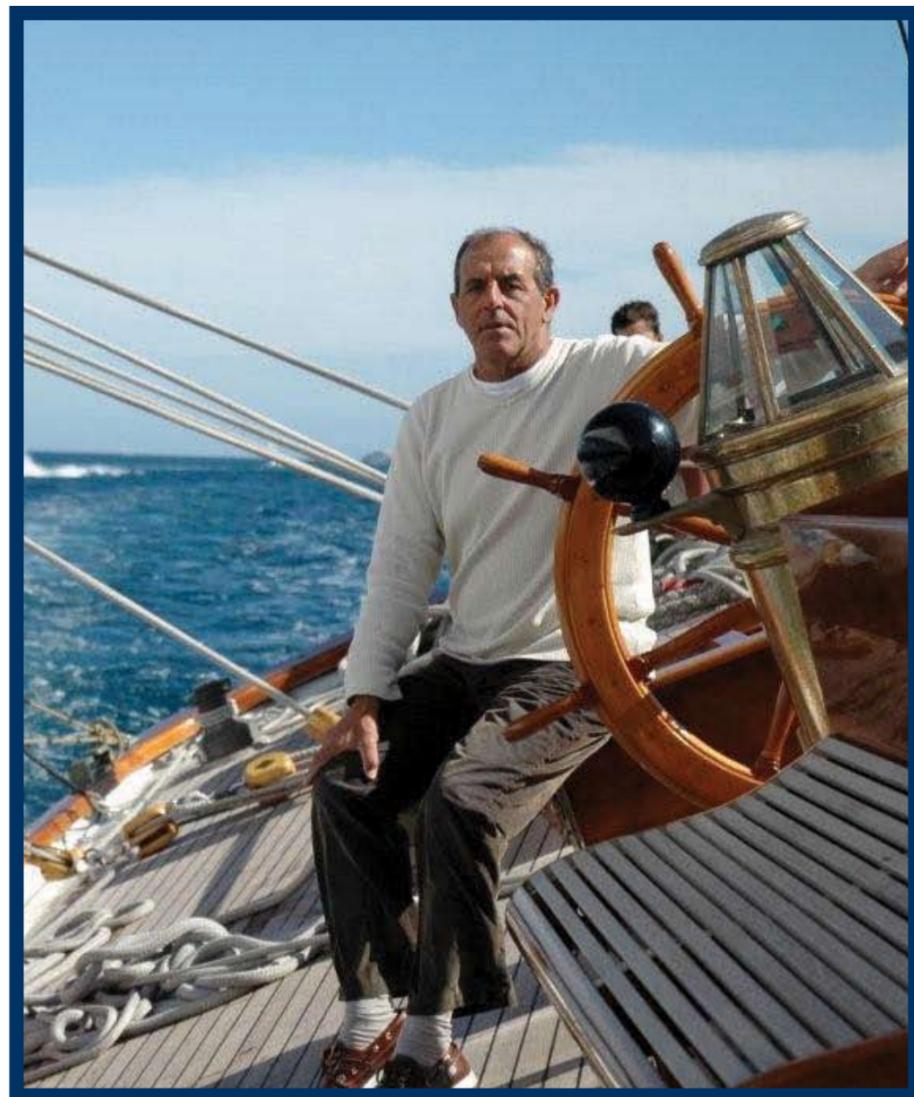


Poetry of the Sea

The renaissance of the classic schooner *Atlantic*.

words: John Julian



Ed Kastelein at the helm of *Eleonora*.

Photo: Courtesy of Ed Kastelein

“Yachting may be termed the poetry of the sea,” wrote Arthur Clark, a 19th century ship’s captain. Clark was a member of the New York Yacht Club, who also sailed for a living, and he never missed a chance to take the helm for pleasure. “No other sport or pastime has been so interwoven with romance and countless memories of daring deeds and achievements,” he added.

It takes courage to walk into a waterfront bar or yacht club and to start expounding upon the aesthetic merits of cutter versus ketch or sloop versus yawl because there are bound to be others who disagree with your preference. But later, having dined unhurriedly and well, most seafarers would be happy to admit that a vintage schooner represents the epitome of grace under sail and that, ideally, such a vessel should be possessed of three masts. To paraphrase Captain Clark, if yachting is the poetry of the sea, the three-masted schooner is the Tennyson of the art.

If there was an Arthur Clark laureateship for such poetry, it would surely be awarded to the Dutch yachtsman Ed Kastelein for he has been busy re-creating the celebrated American schooner *Atlantic*, as readers of *OCEAN* magazine will know. And like Captain Clark, he is often to be found at the New York Yacht Club; indeed it was there, in the gloriously appointed Model Room, that he decided to go ahead with *Atlantic*, his biggest project to date.

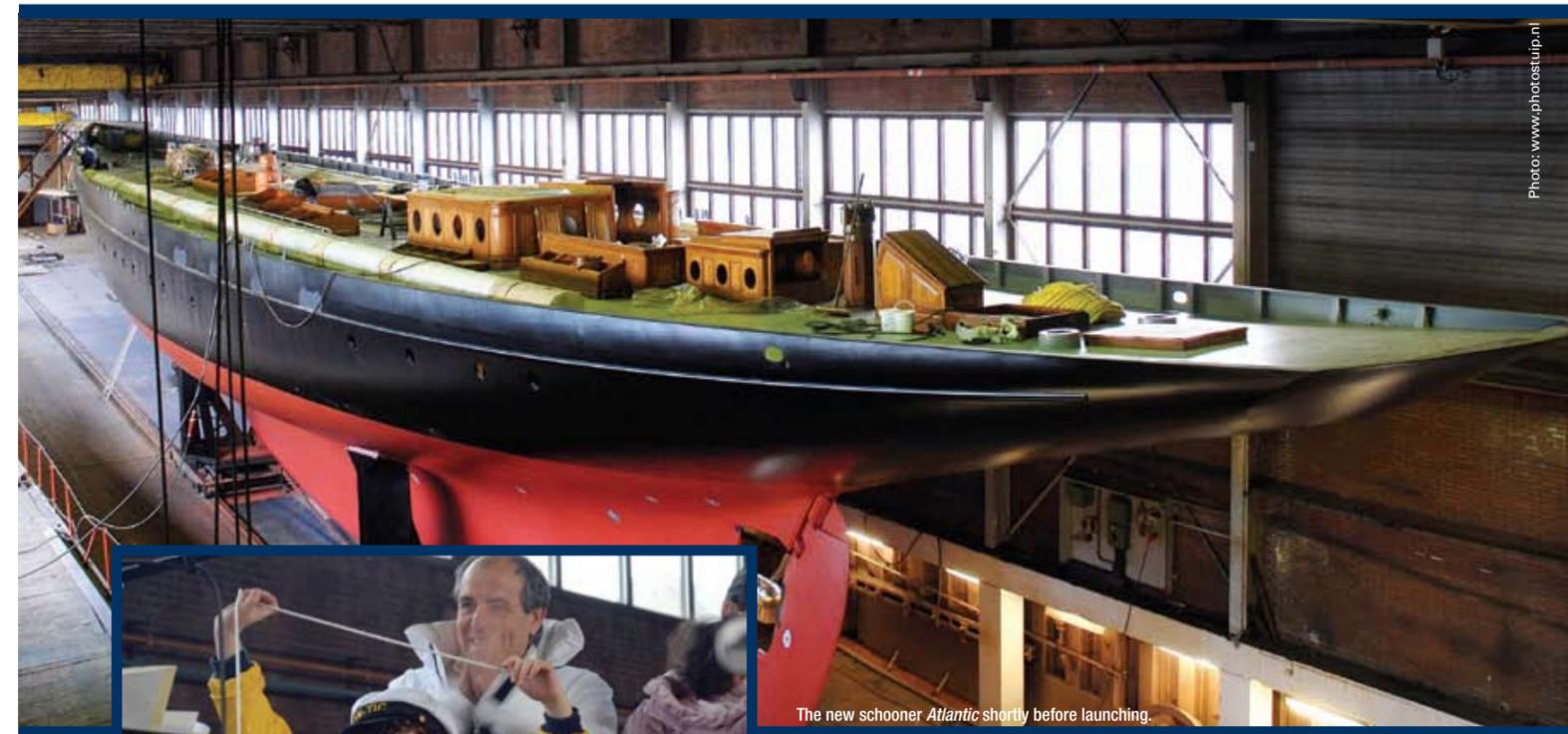
“The moment I really decided to do it was when I was in the New York Yacht Club and I saw the model,” he admitted. “It was then that I saw the boat complete; if you see a picture, it’s always a little bit different. So after I saw this in the Model Room, I thought this was something I would

like to do.”

Manhattan, home to the New York Yacht Club’s imposing West 44th Street headquarters, was a Dutch possession for much of the 17th century and nearby Shooter’s Island was where the swift black schooner that inspired the replica was built during 1903 at the Townsend & Downey Shipyard. The reason that so many other great yachts, including the 2009 schooner *Atlantic* have been built in Holland is because of a very long tradition: the word yacht is itself rooted in the Dutch language of the 16th century. King Philip II of Spain ruled the Netherlands at the time and he was not popular. The Dutch developed a fast sailing warship called a *jaght*, from the word for hunt or chase and many of these were built to fight the Spaniards in the rivers and canals.

When the Dutch won their independence, the *jaghts* were developed for commercial use as Holland became Europe’s leading maritime nation. Some were built for private purposes as well and by the middle of the 17th century yachting and yacht racing were well under way around the Netherlands. Furthermore, Ed’s mother’s forbears had founded the famous Holland-America shipping line, so there were many favourable historical precedents in place by the time he decided to proceed.

Long before he started the new *Atlantic* project, Ed had achieved the unusual distinction of being both a seasoned owner and an experienced captain with vast practical knowledge of yachts. One of the things that he had discovered was that it was not necessarily more expensive to re-create a vessel than to restore one, particularly if the vessel in question was in poor condition. Sailing around as he did gave Ed the opportunity to see many old yachts in various



The new schooner *Atlantic* shortly before launching.

Photo: John Lammerts van Bueren

Ed Kastelein launches the new schooner *Atlantic*.

“The 2009 schooner *Atlantic* is a masterful blend of tradition and technology and she is a testament to her owner’s commitment to, and investment in the preservation and re-creation of the best in yachting heritage.”

states of repair and, by his own admission, he had fallen in love with the schooner *Zaca*, formerly owned by the actor Errol Flynn, which for many years had lain dismasted at Voisin's yard in the old port of Villefranche near Nice in the South of France. To say she looked rough under her grimy,

flaking paint would be to understate her predicament so, rather than restore her, Ed decided to commission a replica, which emerged from Scheepswerf Kramer of Amsterdam in 1992 as the 38-metre *Zaca a te Moana*.

Ed's yachts were getting bigger and so was international interest in classic restorations and re-creations with generously sponsored regattas from Imperia in Italy to Palma de Mallorca in the Balearic Islands becoming part of the end of each Mediterranean season.

His next project was suitably majestic in scale; the re-creation of the famous 42-metre schooner *Westward*, which had been scuttled in the Western Approaches to the English Channel, not far from the final resting place of her old racing rival *Britannia*, as stipulated in her late owner's will. Thomas Benjamin Davies had been concerned that his successors might be unable to afford to maintain *Westward* after the Second World War, and so she was sunk in the Hurd Deep, close to the Channel Island of Jersey on 15 July 1947. This fast and fair vessel had been designed by Nat Herreshoff and built at his yard in Bristol, Rhode Island in 1910. She had also been Captain Charlie Barr's last command and they enjoyed considerable success in their only season together before his untimely death in 1911. *Westward* continued to compete until the mid-1930's, famously beating all comers, including several J Class cutters in the Royal Yacht Squadron Regatta on 5 August 1935.

Eleonora, her spiritual successor was launched in 2001 from the Van der Graaf yard in Hardinxfeld-Giessendam, Holland, but by this time Ed was already thinking of *Atlantic*. Managing the project single-handedly, but drawing on the talents of a trusted team, including yachting historian John Lammerts van Bueren and consulting naval architect Doug Peterson, he began to gather drawings and images of the old schooner from museums and photo-libraries in the United States and elsewhere. Naturally, not all that much had survived intact, given *Atlantic's* somewhat peripatetic existence during the latter stages of her life but enough existed to guarantee maximum authenticity and Ed's unrivalled experience with previous projects, such as *Eleonora* and *Zaca a te Moana* meant that he was able to reproduce items of period deck hardware along with anchors, bollards, stanchions and belaying pins, which corresponded accurately to the originals.

There was next to nothing left of the furniture and fittings of the old *Atlantic*, which was broken up in 1982. As Ed discovered, "There was part of the cap rail, completely rotten, lying in somebody's garage, and I've seen two pins from a pin rail. The table, which belongs to Miss Mellon is still around



The 1903 schooner *Atlantic*.

Photo: Courtesy of The Mariners' Museum, Newport News, VA

and we suggested she give that to Mystic Seaport. I think it's much nicer to have that in a museum so everyone can see it than aboard the new *Atlantic*. We are doing an interior that is completely new with mahogany and white paneling and the few things that were left over from the old *Atlantic* were in a very bad state."

The huge, 56.43-metre hull was completed in early 2009 and at 1030 on the morning of 15 March, the new schooner *Atlantic* was launched into the river Merwede from the Van der Graaf Brothers' yard at Hardinxfeld-Giessendam by Ed's nine-year-old son Atlan Kastelein, eight years after *Eleonora* had taken the same route. Since then she has had her masts stepped and rigged, deck furniture and hardware installed with

numerous other tasks being performed by a cosmopolitan crew including specialists from France, Poland and New Zealand, as well as Holland, many of whom have worked on Ed's projects before.

The 2009 schooner *Atlantic* is a masterful blend of tradition and technology and she is a testament to her owner's commitment to,

and investment in the preservation and re-creation of the best in yachting heritage. She will set sail for the South of France early next year and should be available for charter during the Mediterranean summer season and may participate in some of the classic regattas later in 2010.

"We can have a maximum of 12 guests in six cabins and there will be 11 permanent crewmembers," confirmed Ed in September 2009. "The classic regattas will depend on what my charter planning is going to be. If we have some guests interested in doing the races, for sure we will show up. There's a very nice one going from St Tropez to Sardinia, Sicily and Malta, then back to Monaco, which takes one-and-a-half or two weeks and I have some people very interested in doing that one."

The obvious question is whether the new schooner will attempt to better her namesake's 1905 trans-Atlantic record and Ed is keen to beat the elapsed time set by Captain Charlie Barr, preferably with the support of some fellow enthusiasts. "That would be really nice," he allowed, "and we do have some people interested. I have been able to build a boat but I do want some charters to help run it. I probably won't do it just by myself because it's a long trip, which would cost a lot of money and require some extra sails and more crew."

Whatever she does and wherever she goes, the big schooner will take both the splendid appearance and the dauntless spirit of her predecessor into a new century, which is something that seemed highly improbable on that grey, late January day in 1982 when the old yacht went to the breakers. Given the prolonged and demeaning death throes of the first *Atlantic*, it might have been kinder had she met the fate of *Westward*. She hadn't sailed, let alone raced since the United States Coast Guard disposed of her in 1948 and like a former movie queen in straitened circumstances, she was a magnet for penniless romantics, although one or two suitors like

Courtesy of Ed Kastelein



The 2009 schooner *Atlantic*. Artist's impression

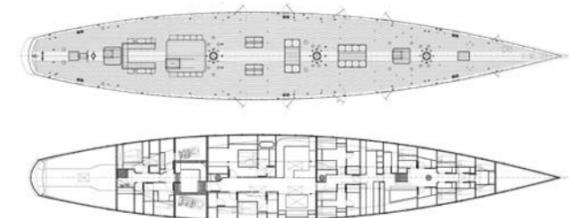
Genaro "Jim" Santos had more practical plans for her (sail training for disadvantaged young people) but, again, not enough cash to carry them out. Whether her legend would have survived had she been scuttled 35 years before she was broken up is debatable and whether Ed Kastelein would still have felt moved to re-create her under those circumstances, we will never know. What we do know is that, thanks to his commitment, she has been reincarnated and whether we glimpse her in the distance only once or are fortunate enough to be able to charter and sail her several times, the experience will be truly unforgettable; a window to another, bygone world.

The last word must go to the schooner master himself; the poet laureate of this saga of the sea. When asked in late September 2009 whether there were any other great yachts vying for his affection, Ed Kastelein replied:

"For me *Atlantic* is the ultimate. If I attempted anything more spectacular, it would be more or less a cruise ship. This is about the biggest you can do and still manage it efficiently. I think I'll have to stop after this one!"



For further information visit www.schooner-atlantic.com



TECHNICAL DETAILS - S.Y. ATLANTIC

Design	Gardner & Cox 1903
Builder	Van der Graaf, Holland
Project Manager	Ed Kastelein
Construction material	Steel
Length overall	69.24 m (227' 0")
Length of hull	56.43 m (185' 0")
Length of waterline	41.18 m (135' 0")
Beam	8.85 m (29' 0")
Draft	5.00 m (16' 5")
Main mast above waterline	44.00 m (144' 5")
Bowsprit outboard	8.76 m (28' 8")
Mizzen boom outboard	4.05 m (13' 3")
Displacement	395 tons
Ballast	120 tons
Sail area	1,721 m ² (18,500 sq. ft.)
Fuel	17,000 litres
Water	15,000 litres
Sewage	12,000 litres
Engine	Yanmar 6 AYM-ETE, 829 HP/610 kW
Generators	Yanmar 6 CYL 100 kW/1500 rpm
Base masts	Nedal aluminium
Topmasts and spars	Sitka Spruce
Winches	Harken
Bowthruster	VETH 75 kW
Classification	Bureau Veritas for charter yachts



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