

Better Boat Insurance is Here!



Any boat. Anywhere. Anytime.

www.offshorerisk.com

800-773-0105 or 284-494-8925
Caribbean • North America • Bahamas • Saipan • Europe

ORM Offshore
Risk
Management

A One-Stop Solution for Wooden Boat Work

by Don Street

Anyone in the Eastern Caribbean who has a wooden boat that needs repair — or a fiberglass, aluminum or steel boat with wood components that need repair — should take a good look at Grenada these days. In Grenada there is someone whom I feel is one of the best shipwrights in the world. There is also a carpenter who has



The 1899-built Galatea, racing in Grenada Sailing Week 2017. Her extensive bow repairs are undetectable

spent his life doing nothing but fine joinery work (when he is not off sailing) in the Eastern Caribbean. There are others with similar skills scattered throughout the Eastern Caribbean, but in Grenada they are both in the same boatyard, a yard that has a massive boat lift and a storage area that has so much space it is rarely full even in hurricane season.

I have owned wooden boats for 72 years. The first was Snipe number three, designer William Crosby's original boat of a class that now numbers well over 100,000. This was followed by a Comet, a 16-foot centerboard version of a Star, followed by *Iolaire*, a 46-foot engineless yawl built in 1905 that I bought in St. Thomas in 1957 and owned for 52 years. During the last 33 years, in Ireland, I have owned and raced a Dragon called *Gypsy*, the oldest Dragon in the world still racing, built by Anker & Jensen in 1933. I have spent the better part of my lifetime helping shipwrights repair *Iolaire* and *Gypsy*. I have had *Iolaire* in boatyards in the Caribbean, in the States, and in Europe, and have observed the workmanship of their shipwrights and joiners. I feel I am justified in making the statement I made at the beginning of this article.

Judd Tinius, a 42-year-old from the US, is a fantastic shipwright. Look at his *Galatea*. *Galatea* is a Swedish-built yawl of 68 feet LOA, 50 feet on the waterline with a beam of 12'6", a draft of 8'6" — and only 18 inches of freeboard amidships. She was built in 1899 by Plymm and designed by Axel Nygren. There is absolutely no way you can see that Judd has replaced seven feet of bow that was once knocked off in a collision.

Judd started sailing in an Olin Stephens-designed 14-foot Blue Jay. Then he crewed in his father's Folkboat, and later aboard *Lady Washington*, a replica square-rigger that did educational cruises from California to Alaska. This got him interested in classic rigging, which led him to working with Jamie White of the San Francisco Maritime Museum, and the well-known rigging expert Brion Toss. Judd was part of the crew who re-rigged the former German nitrate carrier and Australian grain racer *Moshulu*, a 417-foot, four-masted barque whose mast rose a full 200 feet from the deck.

Judd started his informal apprenticeship at age 11, sweeping floors in his uncle's boatyard in Everett, Washington. He was taken under the wing of a very good British boatbuilder/joiner who worked for his uncle. In the US Pacific Northwest in the late 1980s and early '90s there were plenty of wooden boats that needed repair. Judd learned a lot about replacing rotten stems and planking that has stood him in good stead in later life.

—Continued on next page

Cruising Life

The Best Stories from Caribbean Compass

Now available as an eBook at Amazon.com, *Cruising Life: The Best Stories from Caribbean Compass* is a collection of 49 outstanding stories selected from more than 200 issues of *Caribbean Compass*.

Ann Vanderhoof, author of *An Embarrassment of Mangoes* and *The Spice Necklace*, says, "Given a new life beyond the magazine, the pieces in this collection resonate and sparkle in a very different way, offering new pleasures.

Beyond its entertainment — the first piece had me hooked — the collection is sure to spark ideas in both cruising sailors and armchair dreamers."

US\$8.95

Read a preview and order *Cruising Life* now at www.amazon.com!

The best stories from

CARIBBEAN
COMPASS

Compiled by Sally Erdle and Rona Beame

—Continued from previous page

He followed the usual routine of a young sailor, heading to Ft. Lauderdale, Florida to find a job on a yacht heading south. After bouncing around the Caribbean and Europe, crewing on and delivering boats and working in yards, he headed back home to Everett. Here he started his own small and mainly DIY boatyard. After Judd had run the yard for a few years, the then-owner of *Galatea*, who had owned her for 21 years, put her up for sale. He had taken a liking to Judd, and in 2000 offered Judd *Galatea* in a deal Judd could not afford but could not turn down.

Judd decided the wet northwest coast of the States was best left behind, so he headed south, with a crew including his father and two of the workers from his yard. From Panama he headed east, hoping to make the Antigua Classic Regatta. Unfortunately *Galatea* blew out her mainsail off the south coast of Puerto Rico and ducked into Salinas to repair it.

Galatea missed the 2001 Classic Regatta, but placed first in Vintage Class A in 2007 and second in Vintage Class B in a tiebreaker for first in 2009. As well as being an excellent shipwright, Judd is an excellent sailor.

Judd spent years in the Caribbean before heading to Europe in the spring of 2010 with a full crew of four, crossing the Atlantic via Bermuda and the Azores. He ended up in the Baltic, taking part in the Baltic Classic Regatta circuit, which ended with the first Classic Regatta in St. Petersburg.

In October 2010 disaster struck. While sailing off the east coast of Sweden, *Galatea* was run down by a motor vessel and seven feet of the bow was knocked off. Judd managed to make port without sinking, made a settlement with the ship's owners, laid *Galatea* up in Stockholm and departed to Palma to earn money to do the rebuild. He arrived back in Stockholm the following April, with one leg in a cast from ankle to hip — after breaking the leg getting off a boat onto the dock, when a block that was



JANE BIRD

being used as a step rolled out from under him — but managed to jury rig *Galatea* and get her to Szczecin, Poland, 30 miles up a river. The Poles thought he was nuts — arriving with a broken boat and a broken leg — but after watching him work, they took him under their wing and helped him. In three months he replaced seven feet of *Galatea*'s bow, doing such a magnificent job that it is impossible to tell that it is new. Back underway, it was off to a friend's yard in Weymouth, England, where he spent the next ten months working on *Galatea* and other boats, then back to the Caribbean singlehanded. He ended up in St. Croix, running St. Croix Marine.

Disaster struck again, on Good Friday, 2016, when an upper shroud turnbuckle broke and *Galatea*'s mast went upside. Thanks to Judd's contacts on the US west coast he was able to have enough Sitka spruce to build a new mast shipped to St. Croix. Most spar makers would refuse to even start building a mast until a full mast bench was built, a bench longer than the spar and absolutely true. This was not available, so Judd lined up some sawhorses out in the open, got to work, and built a magnificent oval spar. The spar was stepped, and, with no time for trial sails, *Galatea* was off from the Virgin Islands en route to the Windwards to race in Grenada Sailing Week.

Judd recently formed a partnership, Driftwood Fine Yacht Woodwork, with Steffen Meyerer, who has spent his life (when not sailing) doing superb joinery work on boats, both below and on deck. Steffen was born in a little town in the center of the largest forest in Germany. He became interested in woodworking during vacation time, when he was either working in the forestry department or in a small shop that designed and constructed innovative wooden kitchen paraphernalia. Working with wood, seeing it going from the tree to a finished product, started a passion.

When he finished his schooling he, like many others of his generation, took a year off and went wandering. He toured New Zealand for a year on a bicycle. He then returned to Germany and did a full three-year cabinetmaking apprenticeship with a firm that did nothing but cabinetmaking and redecorating house interiors with very fancy wood paneling, making the rooms look ancient.

Once the apprenticeship was finished, wanderlust set in again and Steffen headed to Dakar, Senegal, hoping to find a berth on a boat heading to South America. That did not work out and he found himself in Cape Town, South Africa where the boat bug really hit him. He took every chance he could to crew on boats and literally learn the ropes. He found himself at the age of 23 the owner of a 37-foot *Endurance*.

If you are young, have a boat, and are in Cape Town, what do you do? You talk your girlfriend into joining you on a trip to the Caribbean, which Steffen did. Once in the Caribbean, various jobs restocked the finances until, as he says, "I followed the sawdust trail and ended up working for Chippy in Antigua for seven years." A three-year apprenticeship in cabinet-making in Germany followed by seven years working for Chippy as a joiner on yachts of all sizes is training that cannot be matched.

In 2010 the wanderlust set in yet again, and Steffen, with his girlfriend, now his wife, and their small daughter headed south. They ended up in Grenada, where Steffen set up his own shop, Driftwood, at the entrance to Port Louis Marina.

Steffen had built up an excellent reputation as a fine woodworker while working for Chippy. Once he set up his own shop, business poured in. He had to hire extra help. Business finally snowballed to such an extent that he has opened a second shop, in Clarkes Court Boatyard & Marina, where Judd has also established himself. Clarkes Court is the only place I know of in the Eastern Caribbean where those seeking wooden boat repairs or other woodwork jobs will find a fantastic shipwright, a top-notch joiner shop, a marina, and a hauling and storage facility all in one place.

JOTUN
MARINE PAINTS & ANTIFOULINGS

BECAUSE IT WORKS!

ECHO-MARINE - QUALITY COATINGS, TRINIDAD (Caribbean Distributor)
Tel: 1 (868) 634-4144/1072 • Email: jotun@echo-marine.com

JOTUN is also available at all Trinidadian shipyards as well as all branches of:

ISLAND WATER WORLD
Email: sales@islandwaterworld.com

BEQUIA VENTURE
Tel: (784) 458-3319 • Email: bequiaventure@vincysurf.com

FREE CRUISING GUIDES

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

CAYMAN ISLANDS

HAITI

CUBA

JAMAICA

TRINIDAD

ABC ISLANDS

PUERTO RICO

LESSER ANTILLES IN 3 VOLUMES

www.freecruisingguides.com

COMPLIMENTS OF: **MARINA ZAR-PAR**

Boca Chica, Dominican Republic

www.marinazarpar.com

