



English Translation:

"My father said 'buy a boat before purchasing a house' " commented David Murrin an English geophysicist who has garnered a love of sailing growing up on his family's yacht. So when one evening the twenty six year old noticed a 14.5 metre Laurent Giles Bermudan sloop for sale in a yachting magazine this was his opportunity. Two days later he and his brother travelled to Pembrokeshire in Wales to view it.

The assessment was limited. All he could see of this 1955 build was the hull. The classic long waterline and overhanging transom oozed quality from the renowned designer. *Cetewayo* also had racing pedigree and despite being in poor state had great potential. "I took one look and had to buy it," he continued. It set him back €30,000.00 in 1989 and the path to ownership would not be smooth.

Zulu, as the boat had originally been named, was built on spec by Morris & Lorrimar on the Clyde in Scotland. Constructed from teak below the waterline with mahogany topsides and coach roof on oak frames the years had been kind. When Murrin acquired her, however, the interior had been stripped out.

The second owner, Brian Stewart, had raced her extensively on the Royal Ocean Racing Club offshore circuit. After two decades he commissioned a modern race yacht taking the name. The Bermudan sloop was renamed *Cetewayo* after a famous Zulu chief and left to languish on a buoy off

Camper & Nicholson in Gosport, Hampshire. Sometime later a new buyer named Humphrey Polson appeared, paid a deposit and persuaded the marina to hand over the key whereupon he disappeared with the yacht. Six months later a C&N employee working at Pembroke dock, the only other marina owned by the company, noticed *Cetewayo* hidden up a nearby creek. Brian Stewart was contacted and an Admiralty writ placed on the vessel but not before Polson had her lifted out and stripped of the interior. A mortgage was set up to remunerate the previous owner. But unable to meet the repayments Brian Stewart forced Polson to sell.

Having paid for his new acquisition Murrin had to ensure that he would not inherit Polson's repayments. It took perseverance but he had the vision and an aesthetic appreciation to see the project through. "It certainly was a baptism of fire" he exclaimed, "and I have spent my money four times over in refits."

An organic approach was taken on the rebuild. The plan was to reconstruct this 7/8 fractional rigged sloop enough to race a season and enjoy family time. The initial work carried out in Pembroke took eight months. It was a huge undertaking to transform the bare and somewhat rotting hull. Only a few internal bulkheads remained. Having access to the original deck plans made the work somewhat easier. Joiner Chris Bailey worked on her replacement interior and didn't stop until the exacting standard had been reached. Championing the classic look and craftsmanship the interior was rebuilt to a higher standard than its original white plywood finish and red leather.

Once on the water and day racing the young crew committed themselves to finding the 'sweet spot' and enhancing race performance. Time in the boat was invaluable not only for improving the systems but also for racing effectively. "The most important aspect was engendering the belief that winning was possible" added the owner.

In the first racing season *Cetewayo* was entered for the Cowes Classic regatta and won the Round The Island (round the Isle of Wight) race. A match race against a 16 metre long Fife Bermudan Cutter, *Solway Maid*, then followed. Learning her nuances meant finding the right balance.

Being heavy *Cetewayo* excelled in the stronger conditions. She was competitive downwind but struggled on the beats against the modern racers. Not proving competitive enough it was decided to optimise her to CHS (channel handicap rating system). The hull and keel were faired, the instruments upgraded, new winches added, backstays moved and the cockpit configuration altered. In addition over the next few years the transom, rudder and steering systems were rebuilt and strengthened, the covering boards and garboards were replaced. Dacron and Mylar sails were exchanged for Mylar with Kevlar. The fractional sail plan was converted. Some boom was traded for a masthead kite that proved very fast downwind and similar upwind.

Through innovation Murrin worked out how to strengthen the window of sailing. "We made sure halyards and sheets were giving, the load points flexed too so as to end up with all the drive going forward. The transference of power into speed worked. And then we came up with a Code Zero. We were at the forefront of innovation. People didn't believe the boat would not break."

The modifications and experience racing *Cetewayo* against a modern IRC fleet paid off and in 1997 and 1998 she won the highly competitive IRC Hamble River winter series twice in a row. Having gone from bottom of her class in 1994 and mastered inshore racing by 1998 it was time to take *Cetewayo* offshore to the domain she was designed for.

In her first offshore race she beat the 1964 Sparkman & Stephen fin-and-skeg yacht *Sunstone*. Leading in the first two legs the sloop was becalmed below the white cliffs of Dover. Murrin informed his crew to use the time to eat supper and get prepared. A 120-degree wind shift developed. The breeze gradually came in with a choppy sea state. The crew then picked off each of the other yachts one by one and claimed the podium position. *Cetewayo* was literally forged in the fire of racing. She went on to win numerous RORC (Royal Ocean Racing Club) races.

This acquired performance curve led to IRC optimisation and the team to compete against the likes of Quarter tonners. At 12 knots the boat was in the zone, at 16 knots outperformed her rating, at 20 knots she left a modern boat trailing. When the 150th America's Cup Jubilee regatta came to Cowes *Cetewayo* finished second overall in the IRC3 division. Racing the original America's Cup Round The Island Race she was beaten by Roy Disney's 26 Metre Maxi *Pyewacket* by only twelve seconds.

Murrin's love of yachting was taken one step further when he co-founded the British Classic Yacht Club in 2002 and stood as Commodore of the Club for two seasons. An annual classic yacht regatta was initiated. The successful restoration has competed at every British Classic Yacht regatta since its inception and accrued more silverware than any other classic in the fleet.

His enthusiasm for these classic beauties is clearly infectious. "Look at our club which started with ten owners and has swelled to eighty. It is the personification of what I loved - a competitive classic fleet."

Asked if persevering over a nine-year restoration has been worth it the reply came "I view it not so much of a task but a joy and a fascinating process. I keep my soul on the boat. My family has been brought up on her. It is a privilege to have spent time on her, creating a generation, being free as a parent to teach my children at weekends outside of a school system. It has been a life changing experience."

David believes that a boat changes people's perspectives outside the realms of sailing teaching some of life's lessons. "You need to commit to a life relationship with a boat. It is the most satisfying thing I have done in my life."

Currently, either side of regattas *Cetewayo* is out enjoying charters on the Solent waters. "It's lovely to witness people enjoying the day onboard" he enthused. "They enjoy a good sail, good food, good service. Basically I treat the clients as my guests."

And what of future plans? The 2013 Transpac win by the legendary 1930's S&S yawl *Dorada* seventy-seven years after its first bullet has inspired David. He has his eye on next year's Transatlantic Race from Newport, Rhode Island to Cowes, UK alongside the yawl. The event will coincide with the 200th anniversary of the Royal Yacht Squadron in Cowes on the Isle of Wight, England. Laurent Giles would probably smile at this achievement.

Specification:

Designer: Laurent Giles

Class: 35' Waterline Sloop

Year Designed: 1954

Year Built: 1955-7

Builder: Morris & Lorrimar Clyde, Scotland

LOA: 14.55m / 47.6ft

LOD: 11.05m / 36.1ft

Beam: 3.38m / 10.6ft

Draft: 2.51m / 8.0ft LWL: 11.5m / 35ft

LOD/WL Ratio: 0.76

Displacement: 17.69 tonnes