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## *A celebrated artist with a lifelong love of the sea and boats*

*By Penelope Carroll*

David Barker has spent almost a lifetime painting and sailing. “My father was an architect and as a small boy he taught me perspective drawing,” he says.

David (81) still has one of his first watercolours, painted in England when he was six, now hanging in the hallway of his Devonport home.

His boating experiences began in 1951 (David was 10) when the family emigrated to NZ, settling in Torbay. “Ron Holland and I shared ownership of a plank of wood which had washed ashore at Waiake Beach. We took it in turns to kneel on it and paddle around – it was the beginning of our nautical endeavours.”

A Frostbite dinghy followed some years later when his family moved to Takapuna. “The boys on the beach helped my brother Antony and I rig it and showed us how to sail”. Next came a Cherub, which he really enjoyed – until the day a Jim Young 12ft Kitty class catamaran sailed past. He was immediately attracted to the twin hull concept.



*World-renowned marine artist David Barker has just completed his evocative painting Start, which he is gifting to the Classic Yacht Charitable Trust to raise funds for the ongoing upkeep of the Trust's vessels. He is creating a limited edition of 60 numbered and signed high-quality giclee prints with a personalised remarque sketched into the corner, effectively making each an original artwork. Each print will be offered as a “ticket” in return for a \$450 contribution to the Trust, with ticket holders going into a draw to win the original painting.*

“There weren’t many multihulls around, but Jim Young built one for me in his Little Shoal Bay workshop. I helped on the weekends, and we had some great conversations.” So began his focus on designing large multihulls.

Meanwhile, David kept working at his paintings, which he started selling in his early teens: “It was more lucrative than delivering newspapers on a bicycle,” he remembers.

After Takapuna Grammar, he studied at Elam School of Art – and took up surfing. A scholarship at Hawaii’s

East-West Centre where he completed a Master’s degree in Art (“probably the most formative time in my professional art life”) provided opportunities to surf as well as study.

Since Hawaii, David had been designing his own 12m catamaran, *Sundancer*, C1, built in Sydney in 1969. The catamaran *Stratosphere*, C2 and the ocean-going catamaran *Sundreamer*, C3 have followed over the years. Now C4, an electric jet boat, “is on the drawing board.”

David’s interest in multihulls is matched by his enthusiasm for NZ classic

yachts and launches. His replica 1913 Logan-designed (but built of carbon-fibre and Kevlar) 10 metre launch *Feather*, “gives me much pleasure”.

He reflects on the different roles yachting and painting have played throughout his life in many parts of the world: “Yachting has been about competition, physicality and companionship; painting, in contrast is reflective and solitary.” In his painting above, depicting twelve classic yachts moments before the start of their race, the competitive and reflective come together.



*Spray II running hard  
under her original rig.*

*Inset: John Duder in  
his element at sea.*

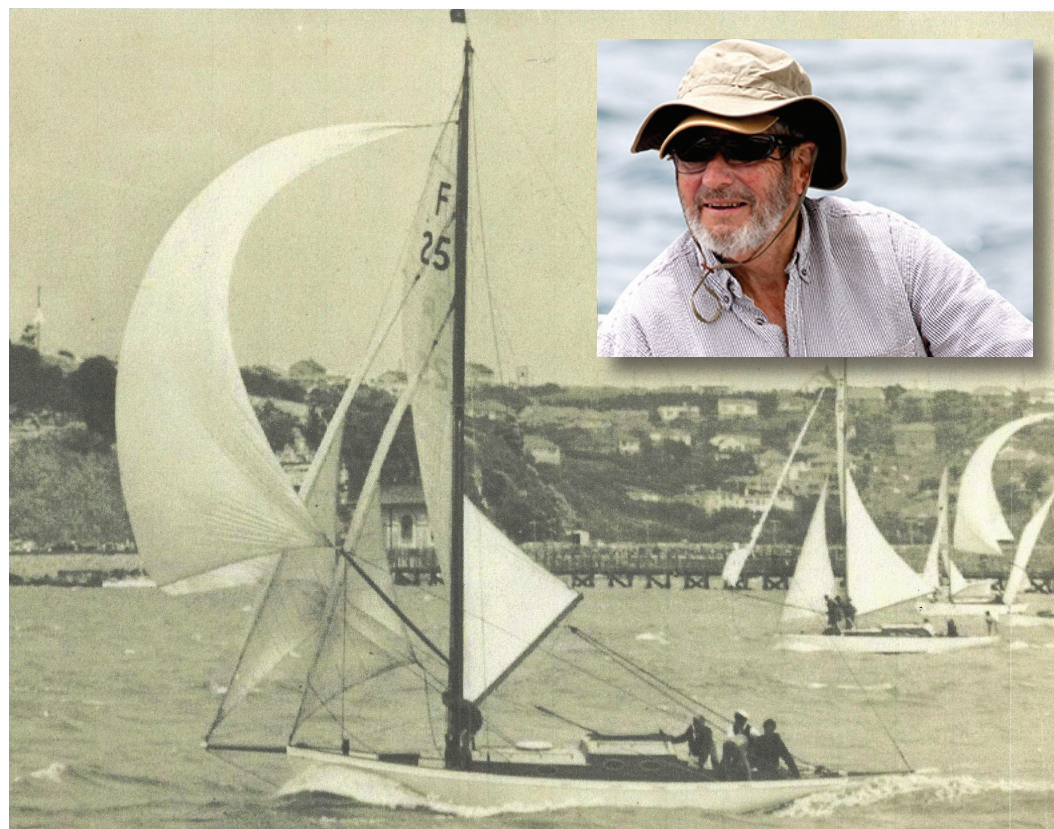
## John Duder and Spray – still sailing after all these years

John Duder is both a keen sailor and committed civil engineer, and is 'still doing both, happily' at the age of 84. Water, he says, is the 'common thread' between his sailing and his engineering.

John spent the first few years of his life in the UK, the family marooned there for almost a decade with the outbreak of World War II. He revelled in his father Nelson's stories of racing Kotiri (now being restored) with the Squadron: and in the sailing adventures of the Blackett, Callum and Walker children from Arthur Ransome's *Swallows and Amazons* (he still has the whole series).

His on-the-water sailing experiences began almost immediately upon the family's return in 1949. His father heard about "a nice little yacht in Napier" – and bought her. She was the 30 foot, single-skinned kauri *Spray II*, designed by Arch Logan and built in Onehunga in 1938 by Len Coulthard.

"We raced her hard," says John. He was foredeck hand on *Spray II* from 1950 until he left for London in 1960. His father and younger



brother Ross continued to race her into the '70s. *Spray II* had a rig with a solid mast until the '60s when his father had Jack Brooke design her present rig. "When Dad was commodore of the Squadron 1963-1965, *Spray* became the smallest yacht ever to have flown the commodore's burgee."

John returned from overseas in 1973 and his father asked if I wanted to go into partnership with him. "But I had four daughters and a new job, so I declined." *Spray II* was sold to Glen Cornthwaite and ended up back in Napier, returning to Auckland when she was purchased by Howard Patterson.

Then in 1996 she was back on the market. By then John co-owned and was racing the

36-foot *Undine* (built in 1887 by Fuller Bros in Kerikeri), with Bruce Marler. "My daughter Lisa persuaded me to buy *Spray* back. 'Come on Dad,' she said. '*Undine* is a bit big for you now'..."

He has been racing *Spray II* this second time around for the past 25 years, with Lisa and, latterly, grandson Mukai Duder-Hura (17).

"I know the boat and I really feel she knows me," he says. "I find myself completely attuned to her – all that muscle memory going back more than 70 years."

He recounts two sailing highlights, the first a race to the Bay of Islands (a forerunner of the Coastal Classic) on *Spray II* in the '50s, with his father and brother (and a friend of his father's, Con Thode who

"agreed to come on condition he could sleep all the way").

"We were just the little nipper. We left on Boxing Day in a light westerly and we trimmed all night. Then at daybreak, unbelievably, we found we were up with the A class! We had a six-hour handicap on them and realised we could win – and we did!"

The second was 60 years later in 2017 when he completed the Coastal Classic on *Spray II* with Lisa, Mukai and Mike Strong. "We had a wonderful race and only missed out on first place by one minute."

Racing *Spray* has always been a family affair, says John, and he is hoping Lisa and Mukai "can keep her going when I bow out..."

**By Penelope Carroll**