



## **Flying Dutchman 60 years of beauty and innovation**

The design of the Flying Dutchman started in the early days of 1950.

In november 1952 the permanent committee of the IYRU adopted the Flying Dutchman to be the new international centre-board boat. And by 1960 it was an Olympic Class. Everywhere it appeared in events it was called and seen as an astonishing beauty. And became the talk of the town. The sailors who sailed and owned one would speak of their dinghy with a be-loving tone. As if they talked about the most beautiful woman. Or as some-kind of myth.

Over six meters long. With a descent square meters mainsail, an even a taller genoa and a spinnaker. It was (is) an insane fast boat to handle. And though average sailors could have a lot of fun in it. To win events you had to be better than average.

The extra to the boat was (and still is) that you could sail it at sea. The stories told about the Worlds in 2000 on the Durban shore-line are still heroic.

Till the 1992 Barcelona Olympic Games it was chosen to compete on the highest possible sailing podium. Then it was released of its Olympic duties. Everyone held their breath what was going to happen to the FD-class. Its greatest moments were yet to come.

As it was developed. The man, Conrad Guelcher, didn't not only promote the boat for its sailing and beauty but also put in the social aspect of the sailors in it. A great variety of men and women who got involved, over the years, gave dimension to this social life. Great stories still are told at the social gatherings at events. Nowadays during events the social program is part of every event .

You can read this and other wonderful stories in the book\* Paul de Schipper wrote about it.



Stripped of its Olympic title. The boat's excellent sailing was still recognized by the sailors who sailed it and they who were looking for something special to compete in. And the developments, embraced in the class's laws and bylaws, updated the boat regularly over the years. Carbon masts and booms appeared. The sails got more square meters. The hull evolved from wood to fibre. Incredible stuff was happening and is still favoring the class attraction to the younger sailors.

In 2011 an absolutely high was the World Championships in Malcesine at Lake Garda. 134 registered boats out of 21 countries came to enjoy the party. It showed, once again, the immense attraction of the class.

This makes us incredibly fond to enter the year 2012.

Our dinghies 60th anniversary will be one of the memorable facts of its journey through time. The European Championships, 30th of March till 7th April, will start the celebrations and at the World Championships in Santa Cruz, California USA, it will finalize its sixties' birthday. Along that track we will also be competing in the Vintage Yachting Games.

An event that gratitudes the great Olympic Classes of the past.

The Flying Dutchman will show its beauty and sailing capacity there once again.

Ronald Stalman

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more about the FD at [www.sailfd.org](http://www.sailfd.org)

\* available only in Dutch

