

# Yachting World

OCTOBER 2013

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# PROJECT CAPE HORN

“ Now *Pelagic* began to feel small. She was thrown exhilarating stuff. We swept east under our tiny sailplan

around more readily, though never out of control. It was swinging wildly against the dark outline of Cape Horn ”



All photos: Richard Langdon/Ocean Images

## PROJECT CAPE HORN



▲ Above: Skip Novak, owner of two high latitudes expedition vessels, has 24 seasons in Tierra del Fuego and Antarctica under his belt

▶ Right: his rugged expedition 54-footer *Pelagic*



A shore party descends from the summit of Isla Jerdan in the Cape Horn archipelago in extremely high winds

It was probably the most ambitious project *Yachting World* has ever undertaken: to head for Cape Horn with high latitudes doyen Skip Novak to make a series on heavy weather seamanship. Editor David Glenn reports from Tierra del Fuego

**A**s we drove into Ushuaia from the new airport, Skip Novak pointed out a small cruise liner moored in the commercial port. She'd recently had her bridge windows smashed in by big seas while negotiating the Drake Passage between Antarctica and Tierra del Fuego. Several people had been injured. The ship's bridge looked to be about 60ft above the waterline and the thought of how that happened sent a shiver down my spine.

Yet here we were about to set off in search of heavy weather in the vicinity of Cape Horn aboard a 54ft yacht. Who in their right mind goes looking for such hostility?

The answer on this occasion was a team of four: me and Features Editor Elaine Bunting from *Yachting World*, plus freelance cameraman Richard Langdon and marine surveyor Jonathan Reynolds representing Pantaenius Yacht Insurance, who were partnering us in our quest.

Our aim was to research, film and photograph a 12-part series about the sort of heavy weather seamanship most sane yachtsmen never want to put to the test, but knowledge of which is essential for anyone undertaking serious passagemaking. In our experience, most sailors have a healthy appetite for authoritative advice on this subject, to say nothing of taking a vicarious interest in how others cope in extremis.

This month we begin our 12-part series in print (see panel on page 46), written by Skip Novak and supported by video, all of which will also be available online. But this is the story of how we got the story.

The yacht we were using, *Pelagic*, is no ordinary yacht and Skip Novak, her owner and the man behind Pelagic Expeditions, no ordinary yachtsman. After a string of round the world races, including, at the age of 25, skippering *King's Legend* to 2nd place in the 1977 Whitbread, then Simon Le Bon's *Drum* in the punishing 1985/86 event followed by *Fazisi*, the Soviet entry in 1989, Skip combined his mountaineering and sailing skills to set up Pelagic Expeditions to take people on high-latitude adventures.

He has spent 24 seasons leading such expeditions, has become an authority on sailing and mountaineering in Antarctica and serves on the executive committee of the influential International Association of Antarctic Tour Operators (IAATO).

He launched the Patrick Banfield-designed *Pelagic* in the UK in 1987. This steel-built cutter with her lifting keel and rudder is a no-nonsense 30-ton yacht able to cope with ice abrasion and beaching. Skip describes *Pelagic's* retractable appendages as her greatest asset: "Interesting for convenience, but ultimately important for safety. In polar regions her ability to get behind barrier rocks and moor to the shoreline in shallow water, makes her safe from drift ice and secure against high winds and seas."

Her austral summer home port is Ushuaia in Tierra del Fuego in southern Argentina and during the winter she is moored in Stanley in the Falkland Islands. Her success led to the launch in 2003 of the 74ft ketch *Pelagic Australis*, an equally powerful aluminium vessel.

We first set eyes on *Pelagic* as she lay alongside a rickety jetty extending from the simple yacht club in Ushuaia. At 54.8°S Ushuaia is touted as the world's most southerly city – the much smaller military settlements at Puerto Williams and Puerto Toro in Chile are, in fact, more southerly – and is 'base camp' for those heading for the Antarctic Peninsula 550 miles to the south and Cape Horn just 100 miles away.

### Wild pioneering outpost

When Skip Novak first came here 20 years ago he described a wild pioneering outpost where self-sufficiency was conditional for survival. Now 200 cruise liners a year are turned round, there's a busy airport and the high street is full of North Face, Berghaus and Patagonia. There's an Irish pub, Burger King, casinos and girlie bars.

It reminded me of a scruffy version of Queenstown in south island New Zealand where adrenalin junkies hang out, but in Ushuaia there was something more hard-edged, the snow-covered 4,500ft high Martial mountains towering to the north and the windswept, white-flecked Beagle Channel tempting us to venture east and south.

The temperature refused to budge above 8°C and when 40 knots barrelled down the Beagle Channel it didn't feel at all like summer. Brutal is the only way to describe the weather down here, but wind was the commodity we were looking for and we were not to be disappointed.

Stepping onto *Pelagic's* decks, you wouldn't look out of place in a pair of steel-capped bover boots because the non-slip industrial, providing the ultimate test for our Helly Hansen foulies let alone our delicate yachting boots. Gigantic Muckmaster commercial grade wellies seemed to be the footwear of choice on deck, below and ashore. There was no way we were going to slip off this yacht!

### FROM USHUAIA ROUND THE HORN AND BACK





◀ **Left:** a fisheye view of the team: David Glenn, Elaine Bunting and Jonathan Reynolds from *Pantaenius* on *Pelagic* in Caleta Maxwell.  
 ▲ **Above:** spooling the lines back in as we get ready to leave  
 ▶ **Right:** David hangs up Dolly the sheep, which was to air-cure nicely in the cold, salty winds



**PROJECT STORMCHASERS**



Where do you go to chase storms? My first thought was to go out into the Western Approaches of the UK in winter, writes Elaine Bunting. Here a North Atlantic gale can whip up conditions as nasty as any in the world. But we would have to lie in wait, possibly for weeks, in a suitably bulletproof yacht.

If not there, where else and in what boat? What about Cape Horn? For a video project, it was hard to think of anywhere better than the most feared piece of lee shore on Earth. That inevitably led to Skip Novak, whose two custom-built expedition yachts reflect his style of seamanship and long experience of Tierra del Fuego and Antarctica.

Chartering Skip's 54ft *Pelagic*, getting to Ushuaia and shooting the series was by far the most costly editorial idea we'd ever dreamed up and there the plan languished for some time before insurance company *Pantaenius* agreed to sponsor the project. Their support made it possible, and we owe *Pantaenius* a big thanks for this partnership.

For the series topics, our ideas were rounded out by Skip. They mirrored techniques he uses routinely on his boats. We might all have our own variations in mind, but Skip showed us what works on his boats, methods that were easy to achieve by a relatively small crew with reliable results.

We heaved to, hoisted a trysail, secured in an anchorage by tying lines ashore, examined anchoring equipment and techniques, sounded an uncharted bay, prepared the boat for a storm and much more.

We discussed at length techniques such as streaming warps and using drogues and sea anchors, gear Skip has never used or wished to. In the conditions we encountered near Cape Horn, I'm glad we didn't try. We'll cover all that too.

Secured in a corner of Caleta Maxwell on Hermite Island with four lines ashore

■ **Our Heavy Weather Sailing series begins in this issue on page 46**  
 ■ **12-part series with accompanying video online**

“ *Pelagic* is part of a community of yachts based in this area, almost all bearing the distinctive design features necessary for survival in the deep south ”

In *Pelagic's* well-insulated accommodation there was an immediate feeling of cosiness, and skipper Dave Roberts and mate Bertie Whitley, both 26-year-olds from the UK, made us feel very much at home.

*Pelagic* is part of a community of yachts based in this area, almost all bearing the distinctive design features necessary for survival in the deep south. Most have retro-fitted hard-topped pilothouses, four 150m mooring warps stowed on individual deck-mounted drums (one warp for each quarter) while two substantial hard-floored zodiac-style tenders are essential (ours were Bombard C3s) along with two outboards.

A stout garden hoe for clearing giant kelp off ground tackle (suitably enormous) is de rigeur and is stowed on the aft pulpit. And that's just the kit you can see on deck – there's more below.

**And Dolly came too**

'Dolly' is another feature you'll see on aft pulpits here. With such a low ambient air temperature a whole lamb carcass can be lashed to the rigging and devoured over a fortnight's expedition. Delicious until the local bird of prey the Chimango caracara plucks up courage to tuck in.

Cosy though *Pelagic* is, with a lovely varnished hardwood saloon table, bookshelves, diesel heater, sheepskin throws and cushions, other mod cons are out. There is no watermaker, guests are encouraged to hand pump fresh water to conserve the 500lt and showers can only be expected twice a week. Sleeping accommodation is open plan and leechcloths and bunk boards are substantial.

The galley is tight, but seamanlike, helping with food preparation and washing up is expected of everyone and woe betide anyone who doesn't pump the single Lavac head 25 times before and after use!

But abiding by these rules quickly galvanised crew and guests into a team and for those of us of a certain age memories of a cruising culture

from another era soon returned. It became a very satisfactory regime.

Although there's no separate generator aboard *Pelagic* there's an enormous 500ah battery bank, providing 24V plus inverters for 12V, 220V and 110V usage, so no problems charging camera equipment. Once east and south of Puerto Williams, however, there was little or no phone or tablet connection just satellite comms in case of emergencies.

We were held up for a day in Ushuaia because with 35 knots on the clock it was simply too windy to move, so the authorities closed the port. A vast cruise liner had to lie at anchor within half a mile of her berth for a night before being allowed in and the 180ft sloop *Erica XII* was also confined to her dock, heeling wildly, before refuelling and heading south for Antarctica.

We received what the pilot refers to as 'the full *zarpe* treatment' – *zarpe* means departure form – before we left, which involved a pre-booked stamping session of passports and filling in of paperwork to enable us to leave Argentine waters. We eventually got away smoothly and headed for Puerto Williams, a small community of 2,000 mainly naval personnel lying 25 miles east on the north shore of Isla Navarino.

There's still a heavy military influence in the way Chile does business and there are strict checking in times, to say nothing of a requirement to report in by radio while cruising locally. It sounds over the top, but the Chilean authorities – ie the navy – are genuinely keen to help yachtsmen and are concerned for their safety when the wind can rise from barely nothing to an unforecast 40 knots in ten minutes.

But it wasn't until we got to into the Woolaston group of islands south of Isla Navarino and the notorious and relatively shallow Bahia Nassau – which to the amazement of *Pelagic's* regular crew we crossed in a flat calm twice – that we felt the full force of the weather we'd been looking for. ▶



■ The temperature refused to budge above 8°C and when 40 knots barrelled down the Beagle

Channel it didn't feel at all like summer. Brutal is the only way to describe the weather here ■



▲ Above: it may be windy above deck, but *Pelagic's* saloon is warm and peaceful. Here we're celebrating Jonathan's birthday  
 ◀ Left: the foc's'le is packed with essential gear and stores. There are two of most things, including tenders  
 ▶ Right: Skip and Jonathan brave a squall after Cape Horn

Lying to a single 110lb CQR on a sand bottom in the Martial anchorage on the eastern side of Isla Herschel, we recorded 56 knots from the west during the night and by morning it was still blowing 35 knots. We hadn't moved an inch. Skip Novak, demonstrating his safety-first mantra, had slept in the pilothouse with senses tuned to anything suggesting dragging. Such is the owner's lot.

Early the next morning he demonstrated how to set and weigh anchor in strong winds and also explained why he prefers to use a single, preferably overweight, main anchor instead of two and an abundance of heavy chain. Keep it simple, keep it big seemed to be the ploy.

Our first taste of sailing in the strong stuff came later in the morning when we set out in 35 to 40 knots to demonstrate why Skip prefers a deep-reefed mainsail to a trysail. You'll have to read our Storm Sailing

Techniques series to find out, but suffice it to say that with seven of us aboard, it took almost half an hour to set the trysail and just over five minutes to take in a fourth reef.

At that stage the wind was topping 48 knots and with the deep reefed main and a tiny staysail (Skip's preferred storm jib substitute) *Pelagic* was going well hard on the wind.

Back in the anchorage the wind strengthened more as we hunkered down and enjoyed a welcome chunk of Dolly, roasted to perfection. My log read: 'Spume flying and clouds of spray rolling down the anchorage, but down below aboard *Pelagic* all is peace and warmth...'

By now we were judging our timing for rounding Cape Horn and decided to head for the fascinating anchorage of Maxwell on Isla Hermite where we could conduct another exercise. This involved tying *Pelagic* in with a cat's cradle of long lines.

### Long lines ashore

"Keep an eye open for sea otter," said Skip as we hung off the anchorage while we went through the time-consuming business of hoisting the tender and outboard from the fo'c's'le-cum-workshop, then assembling, inflating and finally launching it with the aid of a halyard.

Two crew sped into the anchorage with large, galvanised wire strops to be looped over suitable rocks. It's tough work, you need full-length waders to find your way ashore through boulders and kelp and heavy-duty commercial grade gloves to manhandle the strops.

With *Pelagic* now following in, she was nosed just short of a bed of kelp before the anchor was dropped, leaving the chain virtually up and down. In this anchorage the shorelines would be doing the work.

So secure were we that Skip suggested the 1,000ft ascent of the nearby island of Jerdan, a tough walk which would reward us with an outstanding view. We leapt at the chance of stretching our legs and ashore encountered fairly rough and boggy terrain which made the climb a real sweat - at least for me!

Cloud and rain enveloped us and the wind screeched across the rough ground, but at the summit we were rewarded with a parting of the clouds, sunshine and the most spectacular view of the islands looking north towards the Beagle Channel glaciers and south to Islas Hornos - tomorrow's mission.

When the weather came down it provided a reminder of the need for shore parties in this part of the world to be independent if for any reason they cannot get back to the yacht. A barrel of equipment is normally carried and the contents of this and other aspects of handling a tender in heavy weather will be one of the subjects in our forthcoming series.

We were slightly taken aback by the arrival of another yacht in the sheltered Maxwell anchorage. Skip was keen to get together with the owner, an old friend, and having failed to raise them on the VHF I was secretly relieved as a night of yarning might not have been the ideal preparation for tomorrow's romp off the Horn.

Instead we settled down to watch the mesmerising black and white film *Around Cape Horn* which documents the weathering of the Cape from east to west by the square-rigged windjammer *Peking* in 1929. It was filmed by Irving Johnson when he was a 24-year-old, but the voiceover, also by him and spoken some 50 years later, is so

colourful and brilliantly descriptive that the monotone delivery became etched in our minds for the rest of the trip. For us Skip Novak epitomised the modern day clipper skipper!

### Rounding Cape Horn

We were up at 0530 for our Cape Horn day, to release our lines and prepare the yacht for sea, a task which took more than two and a half hours. There was no rushing, just a methodical stowing of equipment, checking of heavy weather clothing, lifejackets and harnesses and a briefing about common sense and hanging on! A decent breakfast was essential.

As we nosed out into a steady 35 knots from the west there was a sense of foreboding as bullet-like williwaws buffeted us, the wind bouncing between Isla Hermite and Isla Chanticleer. With four reefs and the staysail, *Pelagic* seemed to take everything in her stride.

Before we were completely exposed to the 3,000-mile fetch of the Southern Ocean, we decided to undertake another of our seamanship tasks by hauling the staysail to weather, lashing the wheel and heaving to. We allowed the yacht to find a comfortable angle not directly broadside on to the waves and not too close to the wind. She found it and we joggled along at a knot or two confident that we could go below and rest if we had the sea room. We eased the weather sheet and off we set for the Horn.

There are some common misconceptions about Cape Horn. First, it's on a small island a long way from mainland Chile; second it's not the most southerly point of South America - that goes to Islas Diego Ramirez, a group to the south-west - and third you only earn your earring if you sail from 50°S on one coast of South America to 50°S on the other, a distance of nearly 1,000 miles.

We were taking just a day, but what a day it turned out to be. As we emerged from the lee of the land the huge, long sea became



■ Within minutes, under cloud scudding in from the south, the wind rose sharply to 55 knots, driving rain and spume reduced visibility, completely blotting out the Horn ■

apparent over our starboard quarter and a separate chop on top of the underlying wavetrain added to the confusion. Now *Pelagic* began to feel small. She was thrown around more readily, but was never out of control. It was exhilarating stuff as we swept east under our tiny sail-plan swinging wildly against the dark outline of the Horn.

As we closed the headland, two large off-lying rocks were clearly visible mainly because spray was being thrown vertically at least 200ft as the rollers hit them. Visibility was good at this stage so we were able to close to within a few hundred metres and as the Horn came abeam the sun shone as if to celebrate with us.

But within minutes, under cloud scudding in from the south, the wind rose sharply to 55 knots, driving rain and spume reduced visibility to a few metres, completely blotting out the Horn. For ten minutes *Pelagic* took the strain, was heaved about and on one wave was knocked well down, forcing water over our high cockpit coaming.

### Heading for shelter

The squall was over as quickly as it had arrived and as we bore away with the wind back down to about 40 knots, the sun burst through, Peale's dolphins leapt out of the face of following waves and played under our bows as we headed for shelter in the lee of Hornos itself.

Our one regret was that, owing to the conditions, we were unable to land on Isla Hornos where you can walk to the lighthouse, talk with the keepers and have your passport stamped to prove you've been there.

Instead we decided to retrace our steps all the way to Puerto Toro and then back to Puerto Williams where we had a date with the local yacht club. En route we were able to complete our remaining heavy weather exercises, including reefing techniques.

We just missed the 1800 check-in deadline at Puerto Williams, but

▲ Above: trying out the merits of a trysail versus fourth reef in winds of 40-45 knots near Caleta Martial  
 ▶ Right: Editor David Glenn celebrates sailing round the Horn

this did not prevent us from visiting Micalvi, the name of a 1925 German freighter built originally for the river Rhine, which somehow found its way to becoming the headquarters for what is claimed to be the most southerly yacht club in the world.

Yachts moor in ever-increasing lines abreast to the Micalvi and in the evening crews gather in the club, having enjoyed the deliciously hot and plentiful club showers. The party gets going in the low-ceilinged bar or, in wonderful contravention of popular political correctness, on the hardwood panelled bridgedeck where smoking is allowed and the club's famed pisco sours are consumed in alarming quantities. Commodore Alejandro 'Alex' Reyes Nettle will enthusiastically fill you in on imminent development plans – we hope they don't spoil it – and the *Yachting World* team were honoured by being presented with Micalvi YC burgees.

Appropriately, the weather had the final say as Puerto Williams was again closed owing to strong winds, preventing our return to Ushuaia in time for our flights to the UK. We were forced to make our farewells to *Pelagic* here and take an hour-long minibus ride west along the north coast of Isla Navarino before taking a RIB-style high-speed ferry to Ushuaia.

As we sped across the Beagle Channel, I could just make out some of the glaciers which run down to its northern shore and made a mental note that if we ever came here again I'd turn west instead of east out of Ushuaia.

But for now we'd completed our heavy weather research and for once the rigours of winter back in the UK seemed appealing. **YW**

# Skip Novak's STORM SAILING TECHNIQUES

## 1 THE PELAGIC PHILOSOPHY

No one knows more about how to take the rough stuff than Skip Novak, the pioneer of high-latitude charters in *Pelagic*. In an exclusive 12-month series of articles and online instructional videos for *Yachting World*, he shares lessons from 25 years of heavy weather sailing, starting with the ethos behind every trip he makes



Let's put to one side my previous life as an ocean racer. As a pioneer of the high-latitude charter in *Pelagic*, I have been 'cruising' (excuse the oxymoron) offshore south of 50° S for the last 25 years. The Southern Ocean dishes out high winds and big seas, and passages there are followed by seat-of-the-pants inshore navigation, mainly in unsounded waters along hostile shorelines; the Antarctic Peninsula, Tierra del Fuego and the sub-Antarctic island of South Georgia.

Combine all this and you naturally develop tried and tested methods and approaches to sailing systems and equipment to stay safe and stay comfortable – in two words, to stay 'down there'. There is no need for dramas and epics, although we've certainly had some, now filed as learning experiences the hard way. Over time, however, what began as conservative habits eventually evolves into something more than just procedures.

I call it the *Pelagic* philosophy.

### From demanding to doable

This philosophy makes what appears to be a horrendously difficult, physically wearing lifestyle perfectly doable. And the years roll by, with the happy revelation that you never tire of it all. This is hard to imagine from an armchair. But if you seek out open space, true wilderness and a sense of accomplishment that sets you apart – and I admit to that indulgence – then high-latitude sailing is for you.

I have been accused of many things. A dissatisfied client once told his friends I was running a boot camp instead of a charter business – something to do with force-marching the guests up the nearest mountain before dinner in every anchorage. Also, I know well that I have been considered a Luddite of sorts, who is immune to the gadget trade; possibly some kind of primitive throwback simply because I still enjoy wailing away on manual winches and pulling on ropes – exerting myself for the hell of it, when I could be pushing buttons like so many do these days.

### The beauty of simplicity

However, there is method in my apparent madness. The *Pelagic* philosophy has always been one of simplicity of systems and a belt-and-braces approach to all things on board. OK, so it might be a little less so now, but it certainly was when it evolved two decades ago, when we were based from Ushuaia in Tierra del Fuego and lived and

SKIP NOVAK'S STORM SAILING TECHNIQUES

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worked in an environment with no marine services let alone spares readily available. The nearest yachting centre was Buenos Aires 1,000 miles away. Communication was by telex and a tenuous and expensive phone link to the mainland. I didn't see the first fax machine in Ushuaia until 1993 (and that was owned by a predatory shipping agent who tried to charge \$100 a page). Courier services were unreliable and Customs in places like Argentina was so draconian that if any shipment did reach you, it was best to cross your chest as it was almost divine intervention. Basically, we were on our own. Aside from the ability to communicate via email on- and offshore, this situation has not changed much today, so the following

observations remain valid for anyone embarking on a remote cruise, at least in that southern South American sector. I would also add that some of these frustrations and inconveniences had their charming side too! Every cruising sailor should ask themselves two things before they embark on a long-term voyage. Am I cruising to see places and have experiences? Or am I cruising to fiddle around with my over-elaborated boat? Be honest. There's no harm in the latter – it can be a hobby turned into lifestyle. But if you take this tack it's best to sail close to the marine service centres of the world – unless, that is, you happen to be either an ex-Royal Navy

▲ Above: some crews call it Luddite, but gear on Pelagic is there for necessity not for convenience

engineer or a tech geek who is happy to remain dockside for extended periods in the middle of nowhere fixing things. Of course, the genre of larger yachts of the superyacht category operate within entirely different circumstances. (Similarly, a distinction must be made between them and the couple on a 40- to 100-footer or those on professionally crewed family cruisers.) Because of their size and unwieldy sail plans, superyachts can only be managed by sophisticated systems supported by maintenance contracts. As an example, most captains and crews are not trusted (nor allowed) to tune their own rigs because they usually come under a maintenance contract with the mast



▲ Above: ask the crunch question – are you cruising to see the world or to fiddle on the boat?

“ My advice: simplify your boat, its systems and your mindset. It can be a liberating experience ”

maker. Therefore, superyachts and their particular tribulations are not within the scope of this series.

### A cruising ethos

But if seeing the world is your mission, with your boat merely a means to an end (and especially if you want to go remote, whether in the tropics or high latitudes), you need to think your modus operandi out clearly. The climber/surfer/entrepreneur Yvonne Chounaird, who founded and still owns Patagonia, has a great take on this: “Consider every piece of technology that comes your way. Take what is absolutely necessary and discard the rest.” He was talking about a certain quality of life, but the mindset can apply to any application.

It's an attitude at once anathema to designers, builders, equipment suppliers – many of whom who have done little or no cruising – and most of the people who read and support this magazine. It is a brave editor even to publish the heresy in these pages. But there is a place for gadgets, innovation, experimentation and pushing the limits – it is the Mediterranean, northern Europe, US and the city centres of Australasia. Because this approach costs in money as much as lost cruising time.

Time and time again I witnessed yachts dock-bound, behind schedule or missing a window completely because the mainsail wouldn't disappear into the boom or mast (or come back out). Or they were waiting for parts for a system that wasn't fundamental to the cruise, more a convenience.

### Boots and buckets

Naturally, if you have a garbage compacter or washing machine you expect it to work and it is frustrating when it doesn't. Yet I am always incredulous when I see departures delayed or scrubbed when, to use the examples above, a booted foot in a plastic bag and a bucket will do the jobs nicely.

In this series my crew and I on *Pelagic* will demonstrate some manoeuvres that many of you have done ad infinitum. We will also look at some equipping issues. You may consider some of these comments and observations somewhat oversimplified and retro. So be it. I find at sea I am continually learning, but also continually unlearning what doesn't work. To get from A to B in one piece and be able to enjoy what B has to offer is the thing. Sticking to first principles works every time. My advice: simplify your boat, its systems and your mindset. It can be a liberating experience.

## ABOUT THE VIDEO



To complement the features we'll be running each month, the *Yachting World* team has filmed a series of online videos onboard *Pelagic* in the Southern Ocean. In each of these short episodes, Skip Novak explains and demonstrates the heavy weather and expeditionary sailing techniques that he uses on

board his two *Pelagic* yachts. Each of the videos will be released on our website, [www.yachtingworld.com](http://www.yachtingworld.com), to coincide with the publication date of the feature and, as the series expands over the next year, will remain on our website, so you can catch up with or review earlier topics; an invaluable resource with some superb scenery too.

### A YEAR OF EXPERT INSTRUCTION

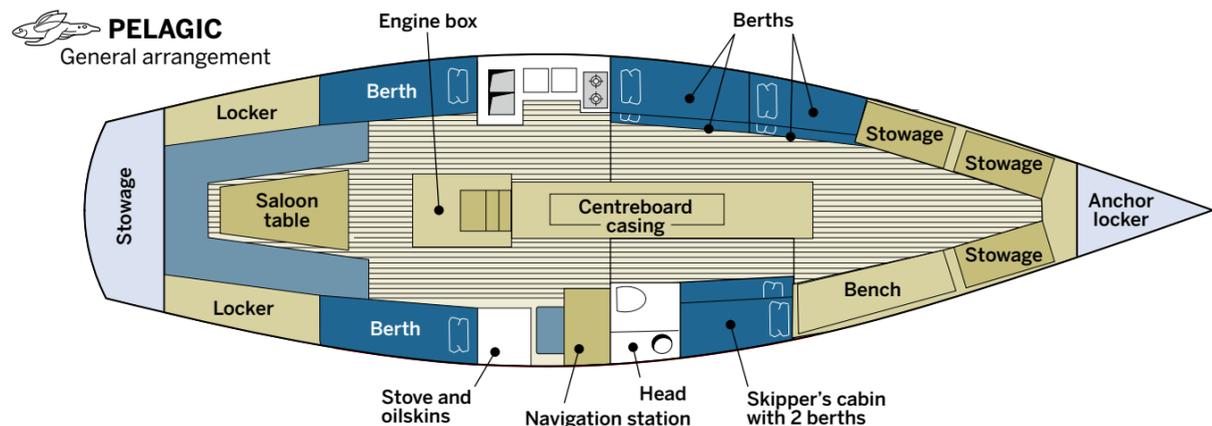
- Oct 2013 Introductory film on the making of the series
- Nov 2013 Tour of *Pelagic* and *Pelagic Australis* – the features of a high-latitudes expedition yacht
- Dec 2013 Heavy weather reefing
- Jan 2014 Trysail vs fourth reef, plus staysails as a storm jib
- Feb 2014 Heaving to
- Mar 2014 Preparing the deck for heavy weather
- Apr 2014 Sail design for extreme sailing
- May 2014 Streaming warps and drogues
- June 2014 Sounding an uncharted bay or anchorage
- July 2014 Anchoring
- Aug 2014 Tying to the shore
- Sept 2014 Using a tender for expeditions ashore/ in extreme weather

### VIDEO EXTRA



### SKIP NOVAK'S STORM SAILING TECHNIQUES

Scan this code on your smartphone to go straight to our exclusive video at [yachtingworld.com](http://yachtingworld.com)



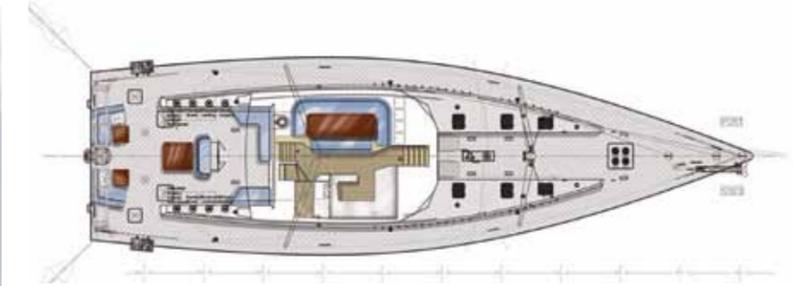
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## PELAGIC EXPLORER

### Cape Horn here we come

This intriguing 25m ketch is a collaboration between high-latitudes expert Skip Novak and designer Tony Castro. Novak explains the ideas behind his new go-anywhere expedition yacht



**M**ore sailors than ever seek a cost-effective vessel to voyage to high-latitude destinations or remote tropical venues, and the 25m (82ft) *Pelagic Explorer* represents a step up in comfort and sophistication for this market.

While the vessel is suitable for charter like my 74ft *Pelagic Australis*, it would also be ideal for a syndicate that hopes to go on extended voyages off the beaten track. For cost purposes, not least in crew needs, she is designed at the maximum 25m LOA that conforms to the MCA Small Commercial Vessel Code MGN 280.

▲ **Above: the new Pelagic design is voluminous and powerful, with a schooner rig. Note the unusual upper doghouse for an internal raised steering station**

Although bigger than her sister, *Pelagic Explorer* will accommodate the same eight people in four roughly symmetrical en-suite cabins, linked by a private communications facility. The crew quota rises to four in two cabins aft of a lounge/library area. An owner's cabin can be added by removing the bulkhead between cabins either side.

The principal feature of the interior is achieved by pushing the day area, with the main salon seating, up to a spacious deckhouse incorporating the galley. Rather than hide the galley in the bowels of the ship, it is part of everyday living, in keeping with

our philosophy on *Pelagic* that all guests on board pitch in with the crew on cooking and galley duties, something which helps to promote a cohesive team, I find.

Built of aluminum, with a centreboard rather than a lifting ballast keel, the yacht can reduce her draught for safety and take the ground (both fundamental characteristics of the previous Pelagics) on a stub-keel, which carries the ballast, and twin skegs that support fixed rudders. A twin engine configuration solves manoeuvrability issues under power and also provides redundancy.

Manual sail-handling is possible by split

rigs and small sail areas. Of course, that means more ropes to pull but that's one more element to the Pelagic Design philosophy – give your people something to do!

*Toby Hodges adds:* In terms of gear, the foremain will carry four reefs, with a high-clewed Yankee, 95 per cent working jib, blade staysail and mizzen staysail plus gennaker on a retractable sprit. *Pelagic Explorer* will have a tender stored through the transom, two watermakers, two dive compressors, aircon and heating, plus tanks for 12,000ltr of fuel and 6,000ltr of water.

[www.pelagicyachts.com](http://www.pelagicyachts.com)

#### DIMENSIONS

**LOA** 25.0m/82ft 0in  
**LWL** 22.5m/73ft 9in  
**Beam** 7.5m/24ft 6in  
**Draught** 2.1m-4.1m/  
6ft 10in-13ft 5in  
**Displ** 70,000kg/  
154,324lb



## Magnus Day, *Pelagis Australis*, skipper

There are surprising similarities between facing down an angry 6ft 4in transvestite and working on the foredeck in storm-force winds with ice all around. You have to keep your cool," says Magnus Day skipper of Skip Novak's expedition yacht *Pelagis Australis*. The 37-year-old is the ultimate ocean adventurer, never more at home than when battling conditions that would make most of us hide under the duvet.

He was taken sailing on the Norfolk Broads in a carrycot and progressed to race every dinghy he could borrow. By 2000 his business – the world's first travelling transvestite disco, popular at festivals around the UK – was taking a back seat to sailing and he needed to make his hobby pay. "Being general manager taught me organisation and management skills and the ability to concentrate when all hell is breaking loose." All useful traits for a skipper facing the Southern Ocean!

Within weeks he was skipping his first double-handed transatlantic delivery, then gained some qualifications. Today he has his Yachtmaster Ocean Commercial and Ship Captain's Medical and does refresher courses. "Well, can you remember what the day shape for a pilot boat aground is?" he asks. He plans to up his tickets to the Master 200, with a goal to project-manage and run expedition yachts.

*Pelagis Australis* cruises deep into the Southern Ocean, taking guests to landmarks such as Cape Horn. Sailing skills are a



“ Day says he would never consider sailing the Southern Ocean without tea and fruitcake. A lesson for us all there ”

big part of Magnus' role onboard. "There's plenty of wind in the Southern Ocean, so it makes sense to harness it, plus sailing helps to make the hours of emails and bureaucracy worthwhile," he says.

His preferred cruising grounds are the fjords of Chilean Patagonia, the icy wastes of Antarctica and South Georgia for its incredible wildlife. "Having said that, some of the best sailing I've done in ten years was Popy racing with old friends on the Norfolk Broads last summer," he says.

As a skipper, he sees himself as "mother, father, nurse, manager, mediator, engineer, cook and bottle-washer – not to mention sailor and host". "The great part of this job is bringing a team together in a short time to achieve their goals," he says.

One of the biggest challenges for Day is time management: "Essentially trying not to do it all. Also, working to the nebulous rules of bureaucrats across the world in several languages is hardest of all."

His work hours are 0700 to midnight, plus night watches, but luckily his journalist partner understands his lifestyle, shares his wanderlust and is as keen to explore new horizons. "We met on Facebook," he says. "She wanted to sail to Antarctica and a mutual friend put us in touch. We've done that and she hasn't dumped me yet!"

If you have a picture in your mind's eye of Day as an intrepid adventurer, then you might be surprised to learn that he would never consider the Southern Ocean without tea and fruitcake. A lesson for us all. **YW**



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