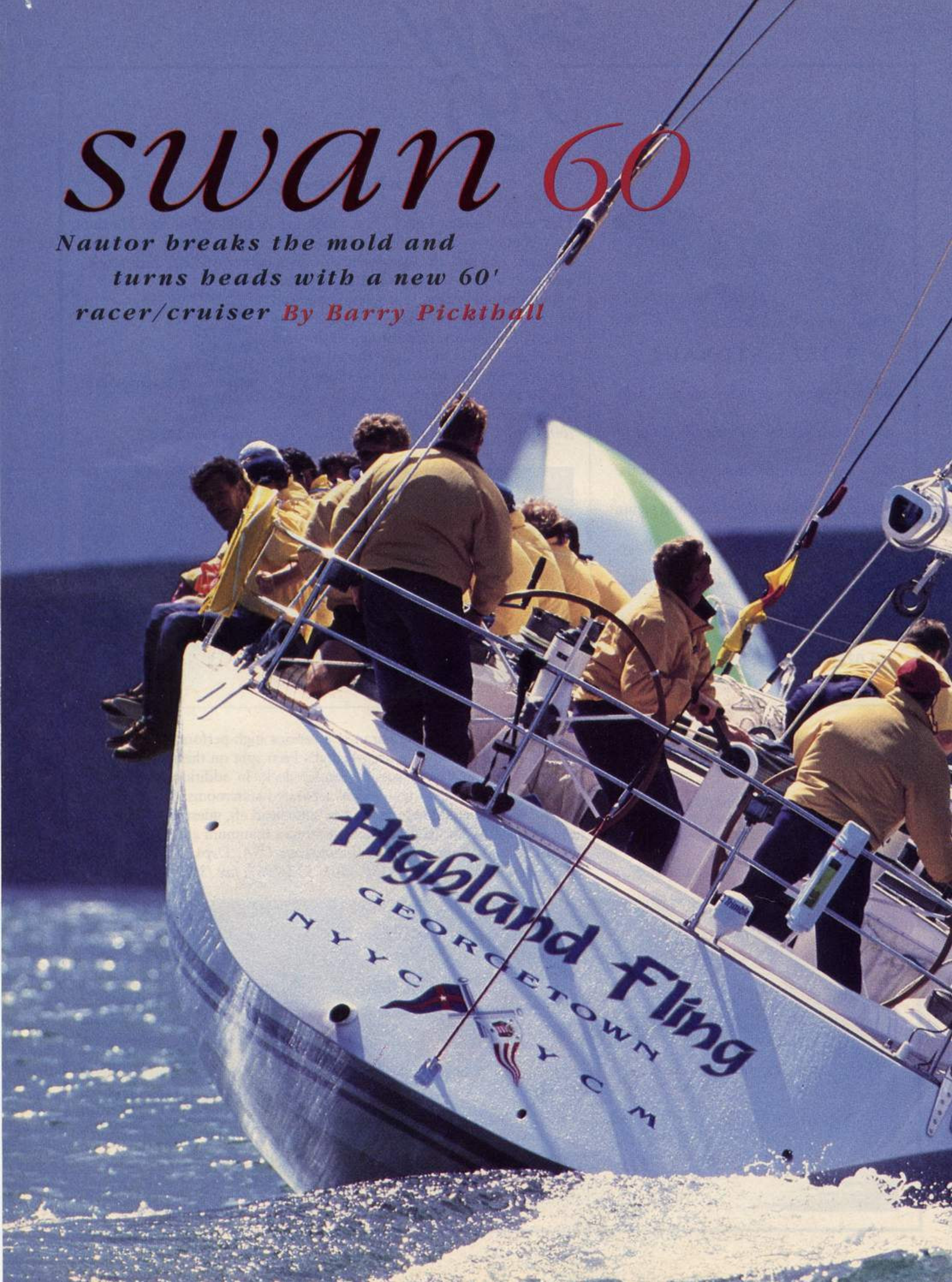


SWAN 60

*Nautor breaks the mold and
turns heads with a new 60'
racer/cruiser **By Barry Pickthall***





The new Swan 60 is fast
and light on her feet.

Highland Fling is a signifi-
cant departure for Nautor.

She's been collecting lots of
silver in Europe.

TWO YEARS AGO, IRVINE LAIDLAW brought his Swan 53, *Highland Fling*, across the Atlantic to YACHTING's Key West Race Week. With her center-board design, she was better equipped for cruising than racing, but she surprised everyone by winning her PHRF division and top honors in the regatta. Laidlaw's latest *Highland Fling*, the first Swan 60, has been sweeping up silver in Europe and many suspect the new Nautor CHS/PHRF racer/cruiser could be a threat this year at Key West.

Highland Fling marks a radical departure from the traditional Nautor's Swan image. She is the first of a new breed of racer/cruiser designs from the board of Argentine designer German Frers that the Finnish builder hopes will bring the Swan name back to the forefront in competitive racing circles. The results posted so far by Laidlaw and crew suggest that designer and builder have more than met the brief.

At last year's Ford Cork Week in Ireland, the Swan 60 (actually, she is almost 62' overall) chalked up a perfect score with five straight wins just one week after her initial

sea trials, then went on to win the Swan World Championship in Sardinia. This domination looked set to continue at the Nioulargue autumn regatta at Saint Tropez. But in the second race, Laidlaw's high-profile assault was brought to a standstill just short of the finish when her carbon-fiber rig suddenly came crashing down after she had established a 4-minute lead over the fleet.

Weight control was a her in racing trim. light that ballast

The failure led to a rethink within the Laidlaw crew about carbon-fiber race rigs, which carry a heavy penalty under the CHS and are banned altogether under the IMS rule.

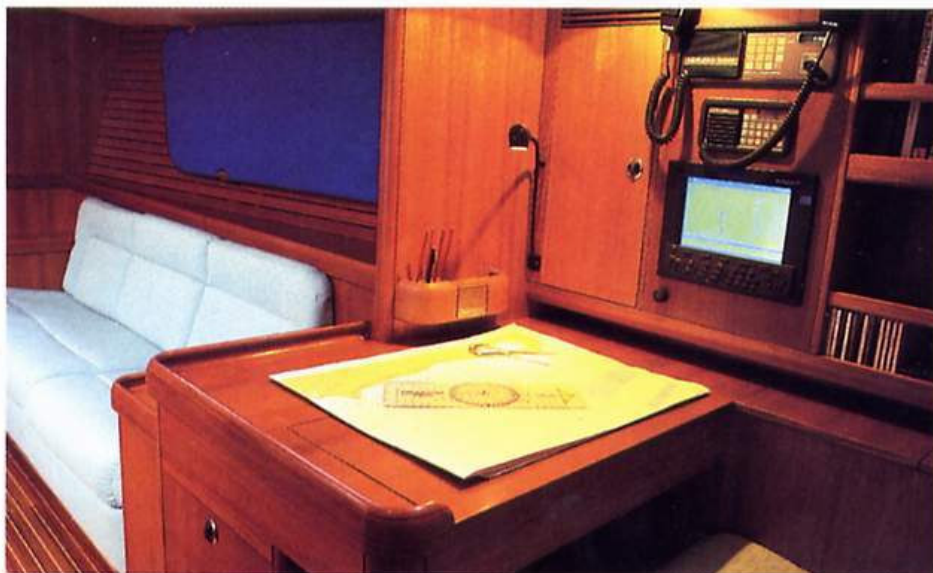
Laidlaw originally specified a carbon spar because he felt the benefits of a 30-percent weight saving and the resulting reduction in pitching motion would more than compensate for the extra cost and rating increase. Also, he firmly believes that materials like carbon fiber should be encouraged in a modern race rule. He felt there was no better way of making that statement than on a production boat like a Swan.

The rulemakers within the Offshore Racing Council failed to see his point at their November conference in London, and chose to retain the carbon ban for another year at least. As a result, *Highland Fling* is bound for Key West with an alloy rig weighing 150 kilos more than the original carbon model.

According to Frers, the change will have an adverse affect on stability, which the rules do not fully compensate for, and the boat will not be as fast at Key West as she has been in Europe unless conditions are flat. Laidlaw's crew is bullish enough to believe she will still be more than a match for the top American designs.

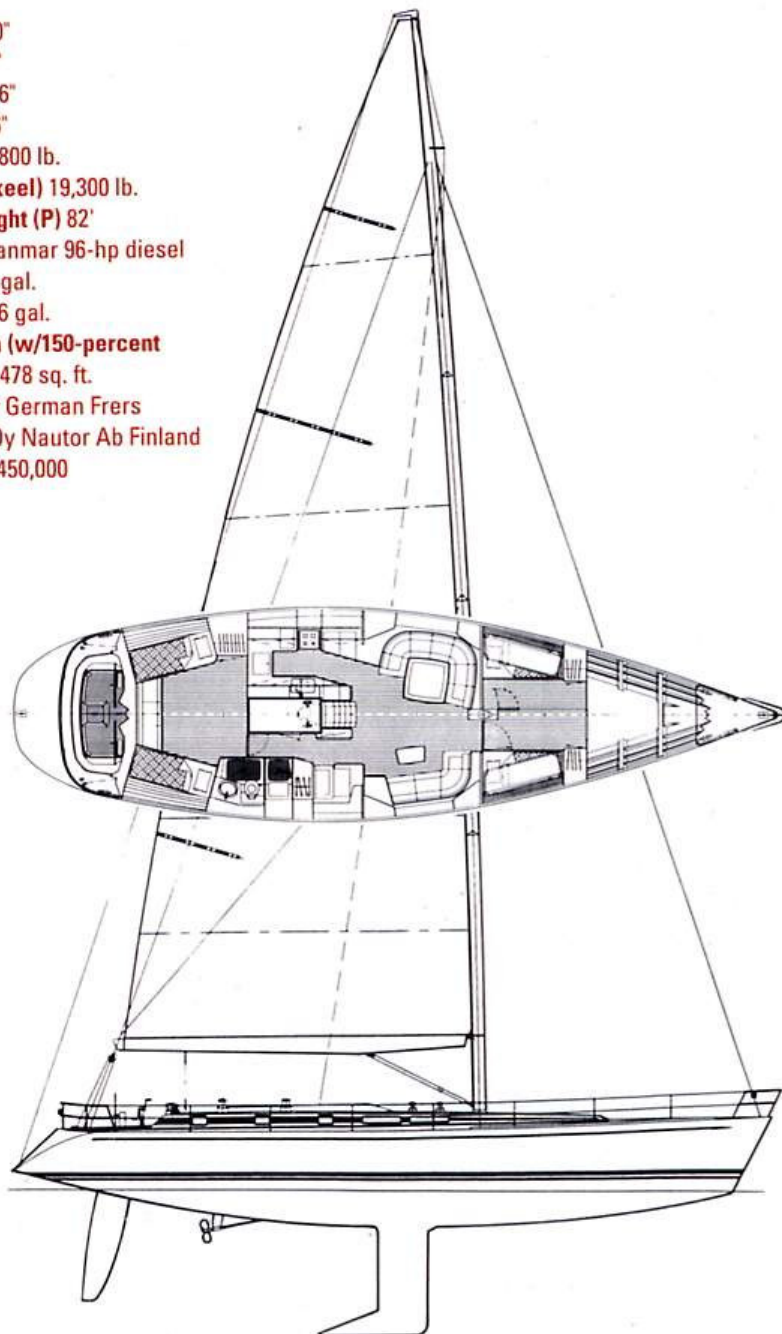
Sailing *Highland Fling* in the Solent, I found her a delight, and indeed, a significant departure from Nautor tradition. Light on the wheel and remarkably responsive to the slightest tweak of the sheets, we were soon displaying a clean wake to other yachts around us. Her twin-wheel configuration—another first on a Swan—provides a clear view of the sails and traffic ahead when one is steering from either the windward or leeward side. The yacht's clean deck arrangement is a particular delight to work on. Nautor's traditional teak decking is retained, but like everything else with this design, the weight implications of such statements of style are deceptive. Under Laidlaw's direction, Frers and his highly experienced struc-

Her twin-wheel configuration provides a clear view of the sails and traffic ahead. Her teak below is, in fact, a highly polished top veneer of high-tech aircraft-standard foam sandwich board.



tural design engineer, Graham 'Frizzle' Freeman, worked hard to retain the conservative aspects both above and belowdecks that have set Swans apart, without sacrificing speed. *Highland Fling's* teak decking for instance is a mere 6mm thick and two-thirds the weight of a traditional Swan deck. Below, her lavish teak interior and exquisite marquetry is equally illusory. What you see

LOA 61'10"
LWL 50'5"
Beam 17'6"
Draft 11'6"
Displ. 51,800 lb.
Ballast (keel) 19,300 lb.
Mast height (P) 82'
Engine Yanmar 96-hp diesel
Fuel 52.8 gal.
Water 116 gal.
Sail Area (w/150-percent genoa) 2,478 sq. ft.
Designer German Frers
Builder Oy Nautor Ab Finland
Price \$1,450,000



**priority for keeping
*She came in so
 bad to be added.***

is simply the highly polished top veneer of a high-tech aircraft standard foam sandwich board. Remarkably, the weight of furniture represents a 50-percent savings over a standard Swan fit-out.

THE REMARKABLE ASPECT OF THIS boat, which has such outstanding racing credentials, is her interior design. It not only boasts a full owner's stateroom with double and single sea berth, but a huge galley with fridge/freezer, spacious saloon with liquor cabinet and separate crew quarters. She also has a full head and separate shower stall.

A great deal of thought has gone into this boat, some of it, like the novel removable bow cleat, stemhead roller and anchor windlass for racing, are clear to see. Other items like the hull structure laminated from biaxial and unidirectional glass, Kevlar and vinylester resin, produced such radical weight savings that this first yacht needed 3,500 kilos of internal ballast to bring her down to her design marks. That is more than enough to cover the extras required for later cruising versions without sapping boatspeed.

The cruising version carries a masthead rig and has the option of a shallow-draft fin keel or lifting centerboard foil that reduces draft to 6'6". This boat is also given the full Swan treatment with three double-berth cabins each with a head and shower stall en suite.

The lasting impression I have from my day on *Highland Fling* is that here at last is a racing boat that can double as a family cruiser without compromising either extreme. If that concept is a throwback to the early '70s, then good, for it was during this era that Nautor's Swan first established a reputation for winning and cruising in style. Like many owners who have walked away from the discomfort of IOR racing during the past decade, I hope it is a trend that other builders will follow. □

Contact: Oy Nautor Ab, Dept. Y, Box 10, 68601 Pietarsaari, Finland. 011-358-67-7601-111; fax 011-358-67-7667-364.



The yacht's clean deck arrangement is a particular delight to work on. Her original carbon rig failed and was replaced with a heavier aluminum model. The impact on speed over the racecourse remains to be seen.

Illustrations by Richard Pacemino; Bottom photo by David Brangato/PFL