

Rosebud, the first STP 65, in her first race



Fresh Out of the Box

With box rules working for the America's Cup Class and TP52s, the USA takes a crack at a TP65

» WHILE THE RISING TP52 FLEET launched a scintillating season in the Med, the first stirrings of a Transpac 65 group were seen in the U.S., with European builds figuring in the rumor mill and reason to wonder why.

The original Transpac 52 was conceived as an ideal vehicle for the great downwind race of that name, Los Angeles to Honolulu. But despite successful examples on the Pacific Coast, the fleet has had its strongest reception in Europe, where it has been patronized by the king of Spain and reconceived for day racing and short coastal races in the region's predominantly light breeze. Thus the Transpac 52 became the TP52, and this year's third season of the Breitling MedCup has 25 of these \$2 million babies going head to head, with the majority of their crews commuting from Valencia. The birthright and the destiny don't match up, and that makes it reasonable to wonder about

the destiny of yet another box-rule class at a different length.

The Storm Trysail Transpac 65 box rule was initiated by the Storm Trysail Club and the Transpacific Yacht Club, with considerable work from designers Bill Tripp, Alan Andrews, and Bruce Nelson, to create a seakindly, primarily offshore boat. It has since evolved into a full-on Grand-Prix weapon much more like a pumped-up 52.

What's going on? North Sails VP Ken Read, one of the instigators of the STP 65, explains: "The boat is not a compromise; compromises don't have shelf life. The TP52 class members built their boats because they will always have resale value—because they're fun; because they're a blast to sail."

Read points out that the cost associated with campaigning such boats is not in design-and-build but in running them, and this is why the 65 has fewer crew for its size than

the 52. Designwise, the significant difference is a lifting keel. Racing, the STP 65 will have a draft of 15 feet, 9 inches, but for access to shallow harbors, the keel can retract to just under 11 feet.

The first STP 65, Roger Sturgeon's Farr-designed *Rosebud*, took class honors in her first regatta. Swan 601 owner Jim Swartz has signed with Reichel Pugh for a 65, and Ken Read speaks of others over the horizon.

Rosebud faced her first real test in the Transpac this July, just two years after the notion was born. Her program manager, Malcolm Park, who grew up racing his father's boats to Hawaii, says, "We were ripping down the Molokai Channel at 25-plus knots. This is where the TP52 excelled, but the class had moved away. It seemed obvious: Create a box rule for a fast 65-footer that encourages offshore sailing while preserving agility for inshore sailing." ■ James Boyd

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