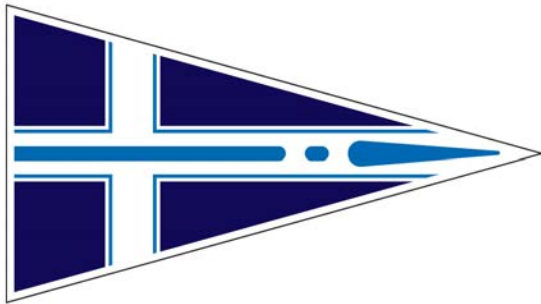




**SPARKMAN & STEPHENS
SWAN ASSOCIATION**

News From the Cockpit No. 415/2024

Hiro Nakajima at the 2023 Fastnet Race

As some of you will recall I am a member of the S&S Swan Association and the owner of Swan 43/046 "Hiro Maru" but I also sail a 1971 custom aluminium S&S 49 "Hiro Maru". "Hiro Maru" 49 raced across the Atlantic in the 2019 Transatlantic Race from Newport, Rhode Island to Cowes, UK, the boat has remained in UK and Irish waters ever since. Since then we have raced in the 2019 and 2021 Fastnet Races and the 704 mile Round Ireland Race in 2022. The boat formerly "Scaramouche" was built at the famous Palmer Johnson shipyard in Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin and is one of three boats built to this design along with "Bay Bea" and "Aura".





Hiro Nakajima rounding the Fastnet Rock, 2023

The Fastnet Race

The 2023 Fastnet Race started on June 22nd celebrating the 50th running of this bi-annual race. Starting off the Royal Yacht Squadron on the Isle of Wight, around Fastnet Rock and, for the second time, finishing in Cherbourg, France for a total of 690 miles.

This year's race attracted 358 boats in six divisions to the starting line and similar to the 2021 race started in especially windy and rough conditions, except a lot worse. As predicted by the weather forecast a series of low pressure systems passed over the race course during the next four-five days producing wind and waves for the duration of the race.

The start on Saturday saw molto gnarly conditions on the Solent and English Channel with rain and winds on the nose at a steady 30 knots gusting into the 40s with wind against tide down the Solent. For those of you familiar with this area, wind against tide in the Solent creates nasty very short frequency steep waves especially along Hurst Castle and the Shingles. It is the kind of sea conditions where your boat sails up the front of a wave but before it can come down into the following wave trough it sails directly into the face of the next wave. On one such wave our port running light was swept away off the bow pulpit. On our way past the Shingles we saw an empty inflated life raft fly by us from a boat that had sank shortly after the start. The winds and seas continued unabated for the next 24 hours and for those of us choosing to sail closer inshore it made rounding

Portland Bill in the inky black night both intimidating and challenging. Between low pressure systems there were periods of clear skies with more moderate winds but the sea state while crossing the Irish Sea remained turbulent as ocean waves compressed as it rolled onto the coastal shelf on its way up the Irish Sea.

In classic low pressure system weather characteristics we were left in light air before the next low pressure system rolled through. As a result our approach and rounding of Fastnet Rock was in very light air flying a Code Zero, a total antithesis of what we started out in just 48 hours before.

As predicted the second low pressure system came in and we had 25-30 knot SSW wind as we reached back towards Bishop Rock and then across the English Channel. Sailing under a reefed mainsail, jib top and staysail we were early approaching Cherbourg and had to sail south of Alderney to get relief from the unrelenting 5 kt. foul tide flowing past La Hague before heading towards the finish line at Cherbourg Harbor entrance.

The 2023 Fastnet Race took its toll on the race fleet this year. Of the 358 total boats entered (6) boats did not start; (151) boats retired with one boat sinking. The “Hiro Maru” racing in division IRC-2 with (132) boats saw (43) boats retire and (1) boat not start. We finished (88th) in division and (61) overall in fleet.

As for the 2024 season the boat will participate in the 704 mile 2024 Round Ireland Race and possibly sail CORK Week.

Fair winds everyone,

Hiro Nakajima

S/V “Hiro Maru”





A beautiful shot (*thanks Carlo Borlenghi!*) of Hiro Maru at the 2023 Fastnet

1st S&S Swan Capraia Reunion

Capraia Island, Tyrrenean Sea, 21 - 22 - 23 June 2024

supported by:



Final call for our 1st S&S Swan Capraia Reunion!

Twenty days to our reunion, twenty two boats (and 86 sailors) already registered, a lot of sailing, delicious food, convivial moments and fun are waiting for us!

If some Member of the S&S Swan Association would like to join us, there are still some available berths in Capraia marina, just let us know as soon as possible.

This Reunion, the very first of its kind, is not a race, "just" a jolly meeting at sea. We are going to meet in this charming small and nearly untouched island on the Tyrrenean sea.

Schedule:

21 June: 20:00 dinner at Cheri restaurant. During the evening we all together are going to plan our Saturday sailing (to Giraglia if there is enough wind or around Capraia if the wind is going to be too light to sail further)

22 June: All S&S Swan out sailing together, not racing (no stress!). Back to Capraia marina in the afternoon and having dinner at Pescianel, just in front of the boats

23 June: bye bye day!

For those S&S Swan owners who would like to spend some more days in Capraia,

A table for a fastnet reunion is available. All the boats are welcome to berth.

Adelaide, our fantastic marina manager will be happy to reserve a berth.

Any other S&S Swan Association Members who would like to join us?



A nice shot from David onboard his S&S Swan 41/047 Maje, after crossing Sicily strait, inbound Capraia (he left Greece to join us this year and 2025 S&S Swan Rendez-vous)

11th S&S Swan Rendez-vous

17 - 22 June 2025, Marciana Marina, Elba Island

Organization of our **11th S&S Swan Rendez-vous**, which coincides with the 25th S&S Swan Association anniversary, is already in full swing.

In 2023 we had 45 participating S&S Swan, from all over the world.

Are we going to have so many S&S Swan in 2025?

This is our goal!

S&S Swan Association

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Via San Damiano, 2

20122 . Milano . Italy

www.classicswan.org



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