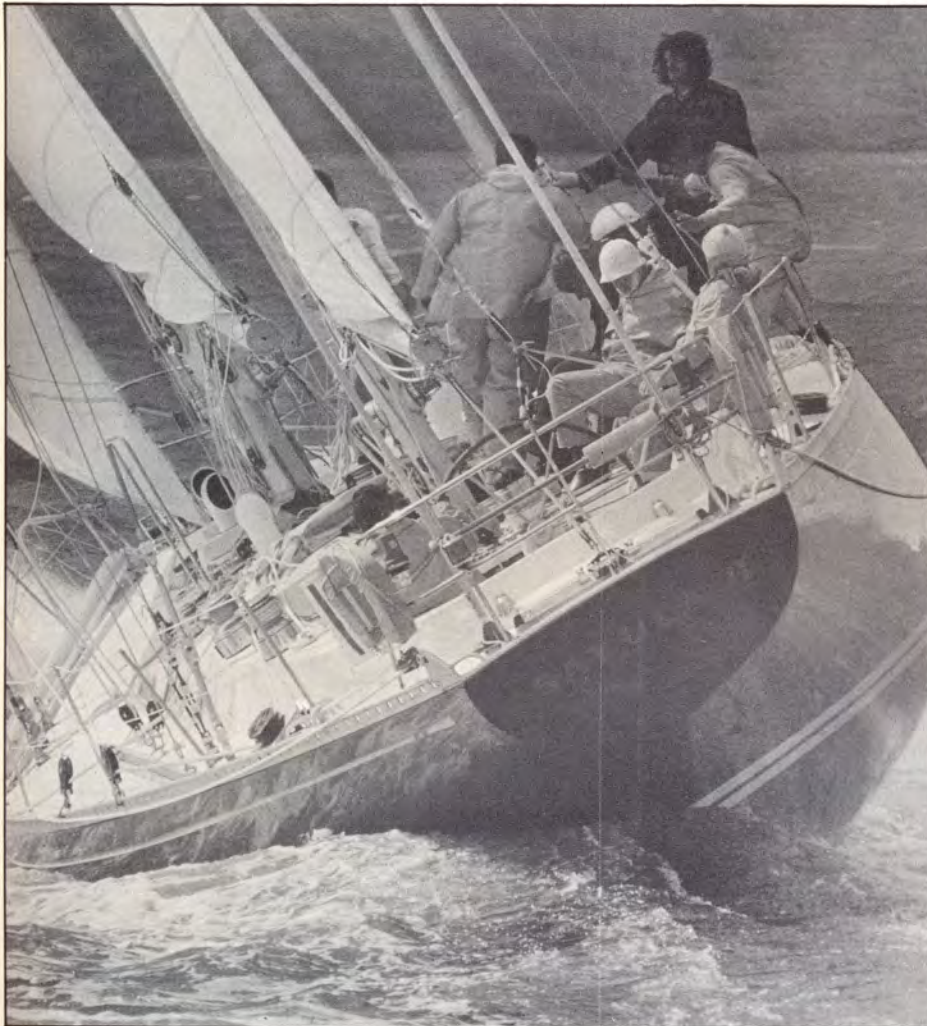


HISTORY



Saulya II, arguably the best known Swan of all, winner of the first Whitbread Round the World race

line system that is still the heart of Nautor boatbuilding.

Nautor have an unrivalled manufacturing facility in the countryside around Pietasaari. From the small commissioning dock near the huge pulp plant of the parent company, to the main factory at Kalby, via the joinery factory at Kronoby and the plug and mould factory at Larsmo, they manufacture just about all the major parts of their boats.

There are workshops fabricating stainless steel components, laminating large and small parts, building masts, assembling accommodation sections in special jigs, even a fully staffed technical and drawing department working flat out to supply the production teams with information and detailed drawings for modifications and developments.

Nautor pride themselves on their customer contact. They have an agent set-up that spans over 20 countries, controlled through Marketing Manager Ingmar

Granholm. Information and sales contacts are certainly dealt with through this network, but, perhaps more importantly, developments, ideas and service information is fed back to the factory from the owners via the agents. Ingmar Granholm values very highly the information he receives in this way and has a great respect for the integrity and experience of his agents. This is reflected in the trust put in the agents when a new addition to the range is called for. It is the owner's opinions transmitted to the company, commented on by the agents, that form the basis for each new boat.

Service support for Swan owners comes in the first place from the agents. They are required to give assistance as required, but there is also a network of suitable repair yards available. Providing the long stop, however, is Lars Strom, Technical Manager at the factory.

Patient, quietly spoken, a man whose respect for machinery is such that he

allows his car engine to warm up for a moment before driving off, Lars Strom knows everything worth knowing about any product of the Nautor factories.

Strom regularly contributes to the Nautor newsletter that goes to every owner and will, if pressed, tell you about the development of the International Measurement System handicapping machine that is located at Pietasaari so that all new Swans can be IMS measured if desired, about the amazing system of instrumentation that was fitted to the Whitbread Round the World Race boat *Fazer Finland*. The strain gauge and recorder system assessed every load impinging on the hull from rig, wave and weather, and the information gathered will be used in ensuring that future Swans will be engineered from a factual database of knowledge, rather than from educated guesswork.

Typical of the calibre of Nautor staff that contribute to Rolls Royce standards in boatbuilding, Lars Strom makes it his business to have — mainly in his head — all the information that would be of interest to owners trying to keep their boats in tip-top condition. But there is more to Lars than just maintenance and production.

He is in constant contact with the Ship Laboratory of the Technical Research Centre of Finland — who helped develop the monitoring system for *Fazer Finland* — so that the latest in research is always available to him.

A recent programme assessed the relative merits of the deep draught regular keels, centreboard arrangements and Scheel keels used on Nautor boats, and investigations into subjects like furling gears for jib and mainsails, as well as into the confusing realms of comparisons of winch power for the various sizes of Lewmar winch commonly fitted to Swans, form part of the brief of Lars Strom and the technical department of Nautor.

Owners and prospective owners of Swans are encouraged to visit Pietasaari to see the factory and to see their own boat in the throes of construction. Those who do visit cannot fail to be impressed with the dedication of everyone working within those walls. The Nautor philosophy is 'to develop, produce and market off-shore cruising/racing sailing yachts of the highest quality for International customers, with the object to be the market leader'. It is clear that all those 370 or more personnel at Nautor are dedicated to that ideal.

HISTORY

Setting a boatyard just 180 miles south of the Arctic circle might seem a curious decision when attempting to take international boatbuilding by storm. But that is what Pekka Koskenkyla decided to do in his home town of Pietasaari, Finland, back in 1966. That unlikely beginning has developed into the company known as Nautor, with its renowned Swan range of boats.

Koskenkyla knew that there was a ready-made pool of talented woodworkers in the town and started business with a few of them, in a converted tannery. The mahogany yacht they built was snapped up by an eager purchaser before she was completed so, believing that there was a ready market for very high quality production yachts, Pekka Koskenkyla approached Rod Stephens, then the world's top designer with his brother Olin, to get the rights to build a 36 footer.

This 36ft (10.97m) yacht was a development of an existing S&S design, but Pekka wanted the boat built in the then new material of glassfibre for strength and lightness. This boat became the Swan 36 and was so successful in her first year of production that soon a larger factory than the old tannery was opened and a production line was started.

In 1968, the British agents for Nautor, Mike Hurrell and Dave Johnson, took their second Swan 36, they bought the very first of the Swan 36s, to Cowes week. Six of the scheduled seven races were sailed, and *Casse Tete II* won them all. The name of Nautor became immediately known around the sailing world.

In the following year, Hurrell and Johnson bought the latest Swan, the 43, *Casse Tete III*, and she became the first production yacht to sail in the British Admiral's Cup team. Success followed racing success, but just as the future seemed assured, disaster struck the company. Fire reduced the Pietasaari factory to ashes. Everything was lost.

Pekka Koskenkyla had been expanding Nautor yet again at the time of the fire and a new factory was under construction. Three months were to pass, however, before production could restart and, despite the insurance settlement, the fledgling company was in severe financial difficulty.

Nautor's problems were only overcome by the purchase of 51 per cent of the company's shares by the wood pulp company Oy Wilh. Schauman Ab, another Pietasaari

resident. By the time another year had passed, Nautor had become the yacht building division of the Schauman group.

1970 saw unprecedented new model development at Nautor. Three new models, the 37, 40 and 50, all S&S designs, were built. By this time, two factories were involved in building the Swan range, a joinery workshop at Kronoby and the main production facility at Kalby. Koskenkyla was sticking to his original idea of taking the factory to the area where a pool of talent could be tapped to do the best job. Most of the workers could walk to work from their nearby homes.

Success continued in the 70s. A Swan 48, *Noryema*, won the 1972 Bermuda race and introduced the now familiar wedge-shaped Swan deck line to the world. In 1973, that year's new model, the 44, took the coveted Boat of the Show award at the London International Boat Show.



Pekka Koskenkyla, Nautor founding father.

Next milestone was the race success of the Swan 65 *Sayula* in the inaugural Whitbread Round the World Race in 1974, but the same year heralded the oil crisis, recession and a decline in demand for expensive yachts. Nothing daunted, Nautor invested in an anodising plant to get their own mast production system into top gear, and in 1975 the company opened a huge new laminating hall.

Pekka Koskenkyla left Nautor in the early 70s, heading off to France in his own Swan 65 to start an agency. Jens Rudback was given responsibility for overseeing the by now impressive product range of the company, continuing the philosophy of new model introduction, production line building and an unrelenting concentration on quality.

Throughout the first decade of Nautor, designs for production boats were not just based on successful racing boats, but were

racing boats in their own right. By the end of the 70s, however, the International Offshore Rule for racing yachts had developed to such an extent that it was becoming impossible to build a dual purpose racing and cruising craft and remain competitive. Sparkman and Stephens's boats were becoming outclassed by the new young lions of naval architecture.

To move with the times, Nautor employed the top man of the year, New Zealander Ron Holland, to design a performance yacht based on his successful racing design *Imp*. The Swan 391 was the direct descendant of *Imp*, with the Swan 441 having a lineage from such sister boats as *Big Apple* and *Marionette*. The name *Casse Tete* couldn't be kept from such a racing Swan. *Casse Tete V* in Dave Johnson's hands represented Britain in the Sardinia Cup in 1980.

Holland designed a total of five boats for Nautor, before his latest contributions, the 43 and the 102ft creation of the custom building division.

Coincidentally with Holland's entry into the mainstream of Nautor design, S&S bowed out. But what an exit! Their last boat for the company was the 76, the biggest production yacht of the time and highly successful as a production craft of that size, with five built. In all, S&S drew 15 boats for Nautor, as well as three motor sailers.

After the entry of Ron Holland into the field of Swan design, Argentinian naval architect German Frers was brought in to modernise the top end of the range. His contributions include the 46, 51, 59, 61, 651 and now a special anniversary boat is being planned, two decades after the first yacht from Swan.

Frers designs are fast cruiser racers with the accent on performance, though boats like the centre cockpit 61 lean towards cruising more than racing.

With demand slowing in the 80s and competition between boatbuilders increasing month by month, Nautor had to relax their previously rigid stance on standard production building. Owners are now allowed more options and accommodation layouts, and even changes, like the addition of a conventional counter to a retousse stern boat, have been arranged.

Olle Emmes, who replaced Jens Rudback as General Manager in 1983, has developed a policy of structured options that allow an owner to specify interior, rig and even some hull and keel shape alterations, without disrupting the production

DESIGNERS

Just three designers have drawn the whole Swan range. We profile the involvement of S&S, Ron Holland and German Frers

S&S

In 1966 I'd gone to Finland, to inspect some jobs that Sparkman & Stephens had going there, when I got a call from a fellow named Koskenkyla. He wanted to see me the next day to discuss the design of a 36ft sailboat he wanted to build.

"Now as it happened, I had a very full schedule on that trip; It hated to be away too long from home and the family, so I had meetings scheduled all day. But I told Mr. Koskenkyla that if he didn't mind getting up early, and if he could get to the place where I was staying by 0600, why I'd be glad to see him.

"Mr. Koskenkyla said that was fine with him, and, by golly, right at six o'clock he was there."

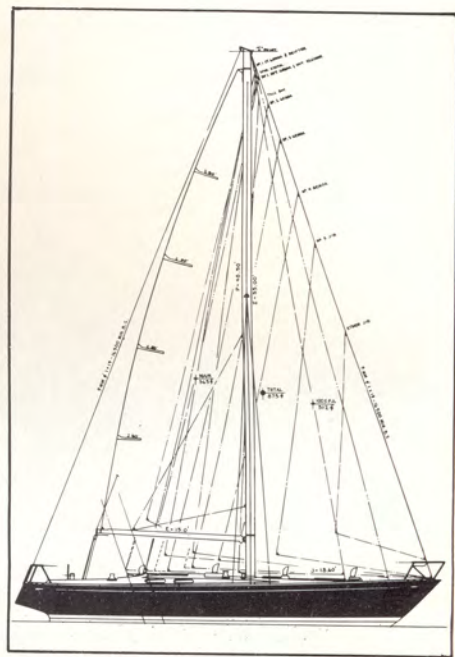
This was Rod Stephens speaking, of the venerable New York City yacht design firm Sparkman & Stephens, who have probably designed more sailboats than any other group of naval architects in the world, including 13 of Nautor's Swans.

Rod Stephens sits erect and square-shouldered at his desk, hands clasped, head forward, squinting as he peers back into his marvelous memory to squeeze out a name, a date, a fact, a mood. He had been asked to discuss the relationship between Sparkman & Stephens and Nautor and to talk about some of the outstanding Swan yachts that were designed by S&S and built by Nautor.

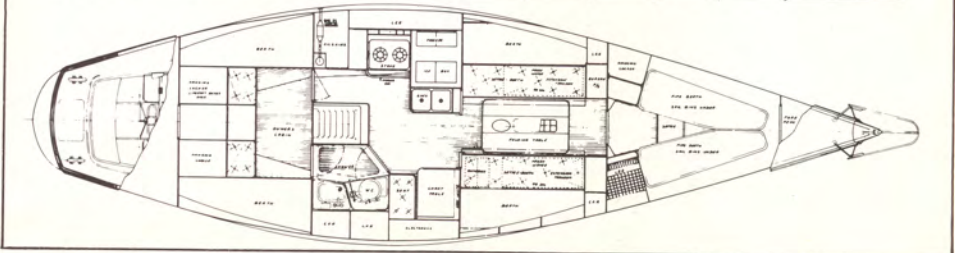
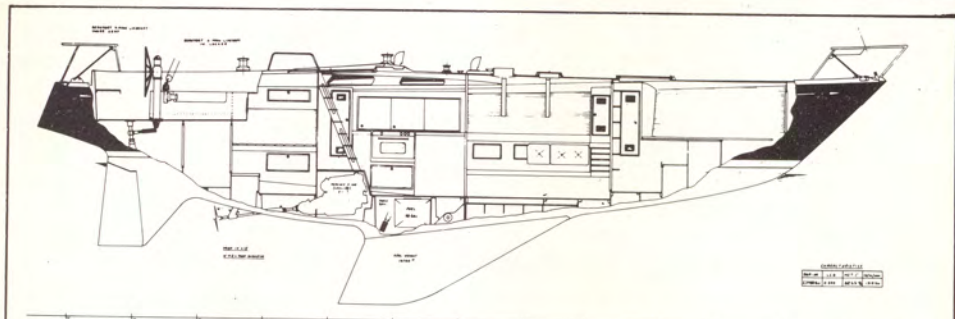
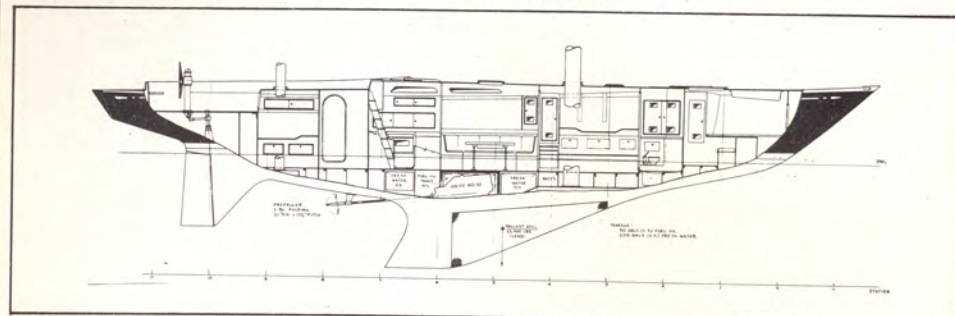
Rod Stephens's visitor that day in 1966 in Finland was Pekka Koskenkyla, who had started Nautor, who knew of Sparkman & Stephens by reputation, and who had already decided he wanted S & S to design a boat for him.

"He was looking for a competitive racing design like the Danish-owned *Diana*, which had won the One Ton Cup.

"*Diana* had gotten a lot of press," said Rod Stephens, "For winning the One-Ton Championship Regatta, and that's probably what caught his eye. In any event, I was very impressed by Koskenkyla's sincerity and his determination, and by the fact he'd gotten up early enough to meet me at 0600, so we struck a deal and I sent him



Above right and bottom, Swan 41. Above left and below, Swan 65



the plans for his new boat."

Rod Stephens was further impressed on his first visit to Koskenkyla's factory in Pietarsaari. This was to approve the plug for the deck mould of what would be the first Swan 36.

"I have never seen a more beautifully prepared plug, all painted and polished and ready to use to make the mould for the first fibreglass deck," said Rod.

"Pekka was most insistent that, if I was to propose any modifications, now was the time. It looked so beautiful, but there were several small details which could be modified to benefit the final deck. I made several suggestions, which were to be dealt with while we had lunch.

"The willingness to slightly modify a beautiful plug showed that Pekka was serious in his desire to make everything as good as possible. Thanks to the skill of the carpenters, the corrections were made forthwith and when I completed my inspection a few hours later, I had a very positive feeling toward this project."

"So that boat, our design No. 1710 with a modified rudder, turned out to be a very nice boat to sail, and at the same time she was a pretty competitive one-tonner.

"A year or so later, we designed the 37, a boat angled more toward the International Offshore Rule, rated one-ton, and a much faster, more competitive boat. Then two years later came the final design in that range, the 38, which was really the best of the bunch. For by that time, Nautor had learned a lot about building and finishing boats, the fittings were improved, and so forth."

Stephens went on to discuss the Swan 65, which Nautor selected because of *Dora*, an S & S design for Lynn Williams that had been built by Palmer Johnson in Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin. "The only reason she didn't win the first Bermuda Race she entered was a screw-up in the rod rigging that prevented her from tacking for the finish line when she should have. *Dora* finished first in most of the races she entered, which caught the eye of Koskenkyla, and he decided to go ahead and build the boat out of fibreglass, even though she'd been designed for aluminium."

Shortly thereafter, a Swan 65, *Sayula*, won the first Whitbread Race; there were three of them in the second Whitbread and they all finished in the top five; in fact, in that particular race, S & S designs, including the three Swan 65s, finished first, second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth.

"Pretty good," says Stephens with a grin.

"The Swan 44 was what I'd call a 'general development'", says Stephens. "One of the early models we did for Nautor was a Swan 43 which was a pretty good boat; one came over from Finland and won the New York Yacht Club Spring Regatta. So the boat caught on and we sold maybe 15 of them in the U.S. and sometime later we updated it to try and make it an even better boat. Unfortunately, just about that time the smart designers began to figure out how to beat the IOR with flat-bottomed boats that had the same measured displacement, but actually weighed a whole lot less. So the 44 wasn't the Admiral's Cup success we thought it would be, although it was still a very successful design and over the years it has won a lot of races."

Sparkman & Stephens produced 13 designs for Nautor during the course of their 14-year relationship, almost one new boat per year and ranging in overall length from 36 to 76 feet (11-23m). During the course of that relationship, the company was sold to Oy Wilh. Schauman AB. Pekka Koskenkyla left the firm and sailed his own Swan 65 to France where he became the Nautor representative.

Jens Rudback was brought in to run Nautor. Though not a sailor, he put a high priority on race results from Swan designs and began to work with designers other than Sparkman & Stephens, notably Ron Holland.

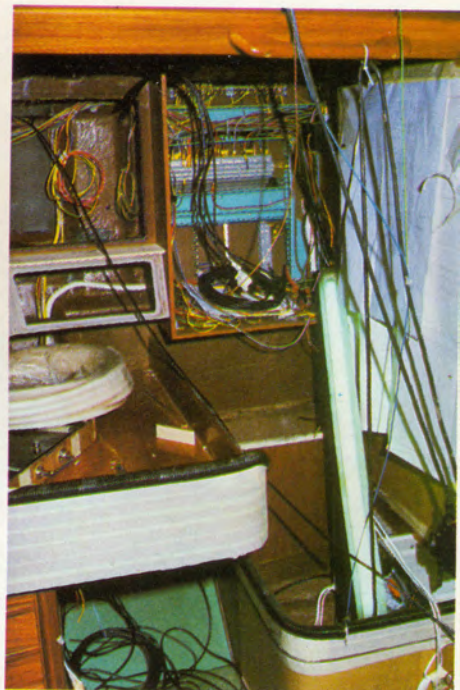
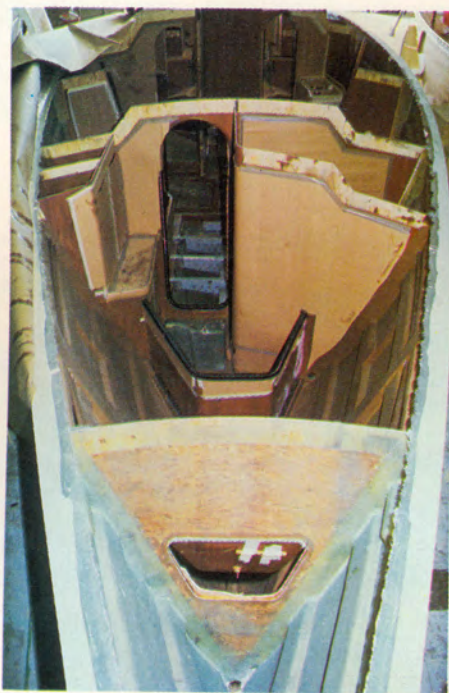
Ron Holland

In the mid seventies, the established yacht designers were being challenged — on the race course at least — by younger men who gave little for the hide-bound traditions of the sport, but who wanted to win. Their successes usually began in the smaller racing classes, but as their fame grew, bigger and bigger boats came from their drawing boards.

One of the leaders in this new wave was Ron Holland.

Ron Holland began sailing in his native New Zealand, started work as an apprentice in a boatbuilding yard, and designed his first boat at the age of 19. After a spell

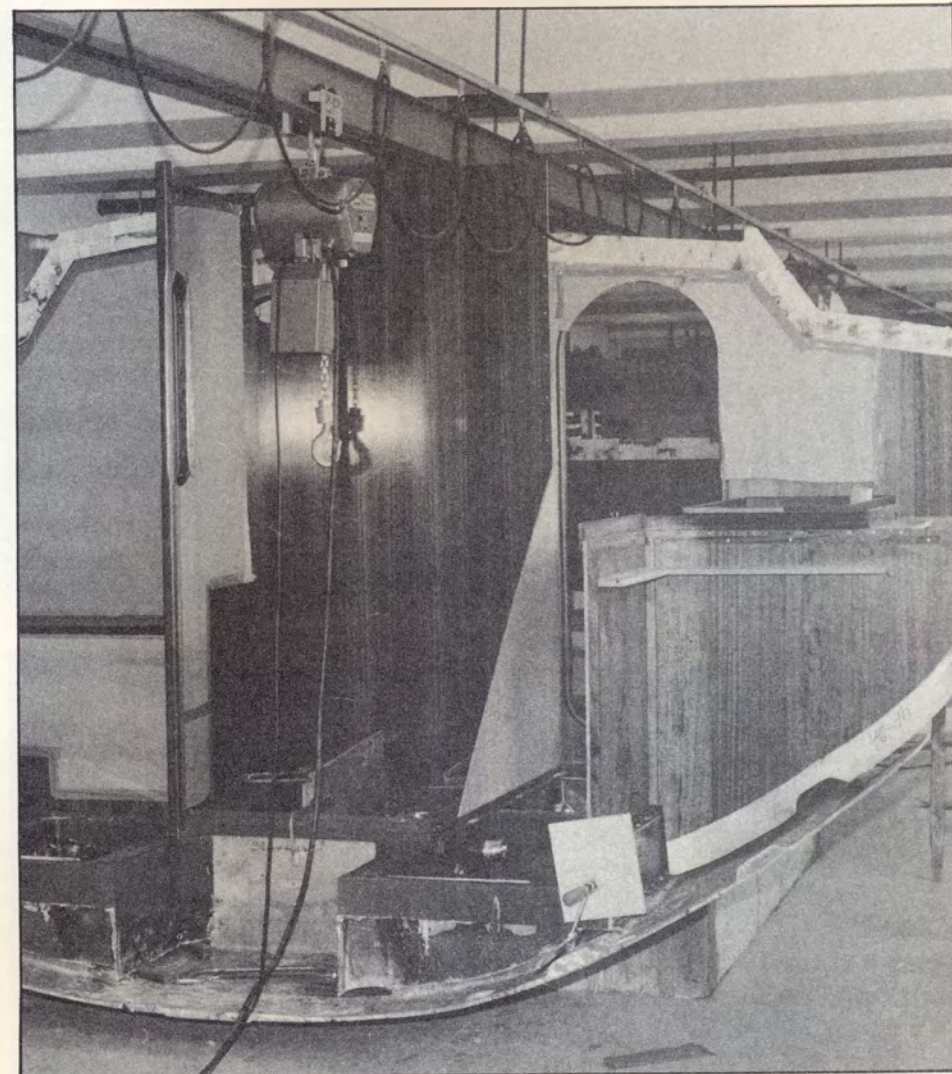
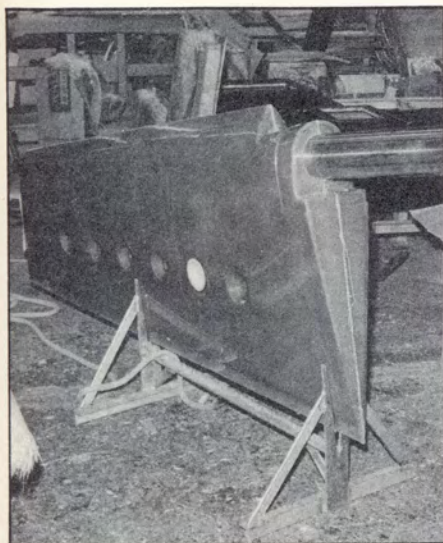
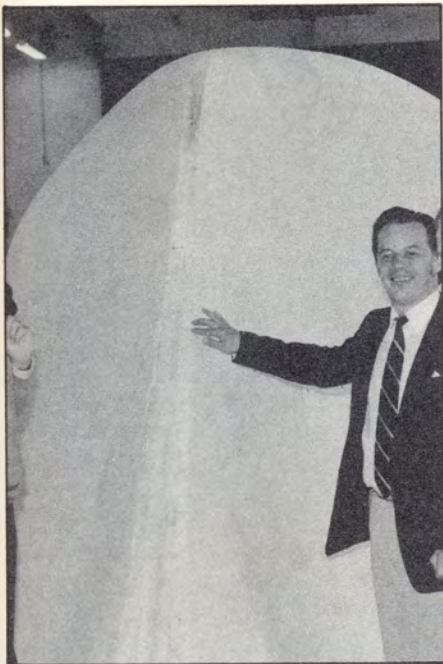
BUILDING A SWAN



Top left, through the doors of the Nautor factory go all the materials for a Swan. The most important ingredient is, however, the workforce. Left, first stages are in the lamination of hulls and decks. Top centre, boats move into the assembly hall for the installation of interiors. Top right, ever more complex electrical circuits are installed early

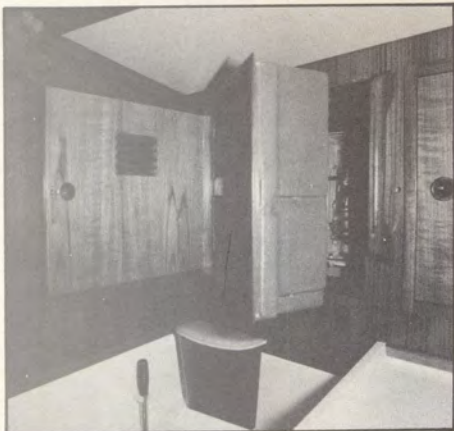
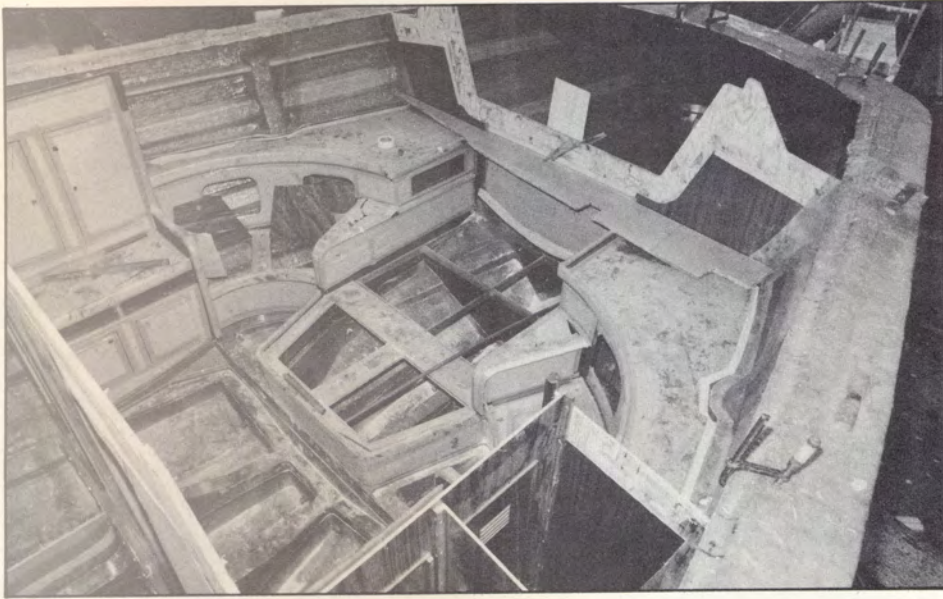
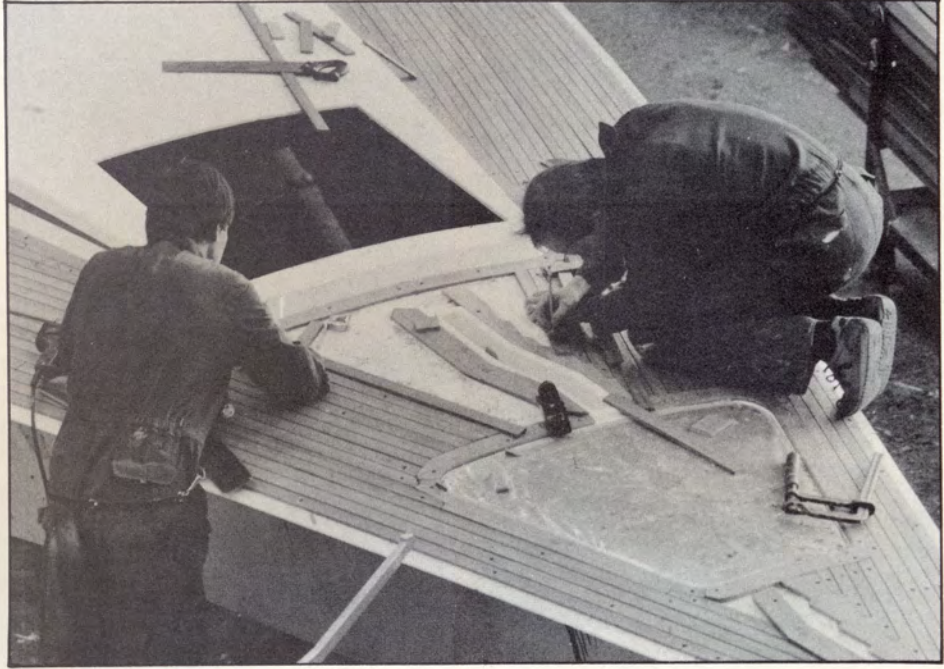


BUILDING A SWAN



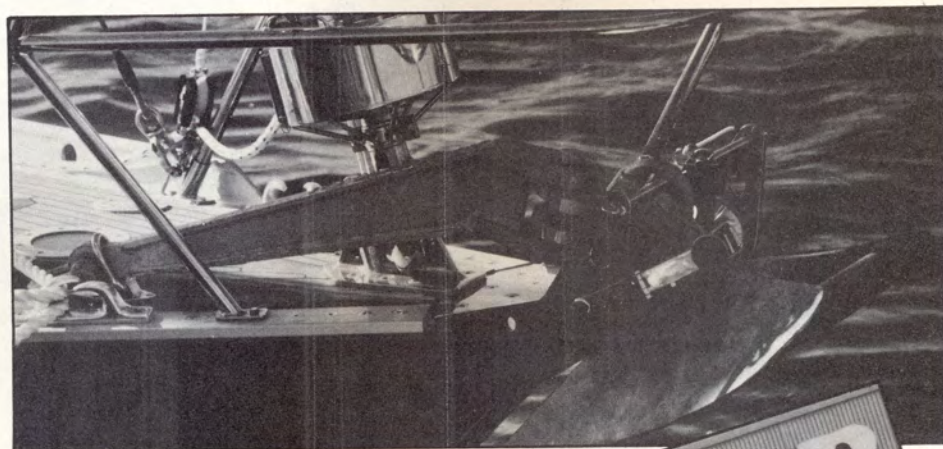
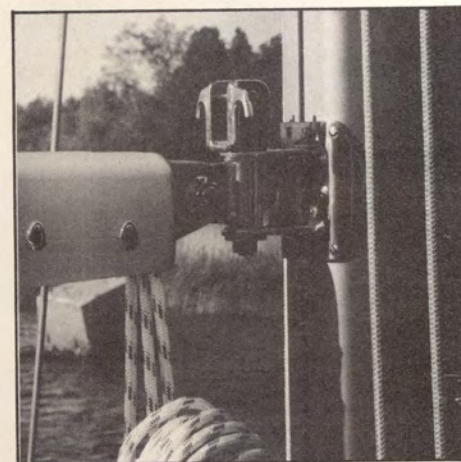
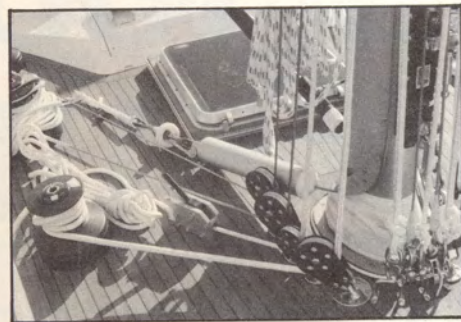
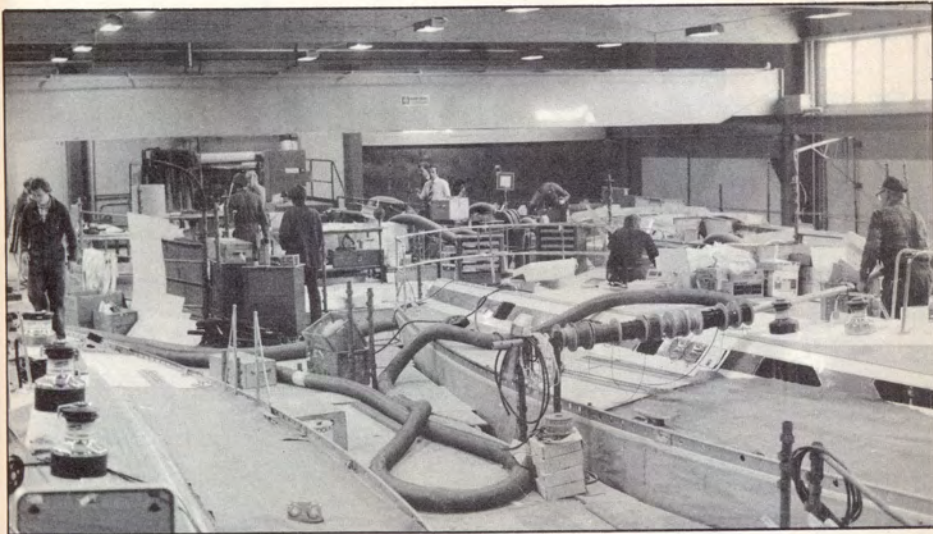
Top left, it all begins with a plug. General Manager Olle Emmes inspects a new boat from designer German Frers. Top right, after the plug and the moulds, the laminators move in to mould each hull. Hulls are usually made in two halves. Above, laminators also make all the small parts needed for the boat. Here a rudder and its massive stainless stock cure before fitting. Right, interior joinery is assembled as complete units in special jigs before being lowered into their respective hulls and bonded into place

BUILDING A SWAN



Top left, every boat has a massive, but light, steel frame to carry mast loads. Top, deck-laying team in action. Centre left, inner mouldings form the bases for the interior joinery units. Above, stepping the mast and checking all rigging. Far left, swing-out locker liners hide electrical panels. Left, Schleel keels show on about 50 per cent of all new craft

BUILDING A SWAN



Top left, hustle and bustle in the lines of boats in the assembly hall. Centre, all boats are tested in the pool. Details, top to bottom, mast foot, gooseneck, masthead, toe rail, (above) stemhead. Right, the complete boat, ready for delivery

