



Gregor Tarjan's Multihull World

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regor Tarjan has been sailing, designing and selling boats—and particularly cruising catamarans—for 30 years. His company, Aeroyacht, based in Long Island, New York, is a dealership for seven brands of cats and runs a successful project management business. MQ caught up with him by phone in early December.

Multihulls Quarterly: You and your company Aeroyacht are very well known in the world of multihulls. Tell us more about what you actually do.

Gregor Tarjan: Aeroyacht is a boutique company that specializes in multihulls in all their forms. We cater to buyers, sellers and those who

want to undertake custom projects. Our customers get one on one personal treatment that is designed to do more than just sell boats. We offer education, consultation and we always offer the good with the bad about any boat or project. So, our approach is to educate and consult with customers as they go through the process of discovering what boat is right for them

A big part of our business lies in project management for some very interesting new builds. Usually we work on larger custom catamarans. Right now we are working with a group that is building what will be the largest catamaran in the world at over 165 feet overall.

On a different front, we are working on and project managing a

record breaking attempt by paraplegic sailor John Holt who was the first completely paralyzed person to sail across the Atlantic single-handed on a 60-foot catamaran in 2004. He is now mounting an around the world attempt aboard a 65-foot trimaran. He is sponsored by the founder of NetJets.

So Aeroyacht specializes in these types of unique and interesting projects where all of my experience and expertise as a sailor, designer and entrepreneur can come into play.

Of course, I am also a dealer for seven brands of multihulls that I sell new. But I think my emphasis on education and consultation helps me to be unbiased about the qualities and benefits of a wide range



Custom Farrier tri

of multihulls. My goal is always to match the expectations of a customer to the right boat, no matter what the brand.

MQ: Tell us about your sailing background.

GT: I grew up in Vienna, Austria and started sailing dinghies when I was 15, on the Danube River. I fell in love with the art and skill of sailing and have ended up owning a series of boats. I had a Flying Dutchman and then two Star boats that I brought to the North American championships. It was the year Dennis Conner won and I think I finished second to last in the 21-boat fleet. It was a great experience. From there I got involved with the *Stars and Stripes* America's Cup campaign and sailed 12 Meters a lot. I worked at Derektor's Shipyard where they built these aluminum 12s.

Throughout the years I have owned so many different boats. I got into trimarans and owned Dick Newick designs. For many years I owned an Outremer 43 that I cruised up and down the East Coast. I owned a customer built carbon tri for racing. And now I sail a 100-year old, 14-foot cat boat with a gaff rig. I

love this boat because it is so simple and pure and it opened up for me the whole world of gaff rigs.

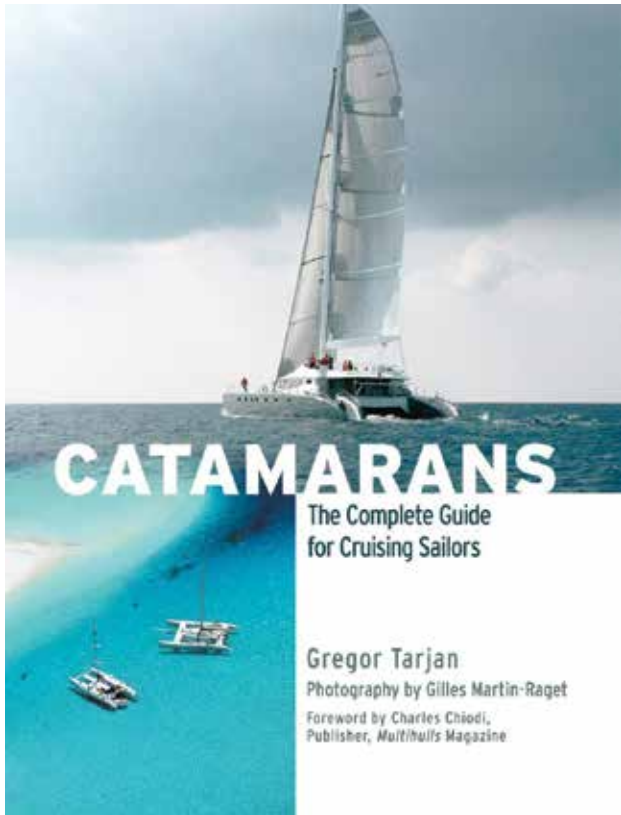
I delivered boats for a living up ad down the East Coasts and from Europe to the U.S. I've worked as a yacht designer and was able to get involved in some very high end projects including one of the first big boats with a wing keel that Dave Pedrick designed. So I have a lot of experience with both monohulls and multihulls and can help customers weigh the advantages and drawbacks of both.

MQ: The multihull word is dominated by catamarans but trimarans seems to be gaining an ever wider audience, too. What's the difference between them?

GT: From the basic feel of the boat, a trimaran offers a softer ride than a catamaran. Monohulls move a lot in the water and give a soft but wallowing ride. A big cat is very stable and gives a jerky but very level ride. And a trimaran falls in between by giving a ride that has the feel of a monohull and the stability and



Seatrialing a Sunreef 74



speed of a catamaran. Trimarans are more weatherly, too, so you can carve to windward better than a catamaran, in part because the leeward float or ama acts as a kind of long keel that actually helps to provide lift. And a tri will tack more easily and faster than catamaran, more like a monohull, and then you get the instant acceleration out of the tack like a light cat. It's the best of both worlds.

Of course cruising catamarans offer much more living space and the large saloon and cockpit that can be enormous. That is the great advantage of a catamaran.

But the new NEEL trimarans are doing something different by adding a platform on top of the main hull that joins with the amas. This creates a large living space like a cat with the master cabin right at deck level. Plus, you get a basement or the space inside the main hull where you can have all of your systems and storage. So, NEEL is offering kind of the best of both worlds where you get the sailing performance of a tri with the accommodation plan of a cat. And, you get a basement. A NEEL 45 recently won the ARC by half a day over an Outremer 51.

MQ: Isn't NEEL the only company building trimarans with full width platforms?

GT: Yes, I think it is. But, right now I am working with my friends at Alibi Catamarans to develop a slightly larger trimaran that will have a similar platform and accommodation plan. But, it will be more high tech, larger and faster. Think of it as the Gunboat of cruising trimarans.

MQ: You are a great communicator and have a good newsletter. But you also have written books. What are they about?

GT: I have actually published two books. The first was called *Catamarans: Every Sailor's Guide*, which I self published and worked with Charles Chiodi to print it in his magazine facility. The book was such a success that I got a phone call from McGraw Hill who took on the publishing of a revised and much improved copy of the book that they called *Catamarans: The Complete Guide for Cruising Sailors*. We're now up to the fourth edition of the book so it has

sold very well. It has become the worldwide reference for all things to do with catamarans. Plus, the book really came out as a piece of art with beautiful photos and layouts and great paper and printing.

About four years ago, I published a book with Sheridan House that was called *Catamarans: Tomorrow's Super Yachts*. It's 400 pages, beautifully illustrated with Billy Black photos so it is another handsome coffee table book that focuses on catamarans from 60 feet and up. It focuses on how an individual can realize the dream of owning a large, luxury catamaran. This is a big new part of the market and the book is a must-have for anyone who wants to fulfill their super yacht dreams.

MQ: How do you see the multihull market growing and changing in the years ahead?

GT: Right now the big players like Lagoon, Fontaine Pajot and

CATAMARANS

Tomorrow's Superyachts
from conception to luxury lifestyle



GREGOR TARJAN

photographic contributions by Billy Black

Leopard dominate the market and going forward will dominate even more than they do today. Without downplaying their incredible success or their products—which are brilliant—these main players have something like 80 percent of the market. And that market share is growing every year. The medium and small players like Outremer or NEEL or Gunboat are on a precarious path. Either they are able to accelerate their growth to the point where they can stabilize production enough to sustain the company. Or, they fail. In the last couple of years we have seen many unfortunate incidences of companies that failed even though they had great products, great boats, name brand recognition and apparent success. This is because building catamarans is very difficult and it is very hard to control the cost. For example, the man hours needed build a cat or a tri is not double those in a monohull, it is three or four times the hours.

Obviously, multihulls are here to stay. We see more ferries and military craft with catamaran hulls

than ever before. The bareboat and crewed charter industry is now dominated by catamarans because they make such perfect platforms for family vacations. So, the charter industry is driving the market and making the big players who supply boats to the charter fleets stronger every year.

It is difficult for smaller builders

to build as efficiently and gain the economies of scale that are possible when you are building 100 boats a year. Still, there are many still out there in France and South Africa and around the world all competing for the niche of the market that wants semi-custom unique cruising multihulls. We have to wish them well. ■



MaxTri coming 2017

