



REFIT

PENDENNIS REFITS LADY K – A TRUE WORLD-GIRDLER

A visit to Pendennis earlier this summer revealed a superyacht yard at the top of its game in refits, the skilled and delicate art of giving yachts a new lease of life.

Seven boats of entirely different shapes, types, ages and lengths were in for refit, including the largest yacht ever to be refitted in the UK, the 86m/282ft motoryacht *Aquila*.

Just five years old, she had been stripped to the frames and completely redesigned inside by Beaulieu-based RWD.

The majestic schooner *Adela* was in for her fourth refit, including new decks, rigging and appendages, and the J Class *Velsheda* lay nearby for her five-year survey – quite a sight.

Plus there was the ocean workhorse *Lady K*...

LADY K

Bill Tripp's long-distance cruiser designs of the late 1990s are, to my mind, the benchmark in large, fast ocean cruising yachts. A sailing

highlight in my life was a Pacific delivery of the 27m/88ft *Shaman*. Her consistent speed, power and stability in big seas, and the communicative feel of her helm, remain fresh in my memory over a decade later.

In *Shaman*, the 22m/72ft *Sirona* and the 23m/77ft *Lady K*, Tripp designed three composite lift-keel boats that, although arguably not all superyacht size by today's standards, were certainly the forerunners and inspiration for some of today's performance super-cruisers.

Between them, these decksaloon yachts – "off-roaders" as Tripp describes them – have sailed to the remotest parts of the planet. They rarely stop, however, so a chance to tour *Lady K* during a refit at the Pendennis yard was very welcome.

Lady K was built in composite in 1998 for unlimited-range bluewater cruising, in particular transpacific sailing. She had been at Pendennis since last November and was due to

leave in time for her owner to cruise to Scotland in late June.

I met up with her Cornish skipper, Richard Dixon, and his partner, Stefanie Waanders, who have been based in New Zealand for the past 20 years and had run the boat for the last four years. *Lady K* had already completed two circumnavigations before they joined her in Darwin.

Since then they have cruised Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia, sailed across the Indian and Atlantic oceans to Rio and explored the Caribbean and Baltic seas.

The six-month stint in Falmouth was the longest *Lady K* had been out of the water since her launch. It was a full refit that involved fitting a new genset and bow thruster, stripping down the hydraulics, renewing the seals for the lift-keel ram and painting her topsides.

Following a whisky tour of the Scottish isles this summer, *Lady K* was due to head north up Norway to the Lofoten Islands within the Arctic Circle. Dixon mentioned that

although she was designed more for downwind Pacific cruising, she had already spent a season in Alaska.

"The mizzen staysail is our secret weapon – it gives a lot of bang for the buck," he explained. "A ketch gives you heaps of options." These include being able to set an asymmetric from each mast and a telescopic whisker pole for poling out the jib. Swept spreaders negate the need for backstays for the carbon rigs. Clean lines and a clean low-maintenance deck make her a manageable boat for the couple to run.

As well as the owner's cabin aft, there is accommodation in three guest cabins plus crew quarters forward. The deckhouse contains a raised saloon and helm station above the central engine space.

On the bulkhead of the lower saloon is a large world map with pins marking the countries *Lady K* has already sailed to. It was still nice to hear Dixon say that of the 35-40 countries he has visited, "nothing compared to the *Fal* last weekend".



Adèle, the 55m/180ft ketch launched by Vitters in 2005, has left Royal Huisman following an extensive refit. Her long list of work while in Vollenhove included a complete mechanical upgrade which required removing the entire engine room. The refreshed yacht has now relaunched and is on an expedition to the Arctic, cruising Svalbard and Norway. Her itinerary then includes Central America, the Panama Canal, the South Pacific and beyond.