

CHANGING GEARS

Tecnomar ups its game on the new 45m flagship *Ouranos*

**KESTREL 106**

One vision of a fast, easy to handle ketch finally realised

**JEWEL OF THE MED**

Sir Donald Gosling's favourite Sardinian hideaways on *Leander*



BOAT

INTERNA
TIONAL



All the action from this year's Loro Piana Superyacht Regatta

AFRICAN HEAT 1950s COOL

On board the stylish, fun 74m charter yacht *Mogambo*

Js OF THUNDER

As the J Class prepares for battle, we put the new *Rainbow* through its paces



8
2
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106



SIX YEARS AGO, AN OWNER AND AVID SAILOR HAD A VISION FOR A YACHT WITH EASY HANDLING, PLENTY OF SPACE AND A TURN OF SPEED; THE RESULT IS THE KESTREL 106



Peter Cooke is an avid sailboater. He is also something of a visionary and, about six years ago, began to formulate ideas for a very special sailing yacht. Its characteristics would be personal but universal at the same time, while also being exceptionally different.

'If that sounds a bit Irish, so be it,' Cooke says with a smile, 'although besides being Irish there's a drop of Scottish blood in me, as well.' We are sitting on the aft deck of the superb new Kestrel 106 ketch at this year's Antibes Yacht Show, basking in the admiring looks of passers-by. 'We (Cooke and wife Jenny) have a small bespoke gulet charter business in Turkey, which is very enjoyable, but it started me on a line of thought which developed into the vessel we're looking at today. While it may be great beating to windward or speeding on a broad reach, having to get everything properly stowed and nailed down (which includes the occupants) is unnecessary extra work. There are many folk who love the idea of a holiday on the water, but get frightened when the boat 'tips over a bit'. So I wanted something that would be gentle but really decisive upwind, with a full turn of speed, have 'motor yacht' space on deck and below and still look good – I didn't want much, did I?'

It must have felt a lot to ask at the time, but you sense Cooke is a quietly dynamic man who largely gets things done with his infectious enthusiasm and drive. As he points out, 'The first objective was to raise the necessary cash, find a designer, plus a shipyard, plus loads of other things, but I felt confident about finding the right solutions.'



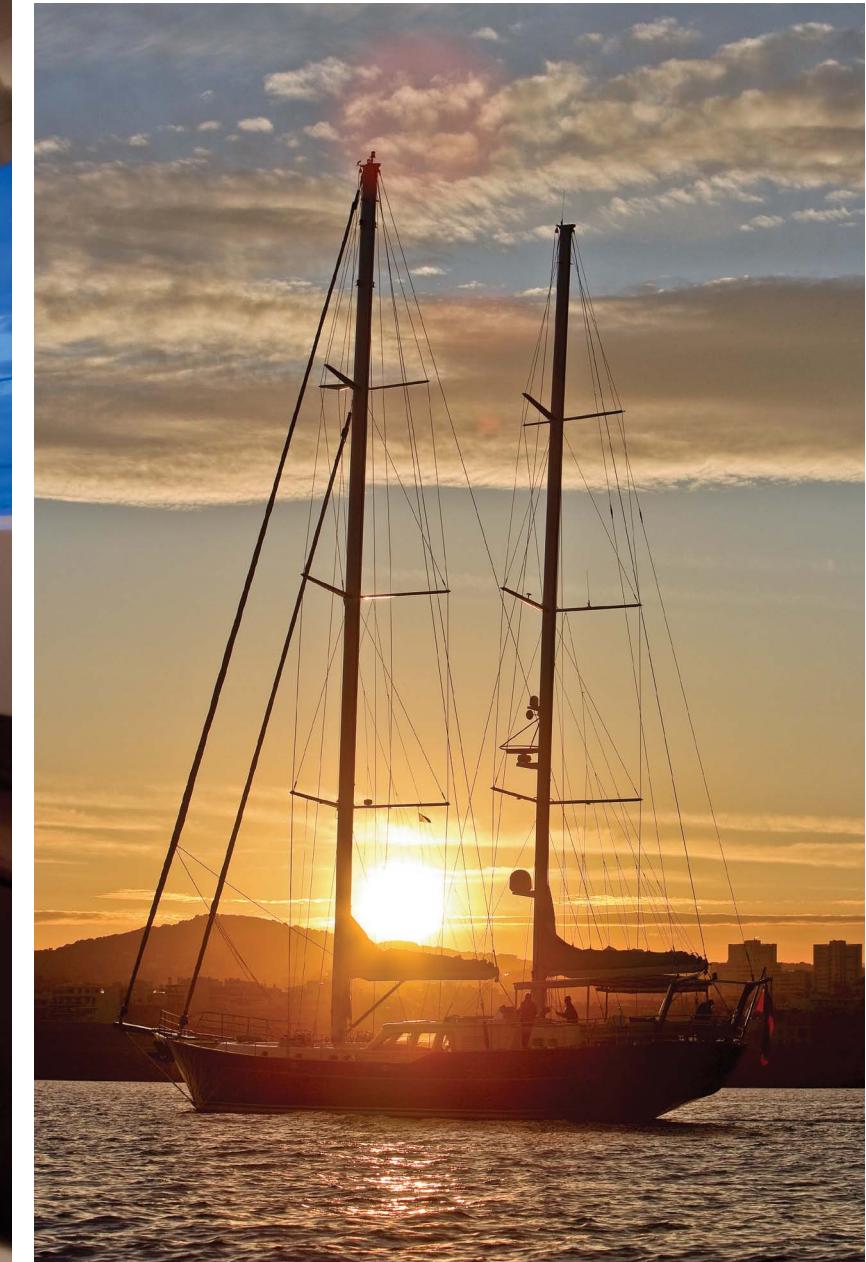
The aft deck space (above), where the table and seating are fully convertible. The stern section (below) lowers hydraulically to meet the sea. There is comfortable seating forward, even under sail (right).



As a sort of goal, I revived an old slogan which summed things up nicely: "Grace, space and pace" – and it looks like we pretty much got it right.' Moving through this yacht, there can be no doubt they did indeed get it right though, most importantly, it should be understood that this is not a one-off, but the benchmark for an entire line of similar vessels. It was with this projection in mind that, back in 2006, Cooke gathered a group of 23 other like-minded Northern Irish and Scots shareholders who would encourage and help finance the project.



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Six years may represent a lot of faith, but I have met some of the shareholders and their enthusiasm easily vies with Cooke's. Their expressions of delight and satisfaction told the whole story, although it did no harm that the yacht was dubbed the star of the show and its public launch was attended by the Mayor of Antibes and his entourage.

Cooke continues his tale of the project's genesis: 'We cast about for a designer, but what with recommendations and our requirements, Ron Holland was obviously the man for the job, plus he only lives down the road in County Cork despite being an immigrant from New Zealand.' At this point, the 'immigrant from New Zealand' ambles over and joins in the conversation.

Ron Holland is a mild character. 'Don't be deceived by his quiet manner,' says Cooke. 'If ever we suggested something which offended his professional judgment, we were weaned away from such heresy in no uncertain terms.'

Holland laughs and says, 'The Kestrel] was an enjoyable challenge, but it was sometimes necessary to keep enthusiasm on the rails a bit. In this case, my team pulled a fine rabbit out of the hat and we're rather proud of the result.' By coincidence, *White Rabbit* was the name of Ron Holland's first design, an eight metre sloop he built in Auckland in 1966 – a far cry from designing the world's biggest sloop, *Mirabella V*, which launched in 2003 and exceeded the length of that first effort by 67 metres.

Holland explains some finer points of the Kestrel's design. 'It was thought construction would be in steel, but there was resistance to this uncovered in Kestrel's market research, so we changed to aluminium. It's a good, strong medium and allows for space as well as savings in weight. Of prime importance was accommodation space. This meant a master suite aft, a double forward, separated by two twin-bed cabins containing Pullman berths, plus two crew cabins



In the saloon (above) huge windows and hatches highlight immense volume. Note the helm seat forward right. The galley is below the main seating area. The descent (left) from saloon to forward cabins and crew quarters is a gentle one

right forward – more than you will find in many sailing boats 15 feet (4.5 metres) longer. To achieve this volume a fullness to the bow section was required without sacrificing speed, so we used a handsome clipper bow; but we were helped by having a good waterline length.'

On the subject of rig, this first example is a nicely balanced ketch offering a useful sail area and employing rod rigging. 'From the beginning,' says Holland, 'Peter wanted buyers to have a choice of rig with permutations any and each of which would be easy to handle, even under extreme conditions. So options cover schooner, wishbone schooner and cutter rigs, plus in-mast roller furling. Roller-furling genoa and self-tending jibs are part of the standard rig. To keep all this standing more or less upright, I suggested a modern fin keel with a hefty flattish bulb, which works well within the set requirements.'

'Taking into account all aspects of the design,' adds

Cooke, 'it was an exciting time with lots of innovations and, in fact, the whole thing took two years to consolidate. Naturally we're still coming up with new ideas, some of which will be incorporated in future constructions.'

'We had drawings and renderings of this beautiful yacht; now all we needed was someone and somewhere to actually build it. This proved to be amazingly difficult and took another couple of years, because what we really had in mind was a place where we could establish a sound ongoing relationship for a future series. We went all over Europe. We even approached our local Harland and Wolff yard in Belfast. Eventually, the perfect answer was found in Bodrum, Turkey, in a family shipyard called Aganlar, which had been building wooden vessels since 1961.'

Erdem Agan, CEO of Aganlar, is remarkably young, but has an aura of competence. 'I am second generation and was born in a shipyard (joke),' he explains, 'but continued



The saloon looking aft (opposite), a beautiful, convivial dining space. Aft is the master suite (top), while the VIP cabin (above) is further forward. The galley (right) is much more spacious than it appears here

my education in the States and UK during the six years 1998 to 2003, studying aerospace and ocean engineering, plus naval architecture at Virginia Tech, followed by yacht and power-craft design at the Southampton Institute. I took over as CEO of the Aganlar Group in 2005. We have a long history of building boats in wood up to 45 metres, while other yards around us converted to steel; Kestrel's original project was in steel, which would not have attracted us, but the change to aluminium fitted well with our own ambitions to build global quality yachts for a world market.'

But why accept aluminium and not steel? 'Basically because of the challenge. It was not easy convincing the company this was the way to go, but it's a medium which, like wood, demands special skills in working and I didn't want us to be just another Turkish shipyard which changed over to steel. We are now the only yard in the eastern Turkish Aegean building yachts in aluminium over 24 metres.'

Working in aluminium requires specific skills, so for a yard used to working with wood, achieving the high

quality required on the Kestrel represented a challenge.

'Turkey is a country where old meets new in complete harmony, so old craftsmanship works easily alongside new technology, which meant little difficulty in setting up the right workforce. However, it is essential to thank Kestrel's project manager David Barwell – even though we did not always see eye-to-eye – we learned so much from his expertise, hard work and talent in problem solving.'

On close inspection, no one can fail to be impressed by the quality of fit, finish and materials, especially the team from central agents Watkins Superyachts, Adrian McCourt and Vicki LeFleur. 'With three distinctly separate deck areas and spacious accommodation below for up to 10 guests if the Pullman berths are used, she will be great either as a family cruiser, or perfect for charter,' notes McCourt. 'We particularly like locating the galley in the port side of the hull, actually beneath the dining area of the saloon, which also gives access to the engine room.'

The engine room is huge for this size of sailing yacht

'Turkey is a country where old meets new in complete harmony, so old craftsmanship works easily alongside new technology'

and, among other equipment, contains two 28kW Kohler generators, a water maker and a 350hp Scania main engine, capable of driving the ship at 11 knots which, says Cooke, 'is only a little below her designed maximum sail speed', although she has since reached 13.8 knots under sail.

Up in the saloon, all is bright, airy and comfortable, with large windows on both sides and forward with a genuinely panoramic view. Forward to starboard is a simple console with a seat, engine and bowthruster controls, but the helm is simply an override linked to the autopilot. 'Better than getting soaked,' says Cooke.

A tour of the deck shows robust Lewmar deck gear and a minimum of visible lines, sheets and halyards to be stumbled over. There is but one helm station against the superstructure to port; it has a spray hood, although the entire aft deck can be covered against inclement weather.

Cooke springs a couple of surprises as he modestly describes the aft seating arrangement: 'We designed this to be easily convertible in three ways. First is as it is, with

two bench seats flanking two narrow tables and a clear space between – a cockpit layout. Next, the tables can be swivelled together to meet and form a single large dining table and the seats, which are on slides in the deck, moved inwards to the table. Finally, the crew can remove the tables and their tubular swivels and move the seats outward to their extremities. A suitable rug is laid on the deck and *voilà*, let the dancing begin!'

With that, a Scottish piper in full regalia strikes up and two Irish dancers provide a memorable closing spectacle to the Kestrel 106's public launch. The piper is the great Fraser MacIntosh who, from the top of the stands at Murrayfield, pipes the Scottish national rugby team on to the pitch; the dancers are Joanne Doyle and David Moore, the original leads from the European tour of *Riverdance*.

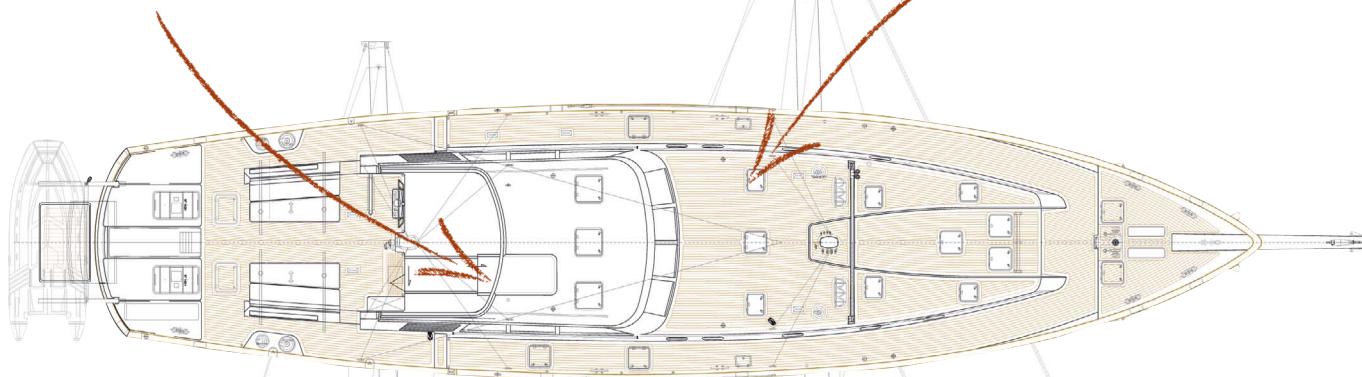
Such a delightful display certainly underlines the beauty of this first Kestrel 106, which apart from her future sisters, makes her a very difficult act to follow.



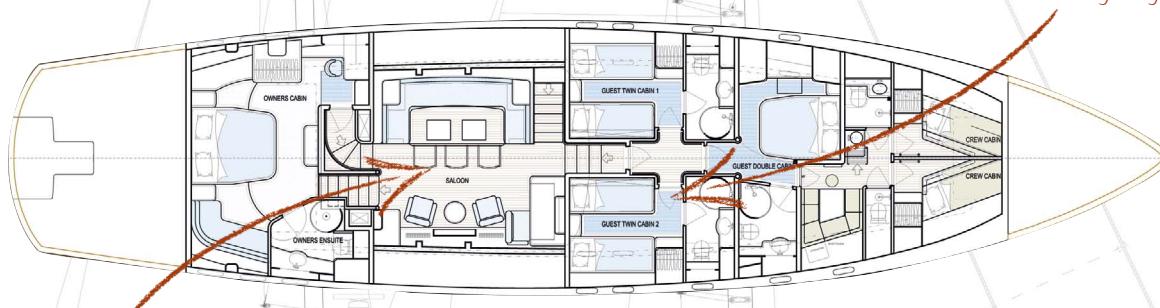
KESTREL 106

A single off-set helm station allows exceptional aft deck space

The deck features an unusually large number of hatches

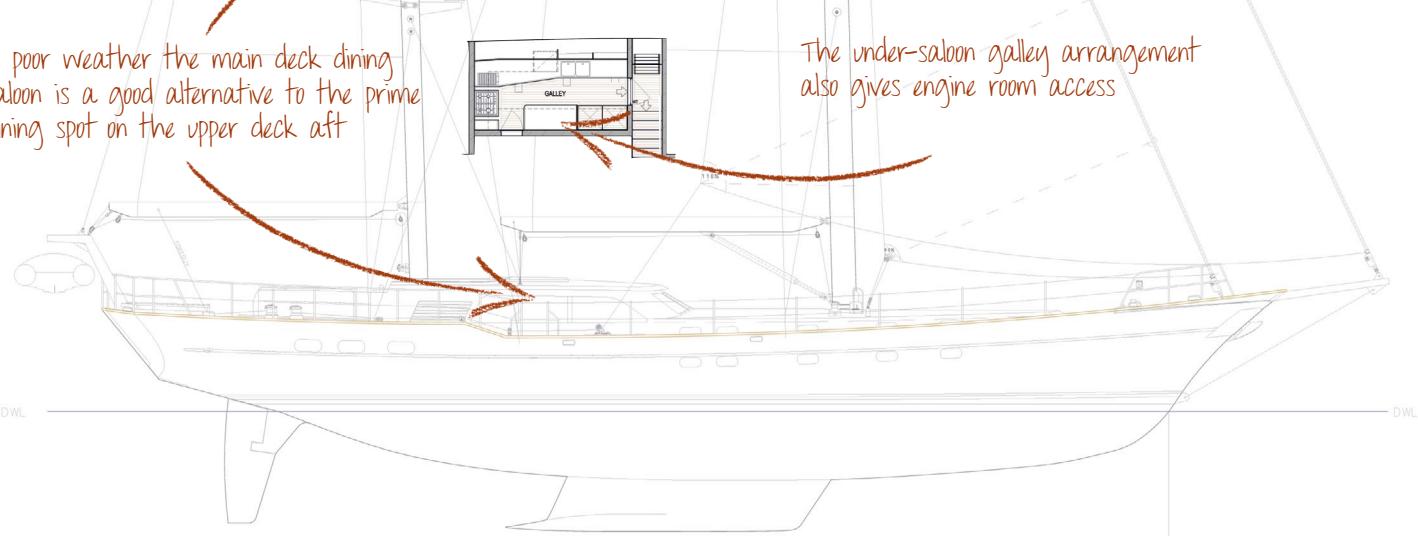


extra length permits a forward double and eight guest configuration



In poor weather the main deck dining saloon is a good alternative to the prime dining spot on the upper deck aft

The under-saloon gallery arrangement also gives engine room access



KESTREL Kestrel Superyachts

LOA 30.6m
LOD 27.55m
Beam 6.69m
Draught 2.9m
Displacement 110 tonnes
Gross tonnage 74GT
Engine
1 x Scania D11259M

Speed (max/cruise)
Under sail 13.8/11 knots;
under power 12/10 knots
Generators
2 x 28 Kohler 28EF02D
Bowthrusters
Lewmar 400 TAH 50hp
Fuel capacity
7,400 litres
Freshwater capacity
3,200 litres

Owner and guests 8-10
Crew 4
Construction Aluminium
Classification RINA
Sails and spars
UK Sails; Valena Spars in
aluminium
Naval architecture
Ron Holland Design

Exterior design
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