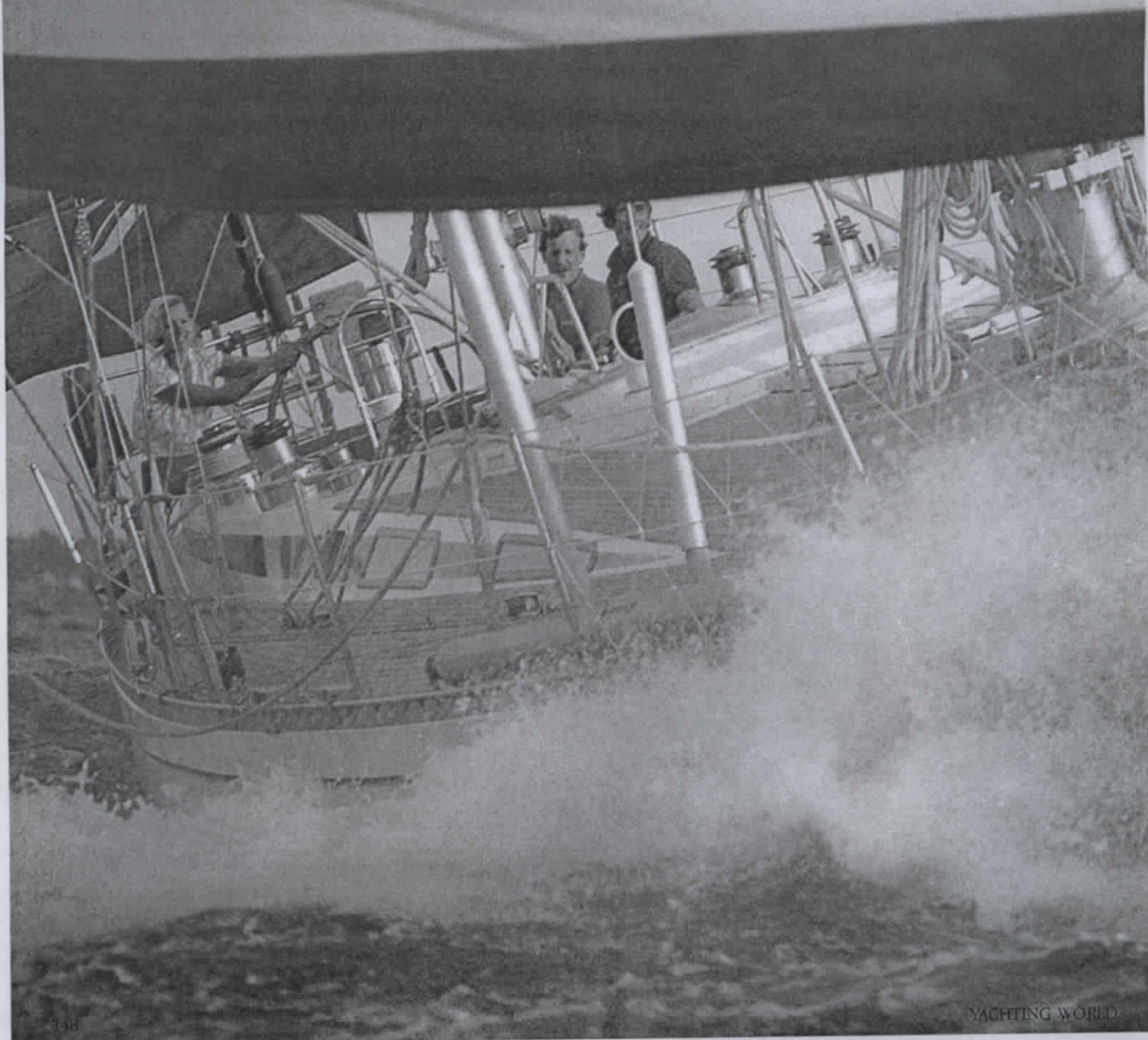


THE CLASSICS

YAN 65

*The title Classic sits more comfortably
on Nautor's legendary 65 than most other yachts.
Tim Jeffery looks at why the boats are
so famous and sought-after*

CONTINUED OVERLEAF





Saloon of Beija Flor showing the impressively roomy galley. A cut out in the bulkhead allows access to the saloon table



Above, all but four of the 65s were ketch rigged. Main picture, the distinctive lines of the 65 as Beija Flor beels to the breeze



THE CLASSICS

Though the word Classic has lost some of its value through overuse, no other comes so readily to mind when describing the Swan 65. Introduced by the Finnish builders, Nautor, as far back as May 1973, the 65 is not only sought after on the second-hand market, but interest is still high for new build.

Fifteen years is a long life for a production yacht: for such a big boat it is extraordinary. Why this enduring popularity? The most simple answer, if not the whole story, would be because the designers responsible for the Swan 65 are Sparkman & Stephens.

The famous Madison Avenue office of Olin and Rod Stephens was in its heyday in the late 1960s and early 1970s, when the Stephens brothers were at their zenith. Olin Stephens' designs were then in demand for world class races from the America's Cup to the Admiral's Cup. The 65 was very much a product of its time, a time when fast cruisers were also good sea boats and good racing boats. In 1973, at least, light displacement and stripped out interiors were still largely over the horizon.

It was racing success which really established the 65, the Whitbread Round the World race in particular. In 1973-74, *Sayula II* owned by Mexican washing machine magnate, Ramon Carlin, won the first Whitbread race. The interest this success generated was manifest by three Swans lining up for the next race in 1977-78: *King's Legend*, skippered by Nick Ratcliffe; *Disque d'Or*, skippered by Pierre Fehlmann and *ADC Accutrac*, skippered by Clare Francis (placed 2nd, 4th and 5th respectively).

Even in the 1981-82 event, when the race had developed into a full-blown grand-prix event with many custom boats being built especially for it, another venerable 65 crossed the Southsea start line. More than that, Padda Kuttel's *Xargo III* not only managed to keep up with the more fancy one-offs, but was placed 6th in the 19-strong fleet. Even then the winning did not end, for in the following year Skip Novak sailed *Independent Endeavour* to victory in the Parmelia Race from the UK to Western Australia. Such sterling performances by the 65 are the very stuff of sailing legend.

In all the Finnish firm have built 38 65s; the 39th is now under construction in Pietarsaari and due for launch this coming May. In fact one other 65 has been built, though this is a little-known fact. The boat, called anonymously hull number 000, was

constructed for Pekka Koskenkyla who had founded Nautor in 1966. It was his golden handshake, when he left the company for the South of France to be a Nautor agent, having sold his interest in the firm to current owners Oy Wilh Schauman Ab. It was a fitting farewell, as it was Koskenkyla who had decided to put the boat into build. At that time it was a brave move to tool up for such a large production yacht.

What attracted Koskenkyla to the design by S&S was the success of *Dora IV*, built in alloy by Palmer Johnson of Wisconsin for the late Lynn A. Williams. As Rod Stephens recalls: "*Dora's* great success led us to work from that design, with appropriate modifications to take care of greater structural and equipment weights, for the Swan 65. *Dora*, later renamed *Tenacious*, had further successes for Ted Turner, including the 1979 Fastnet."

Olin Stephens himself acknowledged that IOR race boat design and production cruiser racers had not then entirely gone their separate ways. "In hull form and general character," he says, "the Swan 65 clearly typifies successful development under the IOR. She has proven to be an excellent cruising boat and it appears that the success of the class is based on the preference of the cruising owner rather than the racing owner."

Stephens acknowledged that the 65s did not quite emulate the round-the-buoys success of *Dora*. "I think it is largely because of the conservative rig which is better adapted to cruising than to racing."

DORA DEVELOPMENT

Answering possible criticisms from the more conservative cruising boat lobby about the divided keel and skeg/rudder underbody, Olin Stephens explained at the time: "I personally do not accept this criticism, feeling rather that, when the skeg and rudder are of adequate size and the other characteristics of the boat are in balance, one can get excellent control with a relatively short keel. In turn, this permits good performance in light as well as heavy weather with a small rig which is ideal from the cruising man's point of view. This seems to me the right way to design a modern auxiliary, whether intended primarily for cruising or racing."

The skeg arrangement of the 65 did attract considerable interest due to problems experienced by some boats. Delrin was used for the bottom rudder

bearing and, as with other so-called maintenance-free materials, it absorbed minute amounts of moisture making a free-running bearing somewhat more sticky than intended.

More serious skeg problems were revealed in the second Whitbread Race when Nautor engineers had to go to Auckland to repair the skegs on *King's Legend* and *Disque d'Or* which had become partially delaminated by lateral loadings applied through worn rudder bearings. On *Legend*, in particular, it seemed that a hard-driving racing crew pushing a boat heavily weighed down with stores had stressed the hull more than originally anticipated. For *Legend*, having a sloop rig with big spinnakers further exacerbated the problem.

SKEG SAGA

The S&S designed yacht is deep gutted with the rudder not only relatively small in area but quite close to the keel. You can imagine the helmsman doing a lot of wheel waggling to keep the boat tracking under a press of sail. Put the 65 half model next to the German Frets successor in current production, the 651, and see how today's emphasis on downwind performance has resulted in a high aspect ratio rudder right at the end of the waterplane. A true sign of the times.

The saga of skegs is one of the few blemishes to have affected the 65s and then it was limited to two boats. To show how isolated the problem was you need only look at *Blanca Estella*, which has hull number 25 and was just 13 months younger than *King's Legend*. She's still owned by the Chilean Navy and used in a tough annual sail training regime in some of the world's more hostile sailing waters. Commissioned in 1977, she is still going strong ten years on, despite an annual programme which includes two trips around the Horn.

But if the Whitbread showed up one failing of the class, it also proved the all-round soundness of the design and engineering. Witness *Sayula's* 180 degree knockdown in the first race. Between Cape Town and Sydney, *Sayula* had been sailing in a sea left over from a 70 knot storm which had moderated to 40 knots, with just the storm staysail set, when she was overwhelmed. The knockdown was a genuine 180 degrees; traces of peanut butter on the underside of the deck hatches are testament to a world suddenly turned upside down. Worse still, some two to three tons of sea water

CONTINUED ON PAGE 153

THE CLASSICS

came below via an open cockpit locker, filled the bilges and flooded the engine and electrics.

Among *Sayula's* crew was Butch Dalrymple-Smith, who later joined Ron Holland Yacht Design who now have strong links with Nautor. He remembered the boat as being lovely to sail in light air and deceptively fast. "Within the context of the race, the boat was limited in not having a high top speed. Rather she was able to maintain high averages and we found our day's run often better than other competitors'. We tended to come off at the end of each leg thinking we were not going fast, but there we were in the lead."

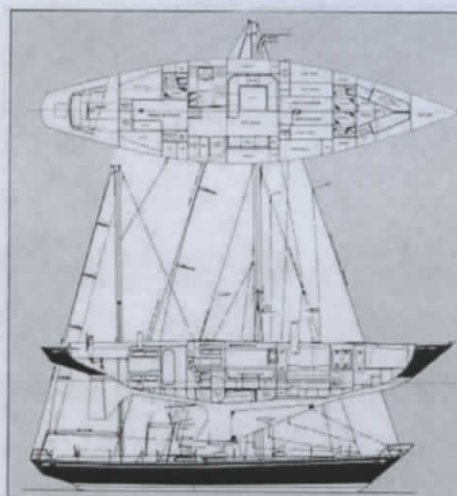
During the run into the finish *Sayula* did experience an increasing problem with her forestay which was breaking strands where they entered the Norseman terminal. Butch Dalrymple-Smith made a 70-point list of recommendations detailing his year-long experience with the 65, many of which were absorbed by Nautor. In later Whitbread races several of the competitors fitted heavier gauge wire or rod rigging with swaged terminals.

"She was a real classic boat," Dalrymple-Smith recalls. "She was quiet and had a kindly motion, except at certain angles of heel upwind where the vee-ed bow sections became flat and would slam."

With just 39 (or 40!) 65s built they are very much in demand on the second-hand market with anything between one or four available at any one time. At the moment two examples are available, *Sbaitan*, hull number 13 with teak decks at \$385,000 and *Flying Trades*, hull number 34 at \$500,000. With such a big yacht, condition and level of equipment can make huge differences in price. The majority of 65s sell through the official Swan Brokerage network, although not exclusively. One owner who has bought privately said: "A 65 is a bit like buying property: you look for quality and in S&S and Nautor you get real pedigree. To sell one of these boats you just have to advertise the words Swan 65 and the hull number. No other explanation is necessary."

Another owner who has had both a ketch and one of the four sloops built (*King's Legend*, *Jaguar*, *Orm* and *Mebetabel*) insists the sloop is the best option. "It will sail circles around a ketch in all conditions. The ketch rig is just good for hanging awnings on." He adds that the standard Nautor sloop with roller furling headsails is easily handled by two persons.

Go below on a 65 and she will give



an immediate sense of well being for this is a yacht for traditionalists. In keeping with the S&S philosophy of making sea going, not marina yachts, the berths are small and secure, but the galley and chart table areas are large, well equipped and very practical. We took a close look at *Beija Flor* (it means Humming Bird, hull number 32) which has been bought by a British owner to join the charter market with areas such as the Seychelles, East Africa and the Maldives on her future itinerary.

CHARTER FAVOURITE

The saloon is impressively roomy and not as dark as the narrow coachroof windows would have you believe. A cut out in the bulkhead allows communication with the galley crew. On some 65s this bulkhead is solid; on others completely open with just a pillar running from the servery island to the deckhead. What is not immediately apparent is just how much space there is below the saloon, for the design dates from the days of wineglass midship sections. Thus there is ample space to swallow up the engine and associated systems. *Beija Flor* has the Volvo Penta MD 32 89hp (66kW) engine which was fitted to the earlier boats. To give more of a push, and to permit greater control when berthing, late boats had the Perkins H6 115hp (86kW) engine, though when Perkins ceased production of this horizontal six cylinder, hull numbers 37 onwards had to be fitted with the newer Volvo Penta TMD40A 124hp (92kW) engine.

Forward of the saloon are two matching guest cabins with upper and lower single berths parallel to the centreline — all in the S&S tradition of seamanlike sleeping arrangements. On

Dimensions:

LOA Ketch (retroussée stem)	64.57ft	19.68m
LOA Sloop (transom stem)	65.09ft	19.84m
LWL	47.00ft	14.33m
Beam	16.33ft	4.98m
Draught	9.6ft	2.9m
Disp (IOR)	70,000lb	31,800kg
Ballast	30,600lb	13,900kg

Designer: Sparkman & Stephens Inc, 79 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016-7802, USA.

Builder: Nautor, Oy Wilh. Schauman Ab, PO Box 10, SF-68601, Pietarsaari, Finland.

Beija Flor, and other boats, the upper berths have been converted to a slide out double using the bottom berth cushion as an infill, so giving passage-making crews and charter parties the best of both worlds. Matching head compartments are ahead of the cabins with a crew cabin in the fo'c'sle.

Right aft there is an owner's cabin which is very roomy. In fact there is so much floor space that another chest of drawers or occasional seat could be incorporated. On *Beija Flor* there is a large Goyot hatch opening into the cockpit well which helps introduce light to a normally dark cabin.

On the latest, 39, this after cabin is for the skipper and his wife, for this is designed from the outset as a two couple boat. The owner's quarters run the full width of the ship forward where the two double guest cabins would normally be located.

The fact that an owner is prepared to have a new 65 built speaks volumes about the design's reputation. Not only is this owner having a semi-custom interior, in keeping with the current Nautor practice, but he is prepared to buy a boat built from moulds now so old that lengthy preparation is needed both on the mould tools and mouldings themselves to achieve a 'Nautor finish'.

But like all other owners, this one is keen to buy the sort of unseen quality which Nautor add to their products, manifest in detailing such as filling the engine beds with lead shot for improved vibration absorption, or the double anodising of the alloy work.

And then there are the aesthetics which please so many eyes. As one owner told us: "You can sail into a Med port full of three-tiered stinkpots, but the 65 still has the looks to turn heads. You feel proud to be aboard." ■