

SPARKMAN & STEPHENS
SWAN ASSOCIATION

News from the Cockpit . No. 406/2023

Capraia S&S Swan Rally, 21 . 22 . 23 June 2024

Save the date in your agenda! In a few months we will be sending more details about our 2024 Event, in the meantime 18 S&S Swan Owners already confirmed their participation, they are:

S&S Swan 36/007 Josian, from Italy
S&S Swan 36/010 Isabella, from Germany
S&S Swan 37/052 Tikka, from Italy
S&S Swan 40/047 Star Swan, from Portugal
S&S Swan 41/025 Lithian, from Italy
S&S Swan 41/026 Freya, from Canary Is.
S&S Swan 43/043 Kokkola, from Italy
S&S Swan 44/014 Four Winds, from Italy
S&S Swan 44/016 Selene, from Italy
S&S Swan 44/036 Sehkraft, from Germany
S&S Swan 44/047 Solano, from France
S&S Swan 44/056 Deneb, from Italy
S&S Swan 47/002 Hypatia, from Italy
S&S Swan 47/041 Tortuga, from Italy
S&S Swan 47/051 Djata, from Italy
S&S Swan 47/056 Black Tie, from Italy
S&S Swan 47/069 Vanessa, from Italy
S&S Swan 48/015 Rendezvous, from Spain

First Year with Ainsleight, S&S Swan 38/027

by Johanna Mäkitaipale

I remember very well that sunny day of August couple of years ago when the idea suddenly popped into my head - we, which is me and my husband Kalle, have to buy a classic S&S designed sailing boat! We had just been admiring a beautiful well-maintained S&S designed IOR One-Off Prospect of Whitby III in Kasnäs harbour here in Finland. Our 31ft Finnish sailing boat (Sunwind) was very good to start sailing with and we had enjoyed sailing her around Finnish archipelago. But she wasn't the once-in-a-lifetime boat for me and I wanted a boat with better bluewater sailing properties for further sailing adventures abroad. So I immediately started searching a perfect boat for us which had to be S&S designed, under 12 m and have excellent bluewater sailing properties. And there she was, a S&S Swan 38! I was sold and couldn't consider any other boat anymore.

Finding a Swan 38 in good condition wasn't easy. I contacted brokers, S&S Swan Association and owners of Swan 38's that were for sale. There were only few for sale in Europe and those in very good condition were sold soon. We were told that many of them changed owners even without public advertisements. We were hoping to find a boat from northern Europe so that we could sail the boat ourselves to Finland during our summer holiday.

Ainsleigh was located in Fehmarn, Germany, so location was very good for us. But she was in need for refit due to leaking teak deck and worn outfit. After changing mails with the seller we decided to give Ainsleigh a try and booked flights to Hamburg as well as a boat inspector to check her for us. Before we left to Germany we were lucky to visit Pirate (hull 019). Her owner introduced the boat to us giving tips what to look at in these boats. Few days later we flew to Germany, rent a car and drove to Fehmarn. Ainsleigh was in a shed where she had been for a while waiting for a new owner. She was badly in need for TLC and full refit. Like a rescue puppy waiting for someone to pick her up and give her a new life. All surfaces were worn, leaking teak deck had caused damage to teak veneer and mast step was corroded. But we were optimistic. Boat inspector came to check the boat couple of days later when we were already back in Finland. We were anxiously waiting for his call and estimation of Ainsleigh's condition but we ended up disheartened after hearing him saying we shouldn't buy this boat! It was in much worse condition than we had expected having severe moisture problems due to leaking keel-hull joint, chainplates and teak deck. He said even the mast was in need for replacement or repair.

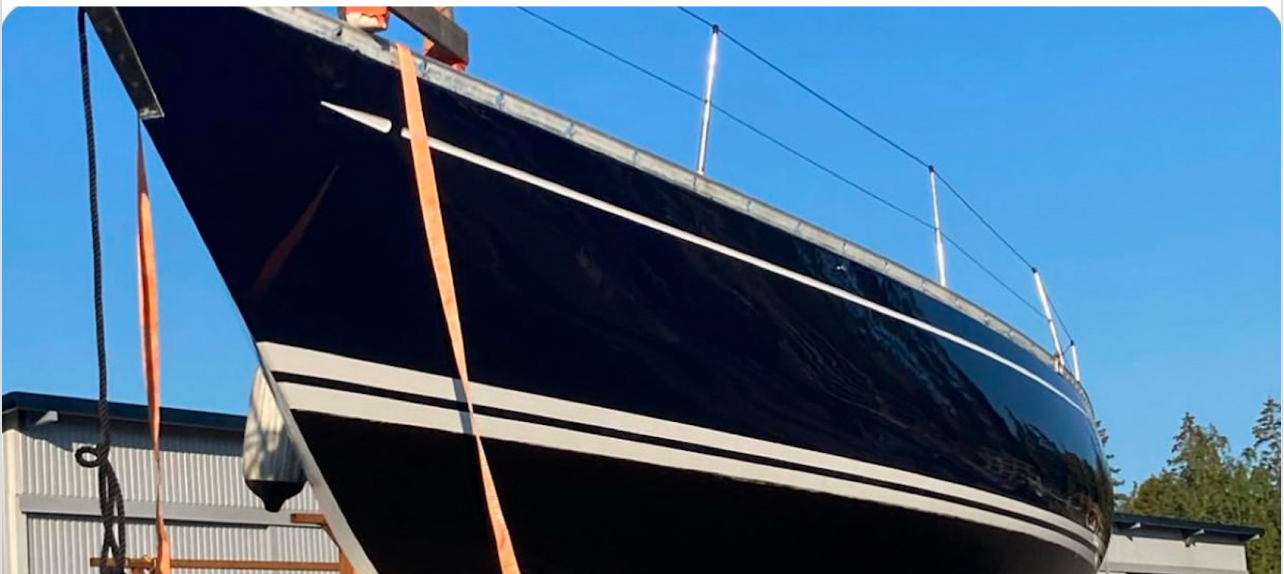
I had, however, found another Swan 38 (hull 035) for sale here in Finland and we went to see her together with boat yard master of Espoon Venepalvelu. She turned out to be in similar condition as Ainsleigh. We spend couple of hours checking the boat and discussing the refit with yard master. He told us what should be fixed and what would it cost. "Everything can be fixed" he said to us. We left home with lot of thoughts. Next couple of weeks I kept searching advices regarding the refit and we spend sleepless nights counting pros and cons of these boats, costs, whether we should still wait for a boat in a better condition or whether it is wise at all even consider a refit project like this. We were lucky to get advices from late Lars Ström who finally made us decide that we will start a refit project and bring back to its glory one of these boats. Finally it was the location of Ainsleigh and the following sailing trip from Germany to Finland, that made us choose her instead of that Finnish boat.

Next June we sailed her from Fehmarn via Danmark and Sweden to southern Finland where we live. We had wonderful four weeks. I will never forget the first evening after we left Fehmarn. Evening was warm, sunset beautiful purple-blue and we were enjoying sailing her towards Danish coast. Suddenly we saw a porpoise swimming next to the boat! That was magical!

Refit was started in the beginning of August in Espoon Venepalvelu. During the Autumn we dismantled the old teak deck and all wooden part inside the boat. Mast step was removed, sand-blasted and badly corroded part was welded. Mast step was hot-galvanised and painted with epoxy. Gelcoat was shaved off inside and outside boat and keel removed. As the moisture level was maximum in the hull, it was left to dry for several months until two new GRP layers were applied with epoxy and bottom was repainted (three layers of epoxy paint, light primer, silicone tie coat and three layers of silicone antifouling). During the Spring hull was repainted with graphite blue Double Coat and all white areas of deck and cockpit with white Double coat. Bulkheads of saloon berths were rotten due to water in bilge and leaking original aluminium diesel tank (tank was replaced by stainless steel tank by previous owner). All rotten wood were removed and replaced. Bilge was painted, teak interiors were sanded and revarnished, new gas oven was installed, new mattresses and spray hood were made and bow-thruster was installed. Metal parts were re-chromed. Lastly new synthetic teak deck was applied. We did part of the refit ourselves and our boat yard did the most difficult parts including refit of mast step and bulkheads as well as applying of the new deck. Refit was really intensive! We spend nearly all of our weekends at boat yard and also evenings during the Spring. We set a deadline to 12th of

July as we wanted to participate to European Swan Regatta held in Turku, Finland a week later. Last month before regatta was just horrible! We worked every possible minute at boat yard to get her ready for launch.

Ainsleigh was launched 12th of July after 11,5 months at boat yard. She was watertight, clean and had everything needed for sailing but lacked a lot, including inner ceiling. During the following week we got her ready for regatta but didn't have time to perfect anything. She was probably the only Swan in that regatta that had not been polished for the race (luckily the new paint was shiny)! As we didn't have any racing experience we were lucky to get very skilful crew including race skipper to sail Ainsleigh in Swan regatta. It was such a wonderful experience to participate to the event and meet other Swan owners. Most importantly, we finally saw result of our huge work at boat yard; Ainsleigh was racing again, sailing perfectly in skilful hands and looked great.





After the regatta we spend three weeks sailing with family crew in Stockholm archipelago in Sweden, participated to Helsinki Tallinna Race and sailed rest of the season short sailing trips nearby areas. Next winter she will spend in Espoon Venepalvelu and refit continues. Inner ceiling will be applied (old was molded), mast will be painted white (yes, Nautor mast is still good after 49 yrs in use!) and we will update the electronics. I would love to replace the Jabsco toilet with original Baby Blake if I can find used one in good condition.

During the last year I searched Ainsleigh's past history. She spent nearly 40 years in US until she was sold to Germany in 2013. After some detective work, I managed to found her four previous owners in US and received lovely stories of her previous adventures. She was originally *Chimera*, and then *Trinidad* until she was painted blue and named *Late Night* in 1985. German owners renamed her *Ainsleigh* and we decided to keep this name. We will write down the history of her first 50 years to follow her for the next 50 years!

So was it worth it? Definitely! Looking back to last winter, I won't miss that work at boat yard at all, but now that we go through the whole boat in this refit, we will have nearly new boat in good condition for years. We can say we know every inch and screw of our boat! And we really love this boat - it is worth of all the work! During this year we have met many other Swan owners and got plenty of good advices from them as well as from S&S Swan Association. We are really grateful for all that.

You can read more about Ainsleigh's refit and adventures in Instagram [swan_38_ainsleigh](#) and in Facebook [S/Y Ainsleigh](#).

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S&S Swan Association
Via San Damiano, 2
20122 - Milan - I

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