



"Many people are surprised when I tell them it's a 12-Meter," says Dougie Gillanders, one of KATE's regular crew. KATE is built to the original 12-Meter rule, which has been revised twice in the past century—and modified further for the AMERICA's Cup.

The creation of this boat in this place seemed an unlikely and curious project when I learned of it a year ago, when yacht designer Ian Nicolson called from England suggesting that it deserved attention. Nicolson, until recently, owned the archive of Alfred Mylne (see sidebar, page 76), and Mylne designed the boat in 1908. The original was called JAVOTTE; after a long career she burned in a fire in Sweden in 1964. I sailed aboard KATE in February, in Tortola, for the Sweethearts of the Caribbean Regatta—an informal Valentine's Week event for Caribbean classics. Learning of the path Philip Walwyn has blazed through life, I concluded that there is nothing unlikely about the creation of KATE. In fact, Walwyn's life in boats suggests that this boat—yellow hull, and all—was inevitable.



Philip William Berkeley Walwyn, age 60, was born and educated in England. In his impressionable years he filled his head with the books of the great British yacht designer, sailor, and author Uffa Fox. Fox's 2,000-mile round trip from England to Sweden in the 22-Square-Meter VIGILANT was particularly influential reading. The boat displaced just two tons, and was one of the pioneers of light-displacement voyaging; she stood old-school notions of seaworthiness on their collective head. Impressionable young Walwyn studied Fox's progressive ideas, all the while racing various types of dinghies—Fireflies, Cadets, International 14s—during his school

years. At the same time, he was developing a fascination with long-ended International Rule boats—Six-Meters, Eight-Meters, and Twelves—and was sneaking aboard a neighbor's Dragon-class sloop, just to soak it all in. In his early 20s he moved to his family's sugar plantation on St. Kitts—a country that was then shifting its economic base from sugar production to tourism. (For a period of time, Walwyn would operate a small hotel on the family land.)

By 1978 Walwyn had a boatyard at St. Kitts, and there he built a Peter Spronk-designed catamaran—a wood-epoxy composite 40-footer. Then he built a 45' catamaran, which he sailed for two or three years and then sold. Next came a 75' schooner-rigged catamaran of rather unusual construction: lapstrake planking above the waterline, cold-molded below. He crossed the ocean in these boats, making ten transatlantics in six years (he's been across the Atlantic fourteen times, four of them solo). In time, he tired of ocean passages and began to focus his attention on the nuances of 'round-the-buoy competition. He leveled his gaze on the Six-Meter class.

He commissioned a Six-Meter to an Ian Howlett design, to be built in strip planks and epoxy in England in 1986. This was the first Six to employ that construction technique—and it was the first to carry the newly fashionable winged keel, then recently made famous in its debut on the Twelve-Meter AUSTRALIA II, which broke the long American grip on the AMERICA's Cup. Walwyn was impressed with the great longitudinal strength of strip construction, and with the boat's overall performance.