



It's quite the fashion these days to fly your new boat in for her launch. Alain Thébault's energetic Hydroptère team took the obvious option when it came to collecting the new *Hydroptère.ch* from Bertrand Cardis' Décision yard ahead of her launch in Switzerland. This boat is purely a testbed for new ideas to be explored before construction starts of a Jules Verne maxi tri-foiler later next year

Oracle budget you might be sailing a TP52 for the next 100 years.

The 2011 TP52 is a well-optimised product. The box is pretty tight. It is not an extravagant product, nor a Formula One car that can only be driven by a handful of pilots. It is certainly not a one-trick pony. Fifty feet is a decent size to race inshore as well as offshore. It is this multi-functionalism that gives the TP52 its steady secondhand market.

The comparison with the America's Cup during 2010 was understandable. We had many of the best sailors on the planet as well as a few owners interested in Cup participation. It was not our aim, we prefer a healthy mix of owner-driver and professional teams. A full pro-circuit is not a realistic choice. Even the AC is mainly private funding. The Volvo is the exception. Sponsorship and proper offshore racing seem an easier mix.

For 2011 we will see more owner-driver interest. Niklas Zennström will helm his new *Ran* and Johnny Vincent, owner of the former *Ran*, now *Pace*, will helm his boat. As the TP52 class manager I dream of similar circuits elsewhere, probably on a full owner-driver basis and, possibly to begin with, scored under IRC. With more and more 2011 TP52s coming onto the market it will become possible to race competitively as a TP52 one day and the next under IRC, without modification.

From Flintstone to Facebook, join the party.

#### FREE AGENT

##### – Lynn Fitzpatrick

There is nothing that 27-year-old Frithjof Kleen wants more than to be an Olympic Star sailor. His future looked bright while he and helmsman Alexander Schlonski were posting nice results at major events. However, when other German teams started eclipsing them on the international stage Schlonski sought to gain an advantage by switching crews.

'I was totally surprised by the split,' reflected Kleen, who is still in college. 'But I considered my options and decided that it would be far worse to stop sailing.'

When Peter O'Leary needed a crew for a Weymouth training session in July he invited Kleen. As the trial period in O'Leary's

brand new PStar drew to a close the Irish skipper asked Kleen to race with him at Skandia Sail for Gold. With a little luck and a lot of skill, the young man 'from the O'Leary clan and his crew with the unpronounceable name', according to the race commentators, passed several boats during the final run to win the regatta.

The Sail for Gold victory was 'the biggest result that I have ever had. We were at the Olympic venue and sailing against so many world champions and Olympic medallists. It was out of a movie,' said Kleen. 'Our pre-regatta goal: to try to make the top 10.'

Kleen's wetsuit was still damp when he landed in LA to race the Star North Americans with 2009 Star world champion George Szabo. The 42-boat championship was decided during a dramatic final match race between Szabo/Kleen and the famously strong Brazilian light-air pairing of Lars Grael and Ronald Siefert. Szabo and Kleen came out on top.

As Bruno Prada's European body double, Kleen has spent



Sometimes it's hard to stay elegant, as Star super-crew Frithjof Kleen – who remains 'stateless' – keeps his weight forward downwind crewing for Robert Scheidt at the 2010 Star Eastern Europeans, where the pair finished second behind Freddy Lööf

GILLES MARTIN-RAGET

NICO KRAUSS

numerous lengthy training sessions with another Brazilian, Robert Scheidt. After receiving his Star North Americans trophy Kleen jetted to Germany where he and Scheidt took a silver medal in the Star Eastern European championship.

So how will Kleen determine who he will train and race with now, given his new free agent status? 'Until recently,' he said, 'I would sail with a top guy to learn. Now I race with a top guy to win.'

Kleen, who played major league basketball in Germany for 10 years, also intends to continue his formal education. Of sailing he says, 'It's the best job. Besides studying and going to school, of course.' An unusual and ambitious young man.

## VERY DENNIS

A dark-hulled 12 that we figured was the British *Victory* '83 was away clean at the pin. It tacked onto port and laid the weather mark with great precision, current and all. Buck Margold and I reckoned the Brits had it made. But as the lead increased noticeably Buck turned to me and said, 'That wouldn't be the Big Man, would it?'

I twisted the binoculars into focus. *US-55. Freedom*. Dennis. Again – the perfect execution of one of the most difficult sailing dilemmas in the book.

### Sir

Last week I was in the amazing world of Les Voiles de St Tropez with its beautiful boats, beautiful women and unique race management... I had been navigating a Maxi in wonderful Irish company. The first thing I saw when I got home and opened your last edition early on Monday morning was a Fireball. I was back down to earth! Had I opened at a page with the words Deed of Gift I would have glazed over.

I enjoyed the article as it places the Fireball in the correct context as far as the evolution of racing dinghies is concerned. What it did for the Icelanders it also did for thousands of others. Their singleminded determination to apply the same principles to the construction of an affordable day-racer is inspiring. Good luck to them.

The Fireball is sometimes mocked as being the ultimate in outdated designs, but it has its place in history. Ironically, the Fireball was saved from decline when minor changes to the interior angles made it possible for epoxy foam sandwich hulls to be produced economically using just two ingenious moulds. Modern hulls are bulletproof and so have the good second-hand values that help sustain the class.

The Fireball was a revolutionary design in its day whereas I believe the 505 evolved from an older French design. The Fireball's designer, Peter Milne, had a number of criteria, one of which was 'individual appearance' – inspired by his interest in flat-bottomed American scows.

As with other older classes, the use of Mylar sails has updated the image, though few would argue that the Fireball is as beautiful as the 505, the design of which looks as fresh as ever. Both boats are a joy to sail in a big breeze; you can carry on racing in 25kt+ when other dinghy types are just surviving.

At one time it was rumoured that the Fireball was to be nominated for Olympic status. Fortunately, it had a merciful escape. Just as well... wouldn't it be dreadful if Olympic sailors had to race in old-fashioned and dated designs.  
*Keith Walker, Southampton UK*



TOM GRUITT

*Freedom*, in which Conner won the Cup in 1980, and not by any means the most modern 12 on the course, just kept pulling away all afternoon. Her gybe-set outside the bay was clean and quick. On the long downwind leg her course kept her clear of traffic and chop, her spinnaker douse would have looked good in a Cup race, and her tide-dodging beat to the finish kept her totally invulnerable. Her lead at the finish was close to a mile, and it was set up by a really gutsy pin end start.

I'd seen it all before. The whole show was very, very Dennis.  
*Bruce Kirby, enjoying the 12 Metre reunion in Newport RI* □



CONNIE VAN DER WAL

Dennis Conner brings his 1980 America's Cup Defender *Freedom* gently back to the dock in Newport RI after reminding some old rivals – Bill Ficker, Ted Turner and Robbie Doyle – of who's boss

## SNAPSHOTS

- **Nice work...** Seahorse contributor and engineer Rob Cook; Item 11 on the agenda for the 2010 ISAF Special Regs committee refers to the promised (simplified) rules rewrite... following a *Seahorse* article two years ago
- **DFL...** Team New Zealand and Dean Barker's first venture into multihulls at the final Extreme 40 round
- **25pt...** behind the next finisher
- **Not...** for long, we expect
- **Off to Kiwi...** Magnus Clarke, Guillaume Verdier, Steve Killing, Benjamin Muyl (ex-VPLP) and others
- **Well...** some of it will be true
- **Problem...** disputes over what is and what is not a genuine 'Wally'
- **Solution...** start a new class
- **Look out...** for the new Wally 100 Racer division
- **Ouch...** the 600kg stack to be moved by Imoca 60 solo skippers in the Rhum – 'it's only a middle-distance sprint', says *Bel's* Kito de Pavant
- **Fair enough...** a Category 5 typhoon with winds exceeding 155mph prompted the rescheduling of this year's Hong Kong to Vietnam Race
- **Recession news...** at least two more J-Class re-creations, *Enterprise* and *Svea*, are under discussion
- **Going global...** Harbor Wing Technologies (issue 347) have been taken under the wing (sorry) of Raytheon in their US Dept of Defense mentoring programme (more soon)
- **Why not...** Oman to up the ante with a Cup challenge?
- **Move over...** Dave Gilmour (no, not that one) will be taking on Pop at the Monsoon Cup
- **Charlie...** *St Cloud*, the movie. Look out for the cameo appearance by *Seahorse*
- **Who knows...** where we are going next
- **Know your subject...** one of Bill Goggins' early encounters with his interviewee was being towed on waterskis behind Buddy Melges's E-Scow for an 'educational' boathandling video
- **Bonne voyage...** *Seahorse's* Miranda Merron and partner Halvard Mabire have taken delivery of a new Pogo 40S2 hull and deck for the Global Ocean Race
- **Now...** they just need the money, time and money to finish it...
- **Oops...** yes, we (now) realise it was (obviously) not a 12 Metre on page 29 last month
- **Stay in touch...** with [www.scuttlebutteurope.com](http://www.scuttlebutteurope.com)