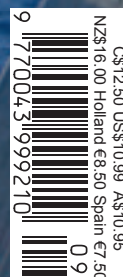


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Stop-start Js

News that *Lionheart*, the newest and largest J Class yacht afloat, has been sold and that the stalled project known as *Atlantis* has also been picked up by a new owner, suggests that the class is about to undergo another surge of development.

Lionheart is not only the latest J to be launched, but also the longest (144ft LOA) based on one of the rejected Burgess/Stephens *Ranger* designs from the 1930s. André Hoek (see right) has configured her for modern use, but her new owner, a Dutchman, will have to rearm her, as it were, with racing sails and other paraphernalia to make her

“The best guess for J Class fleet size next year is four yachts, or possibly six

competitive, although all the signs are that even in cruising mode she is quick.

Although the *Atlantis* project has been restarted, it is unlikely that she will be ready in time for next year's series of J Class regattas in the Solent (see page 122) although the hull shell is ready and a rudimentary fit out could possibly get her to the start line. Her new owner is reportedly Italian.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the Atlantic, Jim Clark's *Hanuman* stood back while *Ranger* and *Velsheda* continued their ongoing duel in a one-off regatta in Newport, Rhode Island. On this occasion *Ranger* won.

With *Endeavour's* major refit almost complete in New Zealand and the prospect of her being repositioned in the Northern Hemisphere in the not too distant future, the best guess for fleet size next year is four yachts, possibly six. It's still very much a guessing game.

David Glenn



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SUPERYACHT CUP PALMA

Hoek takes centre stage

Almost half the fleet at the Superyacht Cup Palma comprised yachts celebrating 25 years of Hoek Design, David Glenn reports

The Bay of Palma served up perfect conditions for the 16th edition of the Superyacht Cup and with the regatta village now well established close to the attractive old town district of Palma, this event has clearly found a formula of which owners thoroughly approve.

Perfect sailing conditions and an inclusive, family-style atmosphere ashore, along with relaxed but sophisticated organisation made for a most enjoyable event.

So far this season, SYC Palma is the only superyacht regatta to have completed its sailing programme, in this case three races. The Dubois Cup (see page 78) and the Loro Piana event, held in Sardinia in June were hobbled by either too much breeze or none at all.

Palma Bay certainly has a habit of delivering the goods with a sea

breeze arriving around noon, and this year conditions allowed Peter Craig's race committee to get proceedings underway on time.

With the wide expanse of the bay at their disposal, simple courses and no big seas to contend with, large yachts are almost guaranteed good sailing and close competition with nothing too extreme. The broad grins in evidence after each day's racing as crews, owners and friends mingled in the cool shade of the village marquee, seemed to say it all.

Of the 21 entries, ten yachts were designed by Hoek Design whose founder André Hoek joined the event to celebrate 25 years in business with as many of his designs as he could muster.

The result was tremendous because not only were there good examples of the Truly Classic genre, which first brought Hoek into the big yacht limelight, but there were some phenomenal examples of his latest work in the form of the 115ft *Firefly* (dubbed the J-slayer), the vast 203ft schooner *Athos* and the recently sold J Class *Lionheart* all making their SYC debut.

Hoek's boats have always been known to be quick, but this was the first time they were competing en masse and they certainly confirmed their nimbleness. *Firefly*, the first of what André Hoek hopes will become the F Class was a truly breathtaking sight, a giant dayboat to all intents and purposes and a very good

Above: *Drumfire* was very hard to catch. Opposite: quick and elegant *Firefly*. Below: André Hoek



“This is better than any boat show – André Hoek



LAberly

SUPERSAIL



P. Colehill/rawphoto.co.uk

looking one at that, although the orange livery (presumably to denote her Dutch ownership) somehow didn't match the modern classic aesthetic. Like the majority of Hoek's yachts, she is designed to compete in the Spirit of Tradition classes for new yachts with classic looks.

Built by John Haart's Claasen Jachtbau in the Netherlands, which also built the J Class *Lionheart*, *Firefly* is intended as a small-scale, manageable J, and significantly one that is capable of beating the heavy-displacement originals. Her underwater lines show a very shallow canoe body, a skinny fin and a big bulb, and while the handicappers in Palma gave her a hard job to do, she fairly scythed through the fleet and certainly left *Lionheart* for dead on more than one occasion.

Interestingly, though, she couldn't catch the 1996 David Pedrick-designed, cold-moulded *Savannah* on handicap.

Yachts like this appeal because they are fairly simple, elegant,

marvellous fun to sail and get round the course like a greyhound. It will be interesting to see if the F Class can build a fleet. My feeling is that it will and that superyacht events like this will be increasingly populated by yachts such as this.

Drumfire to beat

But it was the 79ft 'minnow' *Drumfire* that prevailed to take the Bent Cleat Trophy for best yacht overall. She is more along the lines of Hoek's Truly Classic type. I felt that the handicappers might have been outsmarted by *Drumfire*, which in these conditions – the wind speed never much above low-teens – made her almost impossible to catch if she started close to the front of the fleet.

Aboard the 141ft schooner *This Is Us* (also Hoek) we had a final leg chase in race three and only just managed to pip *Drumfire* on the line. Had her tactics been different she would have denied us the winner's gun. Apart from her raw speed, she was extremely well sailed by a small

crew and while some would say she hardly qualified as a superyacht, she was nonetheless a popular winner.

With such beauties as the magnificent ketch *Marie* and the new schooner *Athos*, the latter still shaking down, the Hoek contingent added a dramatic dimension to the event and there is little doubt it will be back. "This is better than any boat show," commented André Hoek, who appreciated the relaxed atmosphere, the perfect conditions and a great-looking fleet, a winning combination, you would have thought, to demonstrate a brand to a prospective client.

Handicap help

But it wasn't all Hoek. Regulars including *Anny* and *Scorpione dei Mari* may have been pushed down the rankings slightly, but they were both exceptionally well sailed and proved the handicappers right when they say a well sailed yacht will always prevail.

It's just that this year the Hoek contingent, especially the smaller boats, probably needed to have been pegged back a bit by Jim Teeters who crunched the numbers.

Another stand out yacht was *Nilaya*, the Reichel Pugh-designed 111ft sloop which took the Yachting World Trophy for the Performance Division. This carbon supercruiser had a devilish turn of speed, but once again the conditions were perfect for a smaller yacht, not allowing the big boys to get into their stride.

It could be said that the organisers need to be wary of the success of the smaller yacht in both divisions, especially in Palma where light to moderate wind and flat water will benefit them. It would be good to see a larger superyacht walk off with the spoils.



clairematches.com

Top: the beautiful *Firefly*. Centre: the evergreen and distinctive Baltic-built *Anny* won an award for competing in more SYCs than anyone else. Above: PRO Peter Craig

“ Large yachts are guaranteed good sailing in Palma

SUPERSAIL



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Whether it was the Hawaiian fancy dress party, the hog roast or the excellent prizegiving at the Es Baluard Museum you really couldn't fault the functions side of this regatta and the juxtaposition of the event village and the old town with its excellent restaurants and hotels couldn't be better.

There are interesting plans to develop the waterside element of the Muelle Viejo and I hope the local authorities don't drag their feet. This is already a great superyacht venue

and with some of the cool Spanish design already evident in other parts of Palma this could become a centre of excellence for superyachts.

Next year, of course, the centre of attention moves to Cowes and the Superyacht Cup due to be held there from 22-25 July. This does not mean the Palma event won't happen. In fact skippers have made it clear they are very keen to see SYC Palma take place in 2012 so the dates have been set for 20-23 June, which still gives everyone time to get to the UK for



P. Coleshill/rawphoto

The owner of *Nilaya* holds aloft the Yachting World Trophy for winning the Performance Division

the Cowes regatta and catch the J Class racing which runs from 18-21 July in the Solent.

Watch out for *Supersail World* free with the October issue and our report from on board the schooner *This Is Us* during the SYC Palma. For full results go to www.thesuperyachtcup.com

UK superyacht regatta programme in 2012

J Class Regatta, Falmouth	27-30 June
Pendennis Cup, Falmouth	2-7 July
J Class Regatta, Solent	19-20 July
J Class Hundred Guinea Cup, round Isle of Wight	21 July
Superyacht Cup, Cowes	22-25 July



CAPTAIN'S CORNER

Italian yards under pressure

As Northern European yards begin to cut costs, so Italian shipyards are coming increasingly under pressure.

There has always been a notable price gap between the well-respected Northern European yards and the long-established Italian shipyards, which have traditionally benefited from lower labour rates. However, it now appears that this gap is steadily getting smaller.

Top shipyards in the Netherlands and Germany are becoming much more competitive on price. There is still a widely held belief that you have to pay dearly if you want a top quality product from a Dutch yard, but this is no longer an accurate

picture. Recent analysis by brokers shows that the prices are becoming increasingly comparable.

Northern European shipyards appear to have better control over their production processes and are seemingly better set up to streamline their processes and reduce their costs.

Superyacht berthing in Royal Docks for 2012

Royal Docks – London, in conjunction with marina operators Marina Projects, have announced plans for Royal Docks 2012, an exclusive superyacht berthing facility which will be created for July and August 2012, at the heart of London for the 2012 Olympics.

Superyacht berthing is very limited in the London area and the

large historic Royal Docks offer a prime location right alongside the London City Airport and just a short distance from the centre of the city and the main Olympic stadium. The ExCel Centre adjacent to the Royal Docks is an Olympic venue and base for many Olympic events.

Crew wanted in Mexico and Brazil

This year there has been an increasing demand for senior crew from superyacht owners in Mexico and Brazil, reports crew agency The Crew Network. There seems to be a tangible realisation among these clients that a top crew provides a better experience for charter guests and maintains the value of the asset.

However, superyacht crew salaries are lower now than a few years ago, although the more senior crew can still command significant remuneration packages.

Whose fault is it that superyachts are not selling?

Traditionally, summer is the peak of the superyacht sales season, but according to some brokers, yachts are not selling as well as they should and the blame lies outside Europe.

Sales in the US are behind the rest of the world and the slow market there is suppressing world prices. Fraser Yachts believe it appears to be a mindset that is restraining the US market and preventing deals being closed.

As a result of the slow American market, prices elsewhere in the world for yachts have been affected and are still fairly low. Within days of this statement being issued IYC, the US based brokerage house, announced that sales in superyachts had been skyrocketing.

The general view of European brokers is that they do not expect that prices will go up any time soon.