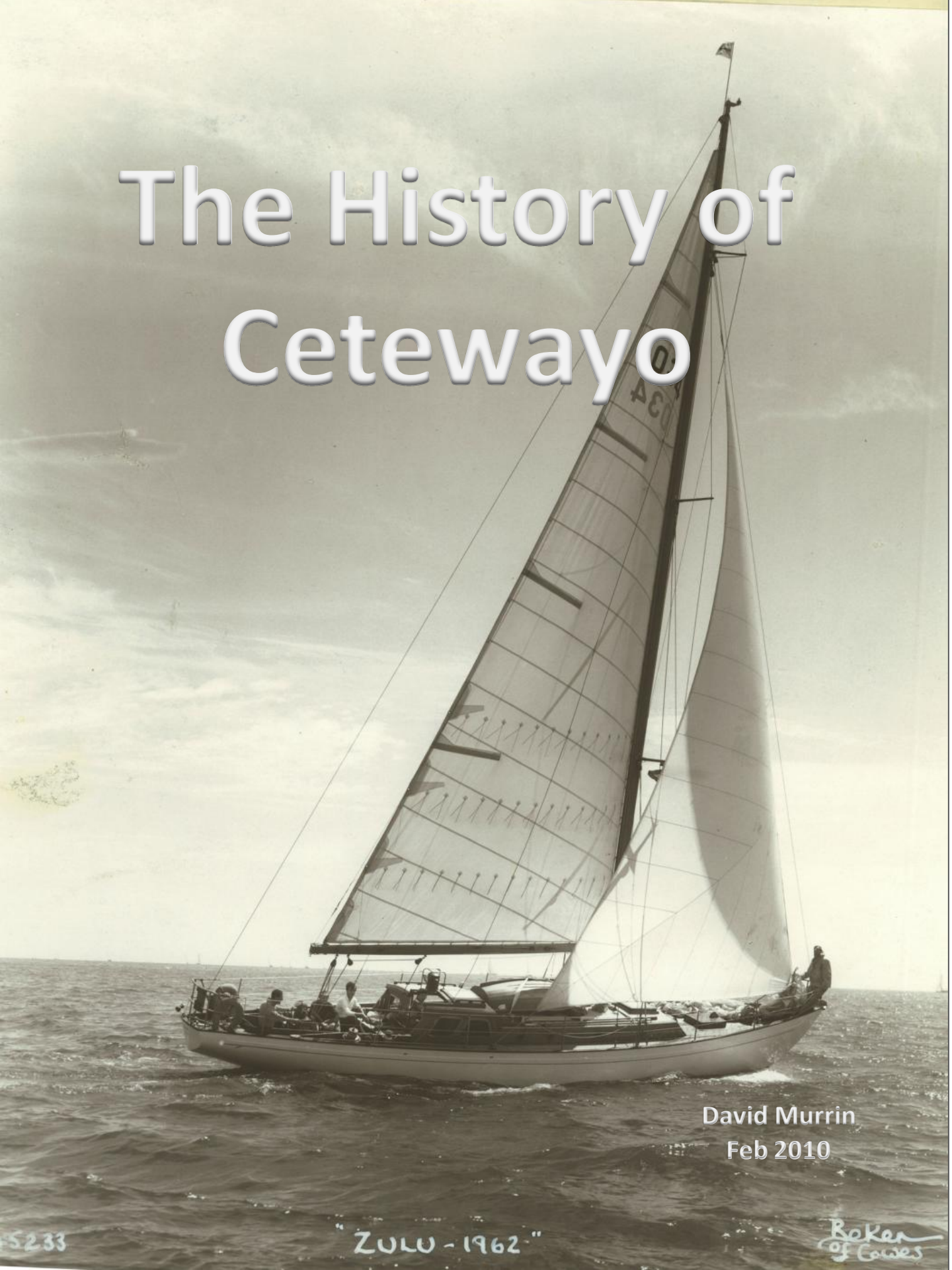


# The History of Cetewayo



David Murrin  
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"ZULU - 1962"

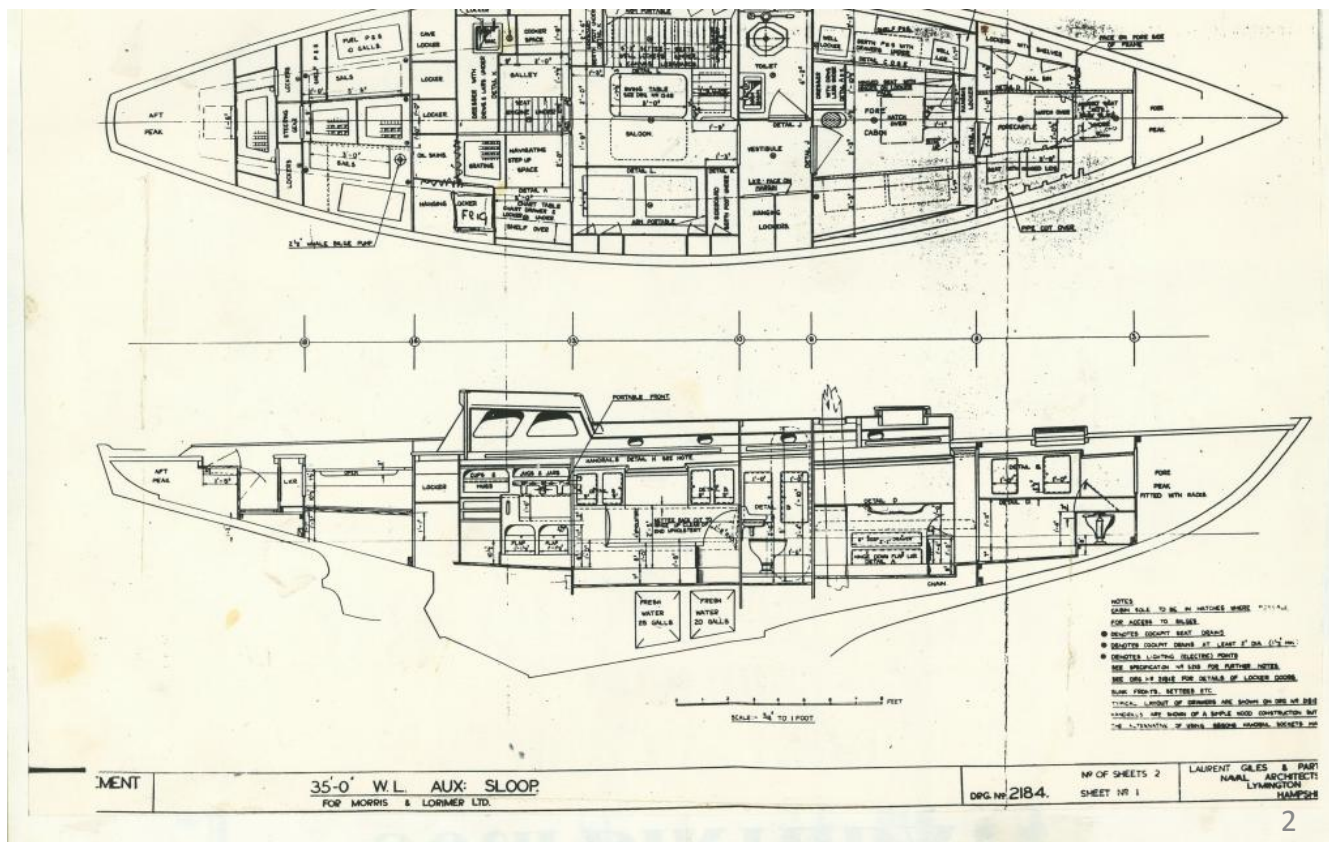
Baker  
of  
Coves

Laurent Giles has always been regarded as an originator in yacht design, gifted, capable and confident in his skill and ability to design innovative yachts of astounding beauty and performance.

In 1955, this confidence was manifested in the design and construction of Zulu, a 7/8 fractional Bermudan sloop, which was built on speculation of sale, rather than commission, by Morris and Lorimar on the Clyde. There are whispered rumors that many post war yachts were built of inferior materials, but the opposite was true for Zulu. During the war, Morris and Lorimar built wooden MBTs, and one can only assume that the shipwrights who had once built beautiful schooners saved the best timber in the hope that it could be used when the war finished. The result was that, during Zulu's two years of construction, she was built with the best of timber, using teak below the waterline which, to this day, is in pristine condition, and mahogany for the topsides and coach roof, all built on oak frames that were specified in the design to be as small and light as possible.

On completion and without much difficulty, Zulu was sold to Sir Henry Spurrier, launched in 1957 and was raced on the Clyde in her first season, gaining five firsts and only being out of the prize list once.

The racing achievements of Zulu or, as she is now known, Cetewayo, are as glorious and honorable today as in her debut year, much to the hard work and restoration of her present owner David Murrin. However, her story has not always been one of glory, and might indeed have ended in tragedy, if it were not for David, who found her, in 1989, perched high on Pembroke Dock in an abandoned - and what would seem terminal - condition. The life of Cetewayo and path that lead her to her potential ruin was colorful and not untypical of yachts of her size and age.



From Sir Henry Spurrier, ownership then passed in 1952 to Brian Stuart who, as a member of Lloyds Yacht Club, had sailed extensively their Laurent Giles ketch Lutine, which had been named after the famous Lutine bell that sat in Lloyds of London. This beautiful Laurent Giles yacht has survived the years, and is now a member of the BCYC. Rumor has it that, having monopolized Lutine, it was suggested that Brian might wish to own his own yacht. So it was that he soon found and purchased Zulu when she was on the hard at Berthons, and proceeded to sail her enthusiastically season after season in offshore RORC races, for which she was ideally suited.

Brian owned Zulu for almost two and half decades and raced her hard with a plethora of crew who, to this day, remember sailing on her. However, Brian was not renowned for paying excessive attention to her aesthetic condition, perhaps viewing her more as a utility than as a craft of great beauty. After two decades, he commissioned a new Camper and Nicolson's fiberglass yacht and transferred the name Zulu to her. To this day, Zulu can be seen starting and finishing many a RORC race. He renamed the old Zulu Cetewayo after the famous Zulu chief that presided over the Zulu War that led to the British defeat at Isanwalla and heroic resistance of Roukes Drift, and who was subsequently captured and presented to Queen Victoria at Osborne house.

Displaced and unused for a few years, Cetewayo languished on a buoy off Campers in Gosport waiting for a new owner. Unfortunately, he came in the form of an individual called Humphrey Polson, who put a deposit on Cetewayo. Then he persuaded the Campers staff to give him the keys and sailed off with his new love into the sunset. Cetewayo and its new almost-owner then disappeared from the radar screen for almost six months until by chance the manager of the Gosport Campers yard was working at Campers only other UK yard in Pembroke Dock for his summer break. There, whilst in a small boat with his family, he rounded a creek to find Cetewayo moored on a buoy. Keen to recapture his company's honor, he quickly contacted Brian Stewart, who proceeded to place an Admiralty writ on the vessel, but not before Mr. Polson had Cetewayo lifted out on a Friday night onto the only jetty in the harbor that could accommodate her, under the pretense of a weekend's work. Then on Saturday and Sunday his own yard's workforce descended on the jetty and stripped Cetewayo of her interior, leaving only a carvel shell, and a pile of wood by her side. One can only speculate at Mr. Polson's rationale, that he thought that in this condition he might pay less and thus keep the yacht. Instead, there was a long legal battle in which Mr. Polson paid back increments to Brian Stuart, until a critical point was reached at which Brian forced Mr. Polson to sell the vessel.

Meanwhile, one Thursday night while sifting through a copy of Yachting World, David Murrin saw Cetewayo for sale for £25,000, and was struck by her perfect and beautiful hull form. Two days later, David was under said hull with his brother, charmed by what was obviously a beautiful boat that, despite being in need of a huge amount of work, would be well deserving of the effort. Undeterred, the 26 year old purchased her, and in what was a dramatic twist, had to pay off Brian's old mortgage and enter into an agreement with Mr. Polson to put her back together, as the latter owned the only classic boat yard on the river.

When David undertook the task of transforming Cetewayo from a bare rotting hull, with only few remaining internal bulkheads, to the elegant racing condition she is in today, his initial objective was to reconstruct her so she could then sail for a season prior to a complete renovation. Following eight months of hard work in Pembroke, she was ready for her 'maiden voyage' to Plymouth. This voyage from Pembroke Dock was the story of a great escape from the clutches of her Pembroke jailer, as the yard struggled to complete its jobs before departure. On the first attempt, the jib track ripped off, and on the second her engine failed within the first hour of the voyage. A major storm lasting several hours in the Irish Sea then put Cetewayo and her crew to the test.

For the first few seasons in the Solent, David used Cetewayo as a cruising yacht much as his father had done with his family's beloved Harrison Butler, "Minion", on which David was conceived and brought up on the weekends and summer holidays. However, in 1993, David entered the Yachting Monthly Cowes Classic Regatta in which he won. Followed by a most memorable event in the first ever match race with the Fife, "Solway Maid", which was kindly organised over two days by the RYS.

David's conclusion at the end of 1993 was that racing Cetewayo was enormously fun, but that, since there were not enough classic yachts to race regularly, Cetewayo should instead race modern yachts for practice. Thus began the process to optimize her true racing potential by racing her under a system called 'CHS' (Channel Handicap System), which was the fore runner of IRC. For her debut, she entered the Hamble Winter Series, with what, at the time, was a handicap of 1.01, well away from her optimum rating (now 0.958 ). In addition, this big heavy yacht was not set up to race round the cans against modern light yachts. The result, predictably, was a jolly good trashing and a placing at the back of the fleet. However, the eight Sundays of racing provided many, a lesson that would be applied over the coming winters to enhance Cetewayo's racing performance.

In order to optimise Cetewayo's CHS handicap, a continuing programme of restoration, innovation and improvement was undertaken year on year for seven years. This included fairing the hull and keel, improved race instrumentation, re-winchng the whole boat with Anderson winches and re-arranging the back stay runners, replacing Laurent Giles levers with winches. In addition, the transom, rudder and steering system were rebuilt and strengthened, and the covering boards and garboards were replaced. On the inside, the interior was rebuilt to a higher standard than its original white plywood finish, replete with aluminum door frames.

The experience of learning just how finely balanced was Cetewayo's design and her sensitivities to various modifications to her handicap in relation to her boat speed, was one of the many great pleasures her owner experienced as he developed a relationship with her over many years. During this period, the Dacron sails were replaced by the first white Mylar sails built by Doyle's. Mylar has a much higher modulus than Dacron and many people suggested that the addition of such sails would pull an old wooden yacht apart. However, the counter-argument was that such sails would undergo less deformation and stretch and, consequently, would retain their shape maintaining the power generated as a forward driving force rather than a heeling moment. As Cetewayo is a long narrow boat, it would be easier for her to absorb a driving forward force than a heeling moment that constantly puts stresses on the narrow lateral rigging and down into the garboards. In addition, the high shock loads developed by high modulus sails would be partly absorbed by the more flexible wooden spar and the use of traditional sheets. She became a trailblazer, for it was and is today not often that one sees a yacht flying the most modern Kevlar sails from a wooden mast and boom constructed with glued spruce.





**Cetewayo as found in 1989, Pembroke dock, Wales**

With the first two seasons use of Mylar sails, there was a marked increased success in Cetewayo's performance. The next suit of racing sails were Kevlar and straw colored, and, with improved shapes from Reilings, these powered Cetewayo to many a victory. In addition, it was recognized that for a small decrease in the foot length of the mainsail, Cetewayo could fly masthead kites rather than fractional kites. This turned her into a rocket down wind, and yet made very little difference to her upwind performance.

Cetewayo's lines reveal she was built to be fast. Her sleek outline, long waterline dimensions and a distinctive overhanging transom immediately indicate speed. However her semi-stepped keel is not efficient upwind when she is moving at speeds below 6 knots through the water, which translates into a wind speed of 10knots. This performance weakness is only compounded by Cetewayo's extremely heavy weight of 17.5 tones for a yacht of her length, excluding her from being competitive under IRC in upwind conditions in wind speeds below 12 knots. Conversely, Cetewayo's hull shape and downwind sail configuration make her highly competitive under all downwind conditions, so in lighter conditions her overall competitiveness is a function of the ratio of upwind to downwind legs in a given race. Once the wind picks up to 20knts, her performance becomes excellent over all points of sailing though, unsurprisingly, she has never managed to plane like a modern light displacement yacht! The one exception was achieved while sailing in a 45 knt gale off St Catherine's during a RORC race in the middle of the night, when speeds of 14.8knots were noted surfing down the waves with a spinnaker. This compares dramatically to her normal maximum hull speed of 9.5knots!

Sailing Cetewayo against modern boats of similar rating has meant learning and adapting the way she is sailed to ensure that she can compete effectively. A modern yacht of similar IRC rating to Cetewayo is about 30ft long and a third her the weight, and therefore much more maneuverable, able to stop and start easily, and to point upwind by up to 5 degrees higher. This meant that working through the upwind lanes of a modern fleet required the search for space to sail relatively faster and on a lower course.

The starts, for example, were very challenging, as a modern fleet will often hold off the line, head to wind a couple of boat lengths to leeward, bear away, accelerate and then hit the line fast. Cetewayo, in comparison, needs a long speed building up of about a minute, and has had to find a hole in the fleet to sail into, that allows her to sail fast and low off the line compared to other yachts. Otherwise, she is pinned by a leeward boat that sails high and causes Cetewayo to sail slowly and high into a stall, a sure way to slip to the back of the fleet. Compounding the upwind challenge is the problem that tacking is very slow in Cetewayo compared to a modern yacht, especially in light to moderate winds. Consequently, it was critical to be roughly on the biased side of the start line with clear air to leeward, and to have selected the correct side of the course and, if possible, make only one or two tacks to the windward mark. This is in effect, a bang-the- corners tactic, and required excellent lay line skills, especially in the complex tidal waters of the Solent.

However, once at the windward mark and sailing downwind, Cetewayo comes into her own, as her long water line length and large rig generate relatively higher speeds, making her a downwind juggernaut. Similarly, on any reaching course, her water line length and long stabilizing keel give her a distinct advantage, allowing her to carry large asymmetries on very tight wind angles. The only time where this downwind advantage has been challenged has been in the very strong breezes where the lighter boats can surf downwind.

In sum, Cetewayo required a great deal of hard work to sail round a short course, with a complex set of ropes to pull associated with her twin spinnaker pole configuration, and the constant need to have the correct sail combination to driver her heavy weight through the water at optimum speed throughout the race. Naturally, it was the short “round the cans” races that demanded excellent boat handling skill levels to allow Cetewayo to be successful. The Hamble Winter Series provided the best bellweather for the improvements in Cetewayo and the ability of her crew to sail her effectively over short races. In the first year in 1994, she struggled at the back of our class, in 1995 she came 9<sup>th</sup>, in 1996 3<sup>rd</sup> and in 1997 and 1998 placed first.

Meanwhile, offshore races, where the start was less critical, and the number of tacks per mile sailed reduced significantly, as long when the wind was not less than 12knots for the upwind legs, Cetewayo came into her own and won several RORC races in her class and a few overall. The story did not end there as, post 2001, David, having proven Cetewayo’s racing pedigree, decided that her hard racing days were over, and she would only be used to race in classic events, and Round the Island races.

Perhaps the most remarkable racing result was in the American cup jubilee in 2001, when Cetewayo won her class in the east about round Island race and came second overall to Roy Disney’s ‘Pye Waket’. She also came second in class.

Then in the winter of 2003 Cetewayo underwent the mother of all refits and, like so many others, it grew out of control. During the long extended winter, spring and summer of 2004, a new Perkins 65 hp engine and hydraulic drive were installed amidships under the owners bunk, freeing up the dog house space for a redesign as a galley and navigation area. This refit to end all refits completed the interior rebuild to a high common standard and optimized the internal space usage. It also unexpectedly ved the weight forward with the Perkins engine, which countered the increased weight of her transom over time due to the absorbed moisture in the dead wood. This allowed Cetewayo to sit in a more balanced fashion in the water and had the added benefit of reducing the drag of her stern wave, but most of all it greatly enhanced her beauty. In addition, Cetewayo had a completely new electrical refit to the standard of a super yacht. In this dramatic refit, Cetewayo was both completed inside and out to the highest standard. One wonders what Laurent Giles might think of his evolved design over a half century later; David Murrin believes he would be proud.

Since the Jubilee, Cetewayo has been raced only in Round the Island races and in Regattas of the BCYC regattas, and used as a charter yacht, where she continues to gather admirers for her grace and sailing form.



## Cetewayo as she is today





















