

## ANITRA V SQUADRON CLASSIC

BY PHILIP BROWN



**Anitra V under her original cutter rig, San Pedro, California 1959. From the Halvorsen Family Archives.**

The month of December 2021 is particularly significant for the yacht *Anitra V* because it marks the 65th anniversary of her launch in 1956 at the Ryde boatyard of Lars Halvorsen Sons. She is a 38 foot timber yacht, designed by Trygve Halvorsen and built in the Halvorsen boatyard, for the two youngest Halvorsen brothers Magnus and Trygve for ocean racing.

The story of *Anitra V* represents an era of yacht racing and design in the mid 1950s which was pushing new boundaries by innovative thinkers such as Trygve and Magnus Halvorsen to make faster ocean racing yachts.

Long distance ocean racing off the east coast of Australia was still a relatively young post war sport with the Sydney to Hobart Race up to the 12th edition by 1956. For the Halvorsen Brothers, *Anitra V* was their fifth yacht (hence the 'V' in the name) and the fourth boat built specifically to race offshore, in Australia and America, and especially

in the Sydney to Hobart Race. Their previous boats – *Saga* 1946, *Peer Gynt* 1947 and *Solveig* 1950 were each a development of their thinking about designs and their experiences racing those previous boats, however, with the Halvorsen family boatyard, they had the facility to continue building new and better boats.

*Anitra V* differed from previous boats as her hull construction was of lightweight Western Cedar using the American inspired strip planking method of construction with fewer frames combined with new material technology to cover the soft timber. The planking is 1¼ inch x 1¼ inch concave/convex shaped, edge glued and edge nailed with three inch copper nails so that each nail is fastened through three planks, effectively stitching the planks together with copper. The whole hull from keel to toe rail was sheathed with Dynel (then a new woven acrylic fabric) combined with polyester resin (epoxy resins were developed in the early 1960s). In 1996 the Dynel sheathing was replaced with triaxial fibreglass cloth in epoxy resin, making the sheathing much stronger on the, then, 40 year old boat.

Like their earlier boats *Peer Gynt* and *Solveig* and later *Freya*, *Anitra V* is a double ender, and like *Solveig*, she has a free hung rudder positioned just under the canoe stern, well aft of the keel.

In contrast to the lightweight hull construction, the solid teak deck and coach house on *Anitra V* are quite traditional with a raised doghouse accommodating the galley. The mast is deck stepped onto a cast aluminium plate with a compression post between the deck and keel.

Halvorsens had a stockpile of recycled teak from the thick decks of the *Tingira*, a 75 year old Clyde built square rigger hulk which was broken up in Sydney in 1941. So the generous use of teak in Halvorsen cruisers and yachts was a luxury they could incorporate.

The Halvorsen brothers had great success racing *Anitra V* with an overall win in the 1957 Hobart Race and second places in 1956, 1958 and 1959. As they had done twice with *Solveig*, in 1959 they shipped the yacht to Los Angeles to compete in the 2,225nm TransPac race to Hawaii, after which Magnus, Trygve and Trevor Gowland sailed her back to Sydney in time to compete in the CYCA Blue Water Series and the 1959 Hobart Race.

In her 65 years, *Anitra V* has had four owners but the last two have owned her for the last 55. After sailing her hard for four and a half years, the Halvorsen Brothers sold her to Jim Samson (then also owner of *Lauriana*) in 1960. By then the Halvorsen Brothers had built their next boat *Norla* which they raced in the 1960 Hobart Race (5th) and won the 1961 Trans Tasman Race.

Jim Samson did very well in his first Hobart Race coming fourth in the 1961 race. He competed in

the '62 and '63 Hobarts with *Anitra V* and enjoyed sailing her until 1965 when the boat was sold to Garfield Barwick, later Sir Garfield Barwick, who was famous for being Australia's longest serving High Court Chief Justice. Barwick's Sailing Master, Dudley Stewart, took charge of the boat maintenance and crew for racing *Anitra V*. They raced her in six consecutive Hobarts from 1967 to 1972 and in many of the CYCA Blue Water Series races in those years. After an *interregnum* of 22 years since the last Hobart Race entry in 1972, Dudley pulled together a crew (average age of 68) and prepared the boat for one final Hobart Race – the 50th in 1994 along with 370 other yachts. Racing in the 30 Year Veterans Division, they made the finish after five and a half days, despite the long slog in 50kt Southerlies, and managed to avoid the list of 63 retirements. It was soon after this event that the custodianship of *Anitra V* was passed to me in May 1995.

The last race sailed under Dudley Stewart as Skipper was the CYCA Veterans Race in 1995 with me aboard as part of his crew. He steered the boat to a clear win on handicap. It was Dudley's last contact with the boat, and I motored her back to Mosman Bay to her new mooring. Sadly, within two years both Dudley and Sir Garfield had died aged 74 and 94 respectively.

The handover was the start of a new era for *Anitra V* under my ownership which is now 26 years and getting closer to Barwick's 30 year ownership.

In the first five years of ownership we sailed her in the less demanding coastal races to Coffs Harbour, Southport and Mooloolaba, then in 1998 we took her in the Lord Howe Island Race. During those years we raced regularly on Sydney Harbour with the Sydney Amateur Sailing Club (SASC). In 1996, the boat came out of the water for several months for a major upgrade/refit at Noakes' yard, undertaken by Ian Anstee with assistance from Sean Langman and his team. In the winter of 2013 she was back at Noakes for a second major renovation after 17 more years, having been hit by an out of control party ferry in Mosman Bay whilst sitting quietly on her mooring.

After moving from North Sydney to the country in 2001, and being distracted by farming businesses and summer harvests, I did not race *Anitra V* regularly for a decade. However, we did fit in some challenging coastal cruising and regular trips to Broken Bay.

We started racing the boat again regularly in 2011 with the SASC Classic Division and since then have taken the boat to Lord Howe Island four times with Nigel Stoke's annual November cruise, and to Tasmania for an 11 week cruise to participate in the 2017 Australian Wooden Boat Festival, including sailing around to Port Davey and Bathurst Harbour on the West Coast.



*Anitra V* loaded on deck of cargo ship in Sydney ready to depart for Los Angeles

Trygve Halvorsen, Captain Tiffin, Magnus Halvorsen, Trevor Gowland, Stan Darling  
From the Halvorsen Family Archives.

We have also enjoyed numerous trips north to Newcastle, Port Stephens, Broughton Island and Coffs Harbour in the last decade. I have continued to race the boat regularly in the SASC Classic Division plus in other annual Classic boat events including the CYCA Veteran and pre-S2H Classic Regatta, Australia Day Regatta, Newport Classic Regatta, Balmain Regatta and the Squadron Cruise.

I feel privileged to be the custodian of *Anitra V* which has given me and so many 'Friends of Anitra' great pleasure. The boat has been the platform for plenty of great sailing adventures. Many Members of the Squadron and the Amateurs, and many friends have had the pleasure of sailing on *Anitra V* over the past 26 years and we look forward to decades more great sailing on her.

*Anitra V* is a truly special classic yacht, and I am forever grateful to Trygve and Magnus Halvorsen for their creation of this wonderful sailing boat. ⚓

Admiral's Cup Anniversary Regatta  
December 2017.

