

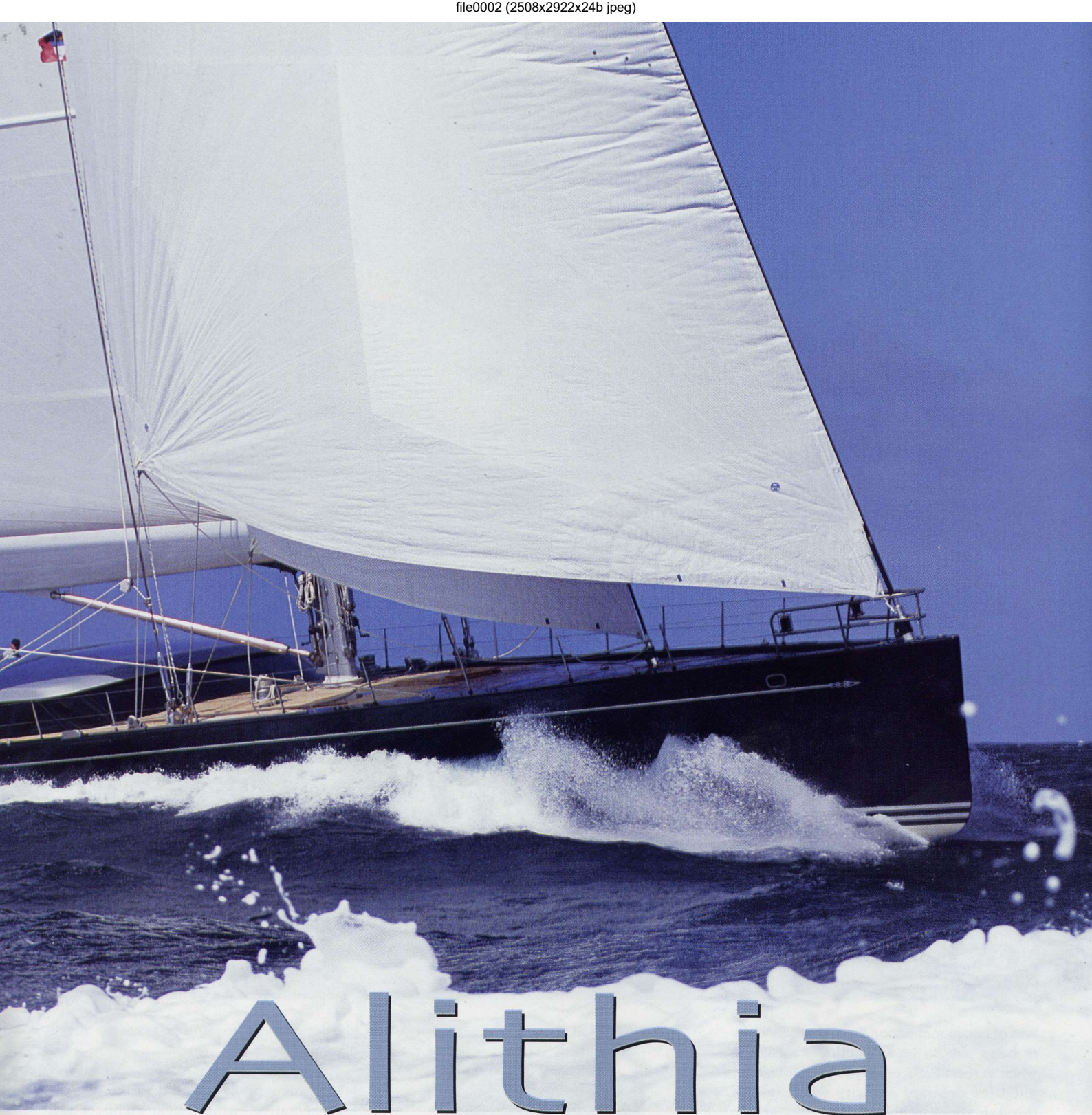
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With the help of a highly specialist team and crew, one family has realised their dream of exploring the far reaches of the world in a totally unique yacht. **Andrew Blatter** goes aboard in Antigua. Photography by **Tom Nitsch**



As she enters Antigua's Falmouth harbour, fresh from her very first ocean passage, one look at her incredibly striking, sleek profile with flush decks and plumb bow, already sets *Alithia* aside from any grain of superyacht normality – for this is a one-of-a-kind ground-breaking yacht, and behind it, a quite extraordinary dream.



Alithia

First and foremost, it is a story of an amazingly visionary and close husband and wife team, who sold their home and broke down all the barriers and expectations of a more normal western lifestyle to pursue an inspirational dream for themselves and for their family of five young children by sailing around the world. With the aim of

– and with the support of a team of teachers, scientists and professional yacht crew – they have set out to visit some of the world's most remote island communities in order to understand and communicate with these people and to see first hand the beauty, diversity, harmony and challenges of nature.

In order to make the dream come true

capacity that could not only sail anywhere and take good care of the crew, but be as simple and practical as possible so as to be maintained by that same crew in isolated locations. Living quarters needed to be comfortable, as this was to be a home, yet would also need to be extensive in order to accommodate the large crew, including



was of paramount importance – both in terms of being able to be self-sufficient medically when in remote places and also regarding the need for onboard security when sailing through some of the world's less stable political areas.

As the owners' first ever yacht, they were in the unique position of being able to address the whole design phase with a totally unfettered, non-conceptual approach that challenged the necessity for any superfluous equipment onboard. Simplicity, purity and innovation were the goals to be achieved by focusing only on the 'essential'. Thus the concept for the design was born. The next



challenge was to find a team to make it happen.

The highly experienced project manager Jens Cornelsen was selected as the owners' representative, while naval architect Bill Tripp was chosen after the owners had completed a previous transatlantic crossing aboard one of his designs. Tripp was given the brief to design a 'real' sailing yacht using all the latest technology available, that 'one could stand, feel and steer' as opposed to the more usual power cruiser that many large sailing yacht designs evolve into. Andrew Winch was assigned the task of designing the pure lines of the profile and superstructure –



Left: light streams into the uncluttered saloon from four portholes and the overhead pilothouse windows

Above: the aft cabin is unusually designated as a school room and dormitory

Bottom: dining for ten with a view



both exterior and interior – with a brief to reduce everything to the ‘essential’. Finally, Abeking and Rasmussen were contracted for the build, as one of the best respected shipyards in the industry.

Construction for the 39.8 metre sloop got underway in June 2000, with the high grade aluminium Alustar being used to provide a strong and reliable lightweight hull form, that was just ten tonnes heavier than a composite equivalent. At her launch in March 2002, all the long and exhausting hours, days and months put in by her dedicated team finally came to fruition, as the next stage of the dream became reality. Named *Alitbia* after the Greek word for truth/truthfulness, she became the very fulfilment of her most simplistic, purist brief. From her sleek dark blue hull and sweeping metallic silver deckhouse, to her minimalist, uncluttered teak decks – she looks every bit the purposeful, stylish yacht her owners had intended.

Down below, one is immediately taken by the beautifully light and voluminous interior, with a most homogeneous and cohesive feel throughout. Andrew Winch worked closely with the owners to create an interior using blending fabrics, a painted Canadian maplewood interior and an abundance of natural light, providing a wonderfully calm and relaxing atmosphere that runs freely throughout the yacht.

All the accommodation areas have their own air conditioning units, satellite telephone and intercom communications and discreet indirect lighting. Foremost are two comfortable mirror-image cabins to port and starboard accommodating four crew members, with two separate shower



The portside master cabin is pure and simple, with plenty of light, space and storage. The en suite shower room has striking stand-alone glass washbasins and backlit mirrors

rooms. Aft of these to port is a comfortable crew mess that has its own video entertainment system, alarm monitoring unit and B&G repeater, with a teak step ladder giving direct deck access through a large hatch just forward of the mast.

The captain and his wife have a double cabin situated to starboard, which has plenty of natural light. Here one begins to feel the benefit of increased beam, with its good stowage and feeling of space. The same eye-catching shower room design runs throughout the yacht and all feature beautifully simple stand-alone washbasins with mirrored cupboards incorporating attractive backlighting.

Heading aft to port, there is a well thought out galley, with an abundance of workspace and dedicated stowage for all utensils. It is



system. This informs the 24-hour stand-by doctor at an international SOS company in South Africa of the patients temperature, heartbeat, pulse and blood pressure, while allowing full two-way interaction during an onboard operation.

The saloon itself, is the yacht's entertainment centre, with Bose surround sound stereo, a JVC video and a DVD player, low level coffee tables, informal seating and plenty of natural light and ventilation from four opening portholes looking out across the water. Steps lead up into the deck saloon which offers panoramic views at deck level and incorporates a gull-wing opening glass section to port and starboard, giving a wonderfully natural airflow for tropical climes. The large dining table to port offers ample seating for ten. To starboard, the navigation station, communications centre, and systems monitoring and alarms are subtly blended into the interior.

Heading aft and down some steps, there are two almost identical light and simple cabins to starboard for the teachers, with a shared shower room.

Continuing aft down the centreline passageway, to port one finds the most unpretentious yet beautifully light and relaxing owners cabin. The double bed is appointed with the most delightful cream custom cotton linen by Frette of Italy, while the stylishly simple shower room uses the same theme of double stand-alone glass sink units and backlit mirrors.

Aftmost in the accommodation is one of the yacht's most memorable concepts – a full-beam six berth children's cabin, set around a central working table for their schooling, with its own laundry and shower room. It is here in the children's cabin that

you can see how the whole dream came together – with the aid of the two specialist teachers onboard and the maintaining of advanced audio-visual and multi-media infrastructure links via satellite to the French National Centre for Distance Learning – the whole broad educational concept suddenly becomes real. Indeed there are no less than 14 laptops available and 24 outlet ports installed throughout the yacht, with two wireless LAN networks, to give complete roaming access with a laptop anywhere on board. Furthermore, crew members can communicate with each other through two of the yacht's onboard servers.

Returning back up the centreline passageway and down more steps to port is the engine room. As the heart of the yacht's power systems, it is a voluminous area with good headroom and stowage that allows plenty of space for service access. It holds a 570hp MTU main engine and two MTU generators, an HEM 12,000 litre per day watermaker and a Hamann waste

also well equipped with a Miele microwave, and gimballed oven, waste compactor, express dishwasher, two refrigerators, two freezers plus a longer term stowage freezer located under the sole boards.

Off to starboard is the multi-functional library which, besides offering an extensive range of books to read, also doubles as extra guest accommodation by pulling out the settee to form a double berth. It also has its own shower room, which itself doubles as a superb full height stowage rack for fresh fruit and vegetables while passagemaking. Even more remarkably, the room also transforms into the yacht's medical centre with the provision of a ready stowed, custom-fitted operating table and appropriate equipment to allow for intravenous drips, oxygen supply and a real-time satellite television monitoring



(on board >

treatment plant.

For some sunshine and fresh air, the deck can be accessed at various points on the yacht, including a teak step-ladder directly from the children's cabin. Once up top, one is immediately overcome by the clean look, the flush hatches and the vast amount of deck space available, as the hull design carries the full beam all the way aft. The working cockpit has two steering pedestals, B&G Hydra 2000 displays and four screens upon which the Transas navigation, radar and systems monitoring and alarms can be displayed. All the hydraulic sail handling hardware is made by Rondal, while the impressive 49.1m Marten Marine carbon mast and in-boom furling, houses a fully battened North mainsail.

Two large cockpit tables fold out to meet each other on the centreline to form a superb large dining area with plenty of seating which receives shade from a cockpit bimini. To ensure the crew are kept cool at all times, a wet bar houses cold drinks.

Back aft, a large full beam transom door lowers to the waterline to launch anything from a variety of exciting watersports equipment,



including two laser sailing dinghies.

Underway, *Alithia* has proved herself beyond doubt, as the owner testified sailing her upwind at 12 knots with just one hand on the wheel in 35 knots of wind. Bill Tripp designed her hull to be ultra fast, by combining the latest technologies with proven hull and foil shapes to create a yacht that sails on the water, not through it. A ten day transatlantic passage has already set the pace for things to come, with *Alithia* having registered a top speed in excess of 17 knots, in the capable hands of her highly experienced captain Graham Pearson and his wife Olivia. Two of the crew are British ex-military and will be looking after all aspects of the yacht's security with the help of infra-red passive beams and a Provilight camera system onboard. They are also advanced paramedics – trained to 'operations standards', so will be well placed to look after their fellow crew members via telemedicine should the need arise.

Ultimately, one cannot fail to admire the



whole concept in its entirety. The owners own personal dedication is impressive, from sourcing the right people to build them their perfect custom yacht and organising a first class team of professionals to sail the yacht in some challenging waters, to accommodating a crew qualified to look after them at all times

and providing teachers with the latest electronic means to give their children the real meaning of *Alithia*... a truthfully authentic experience of diversity, respect and friendship, with children meeting children and other families on the most remote islands of the planet. □

ALITHIA**LOA**

39.8m

LWL

35.2m

Beam (max)

8.38m

Draught (centreboard up/down)

4.0m/6.35m

Displacement

130 tonnes

Spars

Marten Marine

Sailmaker

North Sails

Sail areasmainsail 444m²genoa 317m²staysail 99m²gennaker 882m²**Engine**

MTU-6R 183 TE 93 (570hp)

Fuel capacity

12,000 litres

Water capacity

3,950 litres

Generators

2 x MTU-6R 099 AZ51

Bow and stern thrusters

Max Power (60hp) PTO

off main engine

Watermakers

HEM 30/3200

(12,000 litres per day)

Waste treatment system

Hamann

Entertainment systems

BOSE

Security systems

Infra-red passive beams

and Provilight camera

system

Paint system

Awlgrip

Hull construction

Alustar

Air conditioning

Heinen Et Hopmann using

Marine Air Systems**Navigation systems**

B&G Hydra 2000

Transas Navisailor 3000

electronic charting

Communications

SSB 2 x Satcom B Satcom

C Satcom Mini M

Classification

Germanischer Lloyd

Project management

Jens Cornelsen

Naval architect

Bill Tripp Design Inc.

Exterior & interior styling

Andrew Winch Designs Ltd

Builder/year

Abeking Et Rasmussen/2002

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