The older Imoca 60s will indeed be faster than the new boats at times... as GUILLAUME VERDIER explains to JOCELYN BLERIOT

Why deck-sweeper wishbone rigs look like the way to go... plus son of Sailrocket. PAUL LARSEN

Was there ever a more illustrious guest list? DOBBS DAVIS is introduced to the Pewaukee Blue Chip and goes sailing amid the corn fields

The co-founder of the Caribbean 600, JOHN DOBBS DAVIS has stepped up by several notches thanks to the arrival of Groupama. STEVE CLARK

It's all about the sort of 'fast' that we want to be encouraging. JAMES DADD

Young, old and just plain genius... gold medallist MALCOLM PAGE on the Sailing Hall of Fame

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Good precedent
If the popularity of the Farr 40 during its first 10 years is any guide then the innovative new ‘Fast 40’ class in the UK has a decent shot at success. Around 150 Farr 40s were built in total, enjoying strong events even when campaign budgets started to escalate in the late ‘noughties’. Forty-foot is a good size for inshore and offshore racing; it is big enough to not scare off dubious offshore competitors but not so big as to demand prohibitive levels of expenditure. The model for the Fast 40 is the UK Quarter Ton fleet, where a large group of different designs enjoy the best of handicap racing by being forced into a narrow rating band. Handicap racing works best among similar boats and the Fast 40 follows this theme. Using IRC, small allowances will be given between different designs but the closeness in ratings should over time see handicap results mirroring the order on the water. This initiative will almost certainly be a local success on the UK south coast, with 8-10 existing boats and two or three more on order. If the racing looks good then other skippers looking for racing that is more serious than regular IRC handicap competition will join in. Of course, like the HPR40s in the USA, the whole thing will be blown apart by someone coming in with a new purpose-designed Fast 40 and a top programme. The bigger question is could such a class find traction elsewhere; at best the answer is ‘perhaps’. Every nation has different taste in keelboat racing and to ever bring everybody together inevitably still means a single international rating system.
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Maximum power
Don Coomer and his loyal Stars&Stripes team on their way to winning the 1987 America's Cup in Fremantle. If Tom Ehman can pull it off, and he is some well-qualified and enthusiastic backers, then we might well see powerful, heavier displacement, high pointing 12 Metre-style boats soon racing seriously again. The first renders for the Farr designed Super 12s are now floating around the world and above the waterline the boats do look very similar to the best of the 12 Metres that pounding it out in Perth nearly 30 years ago. Out of sight down below, the boats feature a modern fin and (large) bulb keel with a single efficient high aspect rudder. It is an interesting concept for a new circuit, although initially at least Ehman is proposing just a single annual regatta in San Francisco each July. The closest parallel to the Super 12s is the RC44 circuit, that was successfully launched in 2007 and has been well run since then by Sir Russell Coutts working with French skipper Bertrand Faver. The USP of the RC44s is 100 per cent turn-key one design racing, going to the best venues in the world and with Coutts & Co helping a group of wealthy owner-drivers to secure some of the best sailors in the world as crew. Turn-key indeed, book a hotel, fly in, go racing, go home. The Super Js currently look a cheaper option than the RC44 because of the lack of travelling, but there must be a cost-benefit trade to taking the new 'series' on the road, which no doubt will be very carefully explored. The Super Js should also be cheaper to own and campaign than a serious TP52; there are enough clients out there, for sure, for this type of racing. If nothing else, Super Js will certainly add a touch of both grandeur and gravitas to your regular inshore racing deal.

COVER: Daniel Forster
INSET: Enrico Chiell
Ocean safety!
They build 'em good, those Mini protos... well most of them. In practice, once the initial year of sorting is out the way, Mini's stay competitive for a surprising length of time. Perhaps the fact the boats are short reduces panel degrading, or it may be that the boats are sailed by passionate owners who are always listening to their boat -- and are diligent with preventive maintenance. No 753, seen here, is the Bertrand designed Wild Side which was launched by German skipper Jörg Riechers in 2009. Riechers campaigned the boat through to 2014 when he won the ArMen two-handed race with the boat's current skipper Luke Berry. Since 2014 Berry has been racing the boat himself and enjoying a string of good results culminating in a brilliant 2nd overall in the 2015 Mini Transat behind Fred Denis' Lombard design. Denis' winning boat was also far from new, going afloat in 2011. Clearly the design war in this fleet has cooled off and the Mini's also seem to have been disrupted surprisingly little by the bmrsting onto the scene of David Raison's much refined scow TeamWork - on which he smashed the 2011 Mini Transat fleet. Although several newer scows have followed Raison's lead, the switch to a more all round course for the Mini Transat has returned the best of the non-scows to the front. To allow these short boats to be powered up to the maximum downwind, all the new Mini's are still drawn very full forward, as are the latest Imoca 60s and Class40s; but for now the death notice for the traditional Mini seems to have been a little premature.

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Why Olympic gold medals no longer automatically translate into a big boat career. IAN WALKER

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And a new 5.5m for an Elvstrom anniversary. JOHAN JOENSEN and JØRGEN JENSEN

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Champions both...
The class might well have been around for over 120 years, but with the boats spending more time aloft with the passing of every season it's hard to argue that the 18-foot skiffs would not make a telegenic Olympic class - given the right sailing waters. The 49ers are great, and the foiling Moths are dramatic, but you can't beat scale when you're trying to grab an audience's attention. Just ask the AC organisers...

INSET: Jesus Renedo
Come a long way, baby

AC45s go at it during the AC World Series in Plymouth back in 2011 - Oracle 5 then being steered by Russell Coutts (left) and Simeon Tienpont from Coutts’ original core sailing team. Plymouth was a solidly windy as well as visually spectacular weekend’s racing and the hopeful Cup crews were given a monster workout just trying to stay on top of their powerful and newly introduced wing-rigged one-designs. Since then of course the AC cat game has changed beyond recognition, as catamarans have morphed into multihulls and many of the best-known America’s Cup monohull legends have quietly slipped into senior shoreside roles where they continue to provide invaluable big-picture management skills forged in the heat of numerous winning campaigns. It’s also incredible to remember that even in late 2011 no one outside of some record-chasing sailing ‘speed freaks’ had given much thought to a full-foiling multihull sailing development normally flows upwards but in the case of the foiling multihull it was the Cup boats that led the way with the ‘beach cats’ in tow. From a spectator’s perspective, while today’s America’s Cup 45s and AC50s, given enough breeze, will fly almost constantly throughout a race, little else has changed. The lower wind limits prompted by the wider introduction of foiling mean that during this America’s Cup cycle we are unlikely to see a spectacle as dramatic as the two-day crash-and-burn enjoyed in Plymouth five years ago. With the world’s best and fitter young sailors now crewing the Cup boats, and safety the top priority, the relatively low wind limits for America’s Cup 2017 will inevitably leave a big hole in the grand plan.

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After years out in the wilderness a genuinely practical production wing rig should shortly be on the market.

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Paul Larsen is in love again (sorry, Helena). And, typical of the fastest sailor in the world, the subject of his latest attentions is very slim, very light, very pretty... and 100% carbon.

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The Oman Sail project is doing such a good job of promoting its young sailors that Russell COUTTS dropped by recently to add his support.

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Inset: Michel Joubert who passed away last month was part of a partnership that created some of the most interesting designs of the past 35 years. Production cruisers to maxi multihulls to Half Ton champions, Joubert-Nivelt have done it all. We suspect Joubert would have been impressed by the MC31 (left, pg18) from McConaghy; we need more offshore capable 30-footers to pick up the mantle of the Mumm 30 and it seems we may have another one.
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Ed Dubois’ Two Ton design Police Car went afloat late in 1978, well into the era of light, fractionally rigged Half Tonners but several years before fractional rigs became the norm in bigger IOR designs. But things did not start out particularly well when owner Peter Cantwell and his crew started racing on arrival in the UK; the Two Ton Cup in Poole that preceded the Admiral’s Cup was a light-air affair and Police Car struggled – she was also giving away half a foot of rating, being optimised for the Admiral’s Cup rather than the less important Two Ton event. But once the Australian team arrived in Cowes for the Admiral’s Cup itself the wind started to blow, and it continued to blow throughout the regatta, culminating in the rough 1979 Fastnet. Handing a wind-regatta, Police Car was in her element, very fast reaching around the Solent, easy to de-power upwind and with relatively small spinnakers that were far easier to manage than the tall and narrow masthead chutes of most rivals. Once the breeze hit 20kt the blue Australian boat was almost unbeatable. And not only was she fast (and fun to sail), she proved more reliable than her competitors had hoped; remember that for its time this was a big rig to manage after the Olympic circus moves on

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**Cover:** Guy Gurney

**Inset:** Benoît Stichelbaut
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FULLY FLYING YOUR IMOCA 60 (INSET), understood, bit nery, better than doing it on three hulls. But racing hard around the world on a boat as wet as Banque Populaire (left), that is something your weekend warrior might have to think about. When a keelboat, any keelboat, goes this fast without high freeboards, being underwater is a sailing mode not an event. Trim on