



Press Release

The Rebirth of Britannia:

Iconic racing yacht to be recreated by The K1 Britannia Trust in aluminum with carbon spars and latest green technology

MONACO, September 26, 2018 — The K1 Britannia Trust today announced that it plans to embark on a stunning new rebuild with a modern enhancement of one of the most famous racing yachts of all time – *Britannia*. This beauty won hundreds of races against the classic giants during a four-decade career that ended with the passing of British monarch King George V in 1936.

Inspired by the vision of *Britannia's* designer GL Watson to push the boundaries of the possible, the Trust will incorporate Watson's original lines as the foundational design for a super yacht racing machine with the addition of an all-aluminum hull, carbon rig and the latest technologies in yacht racing to ensure it remains competitive for decades to come. In addition to racing competitively, the Trust is ensuring K1 *Britannia* reflects the noble spirit of her predecessor by serving as a flagship for good causes around the world.

“The Trust’s vision for K1 Britannia is to bring back to life this extraordinary vessel as a truly enduring racing machine and a force for good,” explained K1 Britannia trustee, Priya Thirumur. “As one of the most instantly recognizable classic yachts of all time, the future *Britannia* will be distinctively equipped for a new era of yachting while also serve as an international flagship for youth initiatives and maritime causes the world over. Our goal now is to start construction in early 2019 and unveil the celebrated yacht in all her new-found glory at the America’s Cup in New Zealand in 2021.”

K1 Britannia will be based on G L Watson’s original 1893 lines for the hull with modifications to conform with the J Class Association rules. Taking the latest ideas in terms of eco-conscious technology into account, her deck equipment, rigging and sail plan will be designed for high performance with modern materials so she could race competitively with the J Class Association fleet. Alongside her action on the regatta circuit, the yacht will be used to promote a wide range of charitable causes, exemplifying the nobility and spirit of *Britannia*.

The decision to commission a new rebuild of *Britannia* comes after several years of careful research and development work by the UK-based K1 Britannia Trust and various key partners from the super yacht world who are acting as consultants for the project.

An Incredible Racer

The 37-metre cutter *Britannia* was built in just four months for Queen Victoria’s son Albert Edward, the later Edward VII, by the D&W Henderson Yard in Scotland in 1893. Very fast, amazing to see, *Britannia's* home port for the next 43 years was Cowes on the Isle of Wight. She took on all the great first-class sailing yachts from home and abroad during this time, winning an incredible 231 wins out of the 635 races in which she competed and being placed in well over a hundred more.

King George V, who inherited Britannia as well as the throne after his father’s death in 1910, adored taking part in the regattas, often taking the helm himself. He also took very seriously the sense of awe and majesty that the yacht inspired among his subjects, investing a great deal of time and energy in keeping her race-ready and ahead of her time.

A prime example came in 1920 when the King initiated a revival of Big Class racing to blow away the post-war blues by having *Britannia* comprehensively refitted and re-rigged. He repeated the trick in 1931 at the dawn of the J Class era by giving his charge a Bermudan rig and the tallest wooden mast the world has ever seen. It was at this time that *Britannia* was presented with the flag number K1, and she spent the last five years taking on the very latest super-sailing yachts with distinction until both her and the King were laid to rest in 1936.

The Wisdom of GL Watson

While the first *Britannia* was scuttled at St. Catherine's Deep near the Isle of Wight, the desire to keep her at the cutting edge of racing will live on in the new K1 *Britannia*. Today's project will also reflect both the lines and the visionary views of original designer, GL Watson, who was a leading exponent of exploring new options for yachts at every opportunity.

"We have not exhausted the possibilities of form yet, and really know very little more about it than Solomon did, when he confessed his inability to understand 'the way of a ship in the sea'," Watson once famously wrote. "When we do arrive at perfection in shape, we can set to then look out for better material. The frames and beams, then, of my ideal ship shall be made of aluminum... — GL Watson *The Art and Science of Yacht Design* by Martin Black"

The Rebuild Journey

There has been a previous valiant attempt to bring *Britannia* back to life since 1993 when the Norwegian Sigurd Coates followed his dream of recreating an exact replica in wood. It took Sigurd and a dedicated team of boatbuilders at the Solombala shipyard in Archangel almost a decade to build the hull and interior. Unfortunately, just as they were ready to launch the yacht for outfitting, the project became enmeshed in a legal minefield in Russia for another five years.

By the time finally Sigurd was able to take possession of his *Britannia* and move her to Norway for completion the global recession had taken its toll financially. At this time, K1 *Britannia* offered to purchase the boat as a flagship for charity. Sigurd agreed to the sale and delivered *Britannia* to Cowes. Residents of the Isle of Wight were delighted to welcome her 'home' in early 2012 and the yacht was taken out of the water at the Southboats yard. The Trust invested in the scaffolding, cradle, tools and workmen required and work began in earnest on the final stages of the *Britannia* rebuild.

A second setback faced the rebuild when Southboats was liquidated in late 2012. All work stopped and *Britannia* was placed back in the water in 2013. This was a considerable obstacle for K1 *Britannia* which had invested considerable time, energy and funds to keep the rebuild moving forward.

Charitable Focus

While deciding on the next steps for the hull, the Trust team focused on the development of *Britannia*-inspired charitable projects in the UK and internationally. The Trust had been launched by individuals with a background in philanthropic projects and a shared passion for the maritime world. Among the many projects they undertook in honor of *Britannia* included a Personal Development & Maritime Skills Training Program conducted in the UK and a disaster relief project led by the Trust's sister charities — the K1 *Britannia* Foundation and K1 *Britannia* America — assisting residents of St. Maarten and Dominica in the wake of the Hurricanes Irma and Maria. Over the last few years, the Trust's charitable work with troubled and vulnerable youth through maritime and other programs has received international recognition.

A New Vision

Over the last years in Cowes, various surveyors carefully inspected *Britannia* and a full scope of the work for continuing the rebuild was undertaken. The K1 team decided to broaden its thinking as to the best type of replica and how they could fulfill the purpose of *Britannia* while ensuring *Britannia*'s relevance and stature in the modern sailing world. Based on research, and in the interest of sustainability, the Trust decided to follow the vision of GL Watson while also maximizing the best technology available to boat builders today.

“During her 43-year racing history *Britannia* was regularly modified to ensure that she stayed the fastest and most competitive possible boat of her type,” commented K1 Britannia trustee, Scott Ward. “While many think of her as a historical piece – and she certainly embodies the heritage of the racing days prior to World War II – *Britannia* was actually the F1 racing boat of her day.

“We have become convinced that if she had been built today for the same innovative owners and by the same visionary designer, they would have insisted on staying true to her competitive racing pedigree and leverage the latest technology. This is why we will retain the unrivalled hull lines of the original yacht and then build a replica that truly captures the spirit and performance of *Britannia* in every way.”

Key aspects of the modernized rebuild strategy include an all-aluminum hull and keel, a keel-stepped carbon mast, box boom and bowsprit, carbon continuous rigging, and green technologies.

As a sensational new member of the international regatta fleet, the spirit of *Britannia* will set sail in bolder ways as a beacon for charitable causes and green initiatives the world over. Her remarkable rebuild and charitable mission will incorporate K1 Britannia Trust’s boatbuilding training and apprenticeship programs, combining the beauty of its artistry and history with today’s racing requirements today and sailing technologies of tomorrow.

The Trust is delighted to have the encouragement of Sigurd Coates for their modernized rebuild plans and charitable ventures.

“I fully support the Trust’s wise decision to build a new aluminum hull for K1 Britannia,” said Coates. “Their design approach will give ‘The Greatest Sail-Yacht of all time’ a better chance to excel in competitive racing. I’m also delighted to see all of those involved in the K1 Britannia project equally dedicated to her potential as a global force for charitable causes.”

Next Steps

K1 Britannia will reveal further details and plans for the rebuild in the months ahead. One priority will be selecting corporate partners to be a part of this cherished and meaningful project and igniting K1 Britannia legacy for a new generation.

For more information go to” www.k1britannia.org. And visit Trust representatives at our tent at the Monaco Yacht Show: Location: QR12 / Quai Rainier IER.