

# KRAKEN NEWS

A large sailboat with a spade rudder is sailing on the ocean at sunset. The boat is white with a large, dark sail. The sky is a mix of orange and blue, and the water is dark blue with some whitecaps. The boat is moving towards the right side of the frame, leaving a white wake behind it.

MARCH 2020

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### Travel & Discovery

#### The Sultans Of Sail

Istanbul: Where east meets west

### Meet The Team

Get to know our design engineer, Filip Sochaj

### K50 Update

Trystan Grace reports on the next stage of a Kraken 50 in build

### Technical Reviews

Keel or deck-stepped mast?  
Which is the perfect rig for blue water cruising?



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## MARCH 2020

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## SAILING NEWS



### KRAKEN IS COVER GIRL ...AGAIN

Kraken yachts have been feted by the international yachting press yet again: this time a K50 on the front cover of Yachting Monthly's current issue and in the same month a Kraken 66 adorns the cover of Sailing Today. Kraken Yachts' chairman, Dick Beaumont, said: 'We're already running out of wall space for the posters in our new company offices in Turkey, Krakens have now taken front cover honours on 10 of the world's top magazines in the last 12 months!' Dick said he was amazed and very grateful for the tremendous support and encouragement Kraken Yachts has enjoyed from the yachting media since its launch just 4 years ago. 'When you buck the trend, you can't help wondering if you're alone in the beliefs you hold.' That's clearly not the case and the order books speak for themselves, as production for this year is almost sold out, with the earliest delivery for a Kraken 50 now June 2021.



### TWO DICKS ALL AT SEA PODCAST

Please listen out for our new podcast. Dick Durham, Dick Beaumont and guests will debate blue water sailing topics every month. The first topic will be the psychology of crews on long passages at sea.



### BOLT-ON KEELS MUST BE CHECKED REGULARLY: DESIGNER SPEAKS OUT

Following the news that an independent inquiry is to be launched into the loss of the keel from the Sydney-Hobart yacht Showtime (See **Kraken News February**), top naval architect Kevin Dibley has anticipated the findings. The New Zealand-based designer says any enquiry will come to the same conclusions, namely that keels with such configuration ie bolt-ons should be regularly inspected and undergo rigorous analysis. 'The fin must be checked for signs of corrosion, bolts must be re-checked regularly, and both must be tested by an expert following any impact or grounding,' Dibley said.

### YACHT SPLIT IN TWO AFTER KEEL FAILURE: FULL STORY IN SAIL MAGAZINE

An account of the loss of a race yacht's keel is covered in next month's Sail magazine, the leading US yachting journal. Ran Tan II, an Elliott 50, was on passage from Tahiti to the west coast of America, in June last year, when the keel started to break off causing the hull to split in two. Her three New Zealand crew took to the life-raft 1,700 miles east of Hawaii and were eventually picked up by a Mexican tuna boat.



### KRAKEN ON TOP OF THE WORLD

Kraken friend Mawgan Grace has just completed a climb to the summit of Kilimanjaro to raise money for Tusk [tusk.org](https://tusk.org) and Conservation Lower Zambezi [conservationlowerzambezi.org/get-involved](https://conservationlowerzambezi.org/get-involved). Animal conservation is very important & Kraken Yachts sponsored Mawgan's climb. Read Kraken News next month for a full report. If you would like to donate, please visit - [uk.virginmoneygiving.com/MawganGrace1](https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/MawganGrace1)

# What's wrong with spade rudders?

BY DICK DURHAM

With around 1,900 exhibitors from over 70 nations the Düsseldorf International Boat Show is considered to set the benchmark for the yachting industry and is billed as the biggest show of its kind in the world. And yet as the 2020 edition came to a close and organizers claimed visitor numbers of 250,000, it was impossible not to ask: 'Have they all been well served?'

Checking over the list of cruising boats, which included Amel, Contest, Hallberg Rassy, Oyster, Najad, Jeanneau, Beneteau, Bavaria, Hanse and all others, it came as a surprise to realize not one of them now builds a model with a fully supported, skeg-hung rudder. Every single hull is now fitted with either twin or single spade rudders.



Double spade rudders

And yet any random scrutiny of cruising forums throws up no end of examples of ocean voyages that have come to grief through steering failure and of those the majority are from the loss of spade rudders. Don Casey, a technical journalist with the leading US yachting magazine SAIL, says: 'Before you shrug off rudder failure as a remote concern

consider that the incidence of mid-ocean **failures is close to one per cent.**'

With 250 plus boats entering the Atlantic Rally for Cruisers (ARC) each year, to name just one of scores of such global events, any percentage is too close for comfort.

'A rudder stock should not be so strong that it prizes open the bottom of a boat rather than bending in a collision or grounding. This makes spade rudders on lightly built boats unavoidably more vulnerable to a bent stock,' said Don.

'A bent metal stock can result in a rudder being jammed off-centre which will thwart any efforts to steer a boat with sails, drogues, a jury rudder or towing lines.'

The spade rudder is vulnerable to failing through corrosion, grounding or impact with dense ocean objects including whales, containers, and lumber.

### Corrosion

One case highlighted in detail is that of Megawat, a Hanse 371, a Category A, ocean-going yacht, on passage from Dublin to Scotland in 25 knots of wind and a 1.5m swell. Her rudder snapped off while surfing down a wave. Helmsman Brian McDowell said: 'There was a loud bang like a pistol shot, the wheel went limp and the boat rounded up sharply.' She sank within 40 minutes and the crew were taken off by another yacht.

The Marine Casualty Investigation Board (MCIB), the Irish maritime investigation bureau found that: 'Due to the catastrophic failure of the rudder stock and deluge of water the electric bilge pump and manual bilge pumps had insufficient capacity to control the flooding of the craft.'

One of the MCIB's conclusions was that the rudder stock of the four-year-old boat was suffering from corrosion.

## Some rudder failures in the ARC

Atlantic Rally for Cruisers:

- 1998** Harlequin, Dehler 41, damaged rudder stock, yacht abandoned
- 2001** Heya, EC 37, lost rudder
- 2002** F2, Hunter Legend 450, broke rudder stock
- 2006** Arnolf, Bavaria 350, broke rudder stock
- 2006** YNot, Contest 48 lost rudder
- 2009** Auliana II, JV53, lost rudder, yacht abandoned
- 2012** Modus Vivendi, Motiva 49 lost rudder
- 2016** Endorphine II, Bavaria 47, rudder shaft split
- 2016** Lady Nor, More 55, rudder broke off

ARC weather expert Chris Tibbs said: 'Most years during the ARC there are reports of rudder failures. They include rudders breaking away, the shaft bending or breaking, bearings that seize or break away after hitting an object in the water. The shaft can be bent so that the helm is locked in a fixed position.'

From the forums a random selection of failures include:

- 2007** Zouk, Jeanneau Sun Odyssey 43, lost rudder, boat abandoned
- 2010** Elethea, Beneteau First 38, rudder blade came off, boat abandoned
- 2011** Beneteau Oceanis 45 rudder failure, boat sank
- 2014** Be Good Too, brand new Alpha 42 catamaran suffered double rudder failure 300 miles off US East Coast. Crew airlifted off. Uprturned hull washed up on Scottish island in 2017.
- 2015** Egret, Sweden Yachts 390, rudder blade snapped off mid-Atlantic
- 2015** Scarlet Oyster, Oyster 48, rudder stock snapped off in Mediterranean
- 2017** Dove II, Hanse 52, rudder disintegrated 400 miles east of Barbados. Family of four and one crew member rescued by another yacht.
- 2018** Hilma, Jeanneau 45, lost rudder
- 2019** Beneteau First 40 hit a buoy off Cowes, broke off rudder and sank in the Solent. Three crew rescued by lifeboat.



Grounding

Leading UK boat-builder and classic yacht restorer, John Buckley of Southwold-based Harbour Marine Services told Kraken News that spade rudder failure was a growing problem. John, who has made five crossings of Biscay and a trans-Atlantic in a Victoria 34, a boat with an encapsulated keel and skeg-hung rudder and who has worked in the marine industry for 33 years, said: ‘It was never a problem when I first started because yachts didn’t suffer damage to their rudders, they were too strong.’ Last season alone John repaired damaged spade rudders to a Bavaria 34, a Southerly 135 and two Jeanneau Sun Odyssey 34s. ‘In all cases the damage was caused by grounding,’ he said.

Ocean Hazards

Whale threat

Delivering White Dragon, his Kraken 66 from China to her new home in Turkey, Kraken Yachts’ chairman, Dick Beaumont, hit a suspected whale in the South Atlantic. The 45 ton yacht was sailing at nine knots when she stopped dead throwing the crew to the cockpit sole. Despite this major collision the boat gathered way again and continued to sail on autopilot, as if nothing had happened. At St Helena Dick had the boat lifted out. Apart from some smudges on the bilge where the suspected whale had brushed down the keel, it was the skeg-rudder that had taken the brunt of the collision. And yet the only damage was to the toe of the skeg...it was bent one inch out of line!

‘Had the boat been fitted with a spade rudder I am certain it would have been ripped right off, and we would have found ourselves in the life -raft like so many other casualties of mid - ocean collisions,’ said Dick.



There have been many more cases of whale collision, most notoriously in 1972 when the 43ft schooner Lucette was holed and sunk off the Galapagos Islands leaving her crew, Dougal Robertson, his wife and four children to spend 38 days in a dinghy and liferaft.

However here we are concerned with recent whale collisions that affected steering: 2001 Peningo, 49ft hit a whale 700 miles off The Azores, rudder damaged, crew rescued. 2008 Delta Lloyd and Ericsson 3, two Volvo Ocean yachts suffered minor damage from whale strikes. This led to records of the race being re-examined: four yachts in previous races showed ‘rudders were particularly vulnerable.’

2009 J/World a 40ft J/120 on passage from California to Mexico. Whale struck vessel with its tail jamming the rudder post up and aft, holing the transom. The boat sank in 45 minutes.

Rogue containers

Actor Robert Redford’s film All is Lost depicted every ocean yachtsman’s nightmare: colliding with an unmarked shipping container. But how much of a threat is it?

More than 120 million containers are moved around the world each year, yet, in 2007 [the last figures available] the industry claimed just 0.001% (1,200) were lost overboard. More accurate figures of lost containers are kept by insurers and shipping companies, but they won’t divulge statistics. Yet there are many well-documented cases of yachts sailing into containers. (see side-bar two: Yacht collisions with containers)



Yacht collisions with containers

- 2006** Harlequin, Dehler 41, damaged rudder stock, yacht abandoned  
42ft yacht Moquini was found floating upside down 500 miles off the SW coast of South Africa. Yacht designer Alex Simonis blamed a container for the mystery sinking. She’d lost her keel and six crew were missing presumed drowned.
- 2003** Offshore 33 pilot-house ketch, Lycaena, sank after hitting an object – possibly a container – 20 miles south of St Catherine’s Point, Isle of Wight. Crewman Martin Taylor, 50, told YM she was under power making 6 knots when she ‘stopped dead, slewed over and lay on top of this thing, whatever it was’.
- 2001** 130ft superyacht Silver Cloud damaged her stern gear on what was believed to be a container floating in the English Channel. She limped in to Southampton for repair.
- 2000** During the Vendée Globe, Ellen MacArthur’s Kingfisher was thought to have hit a container north of the equator sailing at 10 knots. ‘All of a sudden we ground to a halt with a gut-wrenching noise of ripping carbon,’ Ellen told YM. ‘As I leapt on deck, I saw half a daggerboard and the tip of the rudder drifting away. There were signs of rust in the water. I cannot say for sure that it was a container, but it was the most likely thing to be submerged and give that kind of unforgiving impact.’
- 2000** Two UK Yachtmaster candidates died when their Farr 38, Rising Farrster, capsized on passage to Sydney, Australia. Nathan Lawrence of Cowes-based Leisure Management International, which ran the course, told YM: ‘That the yacht hit a container is a possibility. It is a well-travelled route and there is a lot of debris there.’
- 1999** Sir Robin Knox-Johnston saw several containers awash while competing in the Clipper Race. ‘These things are a bloody menace,’ Sir Robin told YM. He reportedly hit a container and was holed while sailing Enza, the giant catamaran in the 1993 Jules Verne Challenge.
- 1994** During the BOC Challenge Round the World Race, yachtsman Josh Hall’s Open 60 Gartmore sank off Brazil after striking what he thought was the corner of a container. ‘It was the most horrendous landing you could imagine. The boat reared up and then there was the most incredible rending sound as the bow came down. It was almost as if we’d run aground.’ He was rescued by a fellow competitor.
- 1988** OSTAR singlehanded transatlantic race from Plymouth to Newport, USA. Dutch competitor Roel Engels’ 34ft yacht Doortje hit a container in mid-Atlantic and sank. The Dutch sailor was rescued by a fishing boat.

# GENESIS OF THE TWIN RUDDER

## 'IT'S THE ULTIMATE BLUE WATER DESIGN CRIME'

If you want to go blue water cruising then buy a cruising yacht, if you want to win races buy a racing yacht. A racer-cruiser will never be both the best racing boat and the best cruising boat. That's because the compromises made are compromises too far when it comes to producing a safe blue water yacht.

My beef isn't that these boats are bad boats per se it is that they are bad boats when marketed as suitable for world cruising. This design amalgam now affecting all modern blue water boat builders originate from the popularity engendered by sailboat racing such as The Volvo, The Vendee Globe, and The Jules Verne Challenge.

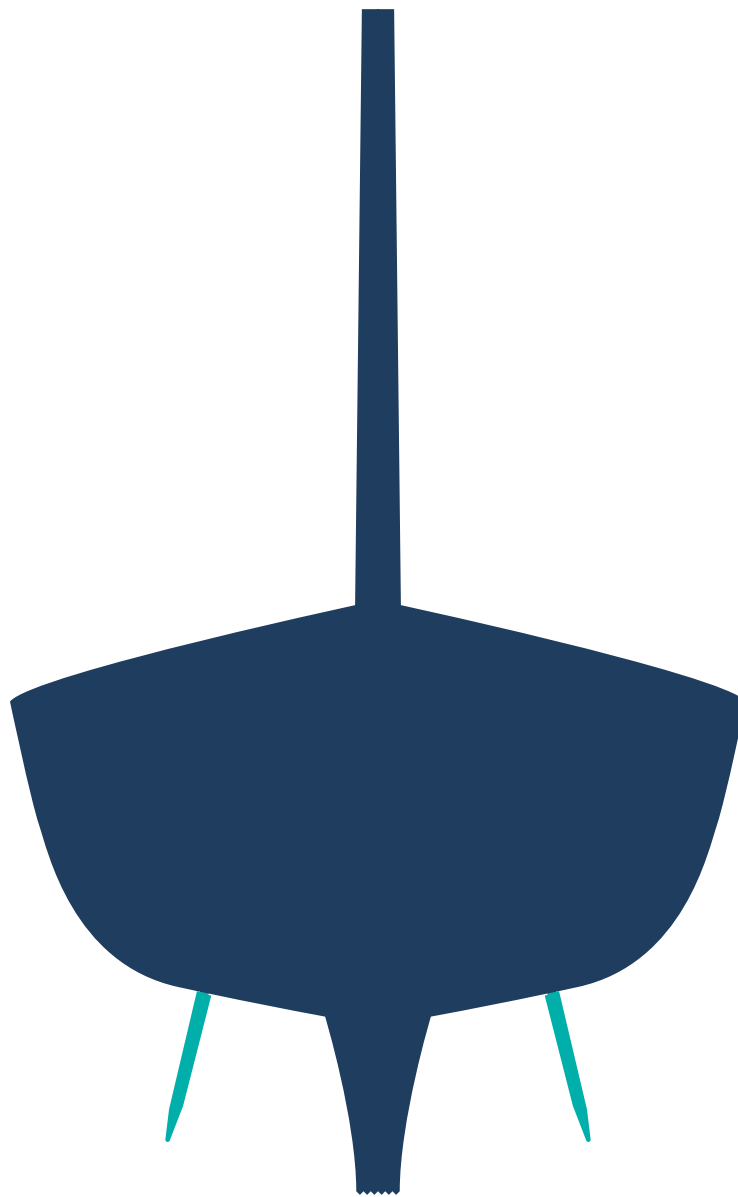
The evolutionary process has been as follows:

1. To lighten construction by using lighter and stronger materials, such as carbon-fibre and a whole variety of aramid materials and alternative construction methods.
2. To change the shape of hull and stern so that this lighter yacht can now plane.
3. To widen the stern so that increased form stability enables the yacht to carry more sail area.
4. To change the shape of the hull to a full delta 'wing' style, maximising the ballast ratio to lighten the yacht further and increase the sail area further.
5. The payback for that is a stern so wide that, on the wind, a single central rudder is levered half out of the water, losing traction and therefore steerage way.

Which leads us to:

6. The use of twin rudders, one for each tack so that one is always fully immersed.
7. So brilliant, now the boat can plane and sail exceptionally fast.

**But hang on, we're supposed to be cruising, aren't we?**



What has all of that got to do with a safe, comfortable, blue water cruising yacht?

Nothing at all.

However on the boat show stands, families are understandably impressed by cockpits big enough for a game of badminton; apartment-sized aft cabins; and dinghy garages, all features that are very different, and sometimes treacherous, spaces on a rolling, open ocean. The boat show sales folk will ask you to slip off your shoes, proffer the glass of Prosecco, then invite you below decks, but it's below the waterline that counts: hull form, keel and rudder.

What, in my opinion, and in the opinion of many in the marine industry who still remain silent in the press, has occurred is that these design demons are now becoming standard, even with top brands that have, in the past, been synonymous with safe Blue Water cruising. The latest models from builders including Hallberg Rassy, Amel, Oyster, and Discovery, all have twin rudders.

A single spade rudder is vulnerable enough to the hazards of ocean sailing, but two, and what's more two that are out of line with the keel, is simply asking for trouble.

It's crazy to think you can sail across the seas and oceans of this world increasingly littered with debris, containers, logs and, thanks to wild life protection campaigns, inhabited by growing schools of whales without risking fundamental damage to one or other of these unprotected steering blades.

Maybe not this week, perhaps not this month, but as your log clocks up the miles, sure as hell there will be a hazard with your boat's name on it.

Dick Beaumont



## ANOTHER SAILING EXPERT SPEAKS OUT

### HALLBERG- RASSY 'GAVE AWAY' DESIGN PEDIGREE

Leading yacht designers' Hallberg-Rassy 'gave away their pedigree' by switching to bolt-on keels and spade rudders, top yachting expert, Duncan Wells told Kraken News in February. Wells, who owns and sails an old-style Hallberg-Rassy with a long keel and skeg-protected rudder, said: 'We all know spades can fall off. If you are going to punch through the rough stuff at sea then you want something substantial beneath you. The trouble is, these days, they all want to go faster...much faster and they gave away the pedigree when they made that change.' Wells was delivering one of his popular Stress-Free lectures on boat safety at the Cruising Association HQ in London's Limehouse.

A sailboat with a large white sail is sailing on the ocean at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm orange glow. The sailboat is white with a wooden deck and is moving through the water, creating a white wake. The sky is filled with clouds, and the water is dark blue with some white foam from the wake.

TECHNICAL REVIEW

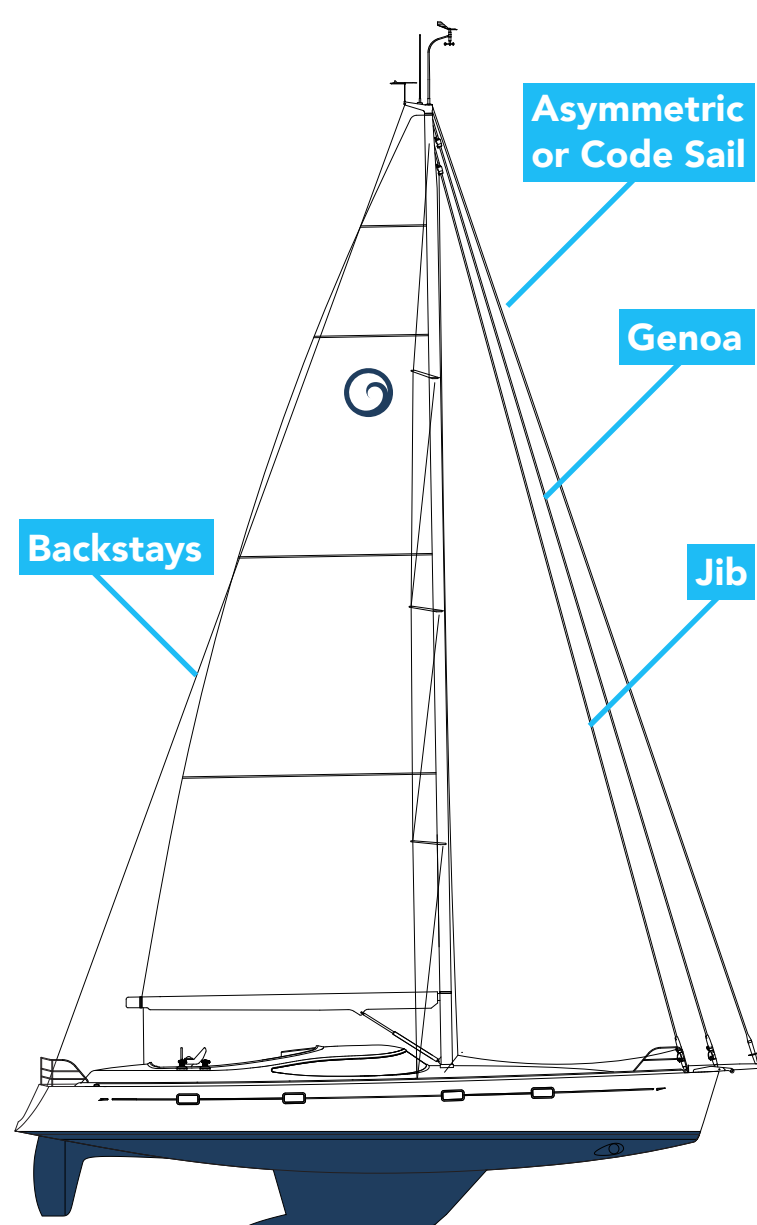
# WHICH IS THE PERFECT RIG FOR BLUE WATER CRUISING?

THE SOLENT RIG IS THE GO-TO  
RIG FOR OCEAN CRUISING,  
SAYS DICK BEAUMONT

## TECHNICAL REVIEW

# THE SOLVENT RIG

The Solent rig, also known as the 'Slutter rig', is arguably the perfect rig for short – handed, blue water cruising (**shown below**).



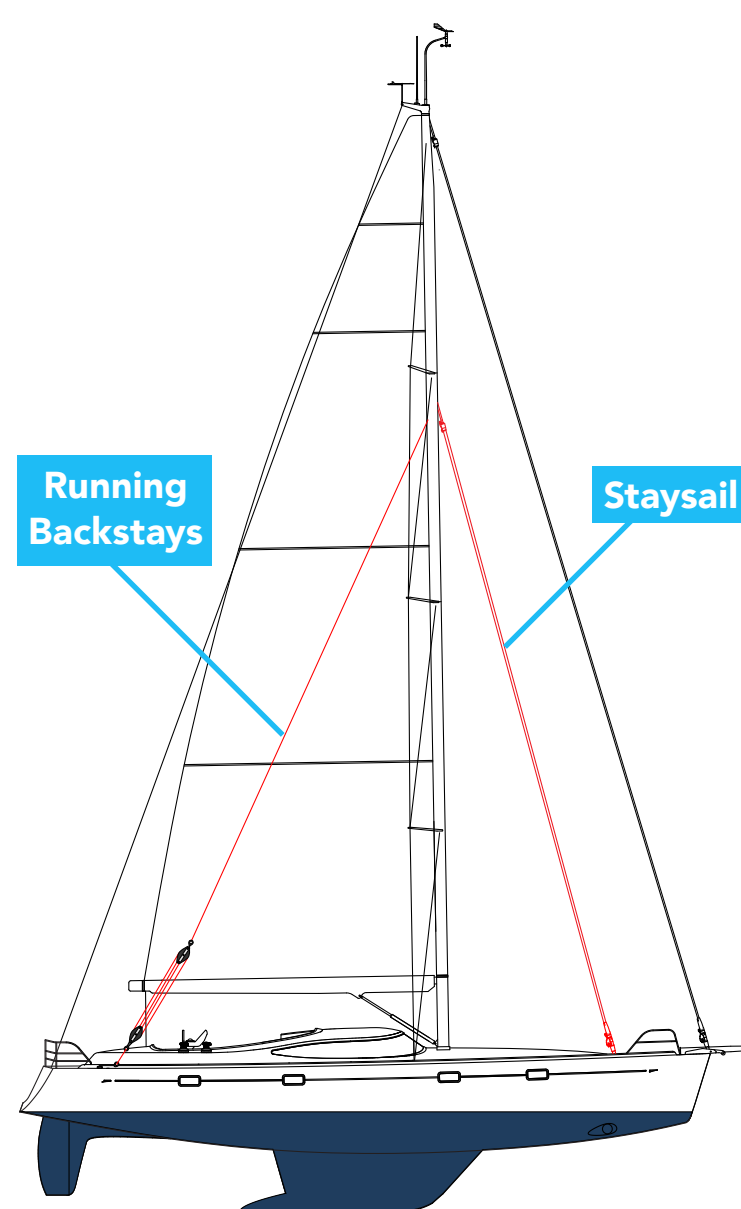
The rig can provide so many different combinations of sail form that the ideal profile is always available to suit wind strength and direction.

Based on a sloop rig it has the advantage over ketch, yawl or schooner because its high aspect mast is placed further aft so that the forward sail triangle, which creates drive, is proportionately much larger. That said its advantage over the standard sloop rig is that it has, in addition to the genoa, a 100% full-size blade jib as well. This blade jib has the clew controlled by a jib sheet that runs through a car on a track well inside the shrouds, making it more efficient for sailing hard up wind because it still sets properly even up to 20 degrees to

the wind. Whereas the standard sloop with its single genoa, with its track outside the shrouds, cannot point as high.

Also the standard sloop genoa must be cut to be both the upwind and reaching sail, whereas with the Solent rig, the genoa is cut for reaching and the blade jib is cut for beating.

The advantage the Solent rig has over a staysail cutter (**shown below**) is that the jib is much bigger because its tack is taken right forward to within 80-100cm of the genoa, and the foot is very low cut, again creating more sail area.



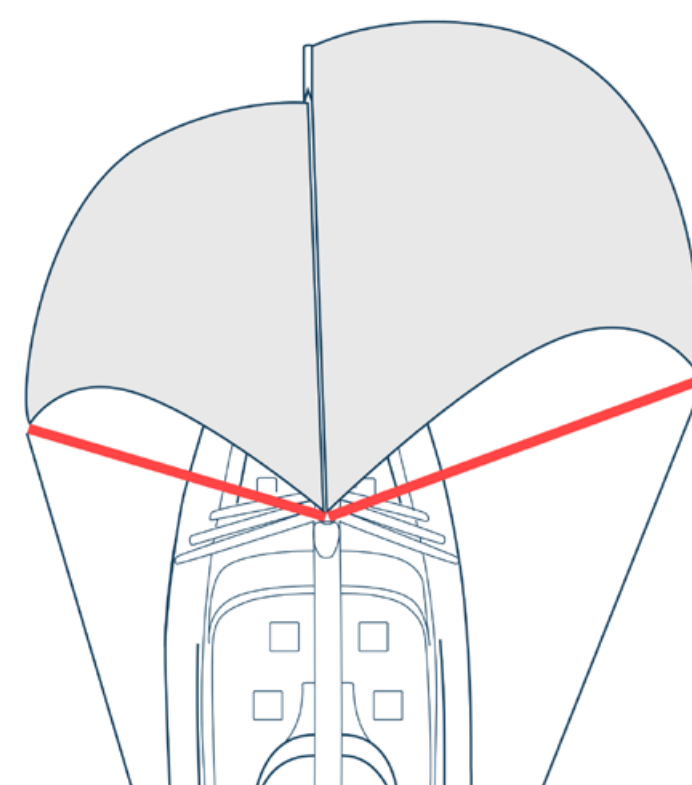
Also a Solent rig inner forestay goes almost to the mast-head, so when under heavy load, it isn't pulling the middle of the mast forward as happens with a staysail, so the problematic running backstays required on a staysail cutter are not needed.

When using the Solent rig for downwind sailing, asymmetric sails - cruising chute, gennaker or Code sail are a matter of choice, they are not obligatory.

On a standard sloop in relatively light winds say 15kts of apparent, the common profile for running dead down wind is 'goose-winged' with genoa on one side and mainsail on the other. The propensity for a wind shift or course variation to cause an uncontrolled gybe is ever present and even with a preventer rigged up, damage is highly likely should this happen.

Sailing for several days with this set up in the trade winds, say, and a will be very stressful as a lack of concentration may cause the dreaded Chinese gybe. Relying on using the autopilot pilot to steer dead down wind is not fail safe either; it places a lot of faith on technology, if the autopilot should drop the helm for any reason, the result can be catastrophic. With a Solent rig the jib and the genoa are set up butterfly rigged. The worst that can happen if the yacht falls of course or the wind shifts is the headsails might back: the risk of gybing, however, is eliminated. So you can run dead down wind without concern.

Ideally the yacht will also have a code sail or gennaker with a pole, or even better two poles of different length (**shown below**).



# TECHNICAL REVIEW

The number one pole should be a bit shorter than a spinnaker pole so it can be used on the gennaker or code sail and the genoa.

The number two pole, if you have it, should be at full length for the jib so it can be used on the jib and the genoa.

If you don't have a gennaker or code the pole sizes should be the perfect length for the jib and genoa. If you only have one pole it should be the correct size for the genoa.

## Sail options for running down wind:

### 6- 15 knots apparent wind

Gennaker and genoa. As the wind increases the genoa is furled

### 10-20 knots apparent wind

Gennaker or code only

### 15-25 knots apparent wind

Genoa and jib, as the wind increases the genoa is partially furled.

### 20- 30 knots apparent wind

Genoa only, furling as required.

### 30 knots plus apparent wind

Jib only furling as required.

## And for up wind:

### 6 -12 knots apparent wind

Gennaker or code plus mainsail but off the wind 40 degrees plus.

Jib and mainsail can be set if the course is hard on the wind but may require motor sailing in very light winds.

### 10-20 knots apparent wind

Genoa and mainsail but not too hard on the wind 35 degrees plus.

or jib and mainsail if hard on the wind.

### 15- 50 knots apparent wind

Jib and mainsail, reefing main and jib as required.

### 50 knots plus apparent wind

Jib only, reefing as required.

Some Solent rigs are comprised of a self-tacking jib which looks convenient, but this jib will also be your heavy weather foresail or storm sail and, **whatever anyone tells you**, a self-tacking foresail sail cannot be properly reefed. This is because as the sail is furled away around the foil the foot will tighten up and the leech will go slack and start flogging: in 40 knots plus, the sail will be ruined in no time.

When the jib sheets are run through cars on tracks the car is moved forward or back as the sail is furled to change the angle of force of the sheet, so the sail stays properly trimmed and set. I would advise having power winches for the genoa reefing line, as the genoa has to be fully furled to tack it.

There is only one disadvantage of the Solent rig compared to others: It is a lot more expensive.

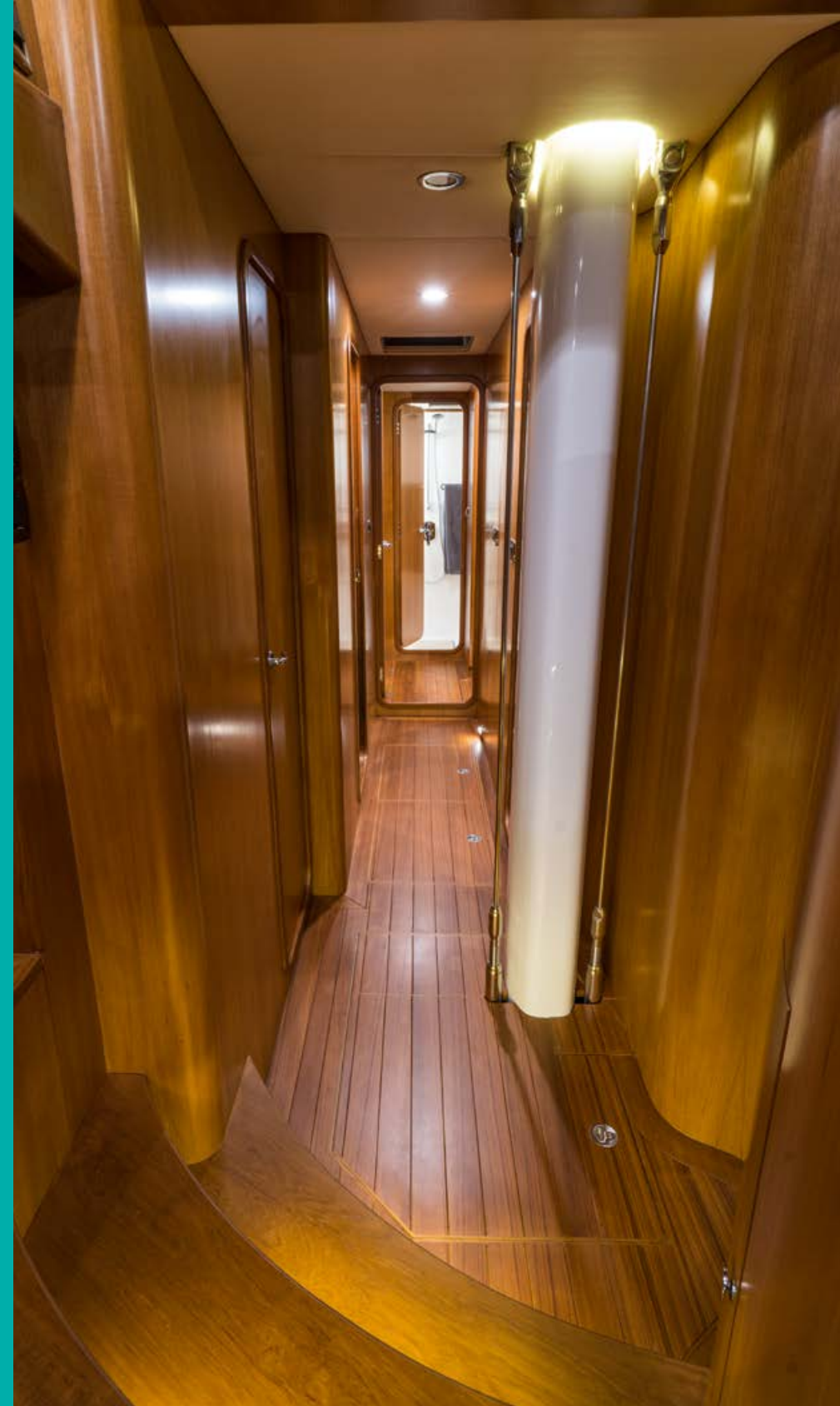
- Those extra costs come from:
- Second forestay and chain-plate,
- Second furler and foil.
- Jib sail
- Jib halyard
- 2x Jib sheets
- Six to eight additional heavy duty blocks to carry the jib sheet aft to the cockpit.
- Four additional blocks to carry the jib halyard back to the cockpit.
- 2x jib tracks and deck cars,
- 2x clutch cleats each side
- 2x cockpit winches.

The total cost will vary according to the size of yacht but for example on a 50ft yacht the additional cost is circa 30,000-40,000 euros.

## THE SOLENT RIG IS STANDARD ON EVERY KRAKEN YACHT, FOR ALL THESE REASONS.



## TECHNICAL REVIEW



## FOR A BLUE WATER YACHT, WHICH IS BEST, A KEEL OR DECK- STEPPED MAST?

**From a safety perspective** it will always be better to have a keel -stepped mast. Dismasting is arguably the sixth worst hazard a sailor faces, after keel loss, rudder failure, gas explosion, fire, and man overboard.

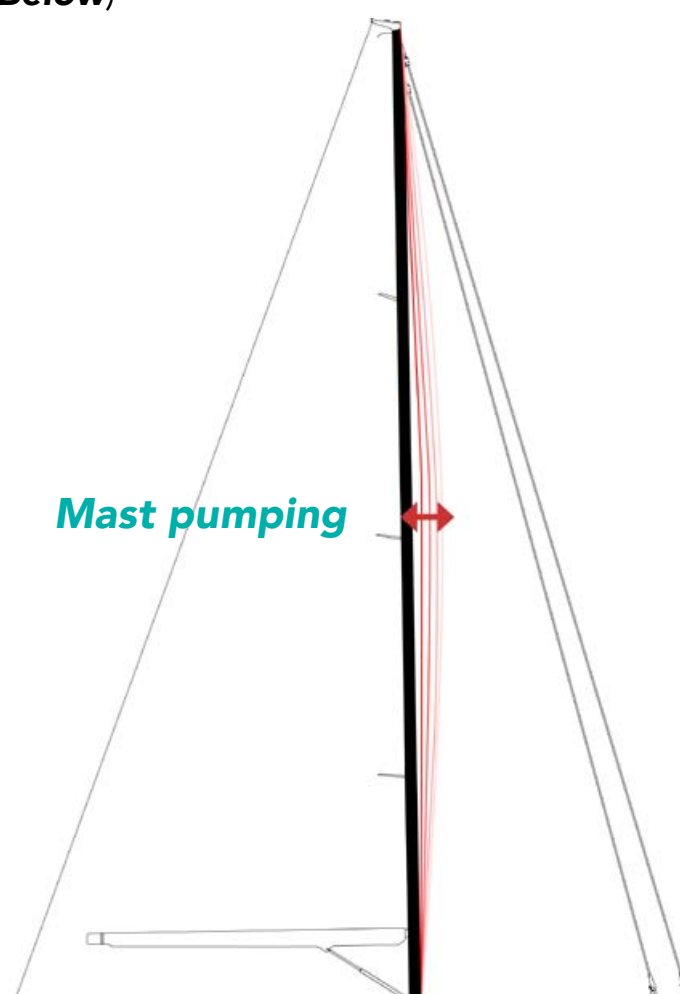
The principles are self-evident. With a keel-stepped mast the foot is sat on the keel and locked into position and then locked again as it comes through the deck.

Whereas a deck-stepped mast is only supported, but not necessarily even locked in, at the base on deck.

If one element of the rigging breaks on a deck-stepped mast, especially the forestay or backstay, the stability of the mast is seriously compromised with nothing to stop it collapsing forward or aft except the shrouds, which are mostly loaded athwartships. When rigging fails on a keel-stepped mast there is still the bracing support between the keel step and the deck collar to hold it up.

When a yacht is banging into a powerful head sea, the mast is flexed out of shape as it pumps, which will cause the rigging to slacken on each pump.

**(Below)**



If the pumping action creates a big curve the mast can actually jump out of the deck collar on a deck-stepped mast.

A keel-stepped mast will pump less violently because it is supported at the deck collar.

So why do many modern yachts have a deck-stepped mast?

Firstly it's cheaper because the mast section is shorter, secondly the cabling for the mast equipment, is cheaper too, because there's less of it, and thirdly it is more convenient to run the cabling out of the bottom of the mast straight into the cavity between the deck and the deck head.

Another reason is aesthetics: the mast section inside the vessel below deck restricts interior design, which, of course, should never take priority over seaworthiness.

**A keel -stepped mast is more expensive than a deck-stepped mast this will reflect in the cost of the yacht. The customer has to ask himself if it's a price worth paying.**

**We at Kraken Yachts answer: 'Most definitely!'**

# KRAKEN 50 V2 BUILD

## MAKING THE MOULD: PART 2

The finished hull plug is prepared to start the mould building process. The surfaces are cleaned, coated in mould release and flanges are built down the centerline and at the topsides. The mould is made in two stages, with half of the mould being built at the time.

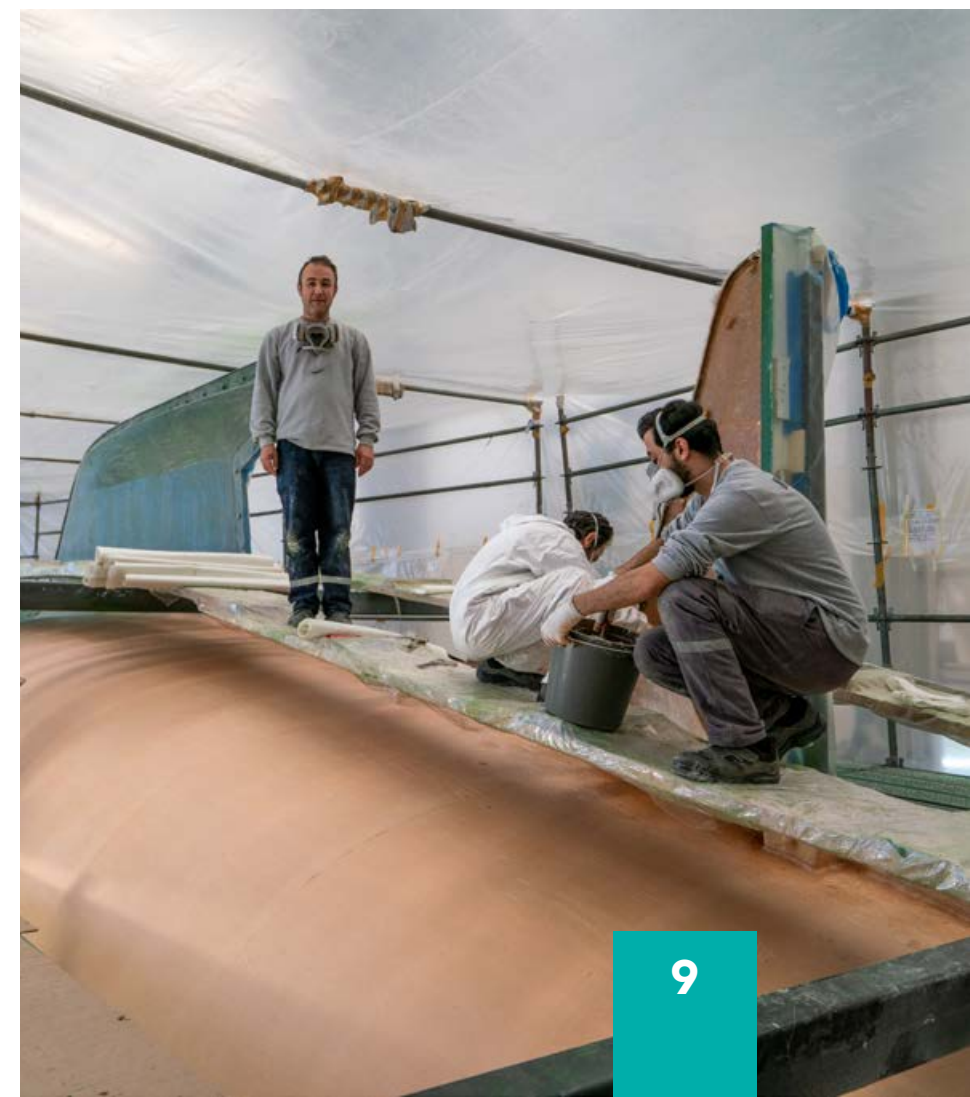


### THE HULL MOULD

**(Left)** Once the hull is ready, multiple coats of gelcoat are applied evenly over all surfaces.

**(Right)** Layers of clear skin coat are applied prior to the first layers of mould laminate. New layers of mould laminate are applied daily.

CONTINUED ON  
NEXT PAGE



# K50 BUILD



(**Left**) Foam strengtheners are placed along the hull, keel and rudder skag. These are then fibreglassed to provide further strength.

(**Right**) A metal frame is then connected and fibreglassed to the mould. The hull mould is nearly finished now!



## THE DECK MOULD



(**Left**) Once the deck plug woodwork is finished, a layer of fibreglass is applied throughout. Once completed, the deck is ready for filling and fairing.

(**Right**) The process of filling and fairing is long and meticulous but is vital in achieving a perfect finish.



(**Left**) Once complete, the deck plug has a smooth finish throughout and is ready for the painting stage.

(**Right & below**) Layers of primer are applied first prior to painting and varnishing. Once the painting is complete, the deck plug will be used to make the female mould for the deck. This process will complete in March.



## MEET THE TEAM

# FILIP SOCHAJ

## KRAKEN YACHTS' DESIGN ENGINEER

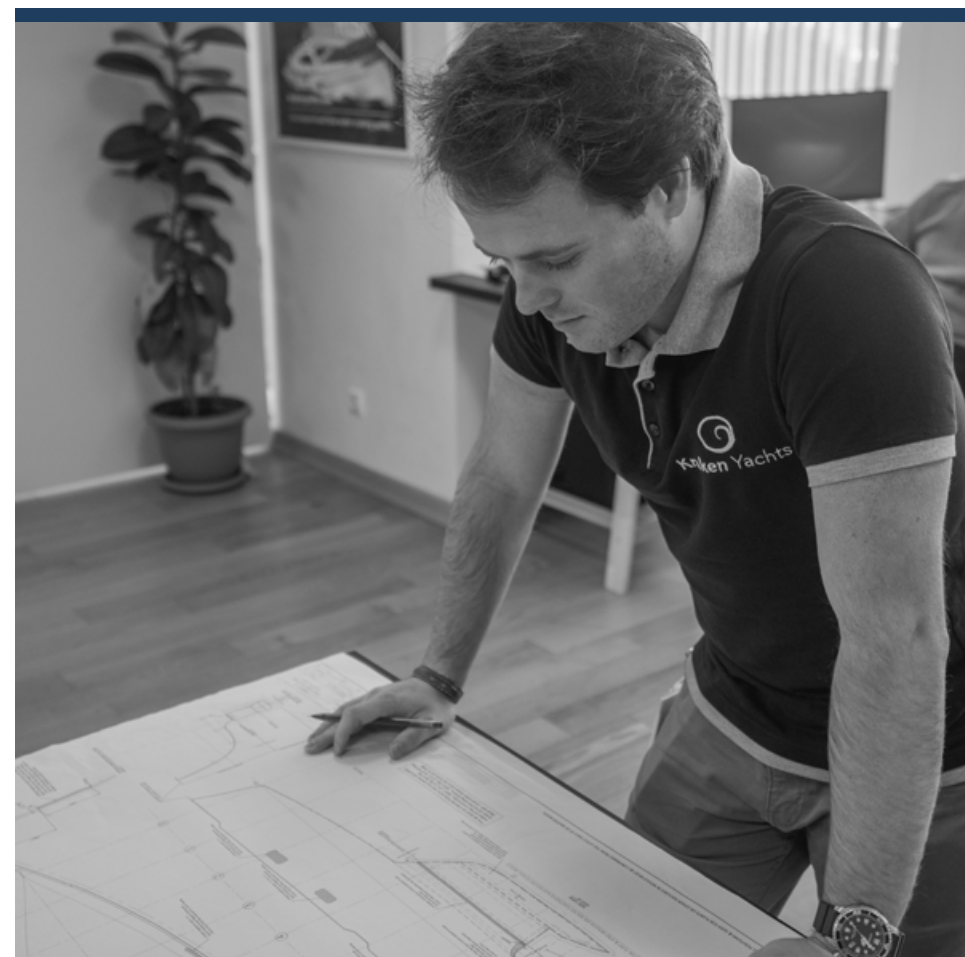
Just three years after Soviet tanks backed off from the Polish border, thanks to the stand made by the walrus-moustached Solidarity leader Lech Walesa, Filip Sochaj was born in Gdansk. His parents, Marcin and Agatha, had joined Walesa's movement and witnessed Poland throw off the communist yoke to become a free market democracy.

Marcin could now go back to the sailing he loved and taught his son how to handle dinghies on the Polish Mazury Lakes, as Filip joined the Gdansk Sea Scouts. A few years later Filip started making trips further offshore – his first storm was on a passage in a 45ft sloop from Gdansk to Lithuania. His godfather, Roman, was surgeon aboard a Polish square-rigger and Filip spent a month aboard her as deckhand on a passage from Gdynia to Rouen, Normandy. Aged 15 he cruised an 8m lifting keel sloop along the Polish coast and three years later joined the renowned Yacht and Powercraft Design course at Southampton Solent University as a design student. A further three years on he graduated as a Naval Architect.

During his time at Southampton he cruised the Solent and also became team racing captain at Southampton University Sailing Club.

He was one of a delivery crew sailing a Beneteau First 40 from Gdansk to Fort Lauderdale in Florida, but the boat threw up too many warranty issues to be sailed further than Carteret, north-west France. Another delivery trip, he was involved with: from Baltimore in the U.S. to Europe also had to be abandoned after all navigation systems were wrecked in a Gulf Stream storm and the skipper decided to turn back. Such first hand experiences have contributed to Filip's drive to achieve fail safe blue water yachts. 'The integrity of the vessel one sails in, especially if the voyage is offshore or across the open ocean, is paramount,' he said.

Filip has a deputy design engineer and works alongside Pete Lawson, Kraken Yachts' structural engineer and Donna Maree, the company interior designer. 'The Kraken team work closely with the engineers at Su Marine and after several rounds of honing and tweaking it all comes back to me to finalise any design change. Because of our passion to produce the perfect blue water yacht it's a process that never ends.'



# THE SULTANS OF SAIL

## ISTANBUL: WHERE EAST MEETS WEST

More than 100 ships a day pass through the Bosphorus. Trystan Grace was on one of them.

'She's really going some now lads,' skipper Dick Beaumont's voice cuts through the whistling wind. He can't hold back a big grin as we feel White Dragon power through the waves as a fresh gust hits us. We are flying in the perfect sailing conditions as we speed up the Dardanelles Strait towards our final destination, Istanbul.



APPROACHING ISTANBUL

I had been lucky enough to join White Dragon for several passages during her 32,000 'shakedown cruise' from Hong Kong to Turkey: I had visited such dream destinations as Manila, Madagascar, and Cape Town, but this was the end of this mega voyage and as such, I was infused with the poignancy, expectation and relief of arrival.

When sailors cruise the Mediterranean they rarely travel as far east as Turkey. The Greek islands snare most, this is a big mistake not least due to warmth and friendliness of the Turkish people. The coastline is littered with historical sites from Byzantine amphitheaters to Ottoman castles. In just one example, as we sailed up the Dardanelles Strait, we passed Gallipoli, notorious for the blood-letting between the Allied forces and Ottoman Empire.

Once through the Strait and crossing the Sea of Marmara, the coastline forms in the distance. A coastline along which was forged Istanbul, one of the most historically, tactically and commercially important cities of all time. Here the meeting of two continents, Europe and Asia, split by the mighty Bosphorus, naturally created a valuable trading hub as far back as the seventh century B.C.

Istanbul really is a tale of two halves, spreading over an area more than 5000 km<sup>2</sup> and is far more liberal and cosmopolitan

than many, who misunderstand modern-day Turkey, believe. Having spent some time in Istanbul, I want to share my go-to places among the must-see historical sites of the city.

The historical and commercial heart of Istanbul beats on the European side where the original Byzantine city of Constantinople stood. It is a fascinating area to explore with remnants of the Roman/Byzantine empire dotted throughout. My favourite Roman site is the Basilica Cistern in Sultanahmet.



BASILICA CISTERN IN SULTANAHMET

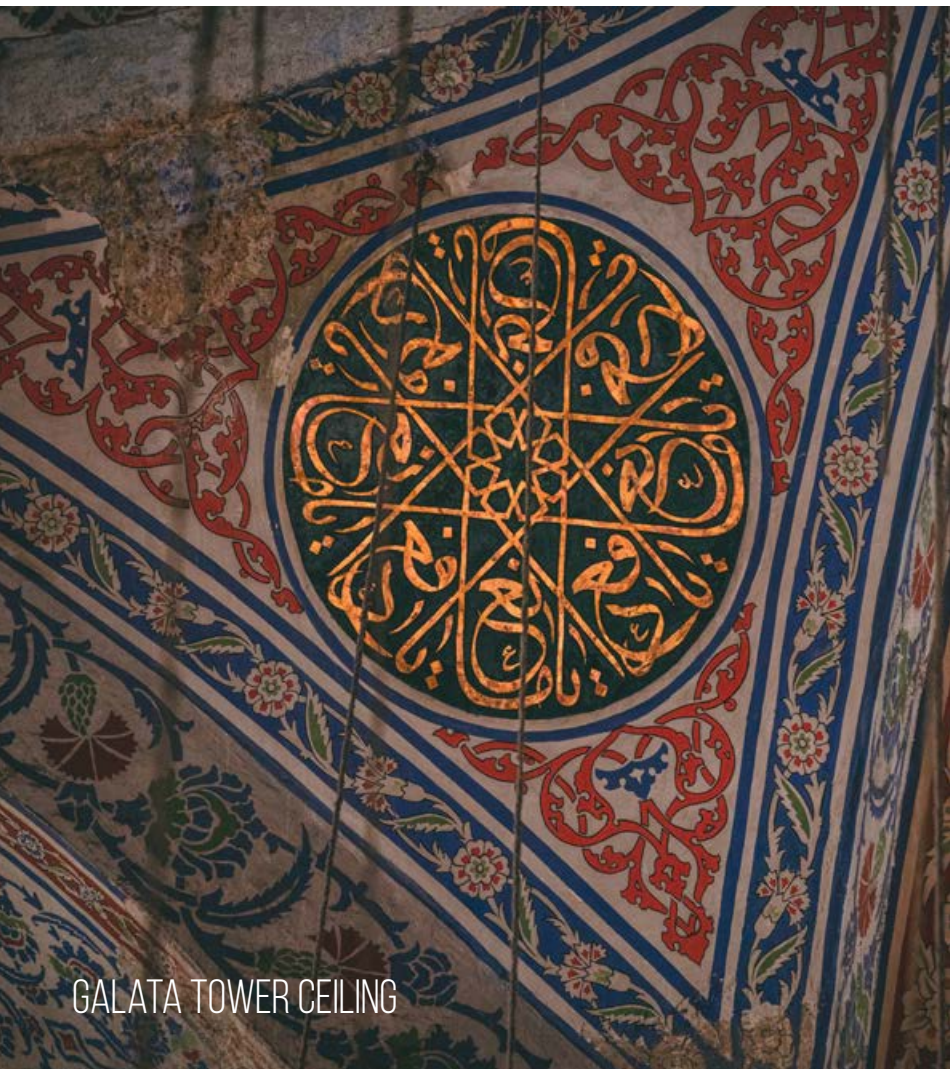
This subterranean waterworks was built during the 6th century by Emperor Justinian the Great and is breathtaking as you walk down the steps into the cool chamber. The symmetry of the columns and the lighting is spectacular and at the far end, there are two huge Medusa heads placed upside down.

# TRAVEL & DISCOVERY

Head to Fatih to see the old city walls which were impregnable to invading forces and which held off the Ottoman forces for so long. And of course, no tour of Istanbul would be complete without visiting Hagia Sofia, built originally by Emperor Constantine as a grand Byzantine church or the iconic Galata Tower which watches over the city.

The truth is, there are endless historical sites and museums, too many to cram into this travelogue. When I arrive in a new town I simply grab my camera and head off into the streets. Go where the locals go, eat where the locals eat. Spend time on the Anatolian side (Asian side) of the Bosphorus to get an authentic feel of Istanbul and Turkey.

You can't visit the Anatolian side without visiting Kadikoy, by far my favourite part of Istanbul. This laid-back district is the place to go for lively cafes, bars, shops and art galleries. A picturesque ferry ride is the best way to arrive and then ride the short vintage tram line to take in the atmosphere and see some of the huge murals decorating many of the buildings.



GALATA TOWER CEILING



ISTANBUL



MAIDEN TOWER

Although Kadikoy definitely does attract tourists, it is a far more of a local hang out district than those found on the European side. The famous market is definitely worth a visit for produce and spices and for those that watch Netflix's 'Chef's Table' can experience the traditional Turkish cuisine by Çiya Sofrası.

From Kadikoy, you can jump on a ferry to the Princes' Islands, a chain of nine beautiful small islands that sit parallel to the Anatolian coastline. If you sail into Istanbul, these islands are a perfect spot to cruise over a couple of days. White sandy beaches, excellent seafood, local craft shops and hikes alongside exquisite wooden Victorian-era houses which sport great views of the Turkish coastline.

To round off the day and to catch the best sunset, head to Üsküdar, a short ferry ride from the European side. Once there, take a short walk along the side the Bosphorus south until you reach my favourite building in the city, the Maiden's Tower. This medieval period tower, built on a small island, has gone through many iterations but legend tells of the Byzantine emperor of the day, building the tower after hearing a prophesy which foretold of the death of



KADIKOY BAZAAR

his beloved daughter to a snake bite on her 18th birthday. After building the tower, he sent her to live on the island in solitude but alas, she could not escape her destiny and died to a snake that was hidden in a fruit basket, brought over from the city. Since then, the tower has been used as a customs point, defensive watchtower, and finally now is a tourist spot and restaurant. Before you jump on a ferry to the island however, the spot I would recommend is on the seawall where you can enjoy a stunning sunset view of the tower with the city backdrop whilst sat on comfortable cushions and enjoying Turkish tea.

Whether you sail in or fly in, perhaps for a visit to Kraken Yachts' HQ, I guarantee an unforgettable experience in the streets of Istanbul.



**KRAKEN NEWS**

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