



CLASSIC 'NOUVEAU'

Dreamt up over a bottle of red wine, this classic gaff schooner has all the vintage elegance of yachts 50 years ago. David Glenn found her setting the yachting fraternity buzzing at the San Remo show

If you could build the boat of your dreams, what would be the result? Dutchman Ed Kastelein had the opportunity to do just that, and in one and a half hours, aided by the wisdom of designer Olivier van Meer and a bottle of red wine, the lines of *Zaca a te Moana* were agreed upon.

She possesses none of the hard, straight and ugly lines bestowed upon so many modern superyachts. Instead she is a throwback, a return to the elegance of 50 years ago, when owners and designers abided by the basic rule that if she looked right she was right.

She is a steel-hulled auxiliary gaff schooner which had the Italian Riviera yachting fraternity buzzing with excitement when she made her recent debut there.

"I was actually born on a 90ft topsail schooner and as Ed and I are both crazy about the same sort of boats, I knew from the outset what would evolve," said Olivier van Meer from his Enkhuizen office on the banks of the IJsselmeer in Holland.



Translated, her name means 'Freedom of the Sea' – there certainly seems little to stop her

At this year's San Remo charter yacht show, *Zaca a te Moana* (translated 'Freedom of the Sea') was the talk of the town. Walking past her magnificent counter as she lay stern-to the dock, one would have been forgiven for grouping her with the genuine classics.

Her pronounced sheer, the gracious sweep of her teak-laid decks, deep bulwarks, Oregon pine spars, hemp lookalike running rigging and gleaming teak hatches failed to betray her

age – surely she couldn't be new? In fact, she had just completed her maiden voyage, from Holland where she was built, and was being chamois-leathered to attract the first charter brokers keen to sell something special to their clients.

Contrary to popular belief, *Zaca* is not based on the lines of a Grand Banks schooner. "She is entirely from my own mind's eye," said Olivier van Meer. "If there is any likeness, it is a coincidence." Nevertheless, if you laid her lines over those of a similar vessel from, say, the 1930s, a vast difference

in underwater shape would be apparent.

They reveal a very fine entry and her relatively narrow beam and easy runs aft suggest something with pace, despite her 175 tons displacement. There are no fins or skegs – just a very long, very straight keel.

She has already sailed at speeds in excess of 14 knots with all sail set (bar topsails) on a broad reach in a Force 5. "But with a yacht like this you shouldn't really be looking at ▷





Top, belaying pins, ash blocks and hemp lookalike running rigging give *Zaca* her distinctive classic character. **Top right**, one of the simple, but elegant master cabins. **Right**, modern styling below, set off by light-coloured maple woodwork, creates a slightly clinical atmosphere. **Above**, since *Zaca* was launched, additional winches have been added to help the crew. **Opposite page**, *Zaca* at speed off San Remo, Italy

her top speed or hull speed, which is around 14.5 knots," said Olivier. "What matters is how quickly she reaches 12 or 13 knots. This is where she seems so impressive."

Zaca's extremely long rudder is hung on the trailing edge of the keel and provides excellent control. The chord measurement remains the same from the waterline to the bottom of the deadwood, a distance of more than 14ft. "Ed wanted the boat to perform and didn't want to jeopardise this by restricting her draught," explained the designer.

Although she is intended for full-time charter, Ed Kastelain, who not only owns the boat, but also skippers her, is champing at the bit for some competition and is looking forward to La Nioulargue regatta in St Tropez at the end of the Mediterranean season. Classic schooners like *Altair* should be on their guard.

Kastelain's seemingly insatiable appetite for pedigree yachts has, in the past, led to his owning some extraordinary vessels, including the 1936 Alfred Mylne-designed 120ft gaff cutter, *Thendara*, which is now in Southampton Yacht Services in the UK for a complete refit (see New Yachts page 106). "I bought her in Greece and took her to the Valdetaro yard near La Spezia for a complete rebuild – we

started, but we could not finish her," he lamented.

He then owned the aluminium-hulled, Palmer Johnson-built *Ondine*, in which he cruised extensively before sitting down with Olivier van Meer and that bottle of wine.

Van Meer's brief was for a yacht which was fast and beautiful. What he also achieved was a yacht in which simplicity is paramount.



Ed Kastelain's insatiable appetite for pedigree yachts has led to his owning some remarkable vessels

Despite the vast amount of running rigging, there are only three winches to be seen on deck. These are custom-built in bronze by Lewmar and are hydraulically powered to haul halyards.

Originally all sheets, including that for the large mainsail, were formed of tackles using ash blocks and a synthetic hemp. A number of manual sheet winches have been fitted since the boat has been on charter. With only four crew aboard, two of which are constantly required for galley and waiting duties, there simply weren't the bodies available to sail *Zaca* to her potential.

The schooner took three years to plan and build. She is almost 100 per cent Dutch, although her Lewmar winches and white-painted Rolls Royce auxiliary are notable exceptions. Her hull and decks are in steel built by De Amstel shipyard in Ouderkerk. The shell was then floated to Zaandam where her wooden bulwarks and massive teak hatches and companionways were made and fitted.

Ed Kastelain, not only her owner and skipper, but also a highly skilled and effective project manager, then oversaw all the detailed finishing work, blending the various specialist skills available in that part of Holland.



Her beautifully built, glued Oregon Pine spars were made by T. Vreeken and Bart Vermeer in Rotterdam, and De Vries in Lemmer made all her sails, the cringle reinforcements all expertly served in leather. The yacht was rigged in Enkhuizen, a working port in the IJsselmeer still dedicated to maintaining traditional Dutch sailing craft.

The thrill of simply walking *Zaca's* teak deck, handling the bronze winches, the great spoked wheel and the rows of belaying pins, is tempered slightly when descending the wide companionway steps into the main saloon. Suddenly, you are fairly and squarely back in the 1990s.

Light-coloured maple woodwork dominates the accommodation and there is a slightly clinical tinge to the atmosphere. "We need a few bits and bobs to make her more cosy," said Annie Bernard, the Yachting Partners International broker who is handling the charter of *Zaca*.

Nevertheless, accommodation is extensive with a double master stateroom, double guest cabin and two twin-bedded guest cabins. All the sleeping accommodation is forward of the galley which separates it from the main saloon. There is a tiny navigation area to port of the companionway.

In the bowels of the yacht, reached by a vertical steel ladder, sits the 300hp Rolls Royce, purring on its flexible engine mounts. All the yacht's wiring and plumbing runs in conduits at this level, making it easy to get at for maintenance or repair. It's a bit of a squeeze below the accommodation deck, but it is a small price to pay for *Zaca's* looks and performance.

Now that she is finished, Olivier van Meer has returned to his drawing board where he is designing a 21m classic bermudan sloop with long overhangs, a carbon spar and an aluminium hull, and a 112m sailing cruise liner. A 60m brigantine, also to his design, has just been launched.

"Ed said he wants to build another boat and asked me what I would like to design. I simply said there's nothing I can do to improve on *Zaca*," enthused van Meer. □

SPECIFICATION

LOA	242ft 8in	73.80m	Maximum speed	11 knots
LOD	224ft 7in	68.50m	Range @ 8 knots	1,500nm
Beam	23ft 7in	7.29m	Generator	25kVA
Draught	14ft 2in	4.28m	Designed by	Olivier F. van Meer, Zandervandijk 36, 1401 JC, Enkhuizen, Holland. Tel: 2280 14353 Fax: 2280 12012
Displacement	175 tons		Built by	(Hull) Amstel (Holland)
Working sail area	8772sq ft	815sq m		
Main engine	Rolls Royce 300hp			

