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Let's hear it for the launches

By Penelope Carroll

The CYA's launch fleet of some 100 vessels spans more than 100 years of launch construction in Aotearoa New Zealand. It showcases great examples of design and building techniques – of both pleasure craft and working boats – ranging chronologically from Mike Mahoney's 1899 *Moerangi* from two centuries ago, to Russell Ward's 1990 *Romany* and Geoff Palmona's 1998 *Souvenir* from just last century.

New CYA launch captain Anatole Perry's 37ft 5in kauri and teak-built launch *Korara* was launched in 1960 and is a great example of a modern classic, he says. The John Powell design was built by Snow Waters and Ron Gurr in the Wairau Valley. Ron re-lofted the plans in Devonport for use in the Hauraki Gulf. She is moored at Heritage Landing.

Anatole and his wife Jennifer have had *Korara* for five years. "I had racing yachts previously. Then when I did a bit of damage to my knee I decided to switch to



Korara makes a fine sight serving as Committee Boat for a CYA race.

a launch – and Jason Prew lured me to the classics."

He is still involved in yacht racing, but now on the sidelines: skippering *Korara* when she is the start vessel for CYA races and driving his 5.5m RIB as a support vessel when his son attends regattas representing Kohimarama and Royal Akarana yacht clubs in starling or 29er races.

Previously president of the NZ Optimist Dinghy Association, the new Launch Captain has "done a reset" he says, to support and encourage classic launch owners. "It would be nice to see more launches out on the water, especially for CYA destination events".

Since 1995, CYA vice chair Russell Brooke and his family have owned another CYA classic, the kauri-planked hard-chined 48ft *Linda*, built by Col Wilde for a Mr M.

Kelly in 1927 – although it took several years of work before the fire-gutted vessel ("she was just a skeleton") was restored to her former glory by his father Robert Brooke, Russell and brothers Michael and Stephen.

"She is one of the gems of NZ boating – her lines are perfect," says Russell. "That's why dad wanted to take on the challenge."

These days *Linda* is moored in Greenhithe through most of the year and

in the Kerikeri Inlet for the summer.

Russell also races the 40ft *Kiariki* (1959), designed by his father and built at Salthouse Brothers; and the 34ft *Gleam* (1940), designed and built by his grandfather, Jack Brooke. He's one of those who has a foot in each camp, he says.

"The CYA isn't just about yacht racing; it links together all the things that are important about classic boats."



Linda – 'a gem of NZ boating' in immaculate condition.



Fidelis competing in the 2014 Mahurangi Regatta.

Ocean greyhound *Fidelis* – still going strong

by Sandra Gorter

Fidelis, pictured above during the 2014 CYA Mahurangi Regatta is one of the most renowned racing yachts ever launched in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Designed by Knud Reimers and built in Auckland in 1962 for Vic Speight, the 61ft ‘ocean greyhound’ began her impressive racing career in 1964 when she beat *Ranger* under the helm of Jim Davern.

He bought *Fidelis* and headed out for the deep blue yonder. She took line-honours in the 1966 Auckland to Suva race, then sailed to Australia to enter that year’s Sydney to Hobart race. Not only did *Fidelis* get the gun, (the first NZ yacht to do so) but she set a new record of 4 days, 8 hours and 39 minutes, a record that stood for the next nine years.

More Sydney-Hobarts followed, as did races to

Noumea, Vila and Fukuoka, surviving a hurricane and other adventures, before Jim Davern and *Fidelis* returned to Auckland.

In 1994 she caught the eye of her current owner, Nigel Stoke, who was visiting from Sydney. Under Stoke’s ownership, there were more Sydney-Hobarts, races to the Solomons, Gladstone, Mooloolaba, Wooden Boat Festivals, and a real favourite, the annual “BBQ” cruises to

Lord Howe Island.

In 2016, Nigel Stoke and *Fidelis* commemorated the 50 years since her historic Sydney-Hobart win by competing again. And even though this time the boom broke, quick repairs in Bass Strait put them only 8 hours behind the winner on line, and just a tantalising 8 minutes behind on handicap.

As the world responded to the news of the outbreak of a pandemic during the 75th Sydney to Hobart race in 2019, *Fidelis* was caught up in the mayhem of the Covid years. But she is back on form and took line honours in the Vintage and Veterans fleet in this year’s Brisbane to Gladstone race.

Semper *Fidelis* is her motto, and she has remained part of the CYANZ since its inception, – and has even returned home to compete in CYANZ and Mahurangi regattas. *Fidelis* is always a beautiful sight on our harbours.

Plea to 40-footers to come out and play

Steve Horton, owner with his wife Kate of 47ft *Totolo*, is putting out a call to the owners of similar-sized modern classics to join *Totolo* in CYA races.

Currently crewing on *Ariki*, Steve will enter *Totolo* in the CYA summer series, and he’d like some more competition on the water. There are not many modern classics 40ft and above currently racing, he says. “So, I’m reaching out to 40ft-plus boat owners.”

He sees the five-skin cold-

moulded kauri *Totolo*, built in 1970 for Don Winstone (who wanted a fast offshore-capable cruiser-racer) as a bridge between the old kauri classics and modern yachts. “She is so beautifully balanced, and the workmanship and technology are amazing.”

While Steve sailed growing up, this is the first keeler he has ever owned, he says.

“A friend was selling *Totolo* and asked me to help. That was in May 2020, between the lockdowns. We went out



Kate and Steve Horton

for a sail, Kate fell in love with it, and so we bought it.”

Probably last raced in the ‘70s and ‘80s (apart from a couple of races with the Waiheke Boating Club), *Totolo* spent some time as

a charter boat and a live-aboard for a family.

But she’ll soon be out racing regularly again with the rest of the CYA fleet – hopefully with some playmates.

By Penelope Carroll