



Building your own boat to sail round the world



Gian Paolo Ferrari manages in just a few words to win you over with his enthusiasm. He seems able to fulfil any undertaking with ease, he doesn't call himself a seaman or a sailor, his roots are the mountains, long walks, climbs. He prefers to call himself a traveller or, better still, a vagabond

The ribs

Valentina Solera

Gian Paolo Ferrari, a man of the sea by passion or by chance?

Although I've always lived by the sea, I've always preferred the mountains. I did mountaineering and free climbing for years, the sea was a chance discovery, an illumination. I looked at it but I didn't see it! My love for it began when I discovered its great potential! I saw the sea as a means of communication between one land and another! My mind started devising situations, encounters, magic places to reach across the sea. I started learning the basics of sailing and I wanted to have a boat of my own. But the boundary between reality and fantasy soon knocked at the door, reminding me painfully that yachting was an expensive business, one I couldn't afford. But sailing round the world was by now a part of me. So I started looking spasmodically for a boat that could help me reach my goal, but it was a failure: they were either expensive

or wrecks. So I decided to use wealth not in terms of money, but what I had within myself: my manual ability.

Where did you learn all you needed for your adventures?

I've always been hungry for books and stories of travel, when I was a kid I put my finger on the globe and set out. Thanks to a book on survival techniques, I understood you can be happy with little, and I've always remembered this reflection; understanding my primary

needs to get myself out of extreme situations I faced was so important lesson and an important memory. My first trip was to the North Cape, when I was 27, I built a cabin in fibreglass, fitted it on my SUV and set out. When I got back I published an article in "Airone". After reading a lot of technical books, I decided to learn to sail. From the very first lessons I realised that single-handed sailing was made for me. I'm not a sailor, I'm a traveller and the sea is, for me, a way of satisfying my need to travel. I had

Working on building the boat





G.P.FERRARI

"This is my boat: I built all by myself, she is called "To the storm" and with her I will sail round the world



Franco Manzoli, mast maker of Velscaf and Roberto Westermann sailmaker with Di-Tech. Friends and collaborators of Ferrari

discovered a world that attracted me and it was hard to remain indifferent.

How did your adventure go on?

I went back to climbing, and it was then that something inside me changed definitively. During a climb I fell about 80 m, tumbling and bouncing, fortunately I ended up in a pile of snow and was unhurt. After this experience, I decided it was time to change route, the sea had started working its way ever deeper into my mind, so I decided to go along with it. On the beach I found a 4.2 m sailing boat, broken in two. The owner gave it to me. In a months I rebuilt it and sailed from one end of Moneglia to the other for two years but unfortunately one day it got stolen. So I decided to design a small boat, a very light trimaran. One night a very strong wind got up and the boat was lifted up and hit the ground disastrously. So I thought that perhaps the sea was not for me and I set out for Finland and Sweden to forget my failures, but it wasn't enough. I couldn't make do with surrogates designed to distract me from my true desires. I wanted more. So I followed my heart, and since I couldn't find a suitable boat I decided to build one, using my manual

abilities. The idea didn't frighten me and it was in line with my personality. I gave a name to my project: "from the trunk to the ocean". After months of research I found a suitable project, an 8 m cabin boat by Alessandro Cantini "AC DESIGN" in flight fibreglass and epoxy resin. After reading a book on boat building techniques, the boat started to take shape. I wanted to build her myself, she had to be my child and that's how it was! After a lot of hard work, in October 2013 I will set out to sail round the world, just as I'd dreamed. I started this adventure eight years ago but now I'm almost ready to sail round the world on this Start 80, she's a fine solid boat with the 12 m mast and a fantastic sailplan.

How did you tackle the project?

When I started building the boat I also took a decision: I didn't want to succumb to the desire to see her finished right away. I decided to carry out the project phase by phase. I broke it down into several small jobs; in this way it all seemed much simpler and straightforward. I exploited everything around me, I built my "shed" and defined the 8 m on the basis of the space I had around me. The boat weighs 2 ½ t

maximum, with the keel and everything. I had to cope with the spaces there were in the countryside: pass a long way from the sea, small squares and slopes to overcome. The dimensions of the boat were also imposed by the need to transport it with a normal helicopter to the sea or use a trailer and shifted with a crane. I built the hull upside down with the ribs and applied the planking, it's a chine hull clad in plywood that makes it easier to do. I understood which materials to use and which glues, I chose epoxy resins and learned about a world of technology I didn't know. My enthusiasm meant I learned to do everything, and I also made all the equipment and the instruments I needed. My dream was the true driving force of this great adventure.

What will be the next appointments with To the storm?

On March 2 the boat will be launched in Chiavari and then I'll start sailing to try her out and do the various tests and in October I'll set out for my voyage. I don't want to do a hard version of the round the world trip, for now I want to learn and that's why I chose the classic route. In October I will set out for Gibraltar then I'll wait for the trade winds that will take me as far as the Caribbean. I want to show what I've done to people who have the same dream as I do but don't have the courage to make it come true. I want to show that everything is possible if you really want it! I've got a lot of ideas and many new things to do, I'm already looking past this adventure, thinking about what to do next! I have a team that follows me in my adventures, that invests with me time and energy and helps me take certain decisions. For this reason I want to thank Massimo Becuzzi, who became enthusiastic about my adventure and is helping me find sponsors, and Franco Manzoli of VELSCAF, who is looking after my mas.

A voyage to tell the world about butterfly children

At a certain point I felt that something was missing from my voyage. I felt I was lucky, I'd found my way, but many people would not have been able to do it. I wanted to do something for others, and I discovered DEBRA ITALIA ONLUS. It's an Association for research into Epidermolysis Bollosa, it was founded in 1990 by patients and their families determined to ensure a better quality-of-life for their children. EB is also known as "butterfly children syndrome" because of the extreme fragility of the skin that recalls the delicacy of a butterfly's wings. It's a rare hereditary genetic disease. DEBRA's mission is to help medical research and improve the quality of the lives of people affected by this pathology. Also connected with DEBRA: Segnoutile is

an idea, a project, a challenge and a choice. It's a spontaneous group that is open to communication professionals, a working group that promotes and supports socially useful initiatives: designers, graphic artists, photographers, journalists and show business professionals, a big group of people who follow the entire creative and production process of the communication.

Also: many people are helping me and I would like to mention some names: Marco Grossi, Daniela Belluschi, Valeria Romiti, Fabio Fondi of SEGNOUTILE, Roberto Westermann, Massimo Becuzzi and Franco Manzoli. I would also like to thank my sponsors: Experiri, Cecchi, Goplast, Silvers, htopen, New Foods, Pastificio Conforti, Cala Elte, Di Tech.