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MARCH 2011



ISSN 1547-9438

# PHIAFEDO

GUNBOAT'S  
YOUNGEST  
OWNER  
INSPIRES ITS  
LIGHTEST, MOST  
TRICKED OUT  
SAILING  
MACHINE YET.

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY  
KELVIN TRAUTMAN







*When Phaedo reached* the remote island of Fernando de Noronha, Brazil, she had sailed nearly 4,000 nautical miles on a shakedown delivery from Cape Town, South Africa, with another 2,500 nautical miles to go before arriving at her new homeport of St. Barths. This in itself wasn't an unusual feat in the world of her builder Gunboat; each of *Phaedo's* 14 predecessors also were delivered on their own bottom.

Notable, however, was that while at her heaviest—set for passage making, fueled to capacity, provisioned for six passengers, and carrying 275 bottles of South African wine—she covered 290 miles in the first 24 hours, reached and maintained a top speed of 25 knots, and averaged 200 miles per day. "Right now we're twenty percent heavier than usual [racing weight] because of all the gear," owner Lloyd Thornburg said. Thornburg and his captain and build manager, Paul Hand, agreed they couldn't wait to see what *Phaedo* was really capable of when she was cleared out and primed for racing.



This kind of performance at long range is just what company founder Peter Johnstone had in mind when he created the first Gunboat, *Tribe*, as a respite from the lack of comfort offered by his 70ft keelboat. Launched in 2001, the 62ft *Tribe* introduced the sailing world to a new breed of catamaran designed for both high-performance racing and comfortable cruising. Designed by Morelli and Melvin, the same names behind the new America's Cup AC72 catamarans, Gunboats are known for their vacuum-bagged, epoxy foam sandwich and Aramid honeycomb Nomex construction, retractable rudders and dagger boards,

*this page*  
Three feet were removed from the cockpit roofline to create cleaner exterior lines, gain more space for sunning, and reduce weight.

and a unique forward cockpit, from which all sailing operations take place. *Phaedo* is the first 66 constructed with unidirectional carbon over the Nomex core, which significantly reduces weight and increases stiffness.

At 31, Thornburg is Gunboat's





youngest owner but by no means the least experienced. *Phaedo* is his fifth sailboat; the fourth, he sailed down to the Caribbean in the Carib 1500 then singlehanded from the British Virgin Islands to Grenada. Suffice to say, he is not someone who woke up one day and thought a sexy, fast catamaran would be a neat toy to own. Though coming from landlocked Sante Fe, New Mexico, his passion for sailing began as a young boy when he read a book called *Tinkerbelle*, which told the story of one man's transatlantic crossing.

"Something about his descriptions, his journey, got me hooked," Thornburg says. He proceeded to read every book on cruising he could find.

While attending college, Thornburg completed a Blue Water Sailing School ASA course, bought a Soling 27 named *Chaos*, and sailed nearly every day. Five years and four boats later, he was commissioning the 66ft Gunboat *Phaedo*, thus beginning a passionate journey to create the lightest, most custom, and performance-driven Gunboat to date.







“Two guys really designed the ultimate guy’s boat. We were like two kids in the candy shop who really went out and made the ultimate, most comfortable, fastest, lightest, cruising boat for circumnavigation.”

Gunboats had been on his mind for a long time—he recalls reading an article on the 62ft *Safari*, which Hand was captaining at the time. Years later, he took the 48ft Gunboat *Lickety Split* out for a test, and though realizing it wasn’t the boat for him, he considered it a fortunate day because at the helm was Captain Paul Hand. It was easy for Thornburg to choose Hand as his captain and build manager—or perhaps it was the other way around. “Paul and I started working together when I was only 27; he said he wouldn’t have considered working with me if I hadn’t had all the experience that I did.”

As to be expected, Thornburg’s experience living aboard and making offshore passages informed his building decisions. The result is a yacht that is all at once a comfortable cruiser, long-range circumnavigator, racing stallion, and even a spacious, modern bachelor pad.

Other than the shape of the hull, which retains the proven Gunboat design, *Phaedo* is 95 percent custom. “Part of [Johnstone’s] vision is letting the customers express themselves,” Thornburg says. “[We asked] if this is the next generation, how can we push the concept further and further?”

At every turn, and almost obsessively, the owner, project manager, and design team looked at ways to reduce weight without compromising on luxury. They found new, lighter solar panels that required half the number of panels while delivering 60 percent greater output. Form follows function inside as well—from a weight savings point of view, the

more furniture that’s removed the faster the yacht will sail. From an aesthetic point of view, space is luxury, and less furniture dictates the open, minimalistic interior. Paired with dark leather upholstery, American walnut cabinetry, wengé floors, and black carbon-fiber countertops, *Phaedo* is reminiscent of a chic New York City loft set to sea.

Much of *Phaedo*’s design stems from her owner’s love affair with carbon fiber. “Everything is better in carbon fiber,” he says. “It’s just the material of the future; it is aesthetically pleasing and lighter and stronger than steel. I think it’s beautiful and the material of our time.” It’s everywhere aboard, in the carbon-fiber winches, rudders and dagger boards, kitchen and bathroom countertops, and decorative cap rails in the staterooms.

Thornburg looked to previous Gunboats as well as Wallyboats for design inspiration, the latter of which he praises for excellence in attention to detail, but feels can be too cold at times. Therefore, he was careful to reject choices that would’ve made the styling more modern if it meant compromising on comfort. Thornburg warns that if you do your first offshore passage on a Gunboat, as a few of his guests were, you’ll be ruined for life. “It’s a multihull expression, ‘once you go flat, you never go back.’”

The owner believes that the kitchen is the center of every home, and the U-shaped galley, with one-piece carbon-fiber countertops (150 pounds lighter than Corian), is designed to welcome, entertain, and support long passages, outfitted with Vitrifrigo refrigerator drawers, a pizza oven, and compost bin. One of the owner’s favorite details is the massive grill on the aft deck. (This was also customized with a cover displaying the boat’s name and pirate logo.) “You can be less than three feet from landing a fish to throwing it on the grill,” Thornburg says. The aft cockpit seat was doubled in length, making it possible for an adult to spread out for a nap. More suitable sleeping accommodations are below, of course, with two guest suites in the port hull and a master suite and office to starboard.

these pages  
Nearly every-  
thing in *Phaedo* is  
custom, from big-  
ticket items, such  
as the stovetop  
to the handles,  
hinges, and CNC-  
machined latches,  
made of aircraft-  
grade aluminum.  
A unique blend of  
natural materials  
add warmth to the  
modern interior;  
the stripes in the  
American walnut  
are actually a flaw  
called sapping,  
which Thornburgh  
wished to maxi-  
mize. The dark, rich  
upholstery was  
inspired by worn  
leather seats at a  
favorite Cape Town  
pub. “It will get  
worn in over time—  
every scratch and  
mark will tell a  
story,” he said.



Thornburg had originally considered a larger vessel, but he wanted to be able to go for a quick day sail without a large crew—in *Phaedo*, he conceived a yacht that would offer the living spaces of a 100-footer that could easily be sailed by two people or raced by a larger, professional crew.

*Phaedo* is the first Gunboat to have a high-modulus carbon mast and boom, the mast is said to be nearly 90 pounds lighter than the previous carbon fiber one. Her trademark black taffeta carbon fusion sails are hoisted on a rig containing carbon battens and supported by PBO rigging. *Phaedo* features custom-made, Lewmar electric, three-speed winches, the same that are found on America's Cup boats. (Lines are also custom made by Marlow.) The jib is self-tacking, a favorite feature on Gunboats. Taking her out for a test sail in Brazil, the sails fly up in a moment, and she is keeping speed in 15 knots of wind.

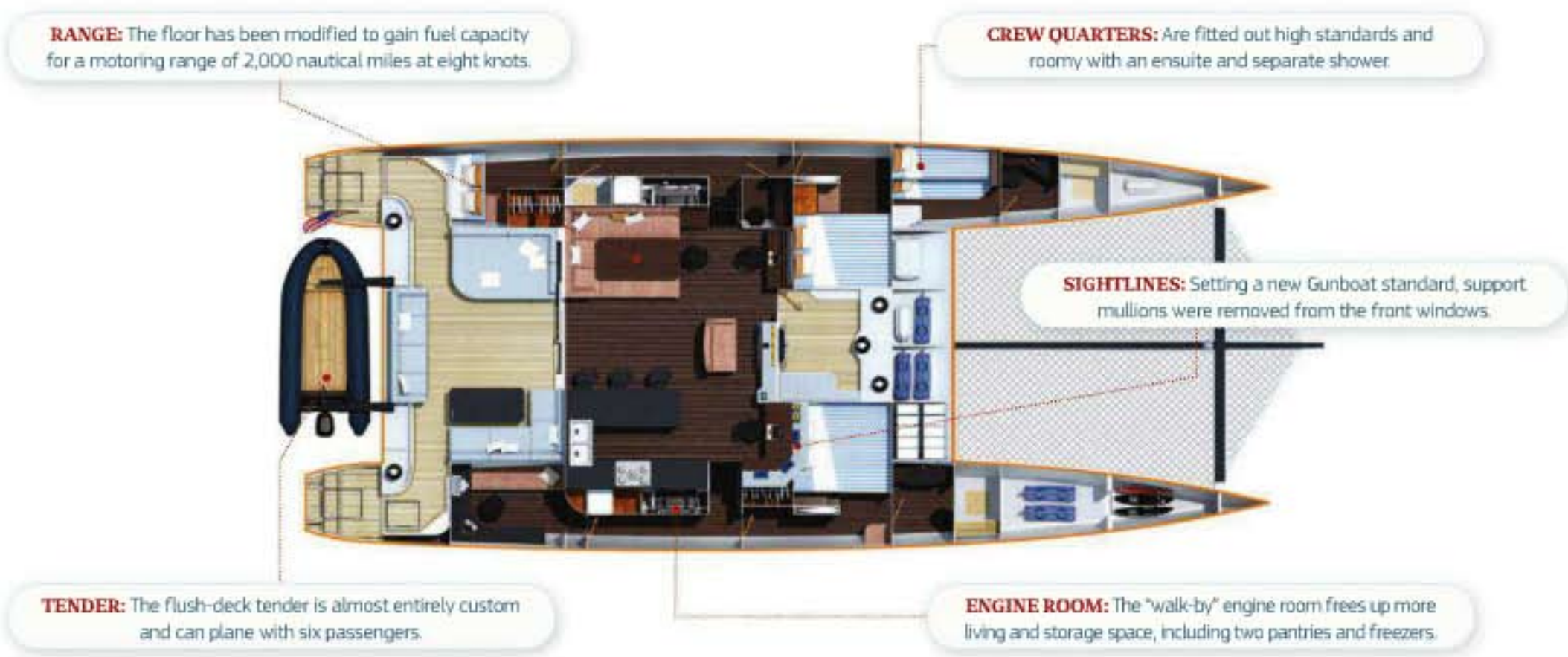
The St. Barths New Year's Eve Regatta was *Phaedo's* first chance to test her racing chops—she performed well, racing against the likes of *Twizzle* and *Ghost*. Thornburg plans to spend the first season in St. Barths, cruising the islands and racing the Caribbean 600. Future plans take *Phaedo* further afield; Thornburg envisions a season in Sweden, his mother's homeland, then back to the Caribbean, through the Panama Canal, and on to the South Pacific.

A bright orange paint job ensures that no one will miss *Phaedo* on the racecourse. After seeing the electric-green *Cream*, Thornburg concurred that an eye-catching paint job was the standard for Gunboats. As he says, "No one orders a white Ferrari." However, it was another sports car that inspired the orange color; an Lamborghini Murcielago whose paint seemed to change and move in the light, a trick called "flip" in car paint terminology. After many failed attempts to create a matching color—too orange, too dark—they decided to use actual Lamborghini paint. The desired "flip" affect can be seen; depending on the time of day, *Phaedo's* hull transitions between dark orange, bright orange, and warm golden hues, making a beautiful contrast against the blue-green waters.

As striking as the color is her unique name, which comes from the famed Plato dialogue. Thornburg says Plato's dialectic method was present in the build process—asking why, taking nothing for granted. As a Plato scholar, Thornburg says *Phaedo* is his favorite dialogue. "It has a beautiful message about being the best you can be," he says. "I like to think the boat is the best it can be." ■

📸 **more shots of *Phaedo* underway in Brazil on the app**

DOWNLOAD THE SHOWBOATS APP FROM ITUNES



<p>LOA: 65FT 11IN (20.1M)                  LWL: 62FT (18.9M)                  BOA: 28FT 3IN (8.6M)                  BEAM: 21FT 8IN (6.6M)                  DRAFT (BOARD DOWN/BOARD UP): 8FT 6IN (2.6M)/2FT 3IN (0.7M)                  DISPLACEMENT (LIGHT/MAX</p>	<p>LOAD): 34,000/40,120 LBS                  RIG: SMART RIGGING                  MAST AND BOOM: MARSTROM                  MAINSAIL AREA: 143.30M<sup>2</sup>                  WINCHES: LEWMAR                  POWER: 2 X VOLVO @ 75HP                  SPEED (CRUISE): 10 KNOTS                  FUEL CAPACITY: 349 GALS</p>	<p>FRESHWATER: 158 GALS                  GENERATOR: MASTERVOLT 10KW/230V                  OWNER AND GUESTS: 6                  CREW: 2                  TENDERS: 14FT 9IN PURE YACHTING CUSTOM RIB                  CLASSIFICATION: RINA CE</p>	<p>PRICE GUIDE: \$4.5 MILLION                  BUILDER/YEAR: GUNBOAT/2010                  PETER JOHNSTONE, NEWPORT, RI                  MOBILE: (401) 662-0204                  EMAIL: <a href="mailto:PETER@GUNBOAT.COM">PETER@GUNBOAT.COM</a>  <a href="http://WWW.GUNBOAT.COM">WWW.GUNBOAT.COM</a></p>
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