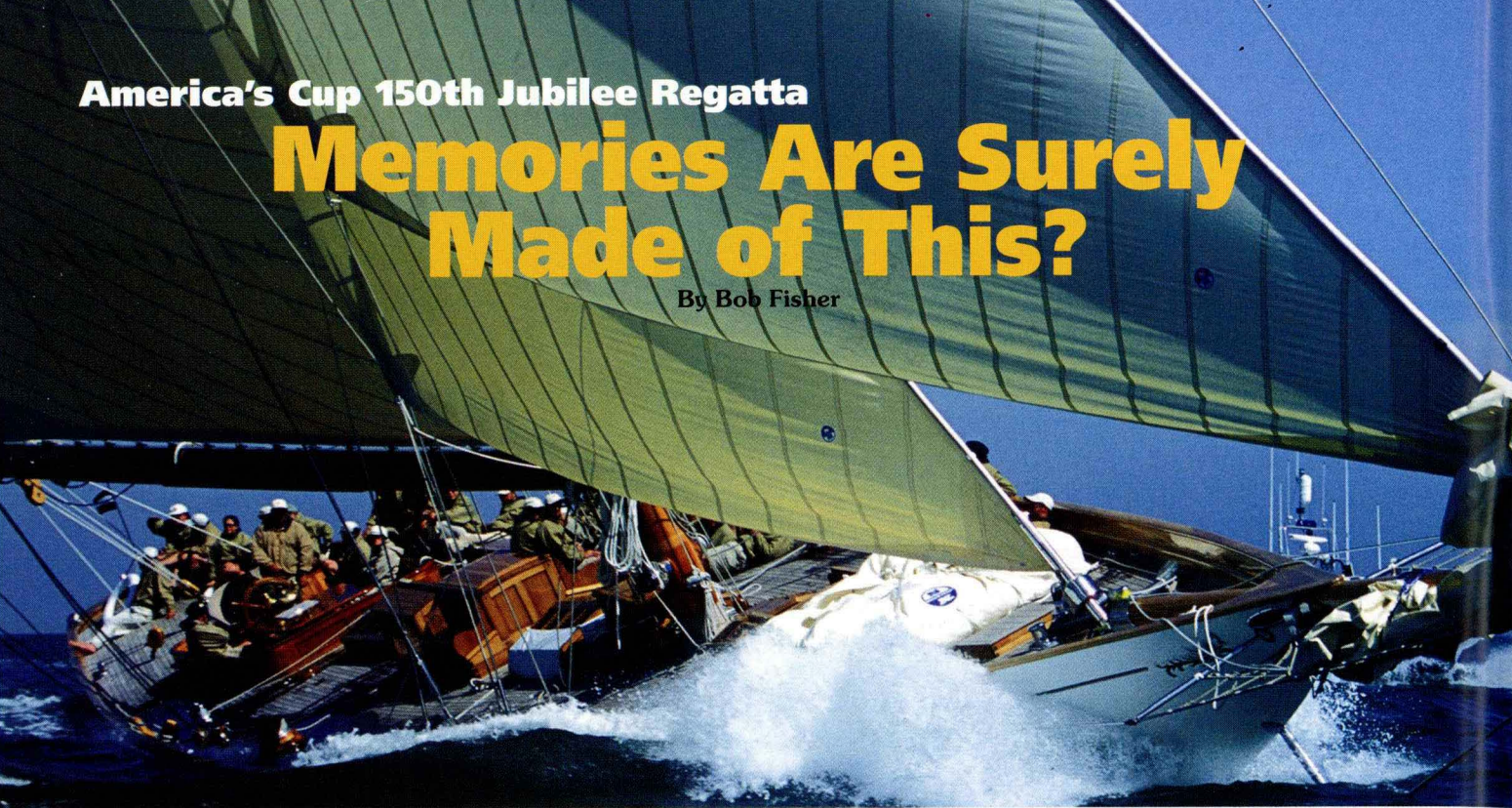


## America's Cup 150th Jubilee Regatta

# Memories Are Surely Made of This?

By Bob Fisher



There were many spectacular boats during the America's Cup Jubilee, with Cambria being a magnificent sight.

Pic by Peter Goldman

There will never be another regatta like it – the Jubilee Regatta had it all. There were boats from all eras, including the Rudi Shaefer-commissioned replica of the schooner *America*, built in 1967; and particularly, there were the people from the Cup's history and from the better sailing events of the past half century to make it a sailing Woodstock – you had to be there.

It was an unqualified success. It was difficult to see everyone, but one of the favourite occupations of the 'legends' around the bars was in trying to identify those who had failed to attend. The top end absentee was Ted Turner, who won the Cup in 1977, and since this had become a festival of all sailing, there were others whose presence was missed, among them Charles Blundell, better known as Chas from Tas. Generally the great, the good, the rogues and vagabonds of the offshore circuits and, for a change, their ladies, turned up to enjoy themselves afloat and ashore.

What Turner missed was a festival of sailing with the race around the Isle of Wight as its centrepiece. The weather Gods chose to bless this race with the best weather of the week – enough wind and undiminished sunshine – for a modern yacht, Gianni Agnelli's 92 foot *Stealth*, to record the fastest time for the 50-mile course. Her 4 hours 48 minutes and 9 seconds was well outside the monohull record, but it was less than half the time *America* had taken in 1851. Bob Miller's *Mari Cha IV* was nine minutes slower and six minutes faster than Hasso Plattner's *Morning Glory* and another three minutes ahead of Mike Slade's *Skandia Leopard*, which was an hour outside her own record.

Boats and sailors came from all over the world for the regatta and the entry was to be limited to 200, but some of the late entries just couldn't be turned away, so important were they to the event. The sailors would not be refused; almost everyone who had taken part in or been around the America's Cup and was still alive was in this tiny town, sailing and attending the parties that were as double-banked as the yachts in the marina. It was easier to count the missing faces.

Nothing in sailing could ever compare with the applause that sent *Australia II* on to the water on the final day. It was the last time that the boat which broke the 132-year stranglehold of the New York Yacht Club on the America's Cup would ever go out racing – she is destined to return to the Western Australian Maritime Museum in Fremantle.

*Australia II* and her crew led by John Bertrand – the same crew, without exception, as sailed her to victory in Newport, Rhode Island in 1983 – were almost certainly the centre of attraction at an event where the quality of the yachts has been undeniably the finest ever seen in one place at anytime. The streaked grey hair of all of that Cup-winning crew is a reminder that their moment of glory was almost 20 years ago, as it was for the majority, some many more years ago, like the 93-year-old yacht designer, Olin Stephens, whose association with the

America's Cup began in 1937 when jointly with Starling Burgess he drew the lines of the wonderboat, *Ranger*, which comprehensively defeated *Endeavour II*. Stephens was in Cowes, sailing aboard one of his 12-Metres which successfully defended the Cup in the Sixties.

So, too, were many of the other successful skippers and crews. Dennis Conner, the man who has been tagged "Mr. America's Cup" because he has won it four times and lost it twice, had moved his bulk to the 118-foot *Extra Beat*, owned by John McCaw from Seattle, and was seen caught on one of the Solent's hazards. He was aground on Lepe Spit for the best part of half an hour, but he was still smiling.

One who failed to take it from the NYYC was Sir James Hardy, "Gentleman Jim" to the Americans, who has been part of the support group of *Australia II* in Cowes. "I'm staggered by the people who are here," he said, "I don't think there is anyone significant who hasn't made the effort to come." And then he remembered the most colourful of all Cup skippers, Turner, who was forever noticeable by his absence. "He should be here," he commented.

On the water, the Jubilee Regatta lived up to everything it had been promising on land, with a goodly breeze of 25 - 30 knots on the opening day which ended some competitors' regattas early when antique wooden masts were split asunder by some fierce gusts and sails were shredded in spectacular fashion. Centre of attraction, undoubtedly, were the three J-class yachts, *Endeavour*, *Shamrock V* and *Velsheda*, together with the 23-Metre *Cambria*. The latter was racing for the first time in 40 years.

The recreation of the first race for the America's Cup, around the Isle of Wight, was sensational. The 208 boats were feted all the way round, the level of serendipity was colossal. Who would have thought that this was simply a yacht race? Crowds gathered at the headlands and the spectator boats generally kept a respectful distance and that fleet of boats was as big, if not bigger, than the one which saw off the Whitbread Round the World Race four years ago. Any doubts that the organisers may

## America's Cup Jubilee

# Koch Collects Another 'First'

American millionaire Bill Koch, winner in 1992 of the America's Cup, successfully bid £310,000 (US\$450,000) for the Hennessy America's Cup Jubilee eaux-de-vie Cognac Collection, auctioned to aid the Royal National Lifeboat Institution.

The public sale of the unique collection was one of the highlights of the Moët et Chandon America's Cup Jubilee Ball last month at the summer residence of Queen Victoria. Members of Team New Zealand, successful defenders of the America's Cup in 2000, were the guests of honour at the ball.

Koch was the high stakes winner in a spirited bidding contest against an anonymous opponent before 2200 guests at the ball, highlight of the social calendar at the Jubilee.

A clearly delighted Koch said: "After spending \$68 million on the America's Cup, this was rather cheap."

Hennessy, one of the sponsors of the Jubilee, assembled and donated the Collection, a 31-bottle set of vintage cognacs from America's Cup event years starting in 1851. The collection, the only one of its kind ever created, featured specially created labels with drawings of the challengers and defenders. It was housed in an oak and teak cabinet.

Hennessy placed an estimated value of £20,000 on the collection. When bidding started, four or five bidders quickly drove the price up to £100,000. They dropped out as Koch and an unknown bidder in the back of the room pushed the stakes steadily higher. ↓



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Velsheda was one of the restored J-boats racing in the jubilee, and had South African Brent Sender aboard.

Pic by Peter Goldman

have had about this regatta were certainly despatched right there and then.

*Stealth*, the Frers-designed all-carbon 92-footer, with Ken Read behind the wheel and Tom Whidden calling the tactics, was the star of the day, leaping into an early lead and sailing down the Eastern Solent to Spithead and drawing away from her pursuers. Behind her the scrap between the other three big boats was intense. Ludde Ingvall's 79-foot *Nicorette* took the initial advantage and was then passed by the 80-foot *Morning Glory*, but at the Nab Lights – the lightship on station where one had been in 1851 – Ben Ainslie with Peter Gilmour calling tactics on the 92-foot *Skandia*

*Leopard* slipped inside with *Morning Glory* attempting a slam-dunk with owner Hasso Plattner steering.

As the boats approached the Needles they were met by a huge spectator fleet, not just the Royal Yacht that had greeted *America* 150 years earlier, and massive crowds on the headlands all the way up the Solent to the finish at the Royal Yacht Squadron. Bob Miller's huge *Mari Cha IV*, finishing later as she had started later, was not as quick as *Stealth* and the prize of the week went to the Italian boat.

Not very far behind *Stealth*'s time was that of Peter Harrison's GBR Challenge yacht, *Idaten*, winning her class, somewhat ironically, on a protest against

Patrizio Bertelli's *Prada*, the boat which challenged for the Cup last year. *Prada* had luffed *Idaten* into the "exclusion zone", an area south of a line between Gurnard buoy and the Hennessy mark, the inner distance mark of the starting and finishing line. By doing so, *Prada* trapped *Idaten*, already hampered with a broken spinnaker inboard end fitting, and beat her on the gybe to get back inside the limit mark.

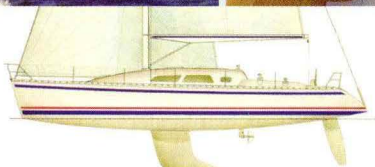
In the 12-Metre World Championship, the Alinghi Challenge led by Russell Coutts with owner Ernesto Bertarelli as navigator, sailed the Ben Lexcen-designed *South Australia* to victory. Coutts admitted that they had modified the keel

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**Australia 11 with all her race-winning crew brought back many a memory during the Jubilee.**

**Pic by Peter Goldman**

and moved the whole rig forward 20 centimetres. She scored 1-1-2-1-4 and had no need to sail the last race, when Coutts and Co were seen heading for the golf course! The boat that was dubbed *Kiwi Magic* in Fremantle, when she had the remarkable record in the three rounds robin of 33 victories and only one defeat, the Farr, Davidson & Holland designed KZ-7, was second with a 5-2-3-3-6-1 scoreline, just edging out *Australia II* with 2-4-5-2-3-4.

In the Modern 12-Metres, *Freedom* scored 1-1-2-3-1-1 to win by a handsome

seven point margin from *Intrepid* with 6-3-1-1-2-7 and *Victory '82* was third. In the Classic 12-Metres, Jacques Fauroux took *Sovereign*, the 1964 challenger, to victory with DSQ-3-1-5-1-1, three points clear of Antonio Marrai's *Nyala*.

The overall prize for the Modern IMS boats went to John McCaw's *Extra-Beat* with Dennis Conner at the wheel, scoring 1-1-2-2-1 and beating Kit Hobday's and Tim Louis's *Bear of Britain* on the countback, she having scored 1-1-9-1-2. Bob Miller's giant ketch, *Mari Cha IV* was third with 2-7-1-1-3.

There were members of all the 48 clubs which have been involved with the America's Cup in Cowes from Sir Michael Fay of the Mercury Bay Boating Club in New Zealand, to Charles Dana, the current Commodore of the august New York Yacht Club. But no one was more happy to be back in sailing than Alan Bond, whose four challenges finally unbolted the America's Cup. He sailed aboard *Australia II* in the Round the Island Race and his smile will need to be chiselled away. ⚓

**Stone Town** By Thora Paver

## A Walk In History

**A rabbit warren of alleys. Bikes and mopeds tooting and signalling their imminent appearance around a corner. Dingy, cupboard-sized shops. Old Muslim men hanging around the streets. Mysterious women gliding along. Happy children in throngs. These are some of the sights and impressions of Stone Town, on Zanzibar island.**

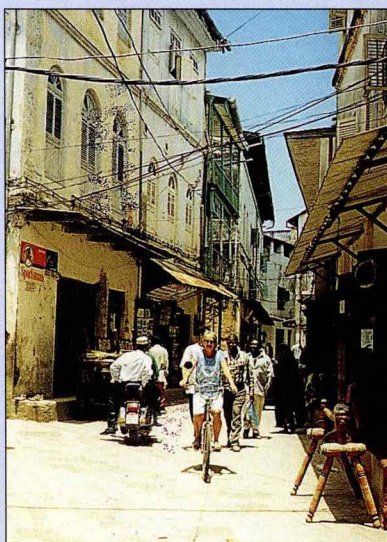
What makes it different to towns on the mainland? It is not African. The Arabic influence still lingers, and one feels far from anything familiar.

A map will show that there are streets, but not many are signposted. As a visitor, it is difficult to find one's way back to a shop or hotel - there seems to be no order. One cannot go "round the block" to return to where one was.

Signs of technological advancement abound, however. At almost every corner there is a sign to a computer, fax and e-mail centre. There may not be hot water, but there is Hotmail.

The Anglican cathedral stands on the site of the old slave market, where activity was very brisk in its day in Zanzibar. Within the church is a wooden cross with an interesting history. After David Livingstone had died in central Africa in 1873, his faithful bearers carried his body to the coast (a trip of 1,600 kilometres which took 10 months), for later transportation to Britain. Prior to this, though, his heart had been removed and, knowing how he had felt about Africa, they buried it under a tree. The cross in this church was made of wood from that tree.

Near the cathedral are the "slave pits", where captured humans



were kept while waiting for a ship to arrive and take them away.

There is a constant stream of tourists pouring in on the many ferries that ply between Dar es Salaam and Zanzibar. Friendly would-be guides and taxi drivers jostle for one's attention.

Along the waterfront are the showpieces of Stone Town, and the largest building, the House of Wonders, lords it over the community. Built as a ceremonial palace by one of the sultans, this edifice is architecturally interesting, but we were disappointed at not being allowed inside. We had heard that it houses the collection of cars belonging to the last sultan, in various states of dusty disrepair. The verandah has been given over to local craftsmen to sell their lovely but expensive wares. The central tower now houses the signal station for the harbour.

Blues restaurant, formerly the Floating restaurant, is worthy of mention. It is built on stilts over the water. It was erected for the very important visit of British royalty, in the 1950s. This was to serve as a jetty where the visitors would land, as there existed no such facility. In 1952 Zanzibar was on the itinerary of the then Princess Elizabeth, but before she reached there, her father, King George VI, died and she returned home as Queen Elizabeth II.

The waterfront comes alive at night with vendors selling all manner of curios and foodstuffs. Some foods, like the prawns-on-a-skewer which we enjoyed, are cooked to order on a braai. The festive atmosphere is enhanced by local musicians. Hotels and hovels exist cheek-by-jowl in Stone Town. Many of the hotels have in their foyers elaborately carved and brassed wooden chests. Descendants of the craftsmen who made these now eke out a living in squalid conditions nearby. The rich and the poor - but when one considers where they live, the poor are rich indeed. ⚓