

LOVE EVERY SECOND: RIBELLE

When a young Paola Siniramed, freshly graduated - magna cum laude - from Milano University's Law Faculty, met Salvatore Trifirò, already a brilliant young lawyer, the two ambitious Italians quickly fell head over heels in love. Salvatore, already a passionate sailor, was quick to introduce his soon-to-be bride to his love for the water, taking weekends to sail on his 7-metre sailing boat on Lake Como, close to their home city of Milan. Paola "quickly realised the wonderful possibilities that come with a life on the water," and after undertaking some serious studying and training at sailing schools, included a tricky celestial navigation course, so began what would become a lifetime affair with yachting.

BY GEMMA FOTTLES

Specialising and practising family law for some years, once married Paola made the decision to dedicate more time to the couples' quality of life, investing her energies into the practicalities of enjoying a busy schedule. "Salvatore does not have much free time, and this is the problem with all yacht owners," she says. "Of course, they are yacht owners because they work incredibly hard, they have reaped the rewards of a high-intensity professional life. I optimise my husband's time so that we enjoy our time together to the maximum level. Our beloved boats are always the most important objects in our lives. Work is our priority, our way of sustaining ourselves and our lifestyle, and the second most important is following our passion whenever we can."

Taking the traditional route of steadily climbing up the size ladder, following their passion is exactly what Paola did, and the next 20 years saw the Trifiròs go from 7-metres to 21-metres in several stages, cruising the wonders of the Italian, French, and Greek coasts extensively whenever they could. The spirit of sailing had the Trifiròs hooked, and as Paola explains, "Sailing is a dream. It allows you to really discover the world, to happen upon secluded beaches and coves that you can't do otherwise. We're always looking for hidden places to explore. It's a fantastic experience."

The thirst for exploration eventually let the Trifiròs minds wonder to more distant shores, and with that, a boat capable of voyaging a little farther than the waters of their homeland. And so they made the jump to superyacht, with the purchase of the 25 metre Jongert-built *Happy Taurus II*. This, Paola explains, was the first chance they had to really get out there and experience sailing in a way that harks back to the ages past. "We bought her from a German owner, and 25-metres was already much bigger than anything we had had at this time. Jongert built very strong, beautiful boats, so I told my husband that now, we can really pass Gibraltar and go out towards the world. Enjoying navigating as Columbus did, to acquire and better our knowledge, or to discover something new and exciting."

Exploring much of Europe, including the British coast, the rest of the world soon beckoned. "From *Happy Taurus II*, we went on to a semi-custom, 31-metre yacht, *Anamcara* in 2001," continues Paola. "She was also a Jongert and just beautiful. With these two boats, still now in our hearts, we did some fantastic cruising all over the world, from Cornwall to Norway, and to the East Coast of the States. We touched Nantucket with a big emotion, we entered New York and Savannah, we passed



Ribelle's wonderfully light interior

Panama many times, and really enjoyed Baja California. We moored in Seattle and navigated the cold, unique waters of Alaska. It was fantastic."

Exploration kept the Trifiròs occupied for an additional four years before they discovered the regatta scene, in 2004, in Porto Cervo at the renowned Rolex Cup. Paola soon had another project in which she could savour learning every aspect - all for the maximisation of their enjoyment of the prized possession. "We had never considered racing, but as soon as we saw the passion for racing, the thrill of the sport, we decided to go for a yacht that was thinner, quicker, and give racing a shot!"

Paola was true to her word, and within the year the Trifiròs were the proud owners of the 40-metre Dubois-designed *Kokomo of London*. Never one to do anything by halves, the first regatta the Trifiròs competed in saw Ed Dubois himself at the wheel of *Kokomo of London* ("Ed was an extraordinary man and friend, we had a mutual understanding and my respect for him still remains strong today," Paola says) taken over by serial yacht owner and influential sailor Neville Crichton after a family emergency forced Dubois to hastily return to shore.

Always with an eye to the future, once the Trifirò's racing appetite had been whetted the search for their next sailing boat began, which led to the commissioning of the 49.7-metre *Zefira* to be built at the New Zealand shipyard, Fitzroy Yachts. Choosing the exterior designer and naval architect was easy, Paola says, with Ed Dubois and the team at Dubois Naval Architects undertaking the project from the word 'GO'. The interior, however, was a little more problematic. Having recently been on board the 52.3-metre Perini Navi ketch *Squall* where Paola was immediately taken aback



Salvatore and Paola Trifirò



Ribelle in action in Porto Cervo

by the high-quality of her Rémi Tessier designed interior, that, as they say, was that. It had to be Tessier. Tessier, however, was much more focused on residential design projects in Miami at the time, and having recently welcomed his fourth child into the world, was less than enthusiastic about the prospect of working on a new yacht on the opposite side of the world.

So he answered a gentle 'no' to Dubois' request. But, as testament to the wonderfully Italian, persuasively charming lady that is Paola Trifirò, she would not take no for an answer. "I called him," she smiles. "It was lucky for me that I speak French quite well as a second language. I convinced him to come to Milano, just for a short meeting. When he arrived, dressed all in white and looking every bit the handsome man, he started admiring our ultra modern penthouse in the heart of the city, close to the Duomo. He stepped in, looked around and said, 'Okay. I think we can work together.' He sat down at the table and said, 'Tell me what you want.' One week later he sent us a design. For the first time in my life, I had nothing to say! He understood everything we wanted. I am not an easy lady



at times, but we had such respect for each other. He is the best." The perseverance for perfection paid off, and *Zefira* went on to win a number of awards upon completion in 2010, including Sailing Yacht of the Year 2011 and Best Sailing Yacht 45m+ at the World Superyacht Awards 2011.

The collaboration with Tessier continued onto the next new build sailing superyacht for the Trifiròs, their current 32.6-metre Vitters-built *Ribelle*, completed last year. This time the Trifiròs opted for a smaller yacht and, enlisting the help of Malcolm McKeon for her naval architecture and exterior design, managed to create another winning vessel with the awarding of Best Interior Design - Sailing Yachts in the BI International Design & Innovation Awards. Looking at *Ribelle's* interior, it's certainly not difficult to see why she is a worthy winner, with a level of comfort, luxury and style that is unfortunately not often synonymous with sailing yachts. Paola agrees: "We have a very quick, ultra modern, all-carbon and titanium racing boat with a fantastic, luxury interior. By luxury, I am not referring to the shiny, expensive things on board. I'm referring to the big loves of life, what you want on the boat to ensure the best life experience onboard. It's very 'luxury' to be surrounded only by the things that you love, to have the space, the light that we do. I



BUYING VS CHARTER

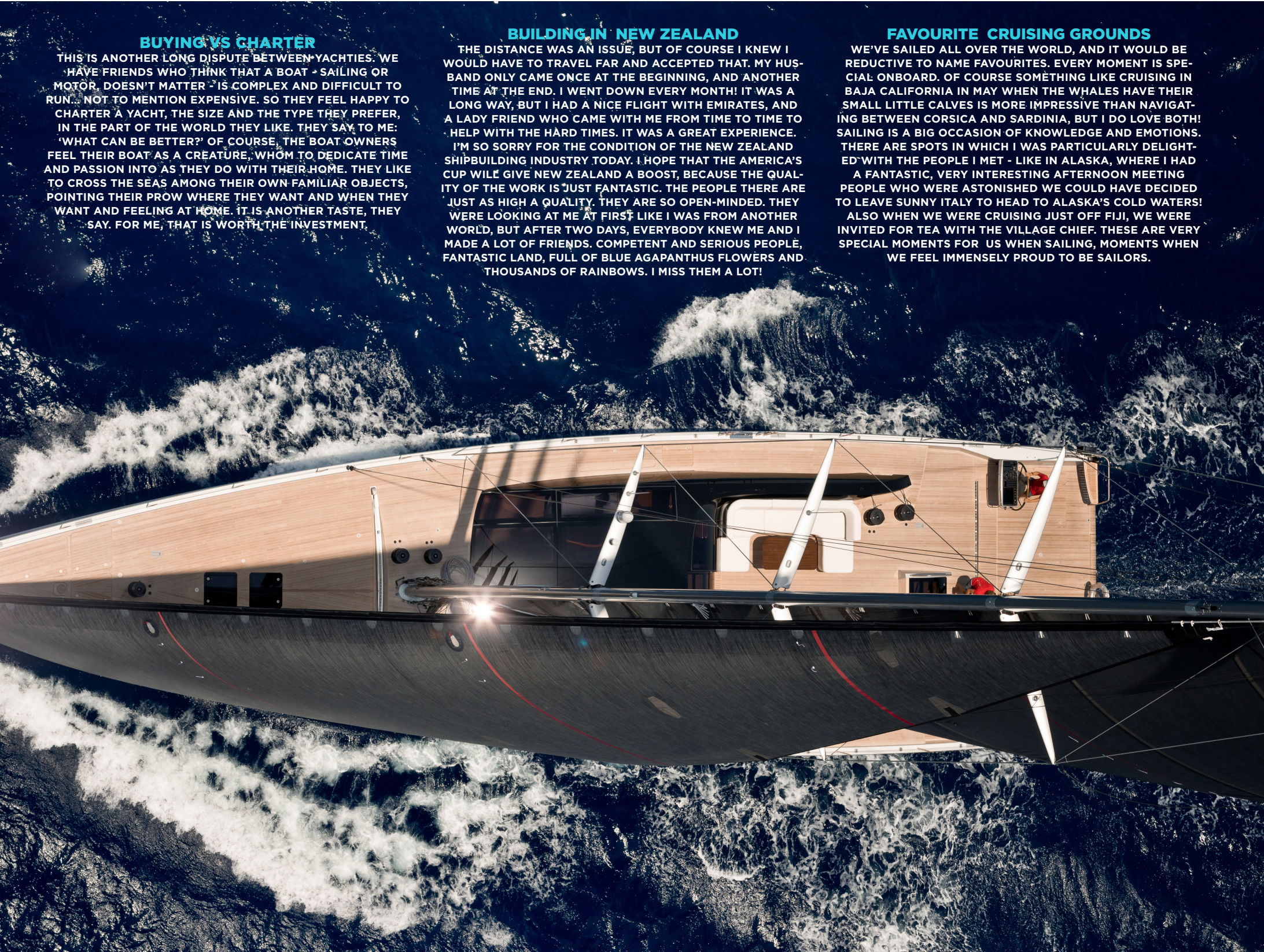
THIS IS ANOTHER LONG DISPUTE BETWEEN YACHTIES. WE HAVE FRIENDS WHO THINK THAT A BOAT - SAILING OR MOTOR, DOESN'T MATTER - IS COMPLEX AND DIFFICULT TO RUN... NOT TO MENTION EXPENSIVE. SO THEY FEEL HAPPY TO CHARTER A YACHT, THE SIZE AND THE TYPE THEY PREFER, IN THE PART OF THE WORLD THEY LIKE. THEY SAY TO ME: 'WHAT CAN BE BETTER?' OF COURSE, THE BOAT OWNERS FEEL THEIR BOAT AS A CREATURE, WHOM TO DEDICATE TIME AND PASSION INTO AS THEY DO WITH THEIR HOME. THEY LIKE TO CROSS THE SEAS AMONG THEIR OWN FAMILIAR OBJECTS, POINTING THEIR PROW WHERE THEY WANT AND WHEN THEY WANT AND FEELING AT HOME. IT IS ANOTHER TASTE, THEY SAY. FOR ME, THAT IS WORTH THE INVESTMENT.

BUILDING IN NEW ZEALAND

THE DISTANCE WAS AN ISSUE, BUT OF COURSE I KNEW I WOULD HAVE TO TRAVEL FAR AND ACCEPTED THAT. MY HUSBAND ONLY CAME ONCE AT THE BEGINNING, AND ANOTHER TIME AT THE END. I WENT DOWN EVERY MONTH! IT WAS A LONG WAY, BUT I HAD A NICE FLIGHT WITH EMIRATES, AND A LADY FRIEND WHO CAME WITH ME FROM TIME TO TIME TO HELP WITH THE HARD TIMES. IT WAS A GREAT EXPERIENCE. I'M SO SORRY FOR THE CONDITION OF THE NEW ZEALAND SHIPBUILDING INDUSTRY TODAY. I HOPE THAT THE AMERICA'S CUP WILL GIVE NEW ZEALAND A BOOST, BECAUSE THE QUALITY OF THE WORK IS JUST FANTASTIC. THE PEOPLE THERE ARE JUST AS HIGH A QUALITY. THEY ARE SO OPEN-MINDED. THEY WERE LOOKING AT ME AT FIRST LIKE I WAS FROM ANOTHER WORLD, BUT AFTER TWO DAYS, EVERYBODY KNEW ME AND I MADE A LOT OF FRIENDS. COMPETENT AND SERIOUS PEOPLE, FANTASTIC LAND, FULL OF BLUE AGAPANATHUS FLOWERS AND THOUSANDS OF RAINBOWS. I MISS THEM A LOT!

FAVOURITE CRUISING GROUNDS

WE'VE SAILED ALL OVER THE WORLD, AND IT WOULD BE REDUCTIVE TO NAME FAVOURITES. EVERY MOMENT IS SPECIAL ONBOARD. OF COURSE SOMETHING LIKE CRUISING IN BAJA CALIFORNIA IN MAY WHEN THE WHALES HAVE THEIR SMALL LITTLE CALVES IS MORE IMPRESSIVE THAN NAVIGATING BETWEEN CORSICA AND SARDINIA, BUT I DO LOVE BOTH! SAILING IS A BIG OCCASION OF KNOWLEDGE AND EMOTIONS. THERE ARE SPOTS IN WHICH I WAS PARTICULARLY DELIGHTED WITH THE PEOPLE I MET - LIKE IN ALASKA, WHERE I HAD A FANTASTIC, VERY INTERESTING AFTERNOON MEETING PEOPLE WHO WERE ASTONISHED WE COULD HAVE DECIDED TO LEAVE SUNNY ITALY TO HEAD TO ALASKA'S COLD WATERS! ALSO WHEN WE WERE CRUISING JUST OFF FIJI, WE WERE INVITED FOR TEA WITH THE VILLAGE CHIEF. THESE ARE VERY SPECIAL MOMENTS FOR US WHEN SAILING, MOMENTS WHEN WE FEEL IMMENSELY PROUD TO BE SAILORS.



did the layout with Malcolm, incorporating all the smart naval architecture tricks to get the very best result. He is a great designer - he always listens and never tries to impose ideas that are not suited to that specific owner. His suggestions, experience and competence are absolute."

Did you ever consider building a motor yacht, I ask? "Well, the dispute between sailing and motor yacht owners is long and without an end. As far as I'm concerned, since I had the honour to be called as a Judge in the BI World Superyacht Awards since 2011, I was presented with the task of visiting many boats, the majority of them motorboats. So I started getting to know them better, and I must admit that many are splendid creatures, unbelievably perfect machines with many possibilities to enjoy life, starting from the elegance of the interiors, to the magnificent swimming

pools, to the cinema saloons. But let me say, sailing for us 'addicts' is also about experiencing the taste of the sea, to glide on the water, and just to listen to the wind and the swish of the sail. It is a totally different way of yachting."

Demonstrating their fierce passion for the sailing way of life, as soon as *Ribelle* was ready to go the Trifiròs took her on three back-to-back regattas. The aim? To show the world that it is indeed possible to create a performance-orientated sailing yacht that is beautifully designed both inside and out. "In 2017, the first year for *Ribelle*, we won the Rolex Cup in Porto Cervo," Paola tells me proudly, "so we proved our idea of a very fast boat with a fantastic interior which looks like a luxury superyacht but is, in reality, a racing boat. People may think she is severe because she is a racing boat, but she is not only so. I am a passionate

sailor, and I love to have the best interior on what many consider a severe vessel. The most beautiful thing is to stay on your boat and love every second, breathing in the sea life. It doesn't have to be such a contrast between the performance boats and luxury boats, and that is very important to me."

With *Ribelle* still relatively new to the Trifirò' fleet, what's the next project for Paola and Salvatore? Despite that fierce loyalty to sailing, the ultimate dream is the rebuild of a 1930s classic yacht. "I have a dream to find a narrow, sleek motor boat of the 30s, and to refit it perfectly. The 1930s was a period of yachting I very much admire, so I would love to refit it and take it around the Mediterranean. Perhaps I am glamorising the idea, thinking of a movie style cruise around the Med on this glorious classic

yacht, but I would really enjoy that refit process. One of my favourite things to do with boats is to think about the every aspect of the construction of my dream." If Paola's previous dreams are anything to go by, this could certainly be one to watch out for in the future. - G.F.



The 49.7m Zefira



Kokomo of London, now called Zalmon



Ribelle being transported through Holland during her construction

OWNERSHIP TIMELINE

