

One Eighty Magnus Campaign St Helena Regatta 2024 - Written by Janet Cotton

The Boat

Magnus was previously Majimoto II and I bought her from Paul Mare in 2018. The boat was renamed Magnus which means Master of the Magical Arts. She is a Farr 38 Mod designed by Bruce Farr in 1991 and built by Ajax Yachts in 1993 originally for Geoff Meek. I don't think that there is any member of RCYC that has not sailed on her at some point when she was Majimoto II so she has a long history and has somehow touched many sailors lives at some point or another.

Having taken over ownership of her, it was decided that she needed a total refit to get her ready to race and be competitive again. I must admit it took a lot of convincing by my partner Paul Swanepoel to take on this project with no way to tell how long it would take and what it would cost. I could not as an engineer plot out the milestones, create a gantt chart or price what would be required. As a result, it was a decision of passion and not of logic to take on this project. She would also have to live up to her new name.

One Eighty is the only Materials Engineering Consulting Company in Africa with a SANAS ISO 17025 Accredited Laboratory and uniquely Bureau Veritas Marine and Offshore Approved. Our work ranges from routine QA/QC testing for weld procedure qualifications for large subsea fabrications for the Oil and Gas industry in Africa, with Angola being our largest market. It also includes all necessary testing for all the metal alloys, composites, polymers, glass, paint coating, all corrosion coatings, ceramic materials and the list goes on. The industry sectors are diverse including food and beverage, packaging, ship repair, oil and gas, mining, agriculture, medical devices, boat building, defense, electrical circuit boards, pharmaceuticals, and many more (we recently tested dog leashes). QA/QC testing is our bread and butter but the jam and cream is the real rocket science. We bring high level technology to real life problems through our highly talented consulting engineers. All engineering problems eventually come down to the materials that were used for the failed item. As such as Materials Engineers we need to get around mechanical engineering, civil engineering, chemical engineering, electrical engineering, biomedical engineering and so on.

I mention this as we are the main sponsors of Magnus for St Helena, but also as I took on this project I thought of the words of the Samurai fighter Musashi – “Everything exists within”. Faced with my decision of passion, and not logic, I knew that I had enough materials engineering experience to tackle this project and somehow make the budget work.

We started by stripping every single fitting off her, when I say every single fitting I mean stanchions, jammers, winches, the mast, absolutely everything. We left one eye fitting to tie her up to the marina. We developed a resin filled with alumina powder in the lab, which I tested and found to have 60MPa compressive strength. We drilled through every single hole in the boat, and filled it with this resin we developed. We then spent several months just sanding her down, weekend after weekend, until finally she was ready for the gel coat and then to fit every fitting back on the way we wanted it.

Due to the age and condition of the deck, I decided that every fitting needed backing plates, but they also had to be super light. I chose a duplex stainless steel, in the cold worked condition called “LDX”. Super duplex stainless steels have three times the strength of normal austenitic stainless steel used for stanchions and etc, which essentially has no mechanical strength. The super duplex in the cold worked condition has even better strength than normal duplex range which is not cold worked. This meant the backing plates could be 2mm thick. All fittings including stanchions were fitted with LDX plate.

This is just one example of the many things we did as a labour of love for the decision of passion that I made in April of 2018.

With the business growing in Africa, we found ourselves with little time to close out all the snags until one day the False Bay Yacht Club team contacted us and asked if they could use Magnus for the Lipton Cup. With the highly capable crew, all these snags were sorted out, and what a great opportunity to test Magnus to her limits. And indeed, a great outcome to have achieved 4th Place in the Regatta for False Bay Yacht Club with Jason Mills Skippering Magnus in the race.

This led to the decision to enter the St Helena Race. Here are the biographies of our stellar crew taking her to St Helena:

Our skipper – Evert Groenewald

Evert has sailed extensively around the Southern African coastline from Pemba, Mozambique to Walvis Bay, Namibia. From 1996 to 2015. He sailed competitively for the SA Navy also over this period nationally and internationally on keelboats and dinghies. He obtained his Yacht master offshore qualification in 2005.

Evert says he was privileged enough to have had John Martin, Hano Teuteberg and Roley Brown as mentors to name but a few. Highlights have been several Vasco da Gama races, Cape to Rio in 2000 and 2006, Governor's Cup 2002 and 2004.

Crew Member – Danie Pretorius

Danie Pretorius started sailing in 2013 when he joined the SA Navy. He never even knew what a keel boat or even a Dingy was and how it moves through the water. It blew his mind that the resultant force between the aerofoil and hydrofoil could make a boat move forward.

Sailing onboard the L26 Blue Tango 2 representing GBYC in 2014 and obtaining a 5th place after having to work painstakingly through the night because of the boat being dropped out of her slings at weigh in and having to replace the whole mast the night before the first race.

Danie says "Sailing onboard vessels like Fast 42, Stud 34, Quartertonner and L26s for the inshore and offshore races I obtained my WP Sailing Colours in 2017 / 2018 season. I also obtained my coastal skippers during this time frame".

He says further, "A new chapter in sailing started when friends acquired a Far38 with the intent of doing the 2023 Cape2Rio race. A lot of work went into the boat in preparation for Rio, but being a Shipwright by trade it's more of a passion than work."

Danie finishes by saying "One never knows how small you truly are until you are out on the open ocean with miles of nothingness around you, but it makes you appreciate the small things in life knowing the power that ones mind possesses and the strength you gain facing and overcoming all of these challenges makes us who and what we are today."

Crew Member – De Wet Nel

De Wet has been sailing from a young age, which started off on Oppies and Hulcats, but his sailing really started progressing when he joined the Navy in 2007. He sailed the very

competitive Laser class for many years where he achieved a 5th at national level as his best result and also having competed in many other dinghy events at Nation level. Over the years, he has competed in multiple Lipton events, with their best result being a 3rd for FBYC.

DeWet's sailed on Seaboard for his first Governors Cup event and won the monohull division and thereafter he has done multiple St Helena races. He has also the opportunity to compete in a few Cape to Rio races and achieved 1st place in the cruising class onboard the yacht Avanti as they achieved fist on line honours, first on handicap and fist yacht across the Meridian. As for local racing, De Wet says he has been blessed to have sailed onboard some of the best yachts in the country with some of the best sailors in the country such as Windpower2, Phoenix, Cape31's, Warrior and Hollard (DHL Speed of Yellow).

De Wet closes by saying that he has many years of sailing experience, sailing locally and abroad, but I've always tried to stay true to my humble sailing roots, where having fun is the name of the game, while remaining competitive at the same time. A truly effective combination, I think.

Crew Member: Edward van der Merwe (Eddie)

Eddie started sailing dinghies in 1994 and then started sailing keelboats in 1998. He has been part of the SAN Fast 42 crew over the years for local regattas and up and down the South African Coast. This includes three Mossel Bay Races, 10 Mykonos Races, 9 West Coast Races and local regattas at Royal Cape Yacht Club and False Bay Yacht Club. Eddie is super excited to be participating in the St Helena Race.

Crew Member: Paul Swanepoel

Paul has been the main motivator and driver of the refit of Magnus since 2018. Paul is new to sailing and participated in his first regatta this year, Spring Regatta at False Bay Yacht Club. If your wondering what the little badge is on the side of the boat, it is a Reconnaissance Commando Operator's Badge. Paul carries such a Badge and his Operator Number is 22. Paul served in 1 Recce and 5 Recce for 11 years, and completed several key missions in that time, both in small teams and in larger teams. The work of the Recce's is currently being published, with Douw Steyn, Zander Strachan being the leaders of these publications, followed by Jack Greef and later other authors. Paul Swanepoel features in all of these books and is

affectionately known as Swart Piet. Having completed many HALO jumps, some behind enemy lines, and surviving in the bush for up to 90 days at a time doing reconnaissance work, he is confident that he will more than embrace all that offshore sailing has to offer, and on our return continue to develop sailing experience with local regattas.

Crew Member: Jessie Giovanna

Jessie is not new to sailing, having had to tag along on keel boat sailing on various boats while mom filled her position since she was 3 years old. Jessie has been on board in many Mykonos Races and this will be her first real offshore race where she will have the chance to constructively participate and learn. She wishes to achieve her Yacht Masters in time.

Boat Owner: Janet Cotton

I started sailing Oppies at 5 years old, I was introduced to sailing by being put in an Oppie pushed off the jetty and an instruction was given to “pull the sail in” which I did. I was hooked. I attended Oppie camp for many years in the holidays and then started sailing keelboats at False Bay Yacht Club for many years. My competitive streak came out at about 16 and I was fortunate enough to sail with the Navy on an L26 in two Rothmans Week Regattas. I was never any good at traditional school sports, but doing a sport at school became compulsory from standard 8 (grade 10). No problem I thought, I will start up a sailing team. I trained a team of friends, and we competed in the Interschools Regatta on Muiras at False Bay Yacht Club for two years in a row and achieved third place which was a good outcome for a group of girls with no sailing experience apart from me and tormented all the other teams from boys schools. We were the only female team in the regatta. During that time in my Matric year I managed to obtain my coastal water skippers ticket under the tutelage of John Therwell, whose voice I can still sometimes hear in my head. I valued that he never thought less of me being a female at that time when it was totally unusual for women to be so involved in yachting.

I took a sabbatical from sailing to achieve my engineering degree, and later my PhD and then to build my business, and finally returned to competitive yachting in 2010. I sailed many local regattas at Royal Cape Yacht Club, several Mykonos Regattas, and Spring Regattas at False Bay Yacht Club on various boats. One Eighty sponsored all ladies sailing regattas in 2013, 2014, and 2015, and we won the event in 2015. I was awarded lady sailor of the year by Royal Cape

Yacht Club in 2015. I am grateful to be back on the water again and to live a lifelong dream to compete in an offshore regatta, and look forward to participating in Cape to Rio and to what the crew can do with the boat in local regattas after the St Helena Race.

To Sum Up

It has been an exciting and passion-driven journey with Magnus, from the complete refit to preparing for the St Helena Regatta! The blend of sailing expertise and engineering innovation, along with the commitment from the team, makes this campaign truly extraordinary and special.