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Yacht Amorita Re-Born After Tragic 2007 Sinking

Newport, Rhode Island, USA: After being rammed and sunk in 2007, AMORITA, the 106-year-old classic Herreshoff New York Thirty Class yacht, is set for her long-anticipated re-launching this week in all her glory.

The 44ft gaff-rigged sloop, well known in New England waters as one of a handful of restored craft that led to the recent revival of interest in classic yachting, has graced the covers of sailing magazines and calendars worldwide, and is revered as one of the most successful racers over the past decade in WoodenBoat Regatta Series and New York Yacht Club events for classics.

The horrific crash took place on July 7, 2007, off of Beavertail lighthouse in Jamestown RI, while racing in the Robert H. Tiedemann Classic Yacht Regatta. While rounding a mark, she was involved in a three yacht collision initiated by the 94ft Fife ketch Sumurun, striking Amorita's sister ship, Alera from astern, which set in motion a chain reaction resulting in the much the larger Sumurun running broadside through Amorita sinking her to the bottom in less than 20 seconds. Remarkably, no one was injured. Noted marine photographer Billy Black, on hand to capture the beauty of classic yachting, documented the entire ugly incident with a series of images detailing the sequence of events, just before he pulled Amorita's crew from the water to safety.

She was raised and hauled in Jamestown two days later where she awaited the results of a contentious legal battle that was drawn out over two years. When the precedent-setting case, which included several rulings in her favor by US Sailing, was finally settled, she was transported to MP&G Yacht Restoration specialists in Mystic, Connecticut for her painstaking, 18 month rebuild. According to project manager Andy Giblin, noted shipwright and Herreshoff expert, "This was unique from a restoration in that the project wasn't starting with a rotten hull, or tired and worn out boat, but one that was in perfect sailing order when she went down, with many of her salvaged parts and pieces still in serviceable order."

According to owners Jed Pearsall and Bill Doyle, "Amorita has been a family member for more than 30 years. Originally rescued and restored in 1981 by Jed's father, noted furniture designer and craftsman Adrian Pearsall, Amorita's rebuild was just as much about preserving the history of Adrian's work as it was in preserving Herreshoff's." With that in mind, the project had one goal: bring Amorita back to life with as much of her original fabric intact as possible.