



CHASING THE

Wind

LES VOILES DE
ST TROPEZ & ANTIBES

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Every summer a flotilla of yachts can be found racing in the Mediterranean as part of 'Les Voiles' - literally 'The Sails'. The season begins in June with Les Voiles d'Antibes and ends in October with Les Voiles de Saint-Tropez - each regatta lasting five or six days and bringing together some of the finest classic and vintage yachts from around the world.

When my colleague and fellow Nikon user Serge Krouglikoff, who runs Create-Away, a photography workshop company based in the South of France, suggested running trips based around the regattas we thought it might be a good idea to try it out ourselves first to see just what it was like to photograph racing yachts from a moving RIB (rigid inflatable boat), so we teamed up with professional skipper and sailing instructor François Ruby in Antibes in June 2014. Now four regattas later I can say with complete honesty that this is some of the most challenging and most exciting photography I have ever done!

Let me set the scene: It is early June 2015 and the sun is shining with temperatures getting up to the mid 30s centigrade in the medieval town of Antibes, midway between Nice and Cannes on the French Riviera. Only the slightest of breeze gently ripples the surface of the water as we leave the harbour overlooked by the 16th century ramparts of the Fort Carré. Out in the bay are some thirty racing yachts built between 1886 and 1949 and we are all waiting. For this is not like Formula One - there is

no set start time and guaranteed action - we are at the mercy of that most fickle force of nature, the wind, and right now we are becalmed. But François is confident as we gently manoeuvre the RIB in and out of the towering yachts photographing the crews relaxing on deck - the wind will come, and sure enough just after noon it does albeit gently, but sufficient to fill the great white billowing sails of Mariska and of Moonbeam IV.

Now roll forward to late October when 70 mile-an-hour gales have been battering the coastline all night. As we meet for breakfast in Sainte-Maxime, across the gulf from St Tropez, our captain looks concerned: "There will be no racing today, there is too much wind - maybe tomorrow will be better..." In the relative shelter of the harbour where the classic yachts are moored, we photograph the teak and mahogany, brass and copper, crews cleaning every square inch of these magnificent boats. The next morning the wind has subsided enough for a few of the braver yachts to venture out into the gulf for 'Challenge Day' and we are there with them, watching them jostle for the best position at the starting buoy and then racing after them in the RIB, confident that François will position us





exactly for the shots we want. By the third day the wind is perfect but the rain has arrived and we wrap ourselves up in oilskins, and our cameras in waterproof covers, wiping the lens between shots and feeling every bit as intrepid as the crew of the tiny Tern, now dwarfed by the waves. On the fourth and final day we have 'perfect' wind with even a hint of sunshine for the last races and we return to shore exhilarated knowing that we now belong to a team that has beaten the elements and photographed its way to 'victory'!

Even on calm seas, photographing from a RIB presents quite a challenge. It is a continually moving platform that forces you to focus on

clarity and contrast. For a wide view the AF-S 24-70mm f/2.8G ED and the AF-S 14-24mm f/2.8G ED both worked well, sometimes held only inches above the water to give a dramatic perspective, especially when coming in really close to the boats. And the 70-200mm f/2.8 ED VR II and D810 proved to be well-matched for the most severe shooting conditions when you have to commit to one camera-lens combination and then seal it in a rain sleeve with copious gaffer-tape before leaving shore!

In amongst the drama of the moment it is easy to forget the reason you are there in a RIB chasing a 100-year old yacht across a rough sea. Yacht racing



the rolling and pitching until you find a rhythm that allows you to compose the image in the viewfinder. Framing wide certainly helps - plenty of chopped off masts in the rejects pile for sure - but when the seas are rough it is quite a different matter. For a start you do want to make sure that you and the RIB don't part company, finding ways of bracing a leg here and an arm there to give a stable hold. Then you have to trust that the gear will do its job when being bumped about and occasionally showered in salty sea spray. Nikon's new AF-S 300mm f/4E PF ED VR proved to be the perfect lens for this situation. Small and lightweight, it is easy to hand hold and the vibration reduction gave a steady viewfinder image in the roughest of conditions. Mounted on the D810 it produced close-up images of the crews and details of the boats with extraordinary

is about using skill and teamwork to control a boat that has been honed and perfected over many decades to do just one job - get from A to B as quickly as possible regardless of the conditions. In many ways it is just like our photography.

The equipment we use has been continually refined with each successive generation to work flawlessly and consistently shot after shot. The photographers and the skipper are the team, working together to be in the right place at the right time for the perfect photograph.

The limit is only you as the image maker - are you ready for the challenge, prepared to get out of your comfort zone and try something truly unique - to capture the spirit of sailing, as yacht and crew chase the wind? ■



WILLIAM FIFE & SON

The name William Fife is synonymous with vintage yacht racing. Over three generations this family boatyard created some of the finest examples of yachts still sailing today.

Born in 1785, William Fife was very young when he started the family business operating from the village beach in Fairlie, North Ayrshire on the Firth of Clyde.

The boatyard grew and acquired an international reputation under his son William Fife II (1821-1902), but it was William Fife III (1857-1944) who designed and built many legendary yachts, often for Europe's royalty and most prominent families: yachts such as Tuiga, The Lady Anne, Mariquita and Moonbeam IV.

Following the success of his design Dragon (1888), Fife adopted a stylised Chinese dragon as his trademark and this distinctive scrollwork is still easily recognizable today.

Celebrated French yachtsman Éric Tabarly wrote: *"the great designers of the period were Herreshoff, George Lennox Watson, Charles E. Nicholson and William Fife. Amongst these, Fife has acquired a particular reputation thanks to the sheer artistry and balance of his designs. Furthermore, those of his designs which took shape in his yard were of unmatched construction."*

William Fife III died in 1944, leaving as his only 'heirs' his drawings and his immortal creations, which now enliven vintage yacht gatherings all over the world. ■









MOONBEAM IV

“The most beautiful yacht ever built”

The fourth, final and largest Moonbeam, was designed and built by William Fife III for Charles Plumptre Johnson, the son of the physician to Queen Victoria, a keen racing sailor. She is the only Moonbeam Gaff Cutter design of the 20th Century and the Winner of the Kings' Cup at Cowes in 1920 and 1923.

First launched in 1914 and commissioned after the Great War, in 1920, she is perhaps best described by the English boat designer Uffa Fox CBE: *“No matter whether she is under way or at anchor, Moonbeam is beautiful to look upon, and combining the speed of a racer with the comfort of a cruiser, is a vessel any seaman would be proud to own.”*

French yachtsman, Éric Tabarly, also wrote a letter to the owners, describing her as *“the most beautiful yacht ever built”*.

Acquired by HSH Prince Rainier de Monaco in 1950, Moonbeam IV's story became legendary when she hosted the young prince and his wife Grace Kelly, for their honeymoon. Following this era as a Bermudian Ketch, she suffered a period of neglect until 2001 when it was decided to return her to her 1927 towering 'Marconi' Gaff rig and complete a total renovation preserving as much of the original Fife craftsmanship as possible. ■



MOONBEAM IV SPECIFICATION

Length	35m / 11ft	Builder	Fife Shipyard
Draft	3.9m / 12.8ft	Hull	Teak / Steel Frames
Beam	5.1m / 16.7ft	Cabins	1 Master / 2 Twin
Rig	Marconia Gaff Cutter	Guests	6
Sail area	506.6m ² / 5452ft ²	Crew	6
Year built	1914-1920	Max Speed	10 knots
Year of restoration	2001	Cruising Speed	8.5 knots
Exterior designer	William Fife III	Current value	€4.5 million (2014)



YACHT

TERMINOLOGY & CLASSIFICATIONS

(Source: Wikipedia)

Sloop: a sailing boat with a single mast and a fore-and-aft rig, with only one head sail.

Cutter: a sailing boat with a single mast, fore-and-aft rigged with two or more headsails and often a bowsprit.

Ketch: a sailing boat with two masts, the forward mast (the 'mainmast') being larger than the after mast (the 'mizzen').

Schooner: a sailing boat with fore-and-aft sails on two or more masts, the foremast being shorter than the main and no taller than the mizzen if there is one. Originally gaff-rigged, modern schooners typically carry a Bermuda rig.

Gaff rig: a configuration of sails, mast and stays in which the sail is four-cornered, fore-and-aft rigged and controlled at its peak by a spar (pole) called the gaff.

Bermuda rig or Marconi rig: a configuration of mast and rigging that is the typical configuration for most sailboats, developed in Bermuda in the 17th century. The term Marconi is a much later reference to the inventor Guglielmo Marconi whose wireless radio masts resembled the wires that stabilise the mast of a Bermuda rigged ship.

Vintage Yachts: Yachts built of wood or metal, launched before December 31st 1949, which respect the spirit of their original plans.

Classic Yachts: Yachts built of wood or metal, launched before December 31st 1975.

Spirit of Tradition Yachts: Yachts built after 1970 using modern techniques and materials but with a look and style loyal to a traditional vintage or classic project.

Metre Classes: a construction specification that means that boats are not identical but are all designed to meet specific measurements in a formula. 'Metre' does not refer to the length of the boat, but to her rating.

For example the overall length of 15 Metre boats is approximately 30 metres (98ft). The 15 Metre formula used in the First International Rule from 1907 to 1920:

$$15 \text{ m} = \frac{L + B + \frac{1}{2}G + 3d + \frac{1}{3}\sqrt{S} - F}{2}$$

where

- L = Load Waterline Length in metres
- B = beam in metres
- G = chain girth in metres
- d = difference between girth and chain in metres
- S = sail area in square metres
- F = freeboard in metres

THE FEATURED YACHTS

Sail No.	Name	Year	Designer	Type / Class	Length (m)
D10	The Lady Anne	1905	William Fife III	15 Meters J1	22.85
6	Eva	1906	William Fife III	Gaff Cutter	16.50
D1	Mariska	1908	William Fife III	15 Meters J1	27.00
D3	Tuiga	1909	William Fife III	15 Meters J1	28.40
8	Moonbeam IV	1914	William Fife III	Gaff Cutter	35.00
NED1	Zinita	1926	William Fife III	12 Metre	20.15
449	Eilean	1936	William Fife III	Bermudan Ketch	22.16
9	Folly	1907	Charles Nicholson	8 Metre J1 Aurique	13.00
517	Lak	1939	Andre Mauric	Bermudan Sloop	14.00

CREATE AWAY

PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOPS

Create Away are the number one specialists and the only photography workshop company actually based in the Camargue. They have exclusive access to private domain, unavailable to everyone else, through their strong and long established links with the local people of the Camargue, who have deep respect for the traditions and wildlife of their treasured land. **Create Away** arranges photography workshops & tours to capture the iconic Wild White Horses, Pink Flamingos, Black Bulls, Stunning Landscapes and Classic Portraits. Outside the Camargue, Create Away also offers breath-taking Landscapes of Provence Villages, Lavender & Sunflower Fields, Graphic Atlantic Seascapes and now exhilarating Classic Yachts Regattas in Antibes & Saint Tropez on the Cote d'Azur. Serge Krouglikoff founded **Create Away**, after an illustrious career in international fashion photography, in order to communicate his passion and professional know-how, developed over the course of his photographic career. Based in London, he worked at the top of the fashion industry, travelling across the globe for editorials and advertising campaigns as well as photographing many celebrities.

Les Voiles d'Antibes:

1st to 6th June 2016

Les Voiles de Saint Tropez:

27th Sept to 2nd Oct 2016

Tel: 0203 642 2448

www.create-away.com

