

Life begins at 27 for MONSOON JAGUAR

Swan 65 / 030 MONSOON JAGUAR completes a clean sweep of line honours at the Rolex Swan Cup in Porto Cervo.

In the autumn of 2005, owner of Monsoon Jaguar, Peter Simon, was at dinner in London with Charles Dunstone, who had owned a Swan 86 for many years. Whilst discussing their respective yachting plans, Peter concluded that his existing, 27-year-old Swan 65 sloop could still offer rewarding cruising – and in addition give him the experience of a competitive campaign on the racecourse.

With clear objectives to have the fastest Swan 65 in the World and to be successful at the Rolex Swan Cup, Peter appointed VMG Projects to manage the refit and put a team together to race her. Matt Cowpe of VMG Projects has worked aboard a number of Swans, including Swan 48 SO FAR , Swan 59 DARK SWAN and Swan 86 HAMILTON.

Cowpe commented: “We were delighted to work on a project with clear direction and commitment from the owner. Although we had a focus on the Rolex Swan Cup, like most Swans the cruising program is an important part of Monsoon’s year. We wanted to use the opportunity to make cruising more rewarding for Peter and the yacht easier to sail generally”.

Cowpe and business partner Nick James conducted a review of Monsoon’s gear, sail plan and structure, developing specifications that would make her safe, reliable - and quick! This thorough survey and planning phase, with support from Nautor, ensured that there was a solid foundation for the upgrades to the rig, sails and rigging.

“The Swan 65 is an icon of her era with the most beautiful S&S lines. Whilst developing the specification for the refit, it was essential that we did not lose this spirit. Had we done so, whatever our results in Sardinia, I personally would have considered the project a failure.” explains Cowpe.

After collating data from naval architects, structural engineers, surveyors, sail designers and mast manufacturers, VMG Projects presented to the owner their plans shortly before Christmas 2005. At the core of the refit was the move to a new, taller aluminium mast with internal jack and rods replacing the existing wire rigging.

Her sails and rigging would use modern materials including some carbon and vectran and the hull would benefit from over 600 man hours of fairing and preparation. The rest of the work was to ensure that structurally the yacht would be sound with chainplates and deck gear upgraded to handle the increased loads and reduced

stretch in the materials. The deck layout would be modernised slightly and equipment such as the pedestal grinder would be removable opening up the cockpit whilst cruising.

In April 2006 MONSOON JAGUAR was re-launched - her new mast and deck gear immediately looking "right" in the boat. The simplification of the deck layout appeared to take years off her and during her early sail trials she certainly had a new spring in her step.

The Rolex Giraglia in St Tropez was the first chance to get a race crew aboard and to shake down in preparation for Sardinia later in the summer. Her potential became immediately apparent when in Race 1 she was the first Swan in the results, beating America's Cup legend Russell Coutts in the process. A complete wind shutdown, with only a handful of yachts finishing race 2, scuppered chances for overall honours in the no-discard series. But with Peter Simon in his first regatta at the helm, his yacht comfortably won the vintage yacht trophy.

"It was amazing to see a yacht I have owned for so many years and sailed so often transformed in this way", commented Simon, "The crew we had aboard handled her so well with numerous changes and manoeuvres carried out flawlessly"

During the summer, MONSOON reverted to cruising mode sailing in the Balearics. "I am really pleased with her performance whilst cruising. I am able to sail her much more now. In the predominantly light Mediterranean winds she still sails along nicely, where as in the past she just stopped" enthused Simon.

After the summer cruising, the VMG Projects team oversaw a quick changeover back to race mode and final preparation prior to the Rolex Swan Cup 2006. The event was again to prove testing for boats and crew with conditions ranging from 5 to 35 knots – a real classic Porto Cervo event. Racing in the Classic Division, MONSOON JAGUAR was never beaten to the first mark, winning line honours everyday and frequently overtaking yachts of the same size or larger in the Grand Prix division who started 10 minutes ahead.

But does Peter Simon have the World's fastest Swan 65? Well so far so good – and by some margin if the results at Porto Cervo are anything to go by. MONSOON JAGUAR finished on the water, on average, over 50 minutes ahead of her sister ships across the week.

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Photograph copyright Fabio Taccola. Monsoon Jaguar powers her way to victory in race 3 (Long Race) Rolex Swan Cup.



Photograph copyright Fabio Taccola. Peter Simon helms Monsoon Jaguar in race 3 (Long Race) Rolex Swan Cup.





Photograph copyright Fabio Taccola. Peter Simon at the helm of Monsoon Jaguar. Rolex Swan Cup



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