

Today's multihulls can be traced back to outrigger canoes like this model proudly displayed by a carver in the Maskeylene Islands of Vanuatu.



The Multihull Mystique

Confession: I did not bother to tune in to the last America's Cup. Yep. Rather roll in poison ivy than endorse that billionaire's game gone awry. Besides, even if I were paying attention, no coverage materialized on my bargain cable service.

Sure, I admire the engineering feats and sailing expertise that went into the contenders as much as the next water rat, but if it takes a team of lawyers to wrangle over the meanings of "constructed" just to stage a sailboat race, I'm gone. Sure would like a ride on one of those machines though . . . (sigh). Onward.

With eight pages on multihulls beginning on page 8, this month's mag could be regarded as the make-amends issue of *Practical Sailor*. In the September 2009 issue, we profiled a few new monohulls and had the nerve to call them fast. I'm still fielding e-mails from mortified multihull fans. In an

effort to clear the inbox, I'll cut to the chase: Two hulls are better than one!! (Alright, two Stiletto owners put me up to that one, but there is a vein of truth in there.)

Honestly, I am huge fan of go-fast cats and tris, and I think the whole multi-versus-mono kerfuffle is largely fueled by marketing campaigns from both sides. As John Spier, who recounts his family's circumnavigation aboard an Outremer 45 catamaran (page 14) puts it, "We're all sailors."

No matter how many hulls you have on your own chosen craft, I doubt many among us wouldn't relish a fast reach on one of the multihulls featured this month. In fact, I'll bet for many *PS* readers, their passion for sailing could be traced back to that surge of adrenaline upon lift-off aboard one of Hobie Alter's early creations. That's my story: a life-altering pocket of air between the windward

ama of a Hobie 18 and the sparkling shards of Biscayne Bay, Fla.

The hardest part of tackling this subject was trying decide where to start. Personally, I'm a fan of James Wharram's Polynesian-inspired catamarans, no-frills cruisers that practice Aikido with the waves of the Pacific. Ultimately, our focus on the raw exhilaration of sailing speed led us away from the cruising boat market to smaller, nimbler craft.

The boats we settled on are a small cross-section of what's available, but they aptly capture the spirit of the current trends. When you regard the wind and waves as distant echoes from that first Big Bang, then multihull boats—as the Polynesians discovered centuries ago—are more than just a means of getting where we need to go, they stir our very soul.

Cover photo: BMW Oracle warms up before racing in Valencia, Spain. (Photo Courtesy of BMW Oracle Racing, by Guilain Grenier.)

Practical Sailor

May 2010 • Vol. 36 No 5

EDITOR

DARRELL NICHOLSON

CREATIVE DIRECTOR

JUDI CROUSE

MANAGING EDITOR

ANN KEY

TECHNICAL EDITOR

RALPH J. NARANJO

EDITORS AT LARGE

DAN DICKSON, NICK NICHOLSON,
DOUG LOGAN, DAN SPURR

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

SKIP ALLAN, KEN DELAVIGNE, DAVID GILL,
ERIK KLOCKARS, FRANK LANIER,
JEREMY MCGEARY, JOE MINICK, GENE SMITH

PUBLISHER

TIMOTHY H. COLE

EDITORIAL OFFICES

7820 Holiday Drive South, Suite 315
Sarasota, FL 34231

practicalsailor@belvoirpubs.com

CUSTOMER SERVICE, WEB, BACK ISSUES, OR FAX SERVICE

PO Box 5656
Norwalk, CT 06856-5656
800/424-7887

customer_service@belvoir.com

SUBSCRIPTION DEPARTMENT:

800/829-9087
www.practical-sailor.com/cs
Box 420235
Palm Coast, FL 32142-0235
for Canada:
Box 7820 STN Main, London, Ontario
N5Y 5W1

B
Belvoir

Practical Sailor (ISSN #0161-8059) is published monthly by Belvoir Publications Inc., 800 Connecticut Ave, Norwalk, CT 06854-1631. Robert Englander, Chairman and CEO; Timothy H. Cole, Executive Vice President, Editorial Director; Philip L. Penny, Chief Operating Officer; Greg King, Executive Vice President, Marketing Director; Ron Goldberg, Chief Financial Officer; Tom Canfield, Vice President, Circulation. Periodicals. Postage paid at Norwalk, CT, and at additional mailing offices.

Copyright © 2010, Belvoir Publications, Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part is strictly prohibited. Printed in USA. Revenue Canada GST Account #128044658. Canada Publishing Agreement Number #40016479.

Subscriptions: \$84 annually. Single copies, \$7.50 (U.S.). Bulk rate subscriptions for organizations and educational institutions are available upon request.

Postmaster: send address corrections to *Practical Sailor*, PO Box 420235, Palm Coast FL 32142. *Practical Sailor*, P.O. Box 39, Norwich ON, N0J 1P0 Canada. WDS return address in Canada: Station A, P.O. Box 54, Windsor, Ontario N9A 6J5.

REPRINTS FOR PUBLICATION AND WEB POSTING AVAILABLE

Contact Jennifer Jimolka, Belvoir Media, 203/857-3144

PRACTICAL SAILOR ACCEPTS NO COMMERCIAL ADVERTISING