

Seahorse

International Sailing

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Summer's here (there!)

'Level heading'

– Rod Davis

FASTER FASTER

A faster PRB

– Greg Metz

A faster Leopard

– Russell Bowler

A faster Ericsson

– Juan Kouyoumdjian

And faster fibres

– SK78 explained

DEADLY STIFF

– building the Alinghi

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started building at the same Boatspeed yard in Australia responsible for Ellen's own successful Irens design. After a quick stop in Paris following the Rhum Thomas flew straight out to Sydney to join his new big baby. There is no time to lose. In one year's time Thomas will be heading off around the world alone, needing to average more than 16kt throughout the 27,000 miles if he is to relieve Ellen of her crown.

Because of a desire to be able to push harder through the big seas of the Southern Ocean, Coville's new *Sodeb'O* has a central hull longer than the floats to measure 32m overall, which is nearly 10m longer than Ellen's *B&Q*. Beam, however, has not increased (at 16.5m) and the sail area is only around 25 per cent more than a modern Orma 60-footer. This boat is all about maintaining a high percentage of a 'high-enough' ultimate performance.

One of the novelties of the new big tri is in the design of the cockpit. Usually a sailor goes 'down below' into his boat which makes for a mental (and of course physical) separation with the outside environment. This separation can prove expensive in responding to an emergency situation on these fast and violent boats. On *Sodeb'O* the skipper is protected by a novel transparent dome, and so can operate from 'inside' his boat at the same level and with the same view as if he was in a cockpit outside.

Nigel Irens likes this step forward for solo designs: 'It is more comfortable for a solo navigator to sleep on a well-protected deck than on a bunk down inside.' Nigel, who is closely following construction from his office in Europe through the magic of modern communications technologies, is also working with Benoît Cabaret on the construction of another similar trimaran that is now building in France for Francis Joyon. Two great Bretons who will be racing each other around the globe quite soon...

Orange turns red (for some)

Earlier this month mobile phone giant Orange announced a new partnership with the French sailing federation. Which sounds like very good news for the French sailing community... but not such good news for Steve Ravussin and Bruno Peyron.

Admittedly Steve did capsize during the Route du Rhum (again) with his Orange-backed Orma 60 and so probably did not expect to be continuing under the same colours, but the decision looks potentially more harsh for Bruno Peyron, who had clocked two fantastic records (Transatlantic and Around the World) with the much bigger *Orange II*.

Now his king of the seas is up for sale. On the other hand, Bruno could perhaps find a fresh way forward by running a new 'The Race 2'. Why not? Other new members of the G-Class are going afloat (*Groupama 3*, *Banque Populaire V*) and the skippers of these boats are certainly more enthusiastic about competing against each other around the world than most of their predecessors were...

Patrice Carpentier



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NEW ZEALAND

A recent theme out of New Zealand has been the welcome rise of a new generation of players achieving top international results, and the trend continued in the New Zealand Match Racing championship when Adam Minoprio and a crew of young guns took it to the established stars.

In the double round robin Minoprio took two of the biggest scalps, Chris Dickson and Dean Barker, twice. Of the big names, only Gavin Brady seemed to have his measure, but after Minoprio had made it through to the semi-finals Brady was singing his praises and expressing admiration for his mature racing. Barker went on to win the title, with Brady second and Dickson third, but there was no doubt that the legacy of strong match racing – well nurtured through the Royal New Zealand Yacht Squadron's highly respected youth programme – was in good shape.

While much of the attention has rightly been with the emerging



Photographer Gilles Martin Raget calls the new Tripp-designed all-carbon Wally 143-footer *Esense* 'the most beautiful yacht in the world'. With these elegant raised gunwales ensuring the magnificent side-profile flows uninterrupted it's hard to argue

generation, an opportunity also arose to reflect on some of those who helped lay the foundations of New Zealand's sailing reputation. Two iconic sailing families of Auckland marked important milestones recently when Salthouse Boatbuilders celebrated their 50th year in business and John Lidgard published his riveting memoir, *It's in the Blood*.

John Salthouse and John Lidgard are both prominent boat-building pioneers, whose careers span the most important years of New Zealand yachting, starting from the post-war rise in prosperity, through the early international successes and spanning the progression from wood to composites. Both are part of marine dynasties that continue today. Even though they are undoubtedly proud of what their offspring are achieving in their respective careers, one suspects they are equally relieved that they left the industry when the scent of woodshavings rather than resin and chemicals still dominated the shopfloor.

This progression from timber to composites was neatly demonstrated at an anniversary bash at the Salthouse Yard in Greenhithe. As a multi-generational crowd gathered to mark the occasion, they shared space in the main shed with the latest Elliott 50 racer, a carbon-fibre creation complete with canting keel. Outside on the slipway the gracious shape of the wooden classic *Windhaven* provided a graphic contrast and a fitting link to the past: John Salthouse helped build *Windhaven* when he was serving his apprenticeship with Col Wild back in the 1940s.

As John's brother-in-law, Robert Brooke (part of another New Zealand sailing dynasty) noted in his speech: 'I never thought I would see high-tech canting-keel racing yachts being constructed at this yard, but I guess it is the way of the future and Salthouse Boatbuilders are at the forefront of this type of construction.'

Recalling the early days of the yard, Brooke said, 'I can remember in 1957 a group of us young lads came out here for a number of weekends to paint the corrugated iron for the big new shed. This large orange shed was the building place for a large number of New