

# MAN AND THE OCEAN



From explorers who set off to discover new trade routes to modern-day adventurers pushing their own boundaries, the lure of the ocean has attracted man for thousands of years. By **Daniel Scheffler**

It's summer in the northern hemisphere and that means yachting season. Each year, hundreds of vintage yachts and skilled sailors come together to enjoy and indulge in the elegance and thrill of sailing. In Naples, the latest addition to the Panerai Classic Yachts Challenge (PCYC), the 'Golfo Di Napoli' was the perfect stage for the Le Vele d'Epoca a Napoli at the end of June. The PCYC embraces some of the world's most breathtaking locations and includes regattas in the Mediterranean's Antibes, Porto Santo Stefano, Mahon and Cannes, the east coast of America at Marblehead, Nantucket and Newport, Cowes on the Isle of Wight and Antigua in the West Indies.

One of the most beautiful boats taking part is the Bermudan ketch *Eilean*, acquired in 2007 and restored by Officine Panerai, the haute horlogerie brand. Built in 1936 by the legendary Fife yard at Fairlie in Scotland, the yacht is now the brand's ambassador at vintage and classic boat rallies and regattas.

Another 30s design, the popular 1937 mahogany and cedar *Gleam*, became the trial horse for the America's Cup in 1958 and went on to become a regular winner for the Commodore of the New York Yacht Club. In September yachtsmen will compete in the 34th America's Cup for the oldest active trophy in international sport, now awarded to high-tech yachts. James Spithill, skipper of last year's winning Oracle Team USA and twice hailed as Australian yachtsman of the year, says, "This might be an individual award, but there is no way I could've achieved what I have without the help of Oracle racing team and my family." Going into the lead Spithill remarked, "We looked at the points and knew we had to win the race — it was the second time we pulled off the double and we're still the only team to do it."

Two new regatta-style catamarans entered the fray this year — the

11-man AC72, with 22m hull, and a five-man crew boat, the AC45, with 21.5m mast. The controversial AC72 is capable of top speeds in excess of twice the wind speeds. Built for 'excessive speed', it's easy to assemble and showcases the future of technology in sailing. Spithill has said the boat is substantially faster but also safer with all the latest modifications. "The wing is big and the boat powers up quickly and is easy to sail; manoeuvrability is not a problem." As a test pilot of the new catamarans he adds, "The AC45 is the coolest boat in the world today — a high-adrenaline machine."

Luxury brands have once again come on board to support, sponsor and get involved in the races. Officine Panerai has sponsored the PCYC for nine years. Originally designed to equip the Italian Military Navy with wristwatches, since the beginning of the 1900s the brand has continued to perfect watchmaking for the nautical enthusiast.

Spanish shoe brand Camper sponsors the Emirates Team New Zealand and Grant Dalton, CEO Emirates Team New Zealand, says, "The relationship with Camper has been great from day one. The brand and its values have a special synergy with the team and Camper has supported us throughout the Volvo Ocean Race and continues to do so with the America's Cup. It's a relationship that goes beyond typical sponsorship."

And of course, there's Louis Vuitton. As the official timekeeper, the brand has created the Tambour Regate Automatic America's Cup — an LV 171 movement 30-minute chronograph. After all, in races like these, timing is of the essence.

Follow the PCYC at [paneraiclassicyachtschallenge.com](http://paneraiclassicyachtschallenge.com) and the America's Cup at [americascup.com](http://americascup.com).

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