



Dimensions		
LOA	18.9m	62ft 3in
Beam	5.30m	17ft 6in
Draught	4.05m	13ft 4in (keel down)
	2.30m	7ft 8in (keel up)
Sail Area	255m ²	2,745ft ²
Disp	15,400kg	34,000lb (lightship)
Berths	10	
Engine	80hp Yanmar	
Water	400lt	105gal.
Fuel	370lt	98gal.
Sail area:disp	41	
Disp:LWL	77	
Designed	Bill Tripp Yacht Designs	
Built	New England Boatworks	

All photos: Billy Black

DESIGNER DAYSAILER

BILL SPRINGER MEETS FORMER WHITBREAD ROUND THE WORLD RACE TEAM OWNER GEORGE COLLINS ON HIS NEW CUSTOM DAYSAILER, *CHESSIE RACING*

At first glance, race day aboard George Collins's sleek new 62ft *Chessie Racing* is pretty much what you would expect to find aboard any high octane racing boat. His crew is peppered with pedigree pro sailors like North Sails's Mike Toppa, who has numerous America's Cup, Volvo Ocean Races, and world championship titles to his name, high profile yacht designers like Bill Tripp, whose distinctive, modern designs – including this one – are raising the bar on superyacht and

sailing performance across the board; and a whole team of strong and experienced guys that know how to push a fast boat. On deck, twin carbon wheels and powerful winches punctuate the cockpit. Carbon sails and a tall carbon mast provide serious sail power, while the aggressive, all carbon hull is covered with distinctive metallic blue paint and an updated team logo that wouldn't look out of place on an ultra-lightweight record breaking race boat. But you won't find many stripped out race

Above: This full-on carbon daysailer/drag racer is designed to be fast in occasional distance races yet easy to daysail with a small crew

Right: The Tripp-designed hull has a retracting keel and twin rudders

boats sporting teak decks, in-boom roller furling, and stylish square portlights. And as I found out during the New York Yacht Club Queen's Cup regatta in Newport, Rhode Island last summer, you won't find many boat owners quite like George Collins either.

The competitive Corinthian

During his long, successful sailing career, 76-year-old George Collins has owned many different types of boat. But he has always been a Corinthian sailor who simply loved to cruise with his family and race with his buddies (and a few pros, he says).

Yet when he started to contemplate retirement from investment firm T. Rowe Price, where he was CEO, far from slowing down and taking up more genteel pastimes, he became even more competitive at the

highest level of offshore racing.

He built, funded, led, and sailed with his own Whitbread Round the World Race team – *Chessie Racing* – in 1997-98. He was 57 years old at the time and is still one of the oldest sailors to ever compete in what is now the Volvo Ocean Race.

Now, nearly 20 years later, he still wants to push himself and sail fast. "I always take it to the extreme," he says. "It's in my make up. Frankly, you don't get to be CEO unless you are a little competitive," he says with a twinkle in his eye.

So, after racing (in no particular order) a Tripp 47, Mumm 30, a Mumm 36, a Farr 52, a Corel 45 ("not a good boat," he adds), Roy Disney's *Pyewacket* ("we won everything on that boat for a while" he says without a hint of ego), and several Swans including a 601

and the Swan 80, which is up for sale, he realised he needed something different.

"I love the Swans," he says. "I wanted something we could race and cruise, and they do that." But when he found himself daysailing his Swan 82 (with a little help) more than anything else from his homes on Miami's Fisher Island in the winter and Guilford, Connecticut in the summer, he knew he needed a boat that was a little less complicated, and as always, he wanted something faster. So he called Bill Tripp.

High octane daysailer

One of Collins's early high-performance boats was a Tripp 47 built by Carroll Marine. Now he needed a boat that could deliver the superior sailing performance of a deep bulb keel with the ability to get into the



small, somewhat shallow harbours near his home in Connecticut. Tripp's reputation for designing fast boats with high performance lifting keels and twin rudders made him the ideal choice.

"With this boat," says Collins, "I wanted 95 per cent day sailing. I wanted simple. I wanted easy. I wanted fast. I wanted it to have a good feel to it. It had to be fast enough to race occasionally, but that's it. And I wanted it to be built in the US, so we called the folks at New England Boatworks and I hired Captain John Boone to be on site as the boat was being built."

While it's obvious Collins has always known what he wants, he's also humble enough to know when to stop: "I don't know enough to 'be involved' with the design. I'm not an engineer."

"We had a series of conversations," says Tripp with a smile that said 'George knows way more about fast boats than most people.' And that's how the new racer/daysailer *ChessieRacing* was born.

The light, stiff, slippery carbon hull, the powerful sailplan, and the deep bulb keel all contribute to superior sailing performance, while a variety of labour-saving devices makes everything convenient and quick. There is in-boom furling, sophisticated hydraulic and electric systems that provide push-button power to every winch and sail control, plus the ability to reduce draught from 13ft 4in to a much more harbour-friendly 7ft 8in. When compared to the Swan, the new *ChessieRacing* is a more easily manageable 62-foot length, which makes it possible for Collins (and one or two other experienced crew) to be popping the kite and doing speed burns in the Gulf Stream off Miami, or Long Island Sound off Guilford in a matter of minutes.

Of course, heavy teak decks do not enhance performance and neither does the bow thruster or the in-boom furling. But the decks sure do look good, and they are comfortable underfoot, while the thruster makes it easier for a short-handed crew to get off the dock, and the in-boom furling means hoisting the big carbon main can be done at the push of a button.

Bill Tripp did lots of interviews with George to make sure he was on track. "We did a three-month design spiral on the boat and came up with the basics of what it was going to be," Tripp said. "All designers will spin towards going 'racy' but on the other hand, George also wanted a boat that he felt at home on. And then Maureen (George's wife) started showing some real interest in the boat too." The solution they came up with was to design a modern interior in sections that can be removed for more serious races.

"You've had so many boats over the years," I ask. "Why go to all the trouble of building yet another one?"

"No boat is perfect and I always want something that's a little faster," he says. "But



"NO BOAT IS PERFECT AND I ALWAYS WANT SOMETHING THAT'S A LITTLE FASTER... I ALSO DO IT FOR THE ART"

Above: The lofty rig carries a powerful sailplan including a carbon North Sails square-top main
Left: Former Whitbread Round the World Race team owner and serial boat owner George Collins

I also do it for the art. I do it because I love it." "What's the art?"

"Well," he continues. "The art is the feel. The venue. The water. The air. It's freedom. When I'm on my skis at the top of the mountain, and can go anywhere I want to, I get this light, lifting feeling. I get the same when I'm flying. And I get it when I'm sailing."

He still wants to race (though not as much as he used to) because he still loves the challenge of competition, the pre-start manoeuvring, and camaraderie of being with the guys on the boat. And as I saw on that sunny summer day off Newport, the guys love him too.

The Queen's Cup

Queen Elizabeth gave the Queen's Cup trophy to the New York Yacht Club in 1953 and the list of past winners includes many iconic American race boats. This was only the second day the crew had really sailed the new *ChessieRacing*, so the day turned into a competitive tune-up. We got off the dock



Above: The modern, superyacht-inspired interior has everything Collins needs for offshore racing and occasional overnight cruising



early as the sea breeze built so Tripp, Toppa and the rest of the guys could check and adjust everything – sail trim, hydraulic and electric systems, rudder angles etc – and for Collins and others to get a feel for the boat's groove. Then Collins pointed at me and said, "You wanna drive?"

There's nothing quite like driving a well trimmed, well designed race boat when it digs in and powers to weather, and the new *ChessieRacing* did not disappoint. Boat speed hovered just under 10 knots (exactly what the polars said we should be doing in 12 knots of breeze), while the twin rudders returned finger-tip control and just the right amount of weather helm. I have to admit it was a lot more fun than sailing the smaller, more traditional daysailers that I'm used to, but it was way easier to drive than a twitchy, thoroughbred race boat.

Soon it was time for the racing to start and that's when I really came to understand what George Collins is all about. He called the guys together so Toppa could go

through the conditions, the competition and the plan for the day. Then Collins stepped into the centre of the circle of experienced sailors and simply said, "Let's sail fast, have fun, and win this one for Jimmy."

"Jimmy" was the legendary American sailor and long time North Sails representative, Jim Allsopp, who died of cancer in March 2016. He was Collins's long-time friend, crew mate, and go-to adviser for nearly every race boat Collins ever owned, including this one. "I still miss him," he said later.

Collins's ability to calmly motivate and lead people helped him succeed in business. And he told me those skills were extremely valuable when it came to managing a Whitbread crew of '35-year-old teenagers'. And he was all business as the starting sequence began, weaving through the fleet that included the 2015 Rolex Yachtsman of the Year, Steve Benjamin's TP52 *Spookie*; NYYC Swan 42s, and even the 12 Metre America's Cup Victory '83. He would be the

Above: A stylish, comfortable, weight-conscious interior built at New England Boatworks in pre-preg carbon with a Nomex honeycomb core

Above right: The interior lighting scheme has its own wireless controller



Bill Springer
Former editor at several American sailing magazines, Bill Springer has sailed to the Arctic Circle, chartered in tropical destinations all over the world, and researched, tested, and written about everything from anchors to zincs.



Above: Wireless electronics and Getac tablet computers in the navstation and at the helms
Left: Powered winches and a captive main provide precision control over a powerful sailplan

