

# SUPERSAIL



David Glenn

## A maxi day out

Forget your corporate golf, go-carting, pheasant murdering or 'team-bonding' at the local paint balling park – go sailing on a maxi! Corporate charter on smaller yachts, like the 40-strong Sunsail fleet, is one of that company's most successful ventures – the Solent fleet is out almost every day of the year – and every corporate type, from solicitors and brewers to the NHS and big city banks come back year after year for a couple of days of intense regatta sailing. Even more play intense après sail in Cowes.

## An experience not easily forgotten

But how about something a bit bigger? Maxi charter has been available for some time and is about to take a step up with the launch of Mike Slade's new *Leopard 3* (see story right).

Getting behind the wheel on a yacht like this on a blowy day in the Solent is the sort of experience not easily forgotten. I often remember a friend from Citibank saying sailing a maxi in a near gale with the sun on his back was one of the best corporate days out he and his team had ever had.

There should be more opportunity for the uninitiated to sail large yachts and perhaps take a leaf out of the *Antigua Classic Yacht Regatta* book, which says that for a donation to a local charity – usually linked to a school – you can take your place on the weather rail or aft deck of one of the great classics.

LEOPARD 3



# HYBRID LEOPARD

One of the big launches this year will be Mike Slade's new 30m *Leopard 3*. She might look a bit like a VO70 on steroids, but she's all yours for £8,500 a day in the Solent this summer. And she may try for a round the world record

For a moment we thought Mike Slade might have gone the whole hog with this yacht and put himself up against the likes of *Alfa Romeo*, *Wild Oats* and *Maximus* in earnest. They are the out and out racers of the 100ft Club, which hammer their 28 tons around the race courses of the world showing us all what 25-30 knots on a blast reach looks like. But the Farr-designed *Leopard 3*, while starting life with a chance on that circuit, especially offshore, will

ultimately set her sights on the lucrative charter market.

Nonetheless, the first phase of her programme will take her from the 2007 Rolex Fastnet and the Maxi Rolex regatta in Sardinia to La Nioulargue and then the Rolex Sydney Hobart on Boxing Day. From there she will return for a Caribbean circuit, including the Bermuda Race, before returning to home territory.

Right at the end of our conversation with Mike Slade,



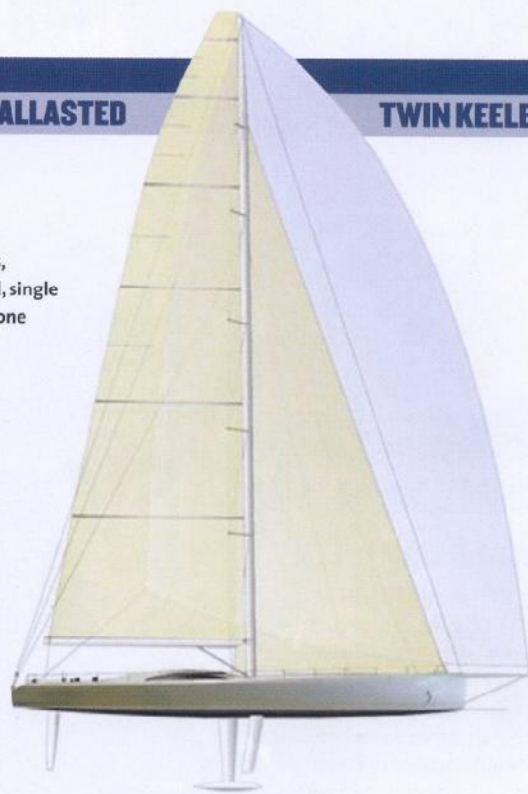
Mike Slade, looking for big performance from *Leopard 3*

who was talking to us from the offices of Helical Bar, the successful London-based property business of which he is managing director, he dropped a bombshell by saying that the yacht might have a crack at the

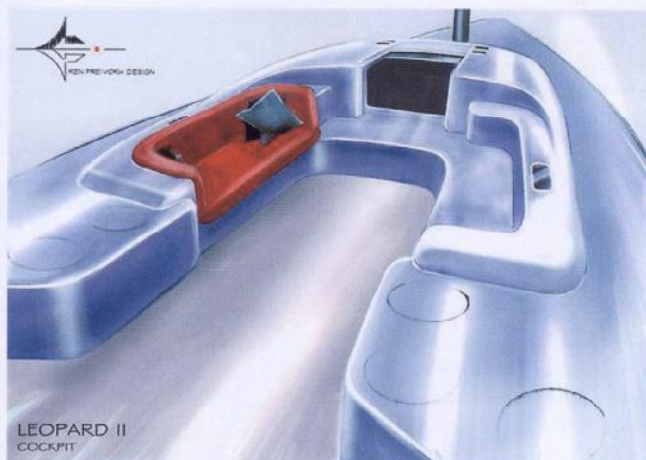


An extremely powerful and spacious machine from Farr. Inset: the hull chine is very evident as construction continues at McConnaghy's yard in Australia

Twin boards, canting keel, single rudder and one big rig



Below: comfort zone in the big cockpit. Bottom: a full-beam saloon with carbon



fully crewed monohull round the world record starting in late December 2008. According to John Reid of the World Sail Speed Record Council, there has never been a record established under their rules. This is a record which seems to have been completely overlooked with all the attention being paid to multihull attempts, but Slade should aim to beat Vincent Riou's 87d 10h which he did single-handed in 2005.

As with all his other yachts,

including the 98ft Reichel Pugh-designed *Leopard of London* and the ex-maxi *Longobarda*, both now sold, the new yacht will have to meet the 'ethos of the Leopard brand', as Mike Slade puts it, and earn her keep as a very high-performance, luxuriously appointed charter yacht. "We go racing to gain profile," he explained.

The last *Leopard*, which could never quite hack it on the race courses of the world because of the weight she





Ken Freivokh's interior using lightweight carbon and metals. Left: the navigation station

carried round to service her charter needs, was very good at doing other things, including making money. She earned US\$1.5 million for Slade and chartered for an impressive 52 days in the Solent, highly successful by any standards.

Some statistics – *Leopard 3* is the same length as the likes of *Alfa* and co, but she will weigh 36 tons opposed to their 28. Compared with the last *Leopard*, she is about the same size, but her volume is a shattering 30 per cent more

## For those looking for a high-speed, high-tech day out at a top event

yet she weighs one ton less. The rig is 23ft taller and she has much, much more sail area.

Although Mike Slade realises he is unlikely to be able to live with the really hot boats inshore, he is sure that he can deliver an exceptional experience for his many repeat customers and attract more who are looking for a high speed, high-tech day out at one of the world's top events.

To do this he has retained key players from the original *Leopard* programmes, including John Bremner's

Ocean Marine who are managing the build, highly capable skipper Chris 'Shirley' Sherlock, Louise Eddom who runs the charter office and Ken Freivokh who has ensured that this boat really looks the part.

Newcomer to the *Leopard* programme is Mike Sanderson, who is running the yacht's North sail programme in Auckland. His success in the Volvo Ocean Race had undoubtedly been responsible for some canny adjustments to the Farr design which should give her the best

chance of keeping on the pace for as long as possible.

The main reason Slade didn't return to Reichel Pugh, who did the last *Leopard*, was volume. He needed much more for his charter plans than the relatively narrow Reichel Pugh designs could provide. Farr on the other hand has much more beam but the initial design underwent four fundamental changes before building started. They started with a canting, lifting keel with daggerboards and twin rudders. Fearing the

complexity and weight, Slade then opted for a fixed keel, drawing a monster 18ft 6in.

But the final decision came after the performance of the Juan Kouyoumdjian-designed *ABN AMRO One* in the Volvo, which left everyone dead for pace. So *Leopard 3* adopted a chine for almost three-quarters of her length, kept her swing keel, adopted a 15ft built-

in sprit, discarded any idea of symmetrical spinnakers and had a 4.5 ton stern water ballast facility built in to keep the bow up on big downwind legs. Sanderson has been instrumental in some of this 'adjustment' and has also gone for a fathead main as part of the sail inventory.

Some interesting developments in the foils too. The keel can cant to 40° but the piston in the hydraulic cylinder is prevented from going to its full travel to allow a shock-absorbing 'reserve', something that VOR crews think may have prevented

## Farr Yacht Design on...



### Chines

'The chines improve the waterflow off the side of the hull at low or moderate heel angles. Including the chine also leads to an overall improvement in the aft underbody shape because the section curvature immediately inboard of the chine is more consistent with the curvature across the centreline.'

### Canards

'Canards are the most efficient solution for carrying the sideforce generated by the sails (as the keel fin has a short chord length). The hydraulically actuated, powered rollers eliminate the typical block and tackle lifting system, making the deck very clean.'

### Optimising for offshore

'Mike asked us to make *Leopard 3* a line honours threat for distance racing. To that end the rig and sailplan can carry large sails for reaching and running that will be left on the dock for buoy races. Water ballast tanks located aft can be filled to improve speed and handling during high speed reaching and running offshore. For buoy racing these would remain empty.'

For charter bookings and more *Leopard* detail see:  
[www.leopardoflondon.co.uk](http://www.leopardoflondon.co.uk)  
 Also: [www.farrdesign.com](http://www.farrdesign.com)  
[www.freivokh.com](http://www.freivokh.com)

some of the almost catastrophic problems they suffered in the early stages of the round the world race.

The daggerboards have also been modified, with a system of hydraulic rollers which should make it easier to adjust them when the yacht is sailing at speed.

Even in her first-phase, racing mode *Leopard 3* is destined to be stylishly comfortable with a very sexy full-beam deck saloon by Ken Freivokh and two cockpits, one a working area, the other for those taking a less active role in proceedings. There's a phase two arrangement showing more berths and cabins.

Mike Slade told us that he hoped to welcome back some well-known sailors such as Neal MacDonald, Jason Carrington, Andy Hemmings, Paul Standbridge and 'some Volvo boys' to get the yacht through her work-up period and some of the first races like the Fastnet, post America's Cup.

"This will be a challenging boat to sail – do you know they can roll tack this thing in eight seconds? – and we need to be quickly up to 90 per cent of capability if we are to stand a chance with the big maxis offshore," said Slade.

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## Food for thought

**Mercury-ballasted twin keeler!**

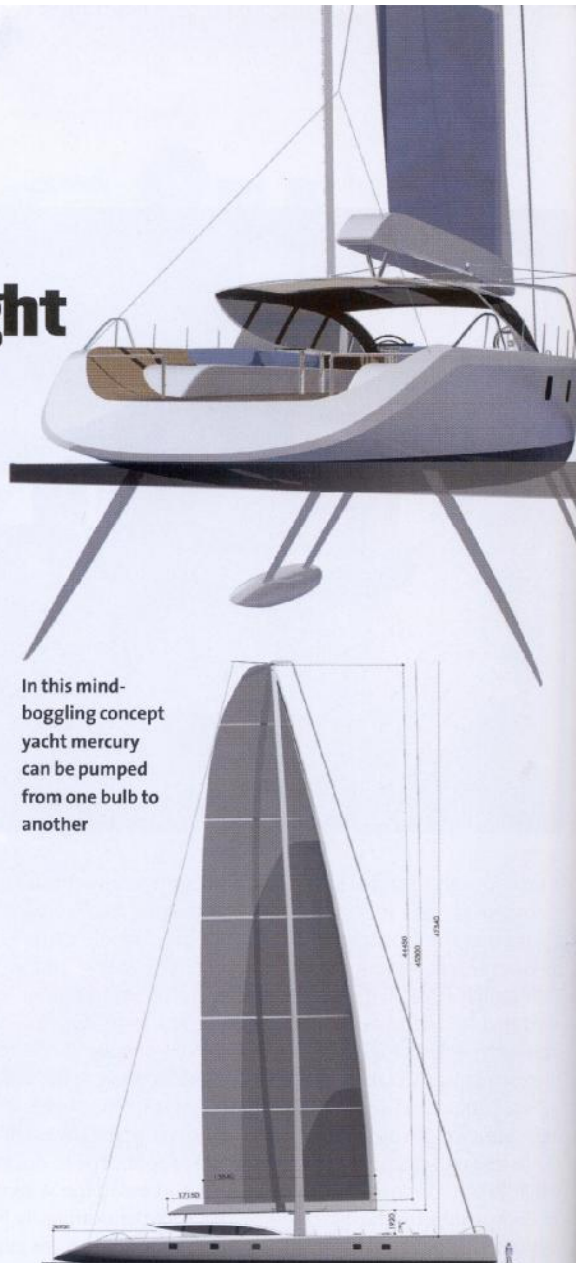
Here's a design which will have you scratching your head if for no other reason than the use of mercury which can be pumped from one keel to the other.

You don't have to be an environmentalist to be worried sick about what might happen in a collision, but as a concept by young designer Eric Siffrer, who graduated from the design department of the Academy of Fine Arts in Ljubljana, having completed his thesis in yacht design, this is a fascinating exercise. He has also worked for Seaway, Shipman and J&J Design.

The rig is suspended on a type of goalpost and set on a boom and a fixed leading edge, which suggests there's a fair bit of weight aloft. The principle is similar in some ways to the AeroRig, but it looks more complex.

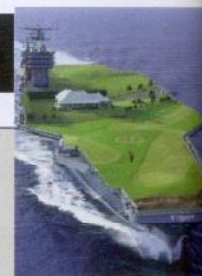
The two keels are attached at an angle of 30° and are hollow so that the mercury can be pumped from side to side. Mercury at 13.456g/cm<sup>3</sup> is denser than lead (11.34) which are both much heavier than iron (7.86) so one can see the attractions, but the thought of it escaping as a result of a breach in the system doesn't bear thinking about. Designed displacement is 110 tons.

The rest of the yacht is fairly conventional with a wide expanse of deck space covered with a transparent hardtop. [erik.siffrer@yahoo.com](mailto:erik.siffrer@yahoo.com)



In this mind-boggling concept yacht mercury can be pumped from one bulb to another

Wouldn't much like to be Tiger Woods's caddy on this course....



## CAPTAIN'S CORNER

### Shades

The latest MAIB safety digest highlights a recent near-miss between

two vessels. The skipper of the first picked up the second on radar when it was three miles away and saw that it was on a potential collision course when it was one mile away.

He attempted contact several times on VHF Ch16, but received no response and was forced to take avoiding action. Investigators

found that the watch keeper on the second vessel had only seen the first vessel at the last minute because the sun had been right ahead.

The MAIB advises officers to take precautions such as wearing sunglasses, or rigging sunscreens.

### Under attack

A new report from the International Maritime Bureau has revealed a sharp rise in piracy cases in which seafarers have been killed, injured, kidnapped and assaulted. It says

that the first six months of 2006 witnessed a total of 127 attacks on shipping throughout the world. There were 74 cases in which ships were boarded and 11 were hijacked. A total of 156 crew were taken hostage, 13 kidnapped and six crew killed compared with 31 held hostage, 10 kidnapped and none killed over the same period in 2005.

### Heart murmurs

There are moves afoot to encourage all yachts to carry devices known as automatic external defibrillators (AEDs) which could make a life or

death difference to seafarers or passengers who suffer sudden cardiac arrest.

What the defibrillator does is diagnose and treat the condition by applying an electric shock to the heart muscle to re-establish an effective heart rhythm.

Every minute the heart is not beating lowers the odds of survival by up to 10 per cent and without appropriate treatment the chances of the patient's survival are negligible after about ten minutes.

