

# Yachting World

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## THE RISE AND RISE OF THE SCHOONER

**America's Cup**  
It looks like Valencia  
in February

**The winching  
revolution**

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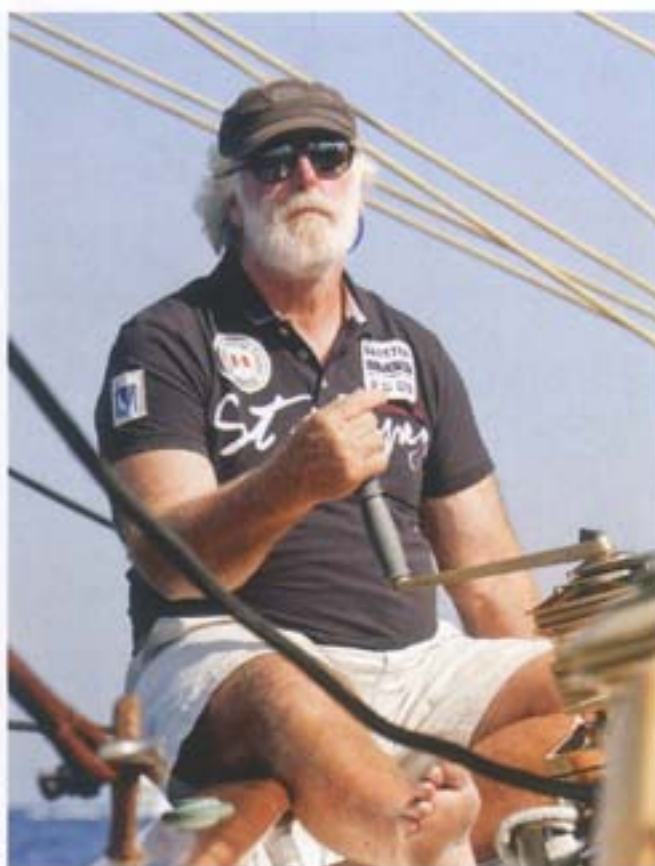
# SCHOONERS

200 tons and more than 1,200m<sup>2</sup> of sail a rudder acts like a handbrake on a car.

McLaren's experience really shows below. A full-size mock-up of the interior enabled him to move cabins and machinery around till he found the ideal arrangement. Subtle differences from *Eleonora* and the original *Elena* should make her faster, owing to better weight distribution, and she should be a more comfortable and easier ship to run for crew and guests alike.

Outwardly she may be the replica of a 100-year-old yacht, but behind her classic panelling she is a pure, no-expense-spared superyacht. All her machinery and high-tech insulation is state of the art, making her an extremely quiet and efficient charter vessel. A large bank of batteries enables her to be run for a minimum of eight hours – longer during reduced night-time consumption.

On deck *Elena* is a perfect recreation of



Nigel Port

An experienced hand: Kenny Coombes, classics veteran, helps coax more speed out of *Elena*

a racing schooner from the early 20th Century. Her wide and seemingly endless teak deck, her low deckhouses and her gleaming wooden masts suggest a yacht of timeless beauty and elegance.

Below deck this feeling is enhanced even further. The large full-width saloon and beautifully finished guest cabins emanate warmth and cosiness through the combination of varnished mahogany and white panelling, offset by carefully selected period bronze fittings.

The bathrooms, without being ostentatious or overdone, are more in the style of a luxury hotel than a yacht. McLaren and the carpenters in Spain have achieved the nearly impossible feat of creating a brand new interior that immediately has that

## Schooner hall of fame

There is a veritable fleet of gaff-rigged schooners, yawls and ketches on the big yacht scene that, if brought together, could redefine the whole concept of superyacht racing. How about a Superyacht Cup Series sailed entirely between gaff-rigged classics? All the yachts listed here are over 100ft on deck and so comply with the old 'superyacht' criteria. What is remarkable, though, is that all of them are between 70 and 110 years old or new-built replicas to an old design. And I am sure that there are at least another 20 similar, but less well-known yachts.

### Atlantic

Three-masted gaff schooner. Designed by William Gardner. Built 1903. LOA 227 ft (69m). LOD 185ft (56m).

Nearing completion in the Netherlands, this

replica of the legendary racing yacht is not designed for short-tacking round the Bay of St Tropez, but would certainly relish the chance to go offshore with her sisters.



### Creole

Three-masted gaff schooner. Designed by Charles Nicholson. Built 1927. LOA 214ft (65m).

Owned by the Gucci family and used as a mothership to their smaller gaff cutter *Avel*, which is raced vigorously in the Mediterranean, regattas. With proper courses and competitors she would probably remove the sailcovers and once again show her magic.



### Croce del Sud

Three-masted gaff schooner. Designed and built by Marinolich in Italy in 1931. LOA 138ft (42m).

Seldom seen racing, but given the right wind and weather, will romp along in an impressive way.



### Shenandoah

Three-masted gaff schooner. Designed by Theodore R. Ferris. Built in 1902 by Townsend &

Downey. LOA 181 ft (55m), LOD 142ft (43m). Spends most of her time in the Pacific, but would be a spectacular sight racing in Europe.



### Aello

Designed and built by Max Oertz in 1921. LOA 125ft (37m). LOD 100ft (30.5m). Since her restoration in the mid-Eighties *Aello* has done well at classic events and won the Antigua Classics in 2002 and 2004.



### Altair

Designed and built by Fife in 1931. LOD 108ft (33m).

Although designed as a cruising yacht,

*Altair* is one of the most regular contestants at events all over the world and is enthusiastically and successfully raced by her experienced crew. All in all, a handsome and keen thoroughbred.



### Aschanti IV

Designed by Henry Gruber. Built by Burmester in 1954. LOA 115ft (35m). LOD 103ft (31.5m).

Although built relatively recently in the 1950s, *Aschanti* was conceived to look like and sail like her much older sisters and belongs in this group instead of the mixed class of modern yachts to which she is currently assigned.



### Germania Nova

Designed by Max Oertz and built by the Germania Werft in Kiel in 1908. LOA 200ft (60m). LOD 157ft (47m).

This replica of the famous yacht *Germania* is under construction and will be an incredible spectacle when she comes out next year. Some 100 years ago her races against *Westward* were legendary and the match race between her and *Eleonora* will be just as exciting as *Eleonora's* against *Elena* this year.



elusive lived-in atmosphere normally only found in an original vessel.

It was a race against the clock for McLaren and his team to get *Elena* fully fitted out and rigged in time to sail from Marin on the west coast of Spain to Monaco for her first event. On the morning of the first race of the Monaco Classic Regatta the crew were still frantically working on her rig.

### 30 crew to race

Although *Elena* can be sailed comfortably in any condition by her permanent crew of eight, it takes 30 more crew to handle the enormous sails she carries when racing. Although many of these extra crewmembers had sailed together when McLaren was captain of *Eleonora*, the racing schooner rig is so complicated that expectations for the first race were limited to getting to the line on time, negotiating the course safely and

getting to know the boat. All our competitors had been sailing for years and were fully tuned and in racing trim. Aboard *Elena* we hadn't hoisted half her sails before this race.

Just minutes before the start the crew managed to hoist the huge jackyard topsail for the very first time. A strange feeling of excitement swept the yacht in the final minutes before the gun, as if we felt we were going to witness something special. We were not disappointed. With about 10 to 12 knots of wind, the big yachts manoeuvred at speed for a downwind start. The largest yachts in our class were the schooners *Mariette*, *Zaca*, *Sunshine* and *Eleonora*, the gaff cutters *Tuiga*, *Nan of Fife*, *Moonbeam III* and *IV* and the Bermudan cutter *Cambria*. Some company!

As the gun went we were all close together and travelling at speed. To our surprise and joy, *Elena*, with far fewer sails up than our competitors, not only kept up with the

others, but slowly pulled away, showing a taste of the blistering speed she'd promised.

Several hours later, after an exciting race in which *Elena* changed places with *Eleonora* three times, *Elena* finished well ahead of her old rival as well as all the other gaffers in her class. This proved no flash in the pan as a week later in Les Voiles de Saint Tropez, *Elena* beat *Eleonora* resoundingly in every race.

Her sternest opposition came from *Thendara*, revived by an enthusiastic new owner, new skipper and new sails. She beat *Elena* by half a boat length after nearly four hours' racing, but in the last race in St Tropez, *Elena* set the record straight by sailing away from the other big boats and finishing over half an hour ahead of her nearest competitor.

The good news is 2010 promises even better racing as the competition is likely to use winter to upgrade yachts. Classic big boat racing is back and here to stay.

### Invader

Designed by Albert S. Chesebrough. Built in 1905 by George Lawley & Son, Boston.



Restored 2003. LOA 160ft (49m). LOD 135ft (41m). Could be a spectacular racing schooner if only she showed up at one of the Med regattas.

### Mariette

Designed and built by Herreshoff in 1915. LOA 138ft (41.4m). LOD 108ft (33.5m). Former



owner Tom Perkins showed how an authentic restoration should be done.

### Noelani

Replica of Alfred Mylne's largest design *Panda*, built in 1938 by C&N and later lost in the



Caribbean. LOA 140ft (42m). LOD 118ft (35.5m). This boat is now under construction in Turkey and is expected to join the fleet next year.

### Orion

Designed by Charles Nicholson. Built by Camper & Nicholson in 1910. LOA 147ft (45m).



Powerful schooner which was restored extensively by Classic Works in La Ciotat in the South of France a few years ago.

### Puritan

Designed by John Alden. Built by The Electric Boat Company in 1931. LOD 103ft (31m).



### Sunshine

Designed by William Fife. LOA 121ft (37m). LOD 103ft (31m).



*Sunshine* (2004) is an extremely well-built and good-looking replica of a Fife design from which two sisterships were built in 1900 and 1902.

### Te Vega

Designed by Cox & Stephens. Built in 1930 at the Krupp Yard in Kiel, Germany. LOA 135ft (41m). Big, chunky and serious schooner that would also relish some proper schooner courses.



### Zaca

Designed by Garland Rotch and built by the Nunes Brothers,



California, in 1928. LOA 118ft (36m). Made famous under the ownership of Errol Flynn, *Zaca* has had a chequered life and looks a bit tired, but is still sailing and attending events in France and Italy.

## The modern fleet

In addition to the classics there's a growing fleet of modern schooners which race in the Spirit of Tradition divisions



Adela



Adix



Borkumriff IV



Meteor



Windrose of Amsterdam



Athos

Photos: Mystic Seaport, Nigel Pratt, C. Barlingh/Rolox, Belem, C. Sillern