

CARIBBEAN

B E A C H N E W S

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Tom; King of Pinel • Tintamarre, a lot of history on a little island • A tale of coconuts • Diving with all walks of life • Is F the new J ? • Rachel in the Caribbean • Every reason for the Four Seasons



photo: Jasper Faber

IS 'F'

THE NEW

'J'?



From Holland to the Caribbean with love: the F-Class is coming!

By Jan Roosens

Photos by Jasper Faber & Jean Martinique

The last time I was at Antigua Classics (the mother of all classic yacht regattas), I was having drinks with the Dutch owner of the classic Phillip L. Rhodes designed "Alert", his captain Phil, and a bunch of crew and friends from Holland that came to sail and to party. One of them (in the Caribbean they would call him "Big Man" for sure) is Joachim Kieft, manager of Bloemsma Aluminium Bouw and Claasen Shipyards. He is easily two heads bigger than most of the others but his smile and

laugh show the easy-going person he really is. The talk of the day was the ongoing construction of the owner's new race yacht "Firefly", developed by Hoek Design, a yacht that would sail in a new class, her own new "F" class.

The owner (smiling): "I wanted a yacht that looked like a J-Class but for less money and faster". Say's Joachim: "This guy is such a nice person. He came up with the idea to build a new breed of race yacht. Hoek Design and our companies all worked together and only nine months later we were able to launch. We never signed a contract, just a handshake. Where in the yacht building world can you find this?" "Firefly" was indeed launched and sailed her first regatta in

Palma during the Super Yacht Cup. She will soon come to the Caribbean and participate in regattas here.

Her hull was built by Bloemsma Aluminiumbouw and was completed by Claasen Shipyards, most recently responsible for the building of the J-Class "Lionheart". The hull building experts at Bloemsma have been responsible for many "truly classics" and three of the new generation of J-Class yachts, and Claasen Shipyards has a similar pedigree of Dutch excellence.

Designed in the spirit of tradition, the F-Class was developed and engineered as a high-performance racer. "Firefly" is designed to get the best out of two generations, using classic J-

Class lines and modern, high performance technology. The yacht is developed for racing from a technical point of view.

She has carbon spars and composite rigging. The combination of a revolutionary T-style fin keel with a 30 ton lead bulb and a carbon high aspect ratio spade rudder is exceptionally powerful.

Specifically designed for long distance racing, the water ballast system efficiently shifts 5 tons of water from one side to the other within two minutes, optimising time and performance. "The interior has been kept very basic" says Joachim. "There is a shower, a toilet and a small kitchen. There is a navigation



Top: Joachim Kieft, manager at Bloemsma Aluminium Bouw in front of one of the just finished Super J-class hulls



Right: Super J-Class hull ready for transport to Claasen Shipyards where she will be finished

area and pipe cots forward of the mast instead of regular berths. The whole interior weighs barely two tons and the total weight of the yacht is only 60 tons.” A new order for a second F-Class race yacht has already been placed. Construction of the hull has again started at the Bloemsma Aluminiumbouw yard in Makkum and the yacht will be finished like Firefly by Claasen Shipyards. She will be an identical sister vessel to the prototype Firefly.

The newest boat will be racing in the Spirit of Tradition class races and will be committed to a match racing circuit with her one-design F-Class sister vessel Firefly.

The genesis of the F-Class has been a desire to bring back a sense of perspective and fun to racing. Like Firefly, this second yacht will be phenomenally fast and built to race. Says Andre Hoek: “The new F-Class Association has been established so that the boats can be

built as a one design class. We are currently in serious negotiations for hull numbers three and four, and the expectation is that interest in the F-Class will increase exponentially as people see what these amazing designs are capable of on the water.”

Firefly will fly this season in the Caribbean waters and in a short period of time there could be a whole swarm of F-Class yachts!

Necker Island is back and open for business!

Photo courtesy of www.neckerisland.virgin.com

Sir Richard Branson's team has been working extremely hard since the fire on 22 August 2011 that destroyed the Great House.

Plans to rebuild the Great House are already under way and in the meantime the island will be able to cater for slightly smaller groups to stay on island with the newly refurbished six Bali Houses, as well as Sir Richard Branson's private home Temple House and his 105ft luxury catamaran Necker Belle, to substitute for the bedrooms lost in the Great House.

As for the Great House itself, much of the beautiful features of the former house will be incorporated into the new design to ensure it retains its authentic Balinese style with panoramic views of the Caribbean but will include a couple of new and innovative twists!

We will cover more on this in the next issue.



St. Barth Cata Cup - F18 regatta once again a success

The fourth edition of the St. Barth Cata Cup once again lived up to its excellent reputation with a maximum allowed fifty catamarans registered long before the start date.

Members of the St. Barth Multihull Association, in collaboration with the Centre Nautique de St. Barth, organised the regatta again to perfection. Optimal sailing conditions with winds in the 10 to 16 knots range gave Holland's Mischa Heemskerck and Eduard Zanen on their cat "Emeraud Plage" all they needed to become overall winners (as they did also in 2009!) following a close duel with 2010 winners John Casey and Dalton Tebo who came in second place.

Casey and Tebo missed the around-the-island race when they collided with another competitor just before the start, resulting in damage and elimination of both boats. Casey took full responsibility for the collision and gallantly offered his second place trophy to the victims.

The surprising Yan Van den Haute, teammate of Puerto Rican champion Enrique Figueroa on "St Barth Sailor," was thrilled to take fourth place overall, thanks to a superb victory in the around-

the-island race.

Another great result was achieved by Joris Van Den Eynde (St. Maarten) with Kervyn Tanguy on "BERNUTH LINES" who came in at sixth place overall. Their boat was shipped specially from Belgium (where Joris is living now) to St.Barth's to participate in the regatta.

In the other St. Martin results, Budget Marine's Bas de Rooij and Jeroen de Rooij finished in 46th place and Bernard Sillem and Rogier Brans in 47th.

It was a disappointing regatta result for St. Martin's Olivier Bernaz and Frits Bus, who had at least three halyard breakdowns and one missed start. They finished 29th in the overall standings.

At the awards ceremony of this fourth edition of the St. Barth Cata Cup, many of the participants were anxious to know how soon they could sign up for the 2012 regatta.

And if 2012 is anything like 2011, the inscriptions for the maximum allowed participants (50) will be "sold-out" again within 24 hours...



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