



Some of KATE's deck hardware was obtained from TIGER, a 94' motoryacht that Philip Walwyn lost to sinking a year before the commencement of the 12-Meter's construction. The remainder of the hardware was cast in England. The spars are of Sitka spruce, milled in Alaska and shipped to St. Kitts. "I didn't calculate how much work was in the spars," says Walwyn. "It was 5-10 percent of the total job. That was a bit of a surprise."

Classic Yacht Association and member of CIM—the International Committee for the Mediterranean—was very helpful in the beginning. Lang, however, was not supportive of the strip-planked construction because it is not true to the original. The CIM is well known for its strictness in this regard; yachts of compromised originality are penalized on the racecourse.

Walwyn recognizes that, with her wood-epoxy hull, KATE differs from the original first-rule 12s. He mentioned cultures that deliberately build flaws into their handiwork, so as to not offend their god. Then he modestly joked: "Well, I didn't put the flaw in deliberately, but it's the same idea.

"The problem for me," said Walwyn, "is that the scene in the Med is done by the extremely wealthy, doing brilliant true true true restorations. They don't like the imitation stuff." He recalls that Lang told him, "You're wasting your time. You might as well build a Wally." The reference is to a futuristic-looking high-end European semi-production yacht. Clearly, Walwyn sees it differently—as do the owners of the many heads that are turned when she sails into a new harbor. Bruce McDaniel recalled the boat's arrival at Saint Martin, for racing there in January. He figures there were hundreds of people lining the bridge, watching the boat sail under. Cars were parked and people were standing and cheering, taking photos. "It was chilling. We never expected anything like that."

"I would like one day to sail against the original 12s," said Walwyn. There have been three iterations of the International 12-Meter Rule, and the 20-or-so-ton earliest boats, with their gaff rigs, topsails, and bowsprits, bear little resemblance to the 30- to 35-ton knuckle-bowed later ones. There are only three original first-rule 12s sailing today: CINTRA, VARUNA, and HETI.

"Do you think it would be pretty even?" I wondered. "I think they'd probably beat me right now," he said, emphasizing that he believes there is no speed advantage to his chosen method of hull construction.

The first time I visited Philip Walwyn aboard KATE, I asked him if he missed building her. "No," came his immediate reply. "I'm happy to be done with it." Then, on the heels of that answer, came a surprising revelation: "This boat's supposed to be the loss leader for a 19-Meter that I want to build." A 19-Meter is a considerably larger version of KATE. There are only a few of them sailing today. Philip Walwyn's ambition is to re-create OCTAVIA, another Mylne design. "It's just an idea," he said, discarding the notion. But he returned to the idea repeatedly during our visit. In fact, most of our conversations circled around to that topic.

On race day, Sunday, I joined KATE's crew for breakfast ashore at a little outdoor café at Soper's Hole at Tortola's West End. When I left the table for a few minutes, Walwyn helped himself to one of my potato pancakes—which had been the subject of a lighthearted battle when I excused myself. Its fate illustrated a point Walwyn made later: "I'm very competitive." After breakfast, we returned to KATE in a somehow distinctive-looking little black inflatable powered by a small outboard, KATE's tender. As we approached the 12-Meter, Walwyn said something about swimming, and began peeling off clothing. "You're going swimming?" I asked him.

"Yeah man," he said, handing command to Dougie. And then he was gone, frogman-style, 100 or so yards from the boat. He swam the rest of the way, lathering and rinsing upon arrival.

Full immersion seems to be the Philip Walwyn modus operandi. A suggestion of an idea isn't just a suggestion. Rather, it's a brewing, full-bore commitment. "Right now, I don't need to build another boat. I need to enjoy this one," he said, returning to the topic of the 19-Meter. He seemed to be wrestling himself in his head over the fact that it was time to stop building and start sailing.

For all of his open-mindedness regarding materials and rigs and sailing, Philip Walwyn seems to be a creature of habit. One of his habits is boatbuilding. Another