

# Seahorse

## International Sailing

Issue 308, £9.95 US\$7.50

# Outa da way!

Transpac  
records  
smashed

War stories – Rod Davis  
BMW Oracle's (wondrous)  
merry-go-round  
Successful simulating  
– Frank & Julian Bethwaite  
Beauty – Alfa Romeo 2

AND IT WORKS...  
Engineering  
the Maximus

OCTOBER 2005  
The official  
magazine of the  
Royal Ocean  
Racing Club



ISSN 0143-644X



'The crew soon became successful. We started to think about the RORC programme, and in 1996 we joined a RORC race for the first time: Cowes-Dinard; it was to be a race of humility. The following year was hardly any more brilliant. It was only in 1998 that we won our first famous small bronze medal for a fourth place in Cowes-Dinard.'

Year after year *Iromiguy* steadily added more medals to her collection, winning the RORC championship in 2002 in IRC 3 and becoming RORC Yacht of the Year in 2003. The same year the now rather respectable Nicholson 33 also ranked second in the Fastnet in IRC 3... Two years later, it was the consecration, with overall victory in the famous classic race around the Fastnet rock.

For Jean-Yves Château 'the secret onboard is simply that nothing ever gets our crew down, their friendship is strong and they are always cheerful'

By the way, *Iromiguy* means 'everything is alright' in Basque

### No third Tour for Berthet

Loïc Berthet, winner of the Tour de France in 2002 and 2004 and current Mumm 30 World Champion, was of course the clear favourite of the 28th edition of 'La Grande Boucle à la Voile'. But on the road to a new success, the guys from Team Bouygues Telecom came up against a tough rival in the crew of *Toulon Provence Méditerranée*, the Mumm 30 skippered by Fabien Henry, who had led the 2005 worlds in La Trinité... until the final day of racing!

The Mediterranean team took the lead in the lighter early stages in the Channel, but once the fleet moved into the Atlantic Bouygues Telecom came back hard at their immediate rival.

For a while these two were lying neck and neck, until the final offshore leg in the Atlantic, when Bouygues Telecom went very badly and *Toulon* very well. Also going well on a windy leg was *Dieppe Seine Maritime*, whose skipper, Romain Gibon, found himself in a very surprising third place overall as the boats were loaded onto trucks for the trip to La Grande Bleue.

Of course, everybody knows how easily things can change during the final tricky 10 days of racing in the Mediterranean. And that is exactly what happened this summer in a scenario that took place in three main 'parts'... First, another boat from the Mediterranean, *Delfi Partagé Marseille*, skippered by Thierry Bouchard and Dimitri Deruelle, went so well in their home waters that they stole second place in the final result from Loïc Berthet. Second, Tour veteran Jimmy Pahun and his team from Région Ile de France made a nice comeback to finish fourth overall in front of another Mediterranean crew bearing the colours of Alpes Maritimes Mandelieu-Théoule. Third, and most important, the young crew of *Toulon Provence Méditerranée*, whose Mumm 30 bucks the current trend by carrying D4 sails from the Delta Voile loft, showed relentless determination all the way around this tough course to finish in Menton a massive 73 points ahead of their closest rival

### Transat 6.50 is coming soon

There are actually 72 Minis in the list of entries for the next edition (the 15th) of the singlehanded Transat 6.50 Charente Maritime-Bahia, with four other boats on the waiting list. Thirty are entered in a production boat division and 42 in the protos.

Among the custom class one of this year's favourites is Frenchman Corentin Douguet (inset). Corentin, 31, sailed in the 2001 Transat 6.50 and finished 17th. He also had an unhappy 'souvenir' from that race, when he fell off his boat at sea but was lucky enough to remain attached and climb back onboard.

The following two years he sailed on a wide variety of boats, from

the Figaro Solo to the Open 60 class... But he always maintained that he would come back on the Mini circuit and in 2004 he finally reappeared, having commissioned a new one-off built by successful French Mini designer and skipper Samuel Manuard.

In 2005 his boat, sponsored by Leclerc and Bouygues Telecom, has already won the Mini Pavlova, the Mini Fastnet and, most recently, the Transgascogne. Corentin says he is only interested in a victory in the Mini Transat... He has good reason for his high expectations!

Patrice Carpentier



**GOTIFREDI MAFFIOLI**  
Customised Performance Ropes

### NEW ZEALAND

Skip and Linda Dashew have achieved a kind of cult status among a section of the offshore sailing community for their highly 'competent' yachts that combine performance and ease of handling to make for extremely efficient passage-making.

Long, narrow and powerful, their yachts sum up their practical approach to safety and their enthusiasm for speed - not a contradiction. All underpinned by a solid, exhaustive, if sometimes unconventional, application of the complex sciences and dark arts that make it all work.

Their most recent yacht, *Beowulf*, was an imposing warrior of



The Reichel-Pugh TP52 *Patches* sets out for the Fastnet... *Patches* briefly held the lead under IRC before losing it first to the maxis and then to smaller boats finishing in more breeze. However, *Patches'* results under IRC this year suggest that fast box rule TP52 designs are well suited to the IRC rule... In 2005 at least!

the sea, with an articulating bowsprit, two towering masts and huge asymmetrical spinnakers. With just the two of them onboard, they clocked up big daily runs - up around 300 miles at times - as they sped across the oceans.

In more than 30 years of cruising, the Dashews have logged huge mileages - 'we stopped counting after 250,000 miles' - and gathered a dedicated band of disciples who have admired their designs and their approach to performance cruising.

Now, however, advancing years have forced them to contemplate the unthinkable: a switch to powerboating. Handling *Beowulf's* big sail area was always exhilarating and rewarding, but it was becoming too much. Bringing on crew, or downgrading to a less highly strung type of yacht were rejected as unacceptable.

So they've opted for what they call an 'unsail' boat. 'We're going to a form of cruising at which we've looked down our noses (well, at least Steve has) for half a century,' they write on their website ([www.setsail.com](http://www.setsail.com)). 'A stinkpot, motor cruiser, power yacht, fizz boat, f\*\*\*ing powerboat, the dark side...'





Steve and Linda Dashew wrote the book on long-distance cruising – literally. Their long and slender (left) 'unsail boat', drawn with the benefit of countless miles at sea, could yet set new trends in its field. *Wind Horse* is practical but very far from spartan! (top)

Typically, however, they have not simply accepted conventional wisdom and opted for what the market has on offer. They have studied the form and come up with something that more closely resembles a small warship than the images most of us might conjure up at the mention of a motoryacht.

Built by like-minded Kelly Archer Boatbuilders of Auckland, the first and most obvious impression of the 83ft *Wind Horse* is that 'unsail' boat is quite a shrewd description, not merely an insult by omission. The hull is much closer to the canoe shape of a yacht than the usual displacement powerboat. Long and narrow, just like their sailboats, the vessel is eye-catching for its purposeful lines, unpainted aluminium plating and tough, workboat appearance.

There is no concession to vanity, or the effete spit-and-polish brigade – although the interior is finished to a very high standard, with plenty of high-gloss timber to satisfy the most discerning tastes. Mostly, though, this is all about form being dictated solely by function. 'We wanted a self-righting powerboat that was capable of high-latitude cruising and was comfortable,' said Skip Dashew. 'That is the whole boat in a nutshell.'

An analysis of conventional powerboats worried the Dashews. First, most of them seemed inherently unsafe in extreme conditions. Apart from surf lifesaving-type vessels, the vast majority of powerboats, from small launches to large tankers, would not survive a roll past 60-70 degrees. 'At that point they will capsize and not come back again,' says Skip. 'Large ships have scale working for them, but if they hit that point, they're gone.'

Yachts capsize too, of course, but they are designed to come back up again. In contrast, operators of conventional powerboats, from recreational cruisers to large ships, seem resigned to a watery grave if their vessels should ever reach that critical 60-degree point.

Get Skip talking about any subject from art to gliding to voyaging and the words pour forth in a torrent of explanation. For those who want the full story, it is related in compelling detail on their web site. But, suffice to say, he and Linda did not like those odds. 'We have too many miles at sea to take those kinds of risks,' he said.

So, largely by drawing on sailboat experience, they have come up with a form that will resist capsize to about 130 degrees and then has so little inverted stability that it will quickly right itself. 'What we've always tried to optimise in our sailboat designs is a balance between a slippery, low-drag hull, which goes fast with small amounts of "horsepower", an accommodation plan optimised for time at sea, with structure and systems that keep the centre of gravity low. When you get this formula right, the end result is great fun to sail, very fast and extremely comfortable. You also end up with a design that does very well in heavy weather.'

'What we're doing is bringing this same approach to our FPB (fast powerboat). Rather than start from the normal powerboat view of the world, we've been using our sailors' view and experience.'

The danger time, of course, is if a vessel is caught side-on in a breaking sea. A great deal of attention has been given to this scenario with the emphasis on encouraging the boat to skid

NOV WILKINS-OFFSHORE PHOTOS



sideways, dissipating wave energy. Even heeled right over at more than 90 degrees, there is very little lateral resistance. The side decks are minimal and the stout deckhouse and high freeboards keep the vessel floating high, with the underwater foils coming clear, offering very little opportunity for the vessel to trip over itself. If it does go over completely, the combination of narrow hull, high topsides and deckhouse will very quickly pull it back upright.

Of course, this is an extreme scenario and one to be avoided. The Dashews have always been advocates of prudent seamanship, closely studying the weather and routing their passages accordingly. Switching to power, they are not likely to fall into the cliché of putting the hammer down, setting the autopilot to their ultimate destination and retiring below to watch DVDs.

Their philosophy has always been that speed is a friend – a boat capable of 270 to 300-mile days can stick with weather systems that are desirable and move out of the way of those that are undesirable. Yachts achieve this with low-drag, high-efficiency hull

and I are on passage, we like to be together.' Consequently, the galley, saloon, dining area and navigation centre are all concentrated in the deckhouse, which has marvellous all-round visibility through massive 19mm-thick windows (which can be covered with storm shutters in extreme weather). For watch-keeping in really foul seas, there are aircraft-type seatbelts on the starboard settee, while the aft guest cabin would be used as a bad-weather sea-berth, also with seatbelts.

The engine room is well aft to keep the noise levels down (as goes for most yachts, the sound of engines is anathema to Skip and great attention has been paid to eliminating mechanical noise). The two guest suites are also aft, while the cavernous master suite is just forward of the saloon area. So the main living areas are concentrated at the middle of the vessel, where the motion is minimised. As with a performance yacht, the forward 16ft of the hull is empty, except for light storage.

With high-latitude cruising in mind, the Dashews have been sensible to design this vessel for extreme conditions, even if prudent seamanship and the speed and agility to get out of the way of most systems mean those conditions hopefully will be seldom met.

Whatever the conditions, disciplines and concepts learned through years of high-energy ocean sailing have led them to create an 'unsail' boat that should serve them very well. And, who knows, it may even inspire pause for thought in the conventional powerboat community.

Ivor Wilkins

**RONSTAN**

## AUSTRALIA

The secret formula that is the IRC Rule has become so mystical for Sydney 47 cruiser-racer owner Steve Chiodo that he has fired a warning shot at the rule's administrators, threatening legal action if there is no logical explanation of why his yacht's rating has taken a sudden and significant turn for the worse without there being any request for a remeasurement.

Both he and the yacht's designer, Andy Dovell of Murray, Burns and Dovell, are completely mystified why a new figure has been applied to the yacht's hull factor when, as IRC managers agree, there has been no discrepancy between the new certificate and the hull measurements taken during a full measurement prior to launch.

Chiodo, from Melbourne, launched the yacht Gomez more than a year ago and subsequently guided it to victory in its division at both the Hayman and Hamilton Island regattas. Its design parameters are similar to those of the Swan 45.

The new IRC certificate declares the hull factor has increased from 9.2 to 9.8, enough to incense the normally easy-going Chiodo and have him seeking legal advice. In requiring local jurisdiction to be applied he has also advised Yachting Australia that he will be aiming any formal action at that organisation, as it acts as the RORC's agent for the IRC system in Australia.

'If they can't come up with a better answer than "we can't tell you because it's a secret" then I'll be pursuing legal action,' Chiodo said. 'And I'm receiving strong moral support from other owners – although no one is rushing forward to offer financial assistance!!!'

Apart from the increased penalty on performance Gomez faces, Chiodo is concerned about the impact the unexplained change will have on the value of his asset. Andy Dovell is equally exasperated by the rating change: 'This action suggests that either the rule is subjective, or that the application is not complete enough to be fair.'



If there were galleries exhibiting fine craftsmanship in modern materials, then doubtless the work of John McConaghy's boys in Sydney would feature heavily. No wonder Neville Crichton looks pleased with his new maxi *Alfa Romeo* – wouldn't you?



shapes and *Wind Horse* does the same. For most 83ft powerboats achieving a range of 4,800nm at 10.5kt would take a heap of horsepower and tons of fuel. *Wind Horse* will achieve that with just two 150hp engines and 2,400 gallons of diesel. Most passages will be run at 11kt, with 12-12.5kt achievable if required.

Apart from efficiency (sad to say, running costs on this vessel will be lower than on any of their yachts), the hull shape will also help avoid those vulnerable beam-on situations in bad weather. Most powerboats wallow downwind, or are in danger of broaching, placing them in that most vulnerable of side-on positions. As conditions worsen, the options quickly narrow to turning head to wind and punching into the waves, with the attendant slamming.

*Wind Horse* has a very fine entry hull, which penetrates waves upwind, offering a really smooth motion, while downwind it tends to surf, just like a yacht. 'You don't want the entry to be so fine that the bow takes over and steers the boat downwind,' says Skip. 'It is a balance between having a fine entry for smooth work upwind and preventing the bow from locking in. This boat goes downwind just like a sailboat – the faster you go, the more stable it becomes.'

Another dislike the couple have of conventional powerboats relates to the layout, which separates pilothouse, saloon and galley areas. 'Why would you do that?' wonders Skip. 'When Linda