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## At 91, Tom Browne realises a childhood dream sailing on *Waitangi*

*Tom and Kate Browne beside Waitangi after the Anniversary Day Regatta.*



*By Penelope Carroll*

**When Tom Browne sailed on *Waitangi* in this year's Auckland Anniversary Day Regatta, he realised a childhood dream.**

Back in the '40s and '50s when Tom, now 91, was racing Zeddies and Idle Alongs on the Waitemata, he would marvel at the beauty and speed of the old gaffers, and the sense of history they embody. In those days, everyone watched the regatta, he says. The harbour was jam packed with yachts, with people watching from ferries and every vantage point.

Growing up in Herne Bay, he began his boating off Sentinel Beach – paddling around in a canoe constructed with help from a school friend

from old corrugated iron, the ends of apple boxes, and tar collected from the road on a hot day to fill the nail holes.

“I began sailing at about 13 when a mate of mine in primary school got access to a little sailing dinghy. It was about eight or nine feet long with just one sail and we learned as we went along.

“We used to sail this dinghy all along the Fanshawe Street foreshore, where there were a number of boat builders and timber yards back then.”

A couple of years later, he bought a Z class yacht with a friend and then graduated to an Idle Along. “We raced every week in the summer with the Ponsonby, Richmond and Victoria clubs – and once a fortnight sailed

up to Point Chev and raced there.”

Sailing took a back seat when Tom married at 23 – “and six children came fairly quickly”. Family boating adventures focused on a succession of launches. “We went all round the Hauraki Gulf, over to Barrier, up to the Bay of Islands ...”

Then in 1983 he bought the hull of a Davidson 35, worked on it every weekend in a friend's factory in Grafton and launched the following year.

“I had to learn to sail all over again,” says Tom. He raced regularly with the RNZYS and Richmond Yacht Club and cruised in the holidays. An Elliott 12 was his next yacht, followed by a Bakewell-White Z39.

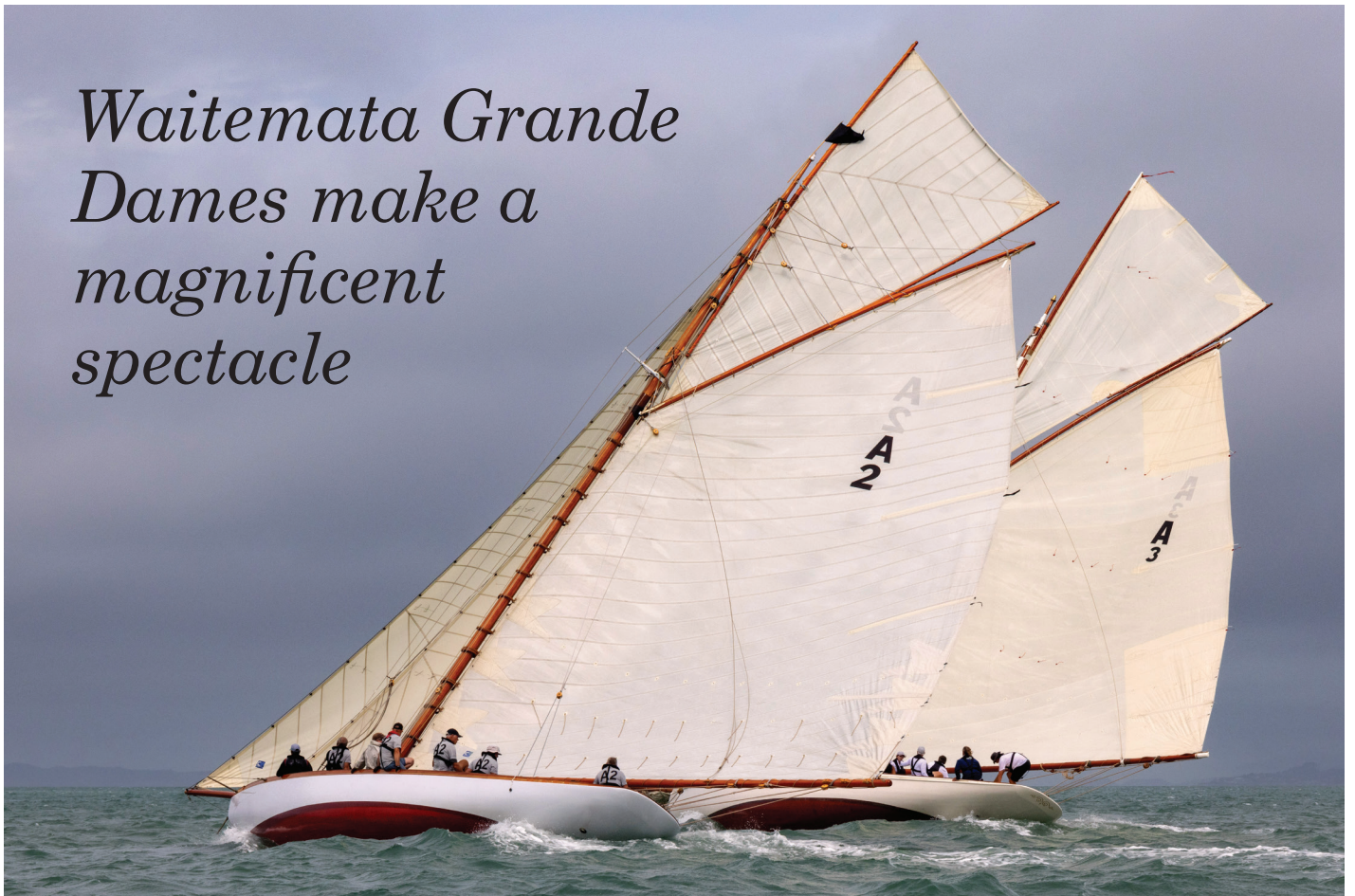
Then Tom gave up sailing for a few years and went back into launches – until eight years ago he bought into the Farr 1020 he now owns with daughter Kate Browne and a friend.

They race *Ambiance* regularly with the RNZYS. He still owns a launch, *Odyssea*, with his son Mark Browne: “I like them both, sailing and launching.”

Tom leapt at the chance to sail on *Waitangi* for the Anniversary Day Regatta: “I have admired the classics from when I first got into sailing. Finally sailing on one of these wonderful boats blows me away. I loved every minute of it.”



# Waitemata Grande Dames make a magnificent spectacle



After a long, calm summer, our 2022 ADB CYA Regatta coincided with a tropical storm and we only managed to sail two of our four scheduled races, with 15 yachts competing. Day One (Friday, February 11) dawned with a stiff breeze and the six gaffers had a great race. Three – *Thelma*, *Rawhiti*

and *Ariki* – crossed the finish line within 10 seconds of each other. Steadily strengthening winds meant only one race on Day Two and only two gaffers – *Rawhiti* and *Ariki* (pictured right) – out on the harbour.

*Roger Mills, Hummingbird Photography*

## Launch parade at Mahurangi

Although a Covid red traffic light level meant reduced entries, 17 CYA launches took part in the Parade and log rally at the Mahurangi Regatta, and 10 at Auckland's Anniversary Day Regatta. First across the line in the Auckland regatta was *Kaikoura*, with *Fleetwing* second (first on handicap), and *My Girl* third.

*Roger Mills,  
Hummingbird Photography*



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