SPARKMAN & STEPHENS
SWAN ASSOCIATION

News From the Cockpit No. 440/2026

Countdown: 128 Days to November 5th...

2026 Swan Heritage *Reunion*

Capraia Island, 19 . 20 . 21 June 2026

It was a memorable weekend in Capraia Island, when 25 Classic Swans designed by Sparkman & Stephens, Ron Holland, and German Frers gathered for the first **Swan Heritage *Reunion***.
The boats began arriving on Friday and Owners and Crews soon met for a drink on the dock, among the Swans themselves, kindly offered by **ClubSwan**. With more than 120 participants, it was the perfect opportunity to renew old friendships and make new ones.
As if on cue, **German Frers Swan 77/010 Blue Itaca** arrived during the gathering and moored alongside the fleet. On board were Andrea, his wife Elena, and a cheerful crew of seven children, the oldest just fourteen years old. Few arrivals could have better captured the spirit of the Reunion: families, friends, and Swans being enjoyed and sailed exactly as they were always intended to be.

Andrea, Elena and part of the Crew of GF Swan 77 /010 Blue Itaca

Each owner was presented with a small memento of the event, kindly offered by **CarboWay**: a custom-made pencil holder personalized with the burgee of each class.
Saturday's forecast called for a very light northerly breeze, barely enough to hoist the sails, yet enough for the fleet to leave the harbor together and sail to a small bay on the island's eastern coast. There, the **Swan Heritage** fleet anchored side by side, crews enjoyed a swim in crystal-clear waters, and class burgees flew proudly from every yacht. It was a magnificent sight and provided the opportunity for some memorable aerial photographs.

Back in the marina, the day concluded with dinner on the dock, enjoying some of the finest seafood Capraia has to offer. Special thanks go to Monika, Nadia, and the entire team of **Pescianel** Restaurant for a truly excellent evening.
The dinner also provided the opportunity for ClubSwan to present a gift to every owner: a **Henry Lloyd** jacket embroidered with the burgee of each class. The gift was presented not only to those Swan Owners had arrived aboard their Swans, but also to those who had travelled from the United States, Finland, Germany, the United Kingdom, Ireland, and elsewhere simply to take part in the **Swan Heritage Reunion**.

The event was made possible through the collaboration of the Sparkman & Stephens Swan Association, the Classic Swan by Frers Association, ClubSwan, and Marina di Capraia Isola.

The true protagonists of the weekend were, of course, the Swans themselves and the Owners and Crews who continue to sail and maintain them, and preserve the knowledge required to keep them true to their original character. The **Swan Heritage Reunion** reflected the spirit that has always distinguished the Classic Swan community: people brought together by a shared appreciation for these irreplaceable Swan and by the desire to see them continue sailing for generations to come.

Capraia also provided the perfect occasion to introduce the new website, **swanheritage.org**, at the moment a simple landing page bringing together all 35 Classic Swans designed by Sparkman & Stephens, Ron Holland, and German Frers between 1967 and 1999. **Swan Heritage** will serve as the common banner under which future events dedicated to these yachts will be promoted and shared.

The **Swan Heritage *Reunion*** was a reminder that these Swans are more than successful yacht designs. Nearly half a century after many of them first left Nautor, they are still crossing seas, bringing together Owners and Crews from around the world, and doing exactly what they were built to do: **sailing**.

SWAN HERITAGE

Their continued existence is no coincidence. It is the result of the dedication of generations of Owners, families, skippers, and crews who have cared for them over the years and understood that these yachts deserve to be preserved, not merely possessed.

Three designers. Thirty-five Swans. One heritage.

Different designs, different eras, different Owners. Yet the same commitment to preserving these Swans and passing them on, together with the knowledge and experience required to care for them properly, to the generations that will follow.

Swan Heritage fleet moored in Capraia marina (*photo courtesy F. Saveriano*)

S&S Swan 55/002 at the Newport to Bermuda Race

While the Swan Heritage fleet was gathering in Capraia, Tapio Lehtinen and the crew of **S&S Swan 55/002 *Galiana WithSecure*** were competing in the **Newport Bermuda Race**. *Galiana WithSecure* was the only Classic Swan on the starting line and the first Finnish yacht to compete in the 120-year history of this prestigious race.

Congratulations to Tapio, his crew, and *Galiana WithSecure* on this historic achievement.

Galiana with Secure at the 2026 Newport to Bermuda Race, photo courtesy Daniel Forster

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Ten Days Solo with Gryms in Japanese Waters

First Single-Handed Cruise on S&S Swan 44/062. by Timothy Langley

Golden Week is Japan's premier holiday season — a magical stretch in late April and early May when several national holidays cluster together, granting many people up to ten full days off. This year it handed me exactly that: ten days of unbroken freedom. While most would relax, I chose something a touch more ambitious: I took my 52-year-old **S&S Swan 44/062, *Gryms***, and sailed solo into the Pacific for the entire period.

Gryms is the only S&S Swan currently sailing Japanese waters. One of just seventy six of her model built, she arrived new from Finland in the early 1970s to a Tokyo doctor and has lived her life in these waters ever since. At 13.5 meters with a deep keel, warm teak interior, teak decks, and almost entirely mechanical systems, she is a pure classic — ten winches, hand-worked sails, and a hull that feels perfectly at home here.

I had spent the previous year restoring her with friends, gradually building miles under her keel. With my usual crew unavailable and those ten empty days calling, it felt like the perfect moment for *Gryms* and me to truly get to know each other — alone.

The plan was bold: depart from my home port near Tateyama on the Chiba coast, round the Miura Peninsula (the real-life territory of the Anjin from *Shōgun*), overnight in the collapsed volcanic caldera of Habu Port on Ōshima, then push on to Niijima and even farther to Kozushima before weaving back through the islands. But as every S&S Swan Owner knows, the sea writes its own script. Winds, waves, equipment failures, and an approaching storm turned the plan into something far more interesting.

Sailing Where Fuji Watches What makes sailing these waters so special — and so different from anywhere else in the world — is the constant presence of Mount Fuji, often shimmering on the horizon like a benevolent guardian. The entire chain of islands we cruised — Ōshima, Niijima, Kozushima — springs from the same vast lava dome that birthed Fuji itself. They feel primordial: steep volcanic cones, some still raw and eroding, rising dramatically from the sea.

Threading through them means dancing with the mighty Kuroshio Current, that powerful warm river in the ocean (famously featured in *Finding Nemo*). It boils up between the islands, creating unpredictable turbulence even miles away. Winds fracture against the volcanic peaks, swirling into sudden eddies and gusts that keep you constantly alert. Add the heavy shipping traffic pouring in and out of Tokyo Bay — cargo ships and tankers seemingly intent on testing your nerve — and you have a sailing environment that is as challenging as it is magical.

As a foreigner sailing here, the experience has extra layers. Japan is an island nation, yet you encounter far more fishermen than recreational sailors. The harbors are full of rugged professionals in their working boats, many of whom eyed *Gryms* with curiosity and then generously shared hard-earned local knowledge. Communication happens in Japanese (I'm fortunate to be fluent), but the universal language of the sea bridges gaps instantly. These small, unscripted exchanges — with tough, skeptical fishermen who suddenly become mentors — were some of the trip's brightest human moments.

Learning to Listen I slipped lines on April 29 for the familiar hop to Misaki. The next morning, with Fuji glowing across Sagami Bay, I headed toward Ōshima. Not long out, the main halyard winch detached — a classic reminder that even cherished Swans have personalities and can throw surprises.

After two frustrating hours fighting the pitching deck and building wind, I turned back. In Misaki, with tools and advice from my friend Tony, I rebuilt the big mast winch on deck. Humbling, but the right call. *Gryms* was already teaching her first solo lesson: patience and respect beat bravado every time.

A few days later the passage to Ōshima delivered real conditions — two-meter waves, awkward wind angles, repeated tacking for seven hours. At twelve tons, *Gryms* shouldered it all with steady grace. I arrived exhausted but relieved, mooring in the crowded caldera harbor as dusk settled and other yachts sought shelter from the coming storm.

From there to Niijima the winds built further. I zig-zagged, reefing the main as gusts whipped around the volcanic islands. The storm locked me in a quiet fishermen's harbor (avoiding the busy leisure marina) for two days. When the window opened, the run to Kozushima became pure exhilaration.

Post-storm seas had calmed, but a perfect 25-knot beam wind streamed in from the endless Pacific. I raised main, jib, and staysail. *Gryms* came alive — rails in the water, surging at sustained eight knots, slicing across the Kuroshio's churning channel under bright sunshine. For four glorious hours she showed exactly what she liked, and I did my best to listen.

Kozushima felt satisfyingly remote, dominated by its central volcanic cone. The big port was nearly empty of other yachts. After being politely waved off one berth by a local fisherman, I solo-tied up on the other side, clambering up a three-meter quay wall to secure the lines. A hot shower, clean clothes, and a quiet cigar on deck as the sun disappeared over the vast empty sea — one of those rare perfect evenings you almost wish you could share.

The Long Return and Deeper Reflections The twelve-hour return to Misaki was a steady plug under lighter winds and chasing rain. I entered harbor after dark, relying on night vision and lights for a smooth solo docking. A simple "hobo's spaghetti" dinner later, I collapsed into the mahogany captain's quarters, thoroughly spent but deeply satisfied.

Solo sailing for days on end is a different universe from crewed cruising. Every decision weighs more. A fouled line, sticky winch, or sudden wind shift is yours alone to fix. Fatigue turns small errors into big problems. I made my share, but each time the voices of my sailing pals Evan and Tony echoed gratefully in my head.

Gryms performed admirably. The repaired winch held, the Yanmar hummed reliably, and in the right conditions she surged with real spirit. This was my first solo Golden Week cruise after six previous ones with friends. With crew there's more laughter and far better food. But this time the boat herself became the teacher.

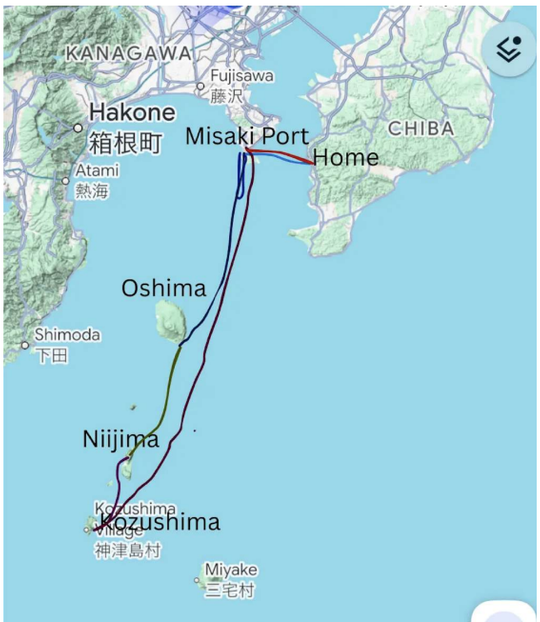
In the quiet stretches between islands, riding the Kuroshio, watching volcanic peaks rise, and feeling the swirling winds and currents around these ancient formations, the partnership deepened. A S&S Swan is more than wood and fiberglass. She has character, quirks, and strengths. You learn to read her, adjust your habits, and trust her responses. In return she offers unforgettable moments and quiet confidence.

Sailing these waters as a foreigner in a restored classic Swan feels both challenging and profoundly lucky. The technical demands, the language layer, the night sailing, the powerful natural forces — it all adds richness. Yet the beauty of Fuji standing watch, the raw volcanic landscapes, and the generous spirit of the local fishermen make it magical beyond words.

(As for my in-process sliding hatch that I've been rebuilding — still months from completion. That's the eternal joy of a classic Swan, I suppose: there's always another project that brings you closer to her).

Ten days alone with *Gryms* reminded me that the sea demands respect — for its moods, for your boat's personality, and for your own limits. Given that respect, to listen carefully, and I hope one day to be considered an accomplished sailor.

Gryms is back home now, resting gently and already whispering about the next adventure.



The Return of the *Black Swan*

In economics, a *black swan* is a metaphor for an extremely unlikely, hard-to-predict event with an outsized impact. On Sunday morning 31 May 2026, we woke up in the black Swan 36 at Hellsö, Kökar in the Finnish south-west archipelago, and for her this was the first time in Finland since she had left the Nautor yard in Pietarsaari, fifty-eight years earlier. Her name is **Rondine**, and after half a century in Sweden, we feel she has finally come home.

We bought Rondine, **S&S Swan 36/042**, with no builder's plate, in Limhamn, near Malmö in southern Sweden, after a test sail in September 2025. We had been looking for a classic Sparkman & Stephens or Olle Enderlein designed boat, and Rondine was the fifth Swan 36 we viewed. She was built in 1968, and like so many old boats she had quietly slipped between owners, sailing clubs, and even names, leaving just a fragile trail that took nine months of research to follow. What we discovered was a chain of different lives, all connected through one beautiful well-built sailing yacht.

The story begins with Gustaf Piehl (1922–2006), a Stockholm brewing magnate, distinguished member of Kungliga Svenska Segel Sällskapet KSSS, 12-times Gotland Runt racer, and later the first non-royal Grand Master of the Swedish Freemasons since 1774. Piehl named all his boats **Sagitta** — Latin for "arrow" — a nod to his family's name and brewery emblem. The 1969 KSSS yearbook, located in the Åbo Akademi maritime history archives, confirmed Piehl's Swan 36 Sagitta had carried sail number OR S 48, the very number cast on a small bronze plate fixed to Rondine's forward dorade box. Piehl raced her in Gotland Runt in 1968 and 1970, and in 1972 he moved to a Swan 40.

In 1971 the black Swan passed to Olle Renvall (1925–2004), an Alfa Romeo racing driver in Eskilstuna. Olle was the 1960 Swedish ice racing champion but the Swan was for Lake Mälaren racing in the summer. According to Olle's old crewmate Leif Hedman, Olle named the boat Rondine — short for "Renvalls **Ondine**" — a homage to the celebrated high-tech offshore racing sailboats named Ondine by Sumner "Huey" Long, rather than the Italian word for the bird swallow, however poetic that coincidence remains. Olle's 1970s sailing trophies — and some entertaining stories of overboard racing protesters and strictly rationed whisky for the crew — are still living on board today.

In 1995 Rondine was motored to Göteborg through the Göta Kanal. The new owners Henrik (1946–2013) and Kerstin Wingård enjoyed cruising in the Göteborg archipelago, and kept Rondine at the mooring buoy at their summer house. The next owner from 2004 was Olof Tiselius in Stockholm, a sailing instructor and European and World Championship level sailor from Djursholms Segelklubb. Olof enjoyed Rondine, and installed a new engine, but soon wanted a larger S&S yacht, and currently he sails the S&S 52 yawl **Gerofia**.

After a DNF in Gotland Runt, Olof passed Rondine to Sten Berg (1943–2026) in Limhamn, in 2009. Sten would own and sail her for the next sixteen years. Sten was, by every account we gathered, "a very special man, in many ways": an engineer, a dreamer, and perhaps ultimately Rondine's most devoted custodian. He fitted a new Selden mast to the original Proctor measurements, commissioned a broad new sail inventory, installed new engine and winches, raced in Malmö's Saltholm Runt, and twice in Denmark's Sjælland Rundt, finishing third on one occasion. He made two solo attempts for a pilgrimage sail north to Rondine's birthplace in Pietarsaari, turning back at Öland when the passage proved too demanding alone. He set up Rondine for an Atlantic crossing, and began another journey through the European canals to the Mediterranean. Sadly, we signed the purchase agreement last autumn but never got to meet Sten — he passed away this January.

That makes our own arrival, the closing of the half-a-century loop. We travelled again to Limhamn in May, spent a long busy weekend with help from a local electrician and Ulf Björk, Sten's longtime sailmaker, and set off for Finland on May 19. Thirteen sailing days, one lay day, and 586 nautical miles later, with no incidents — we arrived at her new home mooring in the Turku archipelago.

Rondine is in honest working condition rather than a showroom centrepiece, which suits us fine. Sten kept her well, and what she needs now is the slower, more affectionate kind of TLC — new teak where the old has softened, making her sandwich deck solid again, refreshing cushions in the original blue, gas system rebuild, interior woodwork, repainting her black hull and the golden hull stripe. Some of this is more urgent, some less so. Our previous boat was a wooden one so the upcoming woodwork does not frighten us.

We applied Rondine to the Finnish National Heritage Agency's classic boat registry, and along the way we've been lucky enough to draw on an international network of helpful people, their knowledge and their networks — Robert Holm at Nautor, Simon Turner at Berthon, Robert Louhimies at Åbo Akademi, Ulf Björk of Sydsegel, Kerstin Wingård in Göteborg and Olof Tiselius in Stockholm, Sebastian Cedercreutz at Nyländska Jaktklubben, sailor Daniel Serrander in Eskilstuna, classic boat authority Jani Vahto in Finland, and several others — all willing to help piece together the life of a fifty-eight-year-old black Swan.

So — is the black Swan a *black swan*, in the metaphorical sense? We like to think so, in a way: an improbable boat, with a lively history, that nobody could quite have predicted would end up exactly here. Rondine has come home to Finland for the first time since she left Pietarsaari in 1968. We intend to make sure she's still sailing — a little more polished each season — for a long time yet.

Maarit Laanti & Harri Kiljander, Kemiö/Espoo, Finland, June 2026

Rondine<> at Hellsö, Kökar —<> first time back in Finland since leaving Nautor's yard in Pietarsaari to Sweden in 1968

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