

Nautical Library

Beautiful classics come alive on the page

SAILING Contributing Editor Nic Compton has again compiled a masterpiece of photography and words. In **Ultimate Classic Yachts**, Compton has researched and photographed 20 of the most beautiful and historically significant sailboats still afloat.

As one might imagine, boats that have been sailing for, in some cases, more than 100 years, have tales to tell. Owners, builders and races have come and gone, but these boats, with the help of serious refits, have withstood the test of time.

Take for example, the 112-year-old schooner *Coral of Cowes*. Owner and skipper Richard Oswald moves the boat around the Caribbean, looking for the best prices for refitting.

"Each island is good at different things. You buy stuff in St. Martin, you do the most visible varnish in Antigua because they do the best job and finish it off in Grenada where it's cheaper, then you run down to Dominica to paint your bilges," Oswald said. *Coral* has 10 coats of varnish on her topsides.

The chapter on *Coral* is eight pages long, about the same length as the other classics; Compton clearly loves these boats and relishes sailing on them and photographing them. There is a timeline highlighting the significance moments of each boat's career. *Coral* had her lead keel cut off in 1939 for the war effort. It won the King's Cup in 1926, but by 1936 it was converted into a houseboat in Cowes.

Compton also includes a short epilogue called "What happened next..." that gives a brief update on the owner and the boat. Sometimes the update is good news, like a regatta win. Other times the news is not so good. But that little segment lets us know that the boat is still going.

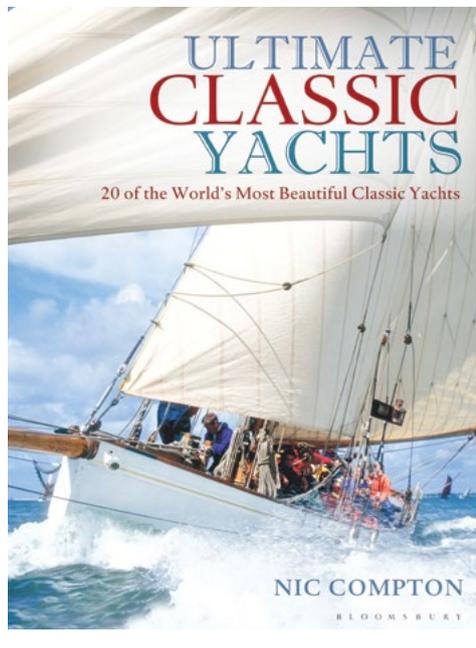
Not all the boats are ancient classics. Compton considers new boats built in the

classic style, with classic materials, classic. The youngest boat is the 3-year-old *Integrity*, a Victorian-style revenue cutter. Owner Will Stirling designed *Integrity* with meticulous attention to historical drawings and original boats.

The boat, a tiller-steered 43-footer, races against the original cutters. That's fair since the hull construction was strictly old school. Compton shows two pages' worth of construction

photos, from cutting the oak frames to pouring the lead keel.

Of the 20 boats, there isn't really a standout in the looks department. They are all unique and fine. It's the stories behind the boats that will grip readers in different ways. And there is no reason to read this book from the beginning. Glance at the table of contents, see a name that draws you in: *Bloodhound*, *Blue Saluki*, *Stavanger*, and start reading.



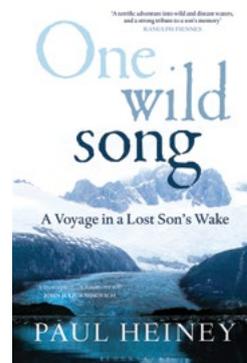
Ultimate Classic Yachts

By Nic Compton, \$50, Adlard Coles

One Wild Song

By Paul Heiney, \$26, Bloomsbury

Author Paul Heiney sails from England to remote parts of South America as tribute to his son, a tall ship sailor lost at the age of 23. The book is poignant, never maudlin, and has excellent descriptions of sailing the Beagle Channel and Cape Horn.



The Box Wine Sailors

By Amy McCullough, \$16.95, Academy Chicago

Two new sailors chuck life ashore and embrace the sailing life—along with the adventures—on a shoestring. This book is an excellent reminder that cruising needn't be expensive and that North America has some great cruising destinations.



Yacht Designer's Sketchbook

By Ian Nicolson, \$21, Amberley Publishing

Who among us hasn't sketched our dream boat or retrofit idea on the back of a napkin? These drawings by Scottish naval architect Ian Nicolson are a peek at good, professional ideas about design and retrofit that can streamline the work on your next boat project.

