



TERRY FONG

FRANCE

To sail big multihulls is of course a 'bonne affaire' for our French specialists. Franck Cammas, Alain Gautier and Loïck Peyron were all involved in the last America's Cup game and are following what is now going on with the new Defender with great interest.

Alain told us he does not want to be a consultant again next time but would prefer to challenge, with some of his French compatriots, starting with fellow Alinghi adviser Loïck Peyron: 'We always said the Cup should be the pinnacle of sailing technology and now it's going in the right direction,' says the former Vendée Globe winner (who by the way is becoming increasingly involved in motorsport).

Along with Loïck, Alain has lived in the world of large multihulls for many years and has real depth of expertise, pointing out that the new Cup boats are far smaller than some of the current oceanic fleet. Of course, to go forward the pair need to seduce sponsors – not easy after what has gone on in the past few years. Money is the muscle of war, and even the billionaires have sponsors now...

Stéphane Kandler, heading All4One Challenge, has worked very hard to stay competitive in the MedCup TP52 series with the help of his skipper Jochen Schümann. 'The idea of creating an annual championship is in theory a good one. But it means we must now find a lot of money at short notice if we are to take part!'

Stéphane is proud of all the work done by his group and their success in staying in the game these past two years in spite of the Ellison-Bertarelli conflict. He has a good team and wants to hold it together. His main capital is the team, which could be attractive to a sponsor, bearing in mind how hard it is to create a cohesive and effective group... especially in France!

Another French Cup hopeful is Aleph Team France. 'The aim,' says the Aleph spokesman, 'is to crystallise French talent – architects, engineers and sailors – around the experienced Bertrand Pacé, to build a competitive project.' It's a very nice idea, but with no money behind it as far as we know and no team.

Such a story... the Auld Mug! Many sailors would like to see it as the genuine pinnacle of yacht racing. But has that really ever been the destiny of the Cup?

Patrice Carpentier

NEW ZEALAND

On Italian Lapo Ancillotti's first encounter with New Zealand, he felt he had 'come home'. Now, having first commuted between the two countries for a decade and finally having settled in New Zealand

in 2002, he says he has swapped the natural exuberance of his Italian genes for the more laidback, reticent approach of his adopted countrymen.

'I do not like to hype things up,' he says, sitting in the bright yellow interior of the first Kiwi Class 40 yacht. 'But,' he adds, barely able to suppress his enthusiasm, 'I believe with this boat we have taken the class to a new level.' A grin lights up his face.

Per Aspera continues a longstanding relationship between Ancillotti, the Farr design team and Cookson Boats. His relationship with Farr goes back to the early 1980s when he was involved with the muscular *Grifo*, designed for racing on Lake Garda, and with a couple of good IOR boats. Since 1992 Ancillotti has put together a significant portfolio of Farr-Cookson yachts for Italian clients, including four Cookson 12s, one Cookson 47 (*High Five*) and four Cookson 50 canting-keelers (he was also involved in the successful creation of a new composite light aircraft – but that's another story).

'I had first read about Bruce Farr when I was a kid and he had designed the 18-footer *Travelodge*. When I met him it was special for me,' he says. 'To be here again doing another project with Farr and Mick Cookson is fantastic.'

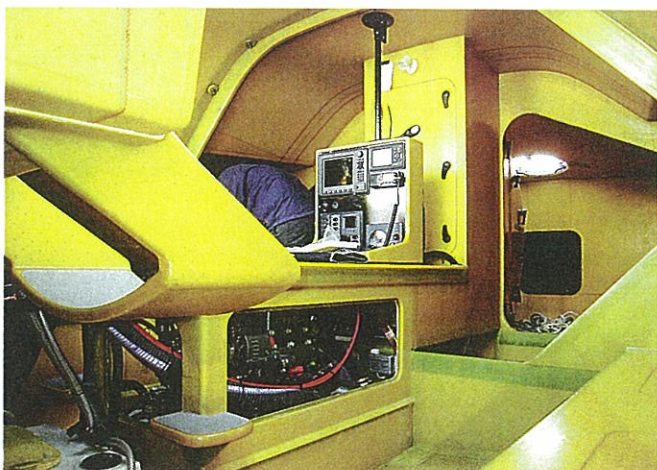
When the Class 40 made its debut Ancillotti's interest was piqued. 'I like the formula of the class,' he says. 'I think it is very smart. At first the box rule looks quite simple, but when you look at all the possibilities and permutations, you quickly learn it can be complex.'

During the inaugural Global Ocean Race the competitors stopped over in Wellington, where Ancillotti has made his Kiwi home, providing an opportunity to examine the yachts in the flesh, to talk to race organiser Josh Hall and to sail on the Verdier-designed Class 40 *Cabo de Hornos*. 'There and then I decided this was something I wanted to take forward,' he says.

After a subsequent trip to Europe Ancillotti's ideas began to crystallise. 'I talked it over with Farr and Cookson and the response was enthusiastic, so I felt I was on the right path.'

With support from an Italian investor, Ancillotti established a new company, BTBoats, and the project got off the ground. Fast forward a year and the result of those early discussions, followed by a typically exhaustive design and build process, is sea-trialling in Auckland.

As New Zealand reeled under the twin assaults of a major earthquake in the South Island, followed by a storm system the size of Australia, the programme was initially disrupted by too much wind.



Once in Europe all eyes will be on Bruce Farr's first venture into the Class 40, beautifully built by Cooksons. There is no doubt her designers – currently without a follow-up commission to their Vendée winner *Foncia* – have put intense effort into ensuring they hit the ground running in this important market. A bowsprit that articulates around the headstay is one of several eye-catching details

Then, unusual for the Equinox, there was a week of mainly light air.

Given the wide beam of these yachts, considerable effort went into reducing wetted surface and the early light-air performance was encouraging. Then at last Auckland dished up the conditions the team were waiting for. In a nice brisk breeze, gusting to 19kt, the boat lit up and with it the smiles onboard, with early downwind bursts of over 16kt in flat water.

Belgian ace Michel Kleinjans, who raced *Roaring Forty* in the last Global race, was in Auckland to see the boat and left mightily impressed. Compared with previous Class 40s, he made special mention of the finish quality, superior stiffness, less drag in the appendages and hull shape, excellent dynamic properties and the ability to remain balanced through changing conditions.

Speaking highly of Cookson's build quality, he said 'right out of the box this boat feels right'. Without a trial-horse, much is of course left to feel rather than science, but he said the boat seemed slippery in light conditions and tacked easily. 'The volume distribution is quite different and, combined with the way the chine is shaped, the boat has a nice balance while reaching with an encouraging tendency to lift the bow when pressed a little.'

At the dock first impressions are of elegant simplicity – the kind that is only achievable with a great deal of skill, effort and planning. Starting at the bow, the carbon bowsprit, which pivots around the forestay to project at angles close to 55°, is like a piece of sculpture, beautifully engineered.

This sets the tone for the entire product, which is finished to an extremely high standard. The wedge-shaped hull (see issue 363, May 2010) reveals those pronounced chines running almost all the way to the bow. Farr's own notes highlight that 'the transom immersion levels and chine placement have been carefully tuned relative to expected heel angles and ballast weight additions to avoid excessive drag in light air, but maximise effective length at heel and speed. To achieve a dynamic bow-up attitude at heel and speed, the LCB of the hull is reasonably far aft, also driving the keel and rig aft.'

The deck layout is lean and clean, with the foredeck and mast control lines all disappearing at the mast down into a below-decks tunnel, then along the cabin floor before emerging via an array of 15 jammers at a central island at the front of the cockpit. On the island are three Harken self-tailing winches, with another two primaries on the side decks. The layout is organised so that all the control lines can be led to any one of the winches, allowing great flexibility and avoiding the need to work to leeward. Also situated at the island are the lines controlling the four water ballast tanks, two per side.

In a relentless drive to reduce weight, there are no headsail tracks. Headsail sheeting is controlled by lines running through deck-mounted D-rings. Similarly, there is no solid vang – just a single spectra line, led below and exiting at the control island.

The class rule specifies rod rigging, apart from the headstay and backstays, which are composite. The NZ Rigging carbon mast is a double spreader set-up, stripped to the minimum. The handsome fat-top mainsail and headsails are by North New Zealand.

Looking over the boat, it is immediately clear that weight has, in the first instance, been kept to the minimum and then carefully concentrated low down and around the middle of the boat. 'We have been VCG-driven throughout the design approach,' says Ancillotti.

This is confirmed by a visit below, via twin watertight companionways either side of the control island. The internal area is split longitudinally down the middle by a thigh-high tunnel, which carries the control lines out to the cockpit. It also contains the engine, situated just aft of the mast, with a nav station above, neatly contained in a carbon pod. This can swivel 90° either side, so the navigator is always to windward. The battery stowage is on the cabin sole at the mast base. Forward of the mast, still on the centreline, is the minimal head... In true Farr fashion, all the static weight is thus concentrated low down and near to the centre of the boat.

Completed to Category 0 for the Global Ocean Race, the interior can split into four watertight compartments. Engineered by Pure Engineering, the group led by Giovanni Belgrano and responsible for all of Emirates Team New Zealand's in-house work, construction is resin-infused in a female mould. The detailing and accuracy of the design and build are outstanding, everything pared back, but at the same time no corners cut in terms of quality.

Kleinjans is himself determined to secure funding for another tilt at the Global race and in a Kiwi Class 40. Meanwhile, a second boat is already taking shape at Cooksons. The combination of Farr and Cookson is always going to produce a noteworthy result and this first iteration of the Kiwi Class 40 under the BTBoats imprimatur has all the look of a serious contender.

Beneath Ancillotti's determination to avoid hype is an unmistakable air of excitement about this project. The proof of the pedigree will be eagerly awaited, when these early models test themselves against their classmates... The team at BTBoats cannot wait.

Ivor Wilkins

AUSTRALIA

Upbeat

Put your money on San Francisco being the venue for the 34th match for the America's Cup in 2013. It's the only logical conclusion after carefully studying the design parameters for the new AC72 class, reading between the lines of what's been written and said, and then talking at length to senior members of the more 'substantial' Cup syndicates.

The critical ingredient in this decision-making process is wind: everyone wants a guarantee that there will be wind, simply because they have had enough of playing the waiting game on too many occasions in recent matches. The call is for a series where, if a race is scheduled, everyone – the syndicates, TV networks, venue, sponsors and spectators – knows it's going to happen... because there will be wind. This means that any potential venue in the Mediterranean is all but out of the running, simply because, more often than not, there's either too little or too much wind.