



The classic yacht Hawk was recently donated to the Museum of Yachting by the Jamestown Boat Yard. Aboard are boat yard staff who worked on the restoration. Photo by Sam Bari

Classic yacht Hawk leaves island boat yard for the Museum of Yachting

By Sam Bari

After a complete restoration in 1984/5 at the Jamestown Boat Yard, the classic yacht Hawk, owned by Little Compton resident Gurdon B. Wattles, is being recommissioned and donated to the Museum of Yachting in Newport.

Once the decision was made to donate the 1948 Knud Reimers-designed, double-ended cutter to the museum, the boat yard agreed to augment funds donated by the donor to rig, re-commission, paint the bottom, launch and deliver the vessel to her new home at the museum for the community to

enjoy. To this end, the boat yard owners, Clem Napolitano, Stephen Devoe, and Chris Otorowski, donated the storage, as well as hundreds of hours of time and expertise from their staff to complete the necessary work to ready Hawk for delivery to the Museum of Yachting.

The yacht was stored in a covered shed at Knutson's Boat Yard in Cold Spring Harbor, N.Y., for many years. Then the boat was trucked to Billings Marine in Bristol, R.I., in 1983, where major restoration work began to refurbish the vessel to its original condition. After a short stay in Bristol,

Billings Marine became Jamestown Boat Yard, where the major part of the restoration was completed. The refit included replacement of the cast-iron ballast with lead, re-planking from the waterline down, a new wooden keel, new wood-and-bronze floors, re-powering with a Westerbeke diesel engine, an Aqua Drive, CV joint, new shaft and max prop, as well as rewiring, new tanks, and a new rudder. The boat does not have a wheel. It is steered with a tiller. The refit was completed in 1984/5. Then Hawk sat in a covered shed at the boat yard for 20 years. During this time, she had only been in the water on three occasions, for a total of 15 days.

"I must praise our staff of experts for their dedication to a real labor of love," said Clem Napolitano, managing partner of Jamestown Boat Yard. "Carl Rossi, our resident shipwright and team leader, was involved in the original restoration back in 1983," he added. Rossi thanked department heads — Lennart Nilsson, rigger; Kevin McLaughlin, mechanics; Bruce Johnson, paint and fiberglass; and Glen Hall, hauling and launching — and their staff members for donating their time and expertise to the recent recommissioning of the classic yacht.

"The boat is ready to sail," Napolitano noted. "We donated a new compass with a chrome frame and cover, finished rewiring the mast, and restored all the bright work. The sails were well stored and are in excellent condition. As long as this boat is maintained, she'll sail the seas with pride."

"The yacht came to us in response to either an ad we placed in 'Soundings' or from a targeted mailing through a boat-claiming program started a year ago by Museum Trustee John Hendricks and myself," said Museum Director of Operations Andrew Segal.

"The owner was looking for a new 'loving home' for his vessel, and we convinced him that the museum was the best choice," Segal added.

"We are honored to be selected as the new home for this historically significant vessel," Hendricks said. "Hawk will be a tremendous addition to our classic yacht collection, including the oldest remaining Wianno Sr., a gaff-rig sloop from 1914, and a 1931, 30-foot, Wicks-built powerboat, each donated during the 2006 season. We invite visitors to see all of the new arrivals daily at the museum and watch them participate in the Best Life Classic Yacht Regatta and Parade on Labor Day weekend," he continued.

The Museum of Yachting is a private, nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving the culture of yachting by fostering education and enjoyment of its history through the presentation of vessels, artifacts, literature, events and regattas. The museum explores the many ways in which yachting demonstrates human achievement in the arts, technology, and design. Museum educational programs offer opportunities for sailors, non-sailors, adults, and children alike. The Museum of Yachting is located at Fort Adams State Park in Newport and is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. For additional information call 847-1018 or visit the museum Web site at www.museumofyachting.org.

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