, provided it's priced competitively and presented at its best.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

If you're picturing buyers strolling onto your boat and falling in love at first sight, you'd better make sure it's worth swooning over.



Yacht broker Josh Hannigan (right) shares practical advice from years afloat. Peter Metcalfe captured a final shot of *Kessel* (opposite) before handing over the keys.

COURTESY MARISSA NEELY

“Think of it like staging a home,” says Metcalfe, who is in the process of selling his boat, the 38-foot Hans Christian *Kessel*, after completing a singlehanded voyage across the Pacific. “A clean, fresh-smelling boat with shiny brightwork makes it easy for buyers to imagine themselves living their dream on board.”

To prepare *Kessel*, Metcalfe embarked on a top-to-bottom makeover. “I revarnished the cabin sole, repainted the interior, refinished the teak, and even spruced up the deck paint. It was a labor of love—and a little heartbreak—but it made all the difference.”

Hannigan agrees, but with a sharper edge: “Every scratch, chip and stain is a negotiation chip that you don’t want to hand over. Fix it now, or be

prepared to lose money later.”

His advice? Paint the bilge, tighten the hose clamps, and make the engine shine like you’re prepping it for a yacht show. “Every small detail adds up to one big impression: This boat is cared for,” he says. “Buyers can sniff out neglect faster than you can say ‘osmosis blister.’”

KEEP IT FUNCTIONAL

Boats are also like pets: They don’t do well sitting idle. Hannigan says systems left untouched for months will almost certainly revolt when you need them most. “Flush the heads, check the furlers, and make sure your wind instruments actually display wind,” he says. “Buyers will forgive quirks, but they won’t forgive neglect.”

Metcalfe adds that honesty goes a long way: “If you can’t fix every issue, be upfront about it. Disclosing known problems shows you know your boat and aren’t trying to pull a fast one. Buyers appreciate transparency, and it builds trust.”

I remember when we were buying *Avocet*. She wasn’t neglected, but she was definitely left untouched for months because the seller was in poor health. Luckily, we had a survey to support our concerns and could whittle the price down to a number that reflected the state she was in.

THE RIGHT PRICE

Hannigan’s pricing philosophy is refreshingly straightforward:

Price your boat fairly based on its condition and market comps.

“Set a no-nonsense price that reflects a boat in good working order,” he says. “If everything works, buyers will pay for their preferences rather than penalizing you for deferred maintenance.”

THE BROKER

Selling privately can save you brokerage fees, but the process is not for everyone. Hannigan recommends asking, “Do I have the time, patience and knowledge to handle this myself?”

A broker can take care of marketing, showings and paperwork, making the pro-

Boats aren’t like real estate. They’re not investments that appreciate. Every day your boat isn’t on the market is a day the perfect buyer isn’t seeing it.

cess smoother—especially if you’re emotionally attached to your boat. (And let’s face it, who isn’t?)

When choosing a broker, Metcalfe suggests going with your gut. Ask yourself: Would I buy a boat from this person? “If the answer is no, keep looking,” he says. “A good broker should be approachable, knowledgeable and genuinely interested in finding the right buyer for your boat, not just making a quick sale.”

PATIENCE IS A VIRTUE

Selling a boat takes time. Hannigan likens it to getting out of a gang: “It’s not going to be easy, and it’s not going to be quick.”

When it came to buying a boat, Chris and I took a whole year and put in two offers on two boats before *Avocet* fell into our laps. It took time, heartbreak and research to find the right boat. I can only imagine how *Avocet*’s sellers felt with the boat sitting on their hands for twice that amount of time.

Budget for the time it takes to sell your boat and for the expenses involved in keeping it in show-ready condition. Whether it’s in a slip or dry storage, a well-maintained boat is far more likely to attract buyers than one that looks like it’s been left to fend for itself.

MOVING ON

For Metcalfe, selling *Kessel* is bittersweet. “This boat carried me through some of my toughest times, but life has seasons. It’s time for me to move on.”

He expects tears when he hands over the keys, but also joy, knowing that the boat he loved is ready for its next adventure. We can’t wait to buddy-boat with him again someday. We are confident he will be on the buyer’s side of things soon.

What he’s going through right now, though, is what so many sailors endure. It’s more than a transaction. It’s a rite of passage. Whether your boat has been a faithful partner, a dream realized or a character-building challenge, preparing it for sale is your chance to honor its story while helping a new owner begin theirs.

So, give it your best. Varnish the teak, clean the bilge, and light a candle in the galley for good measure. And when the right buyer comes along, hand over the keys with a smile, a handshake and maybe a little tear.

After all, it’s not just a boat—it’s a piece of your life, setting sail for a new horizon. ⚓





Buying & Selling

BUYERS BEWARE

“Turnkey boat,” “provision and go” and “ready to cruise” all sound ideal, but reality is complicated—and skipping your due diligence can cost you dearly.

By Behan Gifford

Here’s a hopeful cruiser sentiment: “I don’t want a project boat; I want one that’s ready to go.”

It’s a fair wish. Who wouldn’t want to skip the difficult refit and head off over the horizon? But a truly turnkey used cruising boat is more myth than reality.

We’ve seen dreamers who buy budget-friendly project boats get overwhelmed with the unexpected effort or cost and never leave the dock. Similarly doomed are the Pollyannas who buy that “ready to go” boat, only to borrow from their cruising kitty to correct myriad problems.

These are not cautionary tales. They’re more typical than not. Buying a cruising boat can be one of the biggest purchases in a lifetime, but unlike buying a house or a car, the search can be slower, messier and more emotional. Getting it wrong can cost thousands of dollars and multiple cruising seasons.

Let’s talk about how to get this purchase right.

THE RIGHT BOAT

Spoiler: There is no “best” boat for cruising. There isn’t even a “correct” set of features. It’s easy to get trapped by dogma, and much conventional wisdom is dated when it comes to what makes a bluewater boat. Just ask an AI bot, which feeds on outdated content and parrots a misleading response. Eventually, it will learn that a full or modified keel and heavy displacement hulls are not essential features for an offshore cruising vessel.

Retaining old-school biases limits the inventory of candidate boats. Modern build techniques and design innovations give better sailing performance, more living and cockpit space, and an easier path to insurance. Helping people release biases around legacy bluewater design is a theme that we visit repeatedly in our coaching service.

What’s real is the boat that’s right for a particular buyer. To find that sweet spot of features, real feel and budget, start by

envisioning cruising goals. Is the plan coastal or regional, such as the Caribbean, the Mediterranean or Mexico? Or are you thinking about crossing oceans and doing some multiregional cruising? Safety offshore has more to do with the sailor’s choices while cruising than with the make of boat.

Bob and Kim Stephens, currently cruising in the South Pacific aboard their Stevens 47, *Meraviglia*, say there are often mismatches between boats and sailors. They underscore that not all buyers are created equal: A buyer who knows boats, has owned boats, and has experience with boats is a significantly different buyer than one who is new to boating. Knowing yourself, including your skillset and risk tolerance, is as important as knowing your boat in determining the outcome.

THE ALL-IN BUDGET

To work out whether a boat fits in your budget, start with a purchase figure, then add a general rule to estimate the additional refit budget.

Oh, wait—there is no general rule for refit cost. Every boat is different, and oversimplification will gloss over the likely budget necessary to make a cruising boat safe, reliable and comfortable.

Instead, consider the total cost to purchase and equip a boat for your intentions. We call this the all-in budget: the total investment needed to purchase and prepare the boat for use. It includes purchasing costs beyond the negotiated price, such as survey and haulout, along with transaction fees, taxes, maybe delivery to another location, and the first year’s insurance.

The refit is fixing known and surprise faults, adding missing gear, and replacing unsuitable or aged-out gear. Costs can add up, and new cruisers can hemorrhage money to reach departure day. Before committing to any boat, thoroughly assess its

There is no “best” boat for cruising. It’s easy to get trapped by dogma, and much conventional wisdom is dated when it comes to what makes a bluewater boat.

condition and gear to estimate refit costs. We use a spreadsheet template with fields for available budget, all purchase costs, and refit cost estimates broken down in categories, such as anchor gear, energy systems and rigging.

If the all-in costs exceed the budget ceiling, then it’s time to negotiate a lower price,

Matt Rabdau sits at the helm of the Leopard 38 *Chinook* (opposite), downsized from his and his wife’s original dream boat to stay on budget and upgrade smartly for life under sail.

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recalibrate to a different boat, or plant a money tree.

Going through this process to vet a boat can be liberating or frustrating. Make sure the heartstrings tugging over the quality workmanship don't overshadow the voice mumbling about the rigging age, lack of safety, and energy systems

sales or specific regions, such as North America, Australia or Europe.

A boat search doesn't have to be limited to where you want to start cruising. Identical boats are likely to be priced differently depending on whether they're in Florida, Maryland or Connecticut. It might make

is the North American buyer who dreams of cruising the Caribbean. Purchasing to start on the East Coast feels easier and safer than buying a boat in Grenada. But to reach Grenada, the Florida sailor will go more than 1,000 nautical miles against prevailing conditions on the so-called Thorny Path.

more buffer in their funds. Ultimately, they acquired a Leopard 38.

"We were glad that we shifted from a 44-foot boat to a 38-foot boat, as the money we did not spend was available to make other repairs, including replacing both fuel tanks, the front windows, all four cabin



meant for being tied to a dock rather than off the grid.

FINDING A BOAT

Buyers often ask us where they should look. Online listings are a typical choice, and there are dozens of sites to browse. We track around 30 in our lists. A few sites list only brokered boats; others focus on private

sense to cast a wider net and factor in the cost of relocation after purchase, especially if you're not finding candidate boats in your local search area.

Consider starting where the better-fit boat is, even if it's not your originally planned location. Many buyers feel more comfortable purchasing a boat they can drive to. One common use case

One Seattle-area couple we supported as coaches, Matt and Colette Rabdau, began their search focused on Leopard 44 catamarans. Colette made several trips to Florida, where, despite having watched video walk-throughs, she found gaps that drove up refit costs. They scaled back to smaller models with lower price points to allow

windows and portlights," they told us via email. They also did some upgrades, adding Starlink, a higher-output alternator, a LiFePo4 bank and a watermaker.

Now two years into cruising the United States and Bahamas aboard *Chinook*, they say it was the right call to recalibrate. "If we had purchased the 44

Jamie Gifford of Sailing *Totem* and Suky Cannon give *Shambala's* gooseneck a close look while evaluating the boat for purchase.

[dream boat],” they write, “we would not have had the necessary funds for the upgrades and repairs that would likely have come up for other boats as well.”

DIGGING INTO LISTINGS

It’s tempting to treat a boat’s equipment list in binary fashion: Gear is either there or it isn’t. To avoid surprise expenses after a transaction, buyers should get a deeper understanding of each item’s condition.

Many listings have checkbox lists instead of details. “Depth sounder” seems great, but what kind is it? How old? Similarly, an “autopilot” might be a bungee cord and a centered wheel. Maybe the listing says: “new batteries, 2019.” Well, are they lead acid or lithium? If they’re lead acid, they’re likely near their end of life—not exactly new or a selling point.

Look carefully at photographs. Do the pictures show

Many listings have checkbox lists instead of details. “Depth sounder” seems great, but what kind is it? How old? Similarly, an “autopilot” might be a bungee cord and a centered wheel.

a pristinely painted engine? Overspray on parts not meant to be painted, such as formed hoses, suggests new paint on a not-new engine. Is this paint covering rust and corrosion from poor maintenance? And is the mainsail fully covered in those dockside images, or is the leech exposed and baking in the sun? How rusty is the anchor chain?

Everything on a boat has a lifespan. As the buyer, you want to know where each item is on that timeline. This depends on the original quality of the item, how well it was installed, and how well it was maintained.

Lifespan applies to nearly

everything, not just the electronics. Our boat, the Stevens 47 *Totem*, is 43 years old. It’s been under our ownership since 2007, and we’re on the third standing rigging, the second engine, the third life raft, the third watermaker—not to mention bulkhead repairs, tank replacements and more.

Buyers need detailed knowledge, or solid guidance, to assess each component’s stage of life. When a listing is thin, seek information from the seller or their representative. Sometimes, lifespan will be called out for them, such as when an insurance underwriter refuses to bind a policy until an aging rig is replaced.

Digging into listings also means researching online history. One of our coaching clients went through social media posts by the seller of a boat they were considering. It turned out that the boat had been through a hurricane and sustained meaningful damage—so much so that the insurance company had totaled the boat. This information was not disclosed in the listing. They asked pointed questions of the broker. Screenshots supported their case after the seller deleted the content online. The state in which the boat was listed may not have required disclosure, but the code of ethics for professional yachtbroker associations does—as does a basic moral compass.

Again, the goal is to understand the boat’s all-in cost. This cannot be done by applying a general figure or a percentage calculation. It is unique to every boat.

WORKING WITH A BROKER

A good broker is a valuable asset during the purchase process. The broker provides market insight and access to the back-end data for some online listings to help inform your offer.

The broker also acts as a buffer in negotiations with the seller and their broker. Owners are often emotionally attached

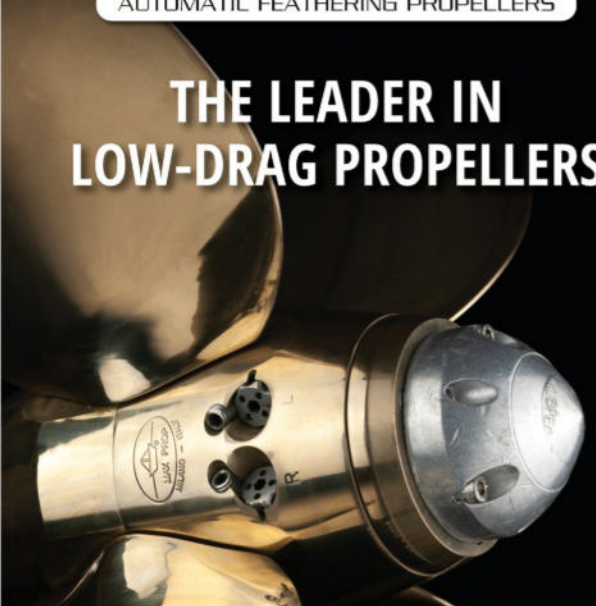
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Why doesn't every buyer have a broker? It requires a reasonable budget to make the commission. This is often around the \$150,000 mark. Not all brokers want to be a buyer's representative. It's not as lucrative. Their commission is paid by the seller.

It's also important to know what brokers don't do. Don't expect them to scour listings to find that dream boat for you. That responsibility lies with the buyer, although a good broker will assist the process. And, of course, they will know what their own brokerage has available.

Working with a buyer's broker isn't always a slam dunk. The *Chinook* crew's Seattle-based broker did not advise

them effectively about Florida taxation, an omission that cost them a considerable sum.

RESALE VALUE

Avoid problems later by keeping resale in mind before you purchase. Consider demand: Is the make or model a name that people will type into search engines? Does the boat have an

Buy with your head as much as your heart. A particular boat might pull your heartstrings, but do the math on probable cost to make it ready for your dreams, and learn as much as possible about what you're getting into.

owners group? Resale value has geographic implications too. Designs revered in one region are undesirable in others.

An unusual boat—your “unicorn”—might be harder to sell later. The cost to carry a

boat for sale, from dock fees to insurance, can get expensive. Boats often sit on the market for months.

Also important: Refit expenditure does not add dollar-for-dollar to resale value. A given make and model tends to have a market value. It will have some regional variation. It will sell faster or slower based on how well it is equipped or maintained. But \$150,000 put into a \$100,000 boat does not make it worth \$250,000.

Newer cruisers aboard their Beneteau, *Paradise II*, Chris and Shiela say that physically getting onto as many boats as they could was an invaluable part of the process. “Any boat,” Chris says. “Boats I could afford with change from the couch, and boats I couldn't afford even if I sold both kidneys. Shiela suspected that she would not have been happy with a linear galley, and I knew I wouldn't be happy with anything in the way from the forward cabin to the companionway stairs.”

Those preferences knocked out lots of designs, but they helped to identify which boats they could afford and which of those retained market value.

WHEN TO PULL THE TRIGGER

Analysis paralysis is real. How do you break that cycle and commit to a boat?

Internalize the idea that there is no ready-to-go boat, and then move ahead with due diligence and support. A mentor can help you ask the right questions, and can sometimes answer them too.

Most important, make sure you buy with your head as much as your heart. A particular boat might pull your heartstrings, but do the math on the probable cost to make it ready for your dreams, and learn as much as possible about what you're getting into.

Then, the day you step aboard your magic carpet really will be one of the best days of your life. 🌟

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WESTMINSTER TEAK

Hanse 360

With a sizable 13-foot beam opening up a roomy interior that's paired with a long waterline and sparkling sailing performance, the Hanse 360 is one beamy baby.

BY HERB MCCORMICK



Prior to stepping aboard the Hanse 360 during the 2025 Boat of the Year contest, the last Hanse I'd sailed was a year earlier on the larger, quite imposing 510. It was a beast of a yacht with a seven-figure price tag, more than 50 feet of waterline, and a towering 77-foot spar. As a brand, Hanse had been concentrating on its larger offerings, and I have to say, I was a bit intimidated but also quite taken by the 510's bold looks and massive platform.

So, stepping aboard the 360, I

was highly interested in how the French design consortium of Berret-Racoupeau—the naval architects also responsible for the 510—would scale back their vision while remaining true to Hanse's usual brand objective: Build comfortable production cruisers that sail well.

I thoroughly inspected the 360 dockside and then took it for a spin on Chesapeake Bay, and I was actually somewhat shocked—because I liked it even more than its big sister. Size-wise, especially, it was a boat I could relate to.

Aesthetically, to gain perspective on the 360's generous girth, it's perhaps wise to begin aft and work our way forward. The wide, open transom has a drop-down platform that serves as a handy back porch for boarding or swimming (a nifty attached swim ladder drops directly into the drink). The twin wheels are just forward and well outboard, with Jefa steering pedestals. The cockpit is flanked by settees/couches to port and starboard, and a flat-screen Raymarine chart plotter is mounted on the

central table that also holds a handy day fridge.

Going forward, as is de rigueur in so much contemporary production yacht design, there's a pronounced chine that creates a lot of interior space. A trio of hull windows offers light and views down below while providing some visual accents to the tall freeboard. The coachroof, as with most Hanses, is low and understated, almost flush (you don't need a tall deckhouse with all that volume below).

The Selden spar package is deck-stepped, and the

traditional, standard Doyle mainsail with slab reefing is fully battened and stashed in a slick stack pack on the boom. There's a choice for the deck of optional real teak or synthetic Flexiteek, both of which offer good grip and appealing looks. Our test boat had the optional sprit forward—perched over the plumb bow—for ground tackle and tacking off-wind sails. From directly overhead, the 360's outline bears a striking resemblance to an arrowhead, especially with its pointed entry.

Not surprisingly for a contemporary design in the mid-30-foot range, the interior is laid out for a couple. In the standard accommodations plan on our test boat, the main stateroom is essentially an open floor plan, with a pair of double doors providing privacy for the forward V-berth in the event that there are guests occupying the double berth aft to starboard (to port, this opposing space is dedicated to stowage). There's a central dining table fronting a U-shaped settee to port, with a straight-line settee to starboard. There's also a nice galley and a single, opposing head to either side of the companionway. The overhead room is rather astounding, well over 6 feet, 5 inches. An optional layout in the 360's brochure shows a pair of double-berth staterooms, two heads and an offset double berth in the bow; from the drawings, at least, this version appears incredibly busy for the length overall.

The construction laminate employs vinylester resin with a balsa core in the hull and the deck, which are bonded together for a bulletproof coupling. The cast-iron keel has an attached bulb and is available in a shoal-draft (5 feet, 5 inches) or deep-draft (6 feet, 9 inches) configuration. The single spade rudder is hung off an aluminum shaft with self-aligning bearings. The auxiliary is a 40 hp Yanmar diesel with sail-drive. Solar power is an option; our test ride had several flexible deck panels.

We tested the boat on a fall Chesapeake Bay afternoon in a moderate breeze of 8 to



12 knots. An electric winch used to hoist that big mainsail was a welcome feature. The boat is easy to sail and trim, with running rigging led aft and a double-ended German-style mainsheet. The 360 has a split backstay that allows easy egress to the swim platform, but it's also a bit uncomfortable when leaning outboard behind either of the wheels. I was curious about that single rudder on such a wide stern, but it had plenty of bite and control. The helm was light, and the boat was pleasant to steer.

The self-tacking jib made tacking easy, but the boat seemed a bit underpowered. Genoa tracks are an option for an overlapping headsail, and that would be an easy choice for me if I were keeping a boat on the Chesapeake. Still, we managed a hair over 6 knots in the puffs, as the hull was easily driven. Even if we didn't maximize the 360's sailing potential, it felt like it was clearly there.

Built in Germany, the 360 found immediate success in the European markets, and it's no mystery why. It's a cool boat,

and it's roomy and quick—two traits that are hard to beat. ⚓

CW Editor-at-Large Herb McCormick was a 2025 Boat of the Year judge.

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NEW TO THE FLEET

Dufour 44

Blending innovation with tradition, the Dufour 44 marks the evolution of a time-proven range of cruisers.

BY MARK PILLSBURY



Boat of the Year judges noted confident performance under sail during Chesapeake Bay trials. Opposite: Belowdecks, the Dufour 44 has a bright salon, an airy owner's suite, and flexible layout options throughout, offering comfort and versatility for extended cruising or charter use.

WALTER COOPER; OPPOSITE: COURTESY DUFOUR

French boatbuilder Dufour is as regular as the tides on Chesapeake Bay. Dufour's team arrives every fall in Annapolis, Maryland, with a new model, each one a few feet longer or shorter than the previous year's, but reliably with a plumb bow and transom, chines that run essentially from stem to stern, a low-profile cabin top, dual helm stations, and a single rudder.

And notably, each and every Dufour I've been aboard as part of *Cruising World's* annual Boat of the Year sea trials has sailed well, including the Dufour 44, which was introduced to North America in 2024.

Such is the benefit of turning to the same naval architect, Umberto Felci and his team of designers, exclusively since 2002. That is an impressively long period of collaboration in an industry where production builders routinely bring in new blood whenever it's time to reinvent a model range.

Felci's hulls are slippery through the water, which means sail plans can be kept manageable for shorthanded cruising sailors. In recent years, self-tacking jibs have been standard, though genoa tracks for slightly overlapping headsails are available for owners who want more horsepower. Sprits that double as anchor rollers also come standard, so off-wind sails such as a code zero or cruising spinnaker can be set on a flexible furler for reaching or running—a greatly beneficial feature on these modern rigs with big main sails and smaller headsails.

Our test boat was fitted with a genoa. In a moderate breeze that ranged from about 8 to 15 knots, we cruised at 6 to 7.5 knots closehauled and kept about the same pace off the breeze. Dufours employ a double-ended German-style mainsheet system, meaning sheets are led to winches adjacent to either of the boat's twin wheels. They can be easily trimmed from either side. I like that setup because whoever is driving doesn't need to leave the helm to attend to a mainsheet led to a winch set on the cabin top.

The cockpit on the 44 is roomy, with a teak drop-leaf centerline

table that is also a handy place to brace one's feet when heeled. The Annapolis boat had factory canvas that included a dodger and a two-piece Bimini top designed to allow the crew to step between supports when headed to the side deck. If I were a buyer, I would probably forgo the Bimini top to make the trip forward a bit easier. As a bonus, I'd get a clearer view of the main.

For several years now, Dufour has built a grill and sink into the center of the transom. New on the 44 are stairs to either

athwartships, adjacent to the main bulkhead. That's still an option on the 44, but the boat we saw has an inline galley that occupies the starboard side of the salon in place of a couch. In either layout, a hexagonal table is to port with seating for up to 10 people, using movable stools that stow under the table underway.

The inline arrangement allows for lots of stowage in drawers and cupboards, and for a large countertop. For a cruising couple, I thought the setup would work pretty well.



side of it for stepping down to the fold-down swim platform; on previous models, there were stairs on only one side. Underway, fold-down seats cover the steps and provide a place for the driver to sit.

The interior of the 44 is by Ardizio Design, and the overall look is bright and roomy. Earlier models in the current generation of Dufours had a galley-forward layout down below, with the stove, fridge, freezer, counters and cabinets spread out

It gives the salon the feel of an apartment with open living space. If I was routinely sailing with other couples or friends, I might prefer having the forward galley, where the cook has space to work and guests have most of the salon to lounge. In the end, it comes down to personal preferences, and in my book, the more options, the better.

There are other layout choices to be made as well. Two aft staterooms are standard. They share a head and shower

compartment to starboard of the companionway, and a shower compartment to port. The latter would make a handy place to ditch wet foulies when coming below. This space can also be set up with a desk and seat, creating an onboard office.

In the three-stateroom layout, the owner's space is forward with an island berth. Separate head and shower compartments are on either side of the doorway from the salon. This owner's space can also be split in two to create a four-stateroom charter-friendly floor plan, with each forward double-berth stateroom having an en suite head and shower.

Base price for the Dufour 44 is just under \$350,000. The boat in Annapolis had a price tag of just over \$580,000, which included B&G electronics, an extra pair of Lewmar winches, and air conditioning.

Dufour builds approximately 300 boats a year. All are vacuum-infused using polyester resin, with an outer layer of vinylester to prevent blistering. Hulls and decks are cored.

The 44 is powered with a 50 hp Volvo diesel, saildrive, and folding prop. Dufour and its sister company, catamaran builder Fountaine Pajot, also offer hybrid electric propulsion developed by OdSea+, a French company that is now part of the group.

When ordering a 44, an owner can also choose among a number of wood finishes and upholstery colors. Add that to the other options for layouts, sail plans and auxiliary power, and owners can sail away on a good-performing boat that's set up just the way they like. ⚓

CW editor-at-large Mark Pillsbury was a 2025 Boat of the Year judge.

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Solo sailor Peter Metcalfe aboard *Kessel*, somewhere deep in the Pacific, and even farther from the life he left behind.

BETWEEN

*ONE SAILOR, ONE BOAT, 3,000 MILES OF OCEAN—AND
THE VOYAGE THAT CHANGED EVERYTHING.*

T W O

by PETER METCALFE, *as told to* MARISSA NEELY

W O R L D S



Solo ocean crossings exist in a strange territory between spiritual pilgrimage and borderline madness. You have to be part navigator, part mechanic, part therapist. There's no one to take the wheel while you sleep. No one to help reef the sails when the 2 a.m. squall hits. No one to tell you that you're not going crazy when you wake up from a dream shouting for someone who's not there.

Most people who take on the Pacific leg of the Coconut Milk Run—the jump from Mexico to French Polynesia—do so with crew or partners. It's the first and longest



bluewater crossing for many sailors. The gateway to a life afloat. For me, it was something else. It was the thing I had to do while my 38-foot Hans Christian, *Kessel*, was in its prime—and while I still had the fire in my gut to prove that I could.

This crossing, from Mexico to French

Polynesia, wasn't a whim. It was a calling. There are maybe a few thousand active cruisers sailing the world's oceans. Of those, only a small fraction attempt the Pacific crossing in a given year, and even fewer do it alone. It's a 3,000-mile stretch of open water where your only companions are the stars, your thoughts and whatever stares back at you from the deep. Those who cross this part of the world return changed.

I didn't grow up on the water. I'm from Oakdale, California—a landlocked town better known for rodeos and almond orchards than reefing sails and reading isobars. But I'd always been drawn to the

Lush, jagged Moorea (top) was one of many South Pacific landfalls that marked the next chapter in Metcalfe's solo voyage beyond the Marquesas. Above: Metcalfe hikes the Pacific Crest Trail in 2015, years before his solo Pacific crossing. Opposite: Metcalfe and his first boat, *Achilles*, in 2019.



edge of things, to adventure, to the kind of stories that begin where the pavement ends. I got a taste of sailing one summer at Boy Scout camp, on a lake in Oklahoma, where the first merit badge I earned was for small-boat sailing. Years later, I was mesmerized by the yachts tied to the moorings off Catalina Island as I sat in my life-guard tower watching the scouts at Camp Cherry Valley.

In college, I shared a leaky old boat with three freediving roommates who had a copy of *Chapman's Piloting* that was more salt-stained than legible. We cobbled together our own education with YouTube videos, borrowed tools, and trial-by-fire weekends out to the Channel Islands. There, in the wild of anchorages such as



Prisoners Harbor and Smugglers Cove, I found what I didn't know I was seeking. Salt. Silence. Self-reliance. Pure adventure.

From that point on, I was all in. I worked as a fireman, hoarding every paycheck to feed the habit of tools, gear and materials. Each upgrade was a step closer. Every busted fitting I replaced by headlamp was a lesson earned.

And then, I found *Kessel*. It was more ruin than boat, left forgotten in the Mexican desert, but it was the one. I saw past the grime and rust to the heavy displacement curves, the sheerline, the potential.

This 1978 build was from a time when boats had thick hulls and even thicker souls. It was meant to cross oceans, to laugh in the face of squalls. Its slip felt like a cage. The rigging was shot. The systems were failing. But beneath the corrosion and peeling varnish, I saw a warhorse.

I rebuilt *Kessel* plank by plank, wire by wire—not just to bring the boat back to life, but also because something in me needed it to be whole.

We weren't just going sailing. We were going to cross an ocean together. We were going to explore the world.

SOMETHING BIGGER

The first three days of the crossing were pure stoke, riding the excitement of the journey as La Cruz de Huanacastle, Mexico, shrank in my wake. It had been my mission to settle into things and find routine, which I would soon learn was a fluid thing. On Day 3, I wrote my first log in PredictWind to keep friends and family informed.

"I woke up with salt on my face and the

WE WERE ALONE OUT HERE. AND IT WAS BEAUTIFUL. EVERY TIME I GLANCED AT OUR WAKE, I FELT THAT PRIMITIVE, IMPOSSIBLE TRUTH ALL OVER AGAIN.

sky bleeding soft light over a restless ocean. I'd spent the night in the cockpit, unable to sleep below. The sound of the hull flexing, the groan of strained rigging—it was all too alive down there. Up top, though, I could see stars. I could feel the rhythm of the sea. It was a violent lullaby, but a lullaby nonetheless."

Kessel was galloping. Ten- to 12-footers from the northwest rolled beneath us like sleeping giants. The wind held firm. We were closehauled at 7 knots, rising and falling like a heartbeat. Every time I glanced back at our wake, I felt it again—that primitive, impossible truth.

We were alone out here.
And it was beautiful.

DAYS OF GRACE

There were moments that made the whole thing feel enchanted. I streamed my sister's college water polo game via Starlink from 800 miles offshore. I cried watching her score goals in a pool half a world away. The loneliness cracked open, and for a moment, I was there. With her. Home.

On Day 7, the wind finally came to stay.

The trades hit like a gift wrapped in foam and sun. *Kessel* surged under the rasta-colored asymmetric spinnaker, galloping over the swell—7, 8, sometimes 10 knots. Flying fish exploded from the water like skipping stones. I stood barefoot at the helm, cackling into the wind like a lunatic. This was what life was about, what I was built for, why I existed. In that moment, every tear, every busted knuckle, all the worst days were all worth it.

These were the days of joy. Champagne sailing. Salt in my hair. Sun on my chest. *Kessel* and I were the stuff that books and ballads are written about, the reason young men and women embark on these quests.

DAYS OF RECKONING

But then there were the other days—like Day 10.

The wind was up, passing 20 knots. I decided to douse the kite and go to a conventional sail plan. It should've been routine. But while dousing, the hood of the kite fouled itself in its rigging. In my anger and haste to retrieve the sail, the sock tore open, releasing the mass of canvas to the howling breeze.

The only way to retrieve and salvage the sail was to dump it. I released the halyard, slowly at first, but with no one to assist, I inevitably had to surrender the sail over the side of the bulwarks.

Kessel rounded up. Water poured over the rail and through the cockpit. Belowdecks, the galley seemed to explode. Something had knocked the faucet open, and fresh water flooded the sole.

I dragged the soaked sail onto the foredeck by hand, inch by inch, like pulling in a drowning body. I had to use a sheet winch. My only hope was that it hadn't wrapped itself around the rudder. I was abeam to the waves, conditions nearing a gale, a thousand miles from land and entirely alone. By the time I'd cleaned up the mess, I was shaking. But we were still sailing. *Kessel* had held its ground.

That would be the worst of it, I thought.

The Intertropical Convergence Zone had other ideas.

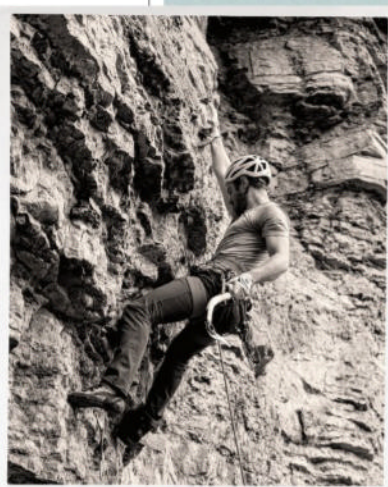
Fierce, whipping squalls marched like crusaders across the horizon, dark and black, set on descending upon me and my good ship. One would come, and I would prepare. *Kessel* and I would battle 50 knots

with sea spray that I swear would break the skin. Waves would tower half the height of the mast. Then it would be gone, and we'd wait for the next one. Again and again, the only way to survive.

For days, it teased me with lightning and silence. I hallucinated voices. Woke up shouting names. My steering cable slipped. The autopilot failed. Solar panels couldn't keep up. The backup system glitched.

All the while, squalls came and went like whispers of war.

THE PACIFIC CROSSING DOESN'T MAKE YOU BETTER; IT MAKES YOU REAL. IT'S THE HIGHS, THE LOWS—THE WHOLE TRUTH OF WHO YOU ARE, STRIPPED BARE.



There was no rhythm. No wind. Then too much.

THE EQUATOR

I crossed into the Southern Hemisphere sometime around 2 a.m. Half-asleep, I took a photo of the GPS. No rum, no ceremony. Just me, tangled in my sheets, too tired to be poetic. But something shifted that night. Not on the water. Inside me.

I wasn't a kid chasing a dream anymore. I was a sailor halfway across the largest body of water on the planet. And I wanted to go home.

Traditionally, a sailor crossing the equator for the first time is initiated into Neptune's domain. The transformation from pollywog to shellback is usually

marked with ridiculous costumes and salt-soaked theatrics. For me, it happened in silence. In the dark. Alone with *Kessel* and the ghost of every sailor who'd crossed before. That moment meant everything. And nothing. The real ritual was surviving the days before and after.

People ask why I did it solo, and nearly a whole year later, I still don't have a perfect answer. Maybe it's because I wanted to see if I could. Maybe I wanted to prove that the years spent bringing *Kessel* back to life weren't just about the boat.

LANDFALL

The last 72 hours were punishing. Wind at 30 knots. Seas building to 15 feet. *Kessel*

From left: Metcalfe with his Bonanza airplane, purchased two months after completing his Pacific voyage; rock climbing during his college years in California; *Kessel* alongside co-author Marissa Neely's *Avocet*, cruising companions turned close friends in Mexico.

screamed through the waves at 8 to 10 knots, surfing down troughs like a creature reborn. I didn't eat. I didn't sleep. I just held on.

And then, suddenly, we were there.

The dark cliffs of Fatu Hiva rose from the sea like something out of a forgotten myth. The Bay of Virgins opened like arms.

I dropped the hook. The engine cut out.

And for the first time in 23 days, everything was still. I could finally sleep.

People ask what it's like to cross an ocean alone. I tell them the truth: It's all of it. It's the highs that crack your heart wide open and the lows that grind your bones to dust. It's frying your last egg and swearing at the sky. It's watching the sunrise after a night you thought might never end.

It's rebuilding your autopilot with one hand while clinging to the lifelines with the other. It's talking to your boat like a friend—and sometimes, like a ghost.

The Pacific crossing doesn't make you better; it makes you real. And that's enough.

Kessel and I dropped the hook in the lush embrace of the Marquesas Islands. One chapter closed; another began. We were in paradise.

There's no sugarcoating the challenge of singlehanded passagemaking. But I also don't think it's possible to describe the beauty, or the absolute elation, that comes with it. It was one of the best trips of my life. Would I do it again? Probably. Would I choose to share it with someone

next time? Absolutely.

The completion of this crossing was the beginning of a grand Pacific tour, one filled with new people, new anchorages, love, laughter, and lessons I'll carry forever. To anyone who feels the call, in whatever form it takes: Go. Do it. You'll find what you're seeking. 🌊

Peter Metcalfe is a solo sailor and self-proclaimed adventure junkie. After reaching the Pacific aboard Kessel, he continued sailing in search of wind, landfalls and adrenaline, eventually landing in Brisbane, Australia, where the boat is listed for sale. He is not done sailing but is moving on to bigger opportunities.



Grace in Motion

A sailor's dream rekindled, a boat built to roam, and an Atlantic crossing remind us that the journey matters most.

SEPTEMBER 2025 | 60 | cruisingworld.com



Sine Finis sails steadily in Mediterranean waters, while owner Nico Jonville stands aboard the Pegasus 50 shortly after delivery, ready to embark on new voyages.

COURTESY NICO JONVILLE





The sea off Cannes, France

is barely breathing this particular morning, its surface flat and luminous under the weight of the sun. We slip quietly from the dock and into the Gulf of Napoule, where the horizon meets the sky in the sort of hazy blur that makes distance seem irrelevant. A thin breeze meanders through the rigging of *Sine Finis*, just enough to stir the sails but not enough to command them. The boat moves anyway. Not quickly, but surely, as if being pulled forward by some invisible tether.

At the helm, Nico Jonville stands relaxed, one hand lightly on the wheel. He isn't adjusting or trimming or steering with any urgency. He is simply sailing. The kind of sailing that reveals not just what a boat can do, but also what it is.

That quiet clarity is what first strikes me about *Sine Finis*. With so little wind, there should have been hesitation. But instead, we glide. A boat like this doesn't need drama to be impressive—only a sailor who understands.

"There's a precision to the helm," Jonville says. "You feel the rigidity of the boat. It's clean, immediate."

Even in stillness, this boat offers something most performance cruisers don't: calm confidence. And in this light-air passage off the South of France, I can already feel what the boat was made for: movement. Big movement. The kind that crosses oceans and transforms sailors.

This movement, for Jonville, started long before *Sine Finis*. It began in France with his grandfather, aboard boats that shaped his earliest memories.

"I was behind the wheel by the time I was 3," he says, laughing. He grew up between Paris and the coast, with summers spent on the water. Sailing wasn't something he learned; it was something he absorbed.

His grandfather—an old-school mariner who believed in giving youngsters the helm—handed him a level of freedom most sailors don't taste until adulthood. As a teenager, he was already captaining trips with friends aboard a 46-footer, gaining miles and an innate trust in himself and the sea. There were mistakes, of course—he's quick to acknowledge them. "Plenty of stupid things done," he says, smiling. "But that's how you learn. That's how it gets into your bones."

Eventually, life brought him to the United States, where he found a different rhythm in the sailing scene of Southern California. In



2007, he bought his first "real" cruising boat: a 37-footer capable of more-serious travel. "I wanted to go farther," he says. "I wasn't interested in racing or daysailing. I wanted to move."

And move he did. From San Diego, he sailed down the Baja coast, into Central America, through Panama and into the Caribbean. He spent time in the San Blas Islands, fell in love with remote anchorages, and began to sketch out a circumnavigation. "That was the plan," he says. "Around the world."

But then came COVID. Countries closed. Routes vanished.

Sine Finis departs the mainland, leaving behind a brooding sky—a reminder of the challenges that lie ahead on any ocean passage.



Plans dissolved. Like many voyaging sailors, Jonville found himself reevaluating not just his passage plans, but also his vessel.

"She'd taken me far," he says of the 37-footer. "But I started seeing the limits—especially in tougher weather. I wanted something safer. Something that wouldn't just survive offshore, but thrive."

He sold the boat in Virginia and began what he jokingly calls "the hunt"—a meticulous, sometimes maddening, two-year search for the right replacement. Not just a boat that looked good on paper, but one that also could carry him through the kind of voyaging he envisioned: shorthanded, long-distance and full of unknowns.

"I had a hundred checkboxes," he says. "Fast. Safe. Solo-capable.

Dry cockpit. Storage space. Good light-air performance. A real sailboat, not a floating apartment. But I still wanted comfort. I didn't want to compromise on what matters at sea."

He found the Pegasus 50 almost by accident. It was in a listing online, with a photo that caught his eye. The lines were modern and purposeful. The configuration looked different. The deeper he researched, the more intrigued he became.

Built in Slovenia, the Pegasus 50 was designed for performance cruising with an epoxy-infused carbon hull, twin rudders, a double-wing keel, and a cockpit that emphasized protection and singlehanded control. It was a monohull with the openness of a



catamaran, but it still promised to sail like a proper offshore boat.

He flew to Europe. When he saw the boat in person for the first time in the marina, he was overwhelmed. “I was like a kid in a toy store,” he says. The sea trial sealed it. In just 12 knots of wind, the boat moved effortlessly at 9. The code zero unfurled, and the boat surged forward with a smoothness that made his decision feel inevitable. “It was everything I’d hoped for. And more.”

That evening, after the sea trial that left him electrified, Jonville and his wife ducked into a small waterside restaurant tucked away in a sleepy Slovenian harbor. Still riding the high of the day—and the certainty that he’d found the right boat—they raised a toast with glasses of local sparkling wine.

The label caught Jonville’s eye: *Sinefinis*. Curious, he asked the waiter what it meant.

“It means ‘without borders,’” came the reply.

Jonville sat back, stunned. His last boat—his faithful 37-footer that had carried him through Central America and into the Caribbean—had been named *Sans Frontières*. The French translation was identical. Here, thousands of miles from that boat and its memories, he’d stumbled onto the same phrase, translated into Latin, etched on the bottle at the table where he and his wife were dreaming of a new chapter. *Sine Finis*. Without borders. Without end.

The boat was delivered to the Mediterranean, and after some time testing and commissioning with the owners of Pegasus Yachts, Jonville set off from Slovenia with two friends, heading west toward Venice, Italy. It was his first true shakedown sail aboard *Sine Finis*, just days after taking delivery. He’d barely had time to get acquainted with the systems—hadn’t even practiced reefing under pressure—when the weather turned.

Off the coast of Italy, sometime after midnight, a squall barreled in fast and hard. The wind spiked to 38 knots. The Adriatic turned serious. “It came on strong and unexpected,” Jonville says. “I barely knew the reefing system yet, and here I was, alone in the dark with sails full and seas rising.”

He sprang into action, reefing down quickly, learning on the fly in real time. Sheets were eased, and he worked through the motion with instinct and muscle memory. But what surprised him most

was how the boat responded—not panicked or overloaded, but sure-footed, balanced.

“She held her own,” Jonville says. “There was no drama in the way she behaved. I adjusted, and she just kept moving.”

Later, in the calm that followed, Jonville sat at the helm watching the glow of the instrument lights dance off the carbon rig. The boat had just passed its first real test—not in a sea trial, not on paper, but out there, in the elements, with one sailor alone. And the bond between them began to cement—not with a handshake or a christening, but with shared weather and trust.

Later, they sailed west through Gibraltar, on to the Canaries and across the Atlantic—*Sine Finis*’ first major passage. This boat was ready. Jonville was too.

“Crossing the Atlantic is the dream,” he says. “But it’s also the test. You learn who you are. You learn who your boat is.”

Crossing an ocean isn’t just a matter of charts and provisions. It’s a psychological departure, a shift in mindset from the immediacy of coastal sailing to the long, slow breath of life offshore. Before casting off from the Canaries, Jonville and his small crew spent days readying *Sine Finis* for the passage. Systems were checked, weather windows weighed, redundancies double-checked. They discussed watch schedules, stowed food in every conceivable locker, and reviewed emergency protocols with the same attention as sail trim.

But as any offshore sailor knows, no matter how prepared you are, there’s always that quiet moment of reckoning when the coast fades behind you and the realization sets in: This is it. You’re out there now.

“For me, there’s a mental shift,” Jonville says. “You go from planning to *being*. There’s nothing left to do but sail, and that’s the beauty of it.”



For just under three weeks, *Sine Finis* rode the trades westward with the grace of a boat made for the passage. The crew settled into their rhythm quickly: two-person watches rotating through the night, shared meals by day, quiet hours at the helm punctuated by bursts of laughter or mutual silence. The boat revealed itself as fast and capable, and also forgiving. It was comfortable in light

Life underway aboard *Sine Finis*: repairing a chafing reef line on passage; sharing breakfast in the cockpit beneath a rainbow; soaking in moonlit seas on a night watch; and embracing the deep camaraderie that comes with a good crew, a fast boat, and miles well-sailed.

air, confident in heavier breeze, and almost eerily quiet in motion.

"Even in rough weather, we could cook, work, sleep," Jonville says. "We had everything from 3 knots to 35, and she never struggled. That gave us time to actually *enjoy* the crossing."

And enjoy they did. There were nights when the cockpit felt like a floating observatory—the stars so brilliant, they could trace constellations by instinct. Moonrises over the stern lit the water in molten silver as the boat surfed at 12 knots. One night, dolphins played in the wake, their bodies igniting trails of bioluminescence like underwater fireworks.

There were challenges, of course, but nothing serious: a code



zero tack line change due to chafing, a spinnaker tear in strong gusts, a loose washing-machine-hose repair underway. The crew was sharp and composed, and worked together with an ease born of trust—trust in the boat and in one another.

"You get to know people differently out there," Jonville says. "When you're standing watch at 2 a.m., talking about nothing and everything, it sticks."

On *Sine Finis*, that space for connection was everywhere—between helm and cockpit, galley and salon, on-watch partner and off-watch sleeper. The open flow of the boat's design meant the crew was never isolated. And the boat's handling meant no one was ever overwhelmed. The boat made the crossing not only possible, but also pleasurable.

More than anything, the passage offered something rare: clarity. Little internet. No noise. Just wind, water and the company of people who had chosen to be there. They trimmed sails together, told stories over breakfast, shared the quiet work of passagemaking without pretense or pressure.

"She just felt right out there," Jonville says. "The boat, the crew, the sea—it all came together."

And for every mile they made good, there was something else gained: confidence and the quiet wonder of seeing the world slowly shift, one longitude at a time.

One of the boat's standout features proved invaluable offshore: an electric gimbaled salon table. "You're heeled over at 15 or 20 degrees, but you can still work, eat, read, use a laptop while sitting level," Jonville says. "It's not a gimmick. It changes the way you live aboard underway."

Just as important was the cockpit protection. On his previous

boat, sailing in big seas often meant getting soaked, battling weather, and bracing for every wave. On *Sine Finis*, the covered helm created a cocoon of calm. "You're doing 9, 10, 11 knots, and outside the wind is howling, but you're dry, you're warm, you're focused," he says. "It's a completely different experience."

After landfall in the Caribbean, the boat continued north toward Chesapeake Bay. There was little fanfare aside from complimentary onlookers asking about the boat. Just another passage, another movement forward. That, in many ways, is what *Sine Finis* represents for Jonville—not an arrival, but rather a way of continuing. A vessel not just for going places, but for becoming someone new along the way as well.

"This October, I'll have *Sine Finis* at the Annapolis boat show. After that, I don't know where we'll go next," Jonville says, standing at the stern as *Sine Finis* edges north along the US East Coast. "The list is long."

A return to San Diego is all but certain—his adopted hometown, a natural waypoint and homecoming after the Atlantic chapters. And there's talk of sailing north to the Pacific Northwest, a region that calls to him with its wild coastline and quiet anchorages.

But there's no timetable. No fixed itinerary. Not anymore.

He's not chasing latitudes or counting countries. He's chasing something more elusive: *feelings*. The right breeze. The right harbor. The right morning light filtering through the companionway as the kettle whistles and the boat rocks gently at anchor.

Still, that old idea, the one that started it all, hasn't entirely disappeared. The dream of a circumnavigation lingers in the background, unhurried but unforgettable.

"It's still there," Jonville says. "It might not look like I imagined when I was younger, and that's OK. We'll take it one leg at a time. If it happens, it happens."

In the meantime, *Sine Finis* is already doing what it was built to do: crossing oceans, making landfalls, bringing people together. Each passage unlocks something new for Jonville—on the chart and inside the sailor himself. It's apparent when he stands at the helm. That quiet reverence. That calm curiosity. The same posture he carried that day in Cannes, when the boat was barely moving but somehow telling us everything we needed to know.

For a sailor raised in the space between tradition and ambition, *Sine Finis* is the right boat at just the right time. 🌊



TUAMOTU





By Kia
Koropp

DRIFT

A cruising family explores these remote French Polynesia atolls, diving into rich culture, wild nature and unforgettable human connections.



We cleared through the Panama Canal and sailed back into Pacific waters for the first time in a decade—but I looked west from our 50-footer, *Atea*, with a sense of despondency. All of our sailing friends had worked hard to get to this stage. They looked at the Pacific as the beginning of an epic adventure. I, however, looked at it as the ending of ours. This would be the final year of an 11-year circumnavigation. I was reluctant to conclude our cruising lifestyle.

Yet, it was hard to be sullen when so much beauty lay ahead of us. The Pacific is the largest ocean in the world, and we would be sailing through one of the most enviable cruising destinations: French Polynesia. We would spend the next three months playing hopscotch across 2,000 miles of ocean, tossing our stone from tropical paradise to tropical paradise in a game that required no more effort than to follow the breeze and our desire. With 130 islands to choose from, the only challenge was selection.

There are five archipelagos within French Polynesia. We decided to focus on one: the Tuamotus. With the Marquesas and Gambier islands to the east and the Society and Astral islands to the west, this central group is a part of French Polynesia that I had bypassed on my previous trip across the Pacific. Tahiti and Bora Bora caught my attention on my first trip, but this time, I was drawn toward names I had never

heard: Makemo, Tahanea, Fakarava. We skipped the high peaks and lush greenery of the popular volcanic islands and headed for the Tuamotus' string of six-dozen near-submerged rings that form the largest chain of coral atolls in the world.

We departed from the west coast of Costa Rica and sailed 4,000 miles through a continuous sea to reach our first atoll. As



KIA KOROPP (3), OPPOSITE: DAMISTOCKADOBEE.COM



we watched a thin cluster of wispy palm trees slowly materialize from the blue seascape, it was like setting our sights on a midocean mirage. Amanu is an outer-lying atoll on the southeastern edge of the group, quiet and sparsely populated with few visitors. We found crabs, coconut trees and a small group of Polynesians in a sleepy village. We wandered the tidy streets and passed orderly rows of houses with tricycles parked outside property fences and gravestones set inside the gates. Other than a single resident who quietly strolled past us in the midday heat, the little township had an air of abandonment. After a month at sea without any outside contact, the lack of solitude suited us perfectly.

Slowly, we cruised around the inner rim of the atoll, enjoying the peaceful beauty. Long, rolling waves that transited hundreds of miles crashed onto the outer reef,



washing over to settle like still pond water in the inner lagoon. The tops of palm trees waved gently in the breeze, offering perches for the terns, boobies and frigate birds resting after their long-haul flights.

We collected seashells and made driftwood rafts for our 8-year-old pirate and 10-year-old brigadier, stick weapons sheathed as they battled for imagined bullion and lost treasure. We snorkeled with the colorful bommies and healthy population of reef fish, and paddleboarded the drop-off with oceanic manta rays gliding by underneath. We built bonfires on the beach out of coconut fronds, pulled down as we dislodged coconuts from the cluster

WE WOULD SPEND THE NEXT THREE MONTHS PLAYING HOPSCOTCH ACROSS 2,000 MILES OF OCEAN, TOSSING OUR STONE FROM TROPICAL PARADISE TO TROPICAL PARADISE.

immersing ourselves in isolation, we were able to pick up on the nuances. Each atoll had its distinctions: Amanu felt totally remote, Makemo had aquatic purity, and Tahanea was unspoiled beauty.

Tahanea was our golden gem. It is a nature reserve whose only residents are feathered, shelled or scaled. The lack of hunting and fishing results in an abundance of wildlife completely unfazed by the odd human guest. A few islets within the lagoon provide hatcheries for three species of booby birds: red-footed, brown and masked. To hear the abrasive warning squawk of a protective hen and to see the curious eye of a newborn chick was a joy, and the frenzied swarm of the disturbed flock swooping and diving

above our heads. We enjoyed a slow gin to the slip of the setting sun and gazed up at the fantastic spray of fairy lights sparkling in the darkness of an unpolluted night sky. For any recluse, Amanu is the place to be.

The next few atolls offered similar isolation. On Makemo and Tahanea, coconut trees provide the only means of generating an income. For most of the locals, this business is a multigenerational family activity. Outside of that, they were doing what we were doing: using those same trees as shade in the midday heat, wallowing in the shallow waters for an easy catch for the evening meal, and shooing away giggling children.

We rarely saw anyone. We usually chose anchorages away from the villages. When you have the independence and means to truly get away from society, you might as well go whole hog. By fully

Clockwise from opposite top: At Fakarava, the Heiva festival stirs the lagoon to life with a fiercely contested men's canoe race. A vibrant community of reef fish offers a glimpse into the Tuamotus' thriving marine life. On the quiet shores of Amanu, Ayla and Braca channel their inner castaways, building a driftwood raft and imagining grand adventures. John jogs to a cheerful last place in a good-natured fruit-carrying race.



overhead was a curious intimidation. In the shallows was another nursery, with foot-long predators skirting around your ankles, the tip of their fin barely breaking the surface.

Our timing for Tahanea was specific. We wanted to witness the grouper spawning. During the week preceding the full moon in July, the marbled grouper usually perform their mating ritual: a spiraling whirlpool of fish that create rippling currents of metallic color. This year, however, the spawning occurred in June, so we'd missed it. But the grouper were still around, all resting on the ocean floor.

We did get to watch red snapper spawn in an equally impressive courtship dance. We came upon a large school just inside the pass and followed them for a while, unaware of the performance that was about to commence.

They started grouping and regrouping, circling one another, one chasing another out of the pack. As the school grew and compressed into a tight ball, a female would break out in an ascending dash. A string of suitors would chase tail in a long spiral, a pearlescent flash of color ripping down their sides. At one point, a lemon shark swam through the group. The entire school turned on it and chased it away. To hear it, I wouldn't have believed it, but that day, I watched the many defeat the mighty.

Next, we sailed for Fakarava to watch the competitions and performances of the Heiva, French Polynesia's version of the Olympic Games. The Heiva is a monthlong festival in July that honors Polynesian history—the oldest festival in the Pacific with initial performances dating to 1881. Fakarava, the most populated atoll in the Tuamotus, holds the best example of a traditional Heiva (Tahiti's are more commercialized). Encouraging locals pulled us from our seats to participate in the fruit-carrying race, javelin toss and coconut-husking competition. Fortunately, we were not invited to join the 'ōte'a, a powerful and seductive Polynesian dance that would only humiliate any nonnative performer. We even walked off with a few cash prizes—a token for participation rather than achievement.

Fakarava is the second-largest atoll in the Tuamotus, with the second-largest lagoon in all of French Polynesia. Pelagic species crowd its two inland passes. (A whale shark guided us through the lagoon.) The northern pass is the largest, with a rich biodiversity of rays, turtles and dolphins. The southern pass is a protected sanctuary for gray reef sharks with

**TO BE SO
OPENLY
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AND INCLUDED,
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EXPERIENCE.**

the highest global concentration: about 700. We were side by side with these apex predators and they acted like docile goldfish. We were able to dive the outer wall and inside the pass without a local group, and the freedom of swimming within the school was an experience like no other.

Leaving Tahanea and Fakarava was like pulling teeth—none of us wanted to depart. But we were midseason and only halfway through the atolls. We received a warm welcome in Toau, where our arrival instigated a spontaneous lobster feast. In Apataki, we quickly made friends with two young bachelors who wanted a life simpler than in the faster-paced Tahiti. A stone set just off their homestead laid claim to the hopes, dreams and protections of mariners who had traveled through Apataki centuries before us. Following suit, we dressed up in palm-leaved hats and did a ceremony for our continued safe journey and protection at sea, then spent the next several days with our hosts sharing bonfires on the beach, fish from their daily catch, and lobster freely delivered to our boat. To be so openly accepted, befriended and included, with no gain in return, is the ultimate human experience.

For us, the Tuamotus offered a rare glimpse into French Polynesia's beauty. Nature is allowed to flourish. The inner lagoons are healthy with marine life. Humpbacks spray their steamy breath into the air, and the occasional whale shark sidles in for a curious peek. The locals are welcoming, but they're also willing to leave visitors in peace.

I had started this season by looking at the Pacific as an ending, but with hindsight, I now see it as an opening. It is a reminder of all the beauty this world holds, and a promise that there is always an adventure in the path ahead. 🌺



A warm meal shared with our generous host in Apataki reflects the enduring spirit of Polynesian hospitality and connection (top). On Tahanea, a masked booby keeps careful watch over its nesting grounds in a protected sanctuary where wildlife thrives undisturbed (above). A quiet, palm-fringed anchorage captures the deep solitude and unspoiled natural beauty that define the remote Tuamotus (opposite).



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Lavranos 43 • 2006 • \$395,000



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Saga 48 • 2003 • \$249,000



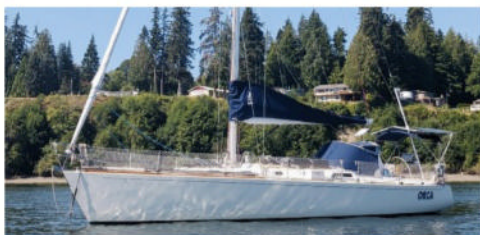
Amel 55 • 2018 • \$1,200,000



Perry 61 • 1997 • \$485,000



Swan 391 • 1984 • \$89,000



J Boats J/44 • 1990 • \$119,000



Island Packet 380 • 1999 • \$179,000

70 Wylie	1993	\$244,000	38 Beneteau 38.1	2021	\$259,000
65 Swan 651	1983	\$395,000	37 Beneteau Oceanis	2009	\$114,000
59 Hinckley Sou'wester	1997	\$449,000	37 Hallberg-Rassy 372	2016	\$399,000
50 Farr	1985	\$99,000	36 Hallberg-Rassy	1999	\$159,000
48 Saga	2003	\$249,000	35 Saga	2002	\$99,000
47 Bavaria	2002	\$167,000	36 Glacier Bay	2006	\$169,000
46 Outbound	2011	\$405,000	34 Jeanneau 349	2022	\$209,000
46 Outbound	2007	\$410,000	32 Sydney	2002	\$85,000
44 Norseman 447	1986	\$149,000	32 Grand Banks	1982	\$99,000
43 Swan	1986	\$129,900	31 Hallberg-Rassy	1975	\$29,000
43 Saga	2000	\$162,500	31 Ranger Tug	2013	\$239,000
43 Dudley Dix	2004	\$339,000	29 Herreschoff Rozinante	2021	\$49,500
40 J Boats J/120	1998	\$149,000	29 Ranger Tug	2019	\$235,000
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MOODY 41DS (2022): All the toys, air, gen, electric furling, davits, solar panels, super nice sails, Flexiteak decks, new dinghy and outboard and much, much more! These deck salon models have wonderful interiors and your outdoor living space is one of the best places to be with the retractable Bimini design. This boat is ready to go places in style, warmth and comfort! Lying Annapolis at **\$595,000**.



SWAN 60 (2000): Beautiful blue hull, carbon mast / Park Ave boom, stunning interior in gorgeous Swan signature honey colored teak and cream leather. Fully optioned, with air, gen, watermaker and much more! Originally a US boat, she is now in Greece, and is ex VAT, so really attractive to non EU buyers. Ready to go at **EU 585,000**.



SWAN 44 MKI (1992): Rare to market, Frers design and is a great family oriented boat. This example is unique with a custom fore cabin arrangement, with the head forward, and then full width cabin with bunk beds to port and a settee and dressing table to starboard, a large cockpit, no bridgedeck, and a spacious interior, in Jamestown at **\$155,000**.



NAJAD 380 (2011): This is the 2nd to last Najad 380 built. American owned since new, and lightly used. In mast furling, bow thruster, new Garmin electronics. UK sails, gennaker, bimini, davits and dinghy Yanmar 54 hp engine. Located in Port Ludlow, WA, and ideally suited for NW cruising grounds! New listing at **\$275,000**.



SWAN 40 (1994): Sold new by us to the current owner. Only ever used in fresh water, and inside stored every winter. New B&G Electronics last winter. 3DL main and recent North Genoa. 3 spreader rig. Nannidiesel with only 300 hours. 2 staterooms with 8 berths total, including saloon. One of the last small 'classic' Frers Swans, great for club racing or cruising. Basically daysailed - the stove has never been used! **\$169,000** lying Chicago.



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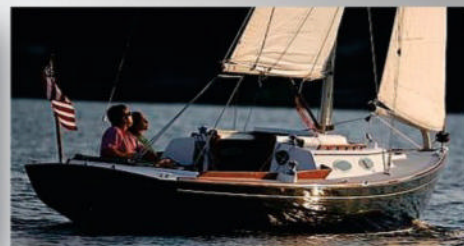
'05 Beneteau 423 129,000



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JAGIYA

2004 OYSTER 82

- ① **\$1,295,000** 📍 Norfolk, Virginia
- ↔ 24.99m 🛖 11 berths in 5 cabins
- ★ Highly specified 82 with shoal draft keel, carbon rig, and a host of spec extras. Motivated seller.



AEGIS

2009 OYSTER 72

- ① **\$849,000** 📍 Oyster Newport, Rhode Island
- ↔ 22.77m 🛖 8 berths in 4 cabins
- ★ Phenomenal boat with fantastic refit potential. Proven configuration enables easy extended cruising.



ELISE

2001 OYSTER 66

- ① **\$995,000** 📍 Norfolk, Virginia
- ↔ 20.37m 🛖 10 berths in 5 cabins
- ★ The perfect package of performance, functionality and comfort. Comprehensively refitted throughout.

MOTIVATED SELLER



TURTLE 4

2008 OYSTER 655

- ① **\$775,000** 📍 Oyster Newport, Rhode Island
- ↔ 20.60m 🛖 8 berths in 4 cabins
- ★ Combined performance, comfort and ease of handling. Fantastic potential for private or charter use.



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2016 OYSTER 625

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2018 OYSTER 575

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- ★ Phenomenal 575 with an incredible spec including super shoal centreboard keel and an extended transom.



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2015 OYSTER 575

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- ↔ 17.89m 🛖 7 berths in 4 cabins
- ★ Late model 575 with a light grey hull, fully equipped for world cruising. Lifting keel with light interior.

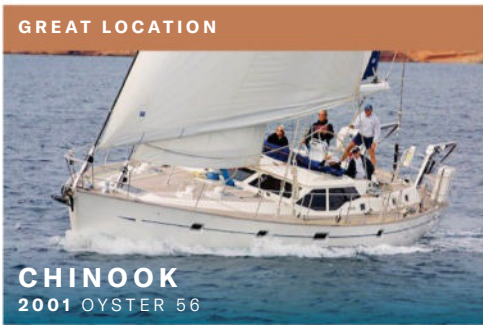


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2008 OYSTER 56

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2022 OYSTER 495

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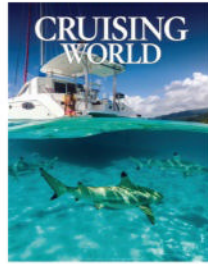


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Off Watch

What I'd imagined would be a mellow, relaxing week racing sailboats in the Caribbean with old mates turned out to be an intense experience just short of intensive care.

BY HERB MCCORMICK



IC24s? Try ICU

Looking back on my racing IC24s in the windswept waters off St. Thomas in the US Virgin Islands this past spring, it's difficult to say which of my bone-headed mishaps stung most. Yes, it might've been the moment the spinnaker pole went totally astray during a hectic kite drop and crowned me upside the cranium. I hadn't seen such stars since my old college-football days, laid out reaching for a pass over the middle.

Then again, there was the instant when we jibed in a barrel of breeze and, in an attempt to gracefully swing the mainsheet from port to starboard, I forgot to let go. That one left me flat on my back in the cockpit with my wind knocked out. Woof.

Or was it re-tweaking my testy rotator cuff grinding a winch after a freak injury just a couple of months before? The one that elicited this observation from my physical therapist when I'd told him of my sailing plans: "I don't think that's such a great idea."

So much pain. So hard to choose. So different from what I'd envisioned.

After all, when the plan had been hatched the previous summer, it was a glorious one indeed. I've been racing J/24s off Newport, Rhode Island, with old pals Ian Scott and Dave Reed for some four decades now. Every so often, we load Ian's *Crack O' Noon* onto the trailer to compete in a North American or World Championship event. This was a different out-of-town exercise altogether: to charter an IC24 for a week to sail the St. Thomas Yacht Club's annual International Regatta.

The IC24s are a Caribbean phenomenon. They're modified J/24s that have been refitted and tamped down; the revamped cockpit means no hiking out, and a blade jib has replaced the big genoa to depower the sail plan. We're not exactly the world's flashiest J/24 sailors, but we've logged some serious miles. We reckoned that mastering an IC24 would be easy-peasy. Shorts and T-shirts on the racecourse, plenty of cold beers after. Who wouldn't want to be us?

This rather cavalier attitude was reinforced on the practice day before the main event commenced, in about 12 to 15 knots of wafting Caribbean breeze, as we spun the boat around the buoys

without drama. Afterward, however, while sipping brews on the yacht-club lawn, there were murmurs about the impending conditions. It was apparently going to get *windy*. It didn't quite occur to me that if the locals were concerned, I should be as well.

The next morning, the big easterly trades—belting in at a solid 25 knots, gusting higher—and a harsh dose of reality arrived at exactly the same time.

How did it all go sideways? Let us count the ways. Dave had recruited his son, Tim, to join us, but we were one of the few four-man crews in the 21-boat fleet. We didn't think that sailing without a fifth crewman would handicap us, but we were constantly on our ear without the additional human ballast (guilty of being not only overconfident, but also overpowered).

Then, things began to break: the boom vang and the base of our mainsheet swivel block being the most egregious gear failures. We compounded the damage with some dumb, unforced errors: a blown jibe that resulted in a spinnaker wrapped as tightly as possible around the headstay, a jib halyard that skied to the mast head when the shackle somehow came undone (we'd even taped it).

Meanwhile, the races kept on coming, fast and furious, five a day over three days, bang-bang. And the wind? It never faltered.

As we nursed the boat around the buoys, our results plummeted. We slowly, inexorably inched our way toward the back of the fleet. It was humbling. Thank heavens the beer remained chilled.

In the aftermath, there was time for reflection. Not for the first time, I was reminded that I'm not getting any younger, and it even occurred to me that I might be getting a little long in the tooth for this particular game. You can still sail without racing, right?

Then again, I'd survived. Ian called a few weeks later to say that it was time to get *Crack O' Noon* back in the water for the season ahead. Was I in?

Was I ever. 🍷

Herb McCormick is a CW editor-at-large.



Hard on the breeze racing off St. Thomas. At least for a moment, I wasn't completely splayed out on the cockpit sole.

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