

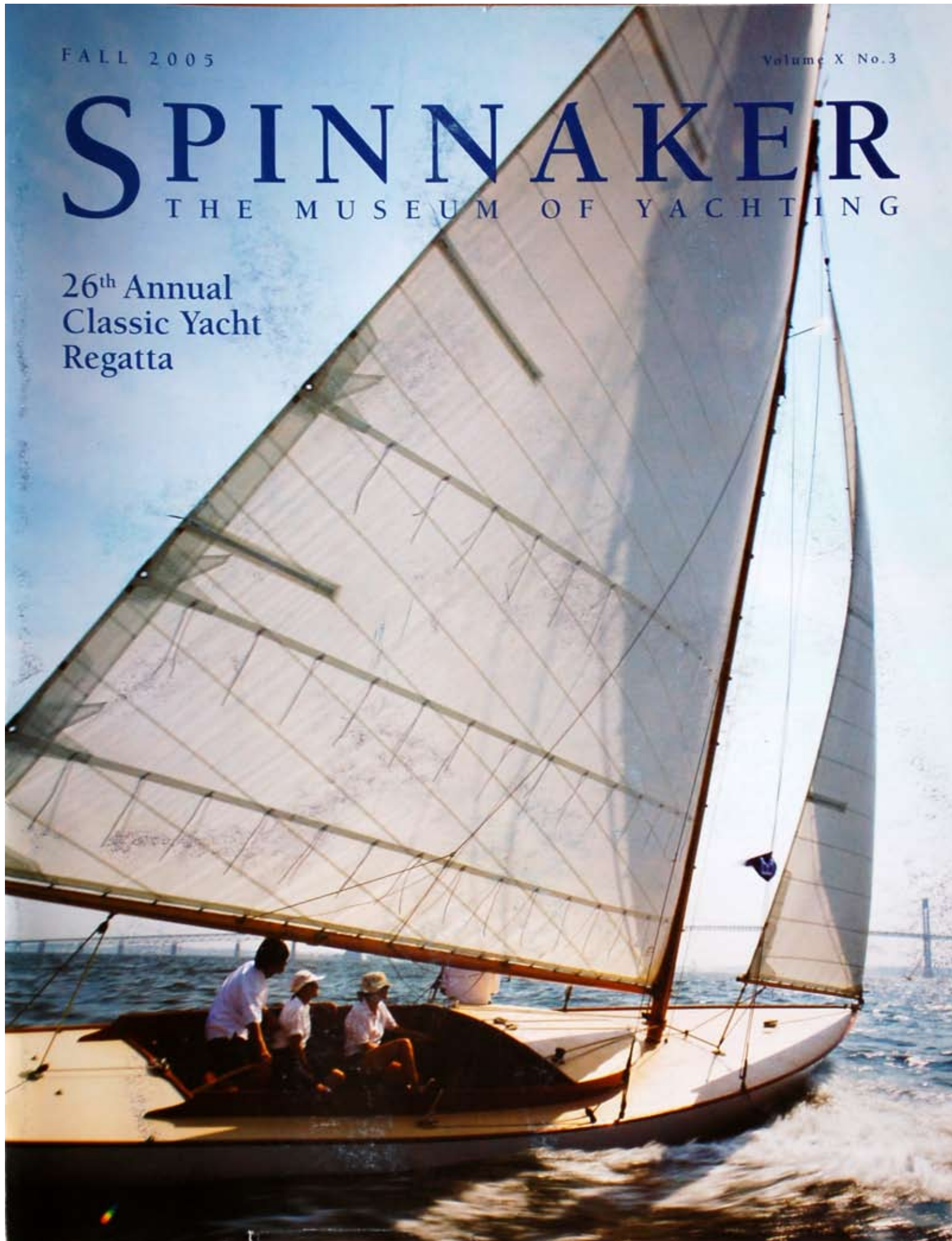
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SPINNAKER

THE MUSEUM OF YACHTING

26th Annual
Classic Yacht
Regatta





100 YEARS in the making

The NY-30s' Summer Centennial
Photo by Onne Van der Wal

By Bill Doyle



This summer marked the 100th Anniversary of the venerable one-design class of Herreshoff designed and built New York Thirties, highlighted by a magnificent reunion at the NYYC Newport station, Harbour Court. The amazing sight of seven NY-30s together, was enough to take the breath away from even the most contemporary yachtsman.

Prior to this season, all the talk among NY-30 owners and restorers had been about construction and design details. It seems that while everyone toiled over these aspects, we hadn't talked much about the yachts' impact on the sailing community or what they represented on a higher level beyond just mahogany, steel, canvas, lead, and bronze. All that changed this spring.

When Jed Pearsall and I began thinking about the Centennial Celebration we discussed many different ideas and asked ourselves, "What is the significance of these boats being 100 years old when most of them have had near total restoration over the years?" The answer, for us, was in the soul of each and every boat, not in the materials. To us, they represented the people who have sailed, raced on, and dedicated important parts of their lives to these boats.

So, the excitement was tangible, when, on a misty mid-July Saturday morning, we stood on the terrace of Harbour Court and looked out on five of the seven attending NY-30s tugging at their moorings. At the skippers' meeting, when we announced that our racing was for fun, not for awards, there was a sense of relief and, I am sure to some, a little disappointment. But most of all there was a deep appreciation of what this weekend represented.

The first day was a sight to behold. There we were at the starting line, six of the original 18, and half of the remaining 12, all in a row. The same number that attended the 50th Anniversary Regatta, held at the Manhasset Bay Yacht Club a generation ago.

There was *Alera*, NY-1 recently discovered and restored in an unbelievable 6 months by Boothbay Harbor Shipyard, with her gleaming varnished cabin-top. *Alera's* crew, David Stimson and family, managed the restoration and were falling more in love with her every day.

There was *Nautilus*, NY-16, formerly owned by Newporter Frank McCaffery and restored by his shop after his passing. Her interior is positively breathtaking in its simplicity and elegance and her new owners, the Pedersons, beamed.

There was *Cara-Mia*, NY-14, famous for winning the inaugural season, and later the subject of "How-To" racing books. *Cara-Mia's* sails were cut and set perfectly by her dedicated owner, Alfred Slanetz who was at the helm.

There was *Banzai*, NY-15, arriving with much of her mid-80s Opera House winning crew. *Banzai's* owner, Carlo D'Antonio of Vineyard Haven, restored her entirely by hand over many years. She is truly a remarkable piece of craftsmanship, carrying what might be her original gaff and boom. She is the only NY-30 to maintain her original cove stripe.

There was *Oriole*, NY-11, once owned by the same family for nearly 40 years, and completely rebuilt by a syndicate of French sailors led by Jean-Pierre Lostis. Their enthusiasm and excitement for her potential speed was

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palpable as they sailed her alongside other 30s for the first time since her re-launching just a few short weeks prior.

And of course, we were aboard *Amorita*, NY-9, still looking as fresh, after 25 years of active racing, as all the newly restored yachts thanks to the care and dedication of the Pearsall family and the meticulous upkeep of Herreshoff restoration experts, McClave, Philbrick and Giblin.

Just when we thought we had seen it all, number seven was sighted in the distance, figuratively and literally. NY-7, *Tabasco* (now *Helen*) is undergoing a long-term restoration and arrived under power to join the fleet. Lee Park, understanding the significance of the day, launched her and brought her down from Wickford, RI. Her rigging work is not yet complete, but her topsides are beautifully fair and her cabinetry magnificent.

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During the weekend, sailors tested speed, but leaders would retreat once ahead, just to keep the family together. Each after-

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noon, the six sailing 30s returned dockside to Harbour Court for an amazing raft-up. We went aboard each other's yachts, shared our experiences, and listened to the enthusiastic expectations of new owners.

The boats had 100 years of life to show us and generations of stories were woven into the fabric of each of them. Sitting onboard each boat one could feel the unique character and warmth, even though they are essentially identical. At first I thought I would bristle at the sight of them being "different", each yacht and owner having varying claims of originality, but this event taught me to appreciate the subtleties that truly distinguishes a mere production boat from a unique living masterpiece.

To that end, the NY-30 100th Anniversary season, and specifically the NYYC event was a resounding success. This summer, we've uncovered amazing stories of owners who, against all odds, have saved these boats from destruction. We've learned of dying owners who requested nothing more than the long term care for their beloved NY-30s. We listened to the story of the tragic loss of NY-17 (*Phyrne*) in a 1976 travelift accident, as told by her still teary-eyed last owner. We have developed friendships with current owners and caretakers of these yachts and realized that they are as dedicated as any before them. Mostly, we learned that the love and commitment we have given our yacht, NY-9 *Amorita*, was equally shared by all of the NY-30s and that these yachts had their own guardians long before we came to be and hopefully will continue to, long after we are gone. ▲