



## *Kia Ora makes a welcome return*

*Kia Ora*, the 120-year-old 24'6" Patiki class yacht built by Arch Logan has just been relaunched at Stillwater. With her flat-shaped hull and no ballast, she was designed to beat the Mullet boats to market, says Sam Bamforth, who, with his father Jeff (a retired boat builder), has spent the last five years restoring her on his Stillwater front lawn. Sam is a builder.

She was in a sorry state when he came across *Kia Ora* at Pam Cundy and George Emtage's Traditional Boat Yard at Whangateau, he says. She'd been lying on the sandy bottom of Cockshead Creek for nearly a decade, partially floating each high tide. For the 50 years prior, she'd languished on a mooring she hardly ever left in the Whangarei yacht basin.

"We got two barrow loads of sand out of her," says Sam. "Every time she sank, more sand came in through the cracks. But the tide coming in and out and covering her saved her hull. We only had to scarf one piece of damaged hull."

Getting *Kia Ora* to Stillwater to restore her was nerve-racking. "George towed us to the end of Whangaparaoa, then I screwed a temporary six-hp

outboard on the stern and Dad and I motored back – right into a 25-knot wind. We were flat-out pumping all the way, and wallowing. I thought we would sink. By the time we got to Stillwater, she was half full of water."

In contrast, the relaunch was uneventful, he says. "We lifted her onto a trailer, stepped the mast, hooked up the rigging, tuned her up and then backed her into the tide."

*Kia Ora* has a new set of sails and rigging, new centreboard plate, new sliding entry hatch, a new self-draining cockpit and an outboard well ("so her lines are not spoilt by that ugly outboard look – we got the idea from the Ross 830s and 930s.")

When he rang up the CYANZ to check if her O5 sail number was still valid, he found it was, even though *Kia Ora* had not been registered since 1969.

She is the last of her Patiki class, as far as Sam knows. That's why he particularly wanted to save her. He'd actually been looking for a Mullet boat to restore when he came across *Kia Ora*. "I've always loved the look of Mullet boats. Their sails are so huge for such a small boat – like a V8 in a small car."



But he is very happy he found *Kia Ora* instead.

*Kia Ora* will soon be racing out of Opua and will compete in the next Mahurangi and CYANZ annual regattas.

"I'm going to race her as much as I can. She was never built as a racing machine. She was a working boat from day one, with thicker planks and bigger ribs. But this boat is going to get up and boogie – she has no ballast and is basically like a large skiff.

"I'm going to put a challenge out to all the Mullet boats. I can't wait to race against them. Mulletts have more belly and a straight up

and down bow and this one has a spoon bow – she will pick up and plane quickly."

The Patiki class was a design before its time, he says, pointing out the latest racing boats designed for the round-the-world Volvo race also have big spoon bows.

Sam is particularly keen to race against the 1904 Mullet boat, *Maru*, currently being restored at Milford Marina. He thinks the 1912 match race series between *Maru* and *Kia Ora*'s sistership *Waterwitch* was the last match race series between Patiki and Mullet boats.

*By Penelope Carroll*



*Tonnant restored.*

## A tale of plucky boats and voyages

Building and restoring yachts has been a big part of Boris and Svetlana Penchevs' lives for more than 50 years – first in Bulgaria, then here in New Zealand.

The first yacht they designed and built was the 21' *Linda* in the Bulgarian city of Varna on the Black Sea, in the late '70s. The 22' *Fiesta* followed, in the early '80s.

"Back then if you wanted to go blue water sailing, you had to build your own boat," says Boris. "And if you wanted to build a boat, you had to log, mill and dry pitch pine and white oak, make your clamps, table saw, copper rivets, bronze bolts, blocks, rigging

screws, do the welding and the casting, make your sails out of cotton canvas, collect discarded twine and ship docking lines from the local shipyard, unravel and run them through a homemade rope twisting machine ... you couldn't buy any boating bits, as there was no such industry."

With their three children (now 41, 39 and 36), they sailed in regattas and around the Black Sea, through the Sea of Marmara and into the Aegean and Mediterranean Seas. "We probably sailed over 10,000 miles in the engineless *Fiesta*".

In the late 90s, while building a Van der Stadt for a

single-handed trans-Atlantic race, the Penchevs met Canadians Lesley and Ray Ginnever, completing their second circumnavigation and en route for New Zealand. That led to a job offer to restore the Ginnever's yacht *G-Force* at the marina in Warkworth.

"So, we came to New Zealand instead".

Their first Kiwi boat was a donated derelict *Trekka*. "We kept some ribs, frames and the skin, then elongated the stern and rebuilt the decks and cabin, cast a bulb keel, added a slim rudder and bowsprit, made new sails at home... and *Gift* won the Mahurangi Regatta in 2002!"

Boris became vice-Commodore and Commodore of the Mahurangi Cruising Club until he moved to Melbourne for a stint lecturing at Deakin University.

In Bulgaria, Boris had trained and worked as a surgeon and Svetlana as a mechanical engineer and designer of ship systems. In Auckland, they both lectured at Unitec (Svetlana still does, while Boris has now retired.)

Their latest restoration has been *Tonnant*, the kauri Davidson 31 built for Peter Mulgrew in 1974. When they bought her in 2012, she was full of water and rotting, says Boris. For nine years their Glen Eden driveway was the site of a meticulous rebuild: "fiberglassing the hull, new bulkheads, cockpit, keel bolts, rudder, propulsion, electrical and plumbing, tanks, rigging, sails – she should be good for another 50 years."

*Tonnant* was relaunched in

December 2021, competed in the CYA Winter Series, and has just completed a three-month circumnavigation of New Zealand, with Boris sailing solo most of the way. (Svetlana joined him for the beginning of the voyage; and a friend, Atanas Gornakov, for the final leg from Tauranga).

After brief stops in the Bay of Islands, Port Taranaki and the Golden Bay-Nelson area, he sailed straight to Fiordland ("NZ really does look like a long white cloud when you're sailing down the west coast!"). He spent six weeks exploring Fiordland's many inlets, islands, anchorages, tracks and lakes ("I was overwhelmed by so much incredible beauty"); sailed around Stewart Island then up to Lyttleton to watch the SailGP before returning to Westhaven with a stop at Tauranga.

"The weather – mostly headwinds, mostly sunny – was never a drama. I saw incredible sights, met amazing characters, read some good books ... it was a great voyage."

*Tonnant's* next journey is likely to be to Fiji, "hopefully in April or May next year".

As a side note, *Gypsy*, (Arch Logan's last design, built in 1939) has taken *Tonnant's* place in the Penchev's Glen Eden driveway as Boris and Svetlana's three children Dimitar, Lora and Vessie add O-frames, a new mast step, rebuild the cockpit, refasten and recalk the hull, change the seacocks... with grandchildren Oskar and Audrie wanting to help.

*By Penelope Carroll*