



'MRS G' GEORGIA GOSNELL

14TH MAY 1930 TO DECEMBER 17TH 2014

PHOTOGRAPH: RICK TOMLINSON



'MRS G'

PHOTOGRAPH: CLAIRE MATCHES

MRS G, OUR HERO AND A SAILING LEGEND PASSED away on December 17th 2014 after a short fight with cancer. She will be sorely missed by all the 'Timoneeros' and the yachting fraternity in general, where she was an icon and an example of how to enjoy life.

In 1991 Anne and I were introduced to the Gosnells by Bill Langan of Sparkman and Stevens during the build of the first Timoneer. We spent 10 months at Palmer Johnson in Wisconsin overseeing the build and then bringing the new boat to Newport via the Erie Barge Canal. Once the boat was up and running I discussed cruising plans with them and said that rather than do the usual Caribbean and New England scenario they should consider Venezuela, a place they had never been in their previous sailing on charter boats. Mrs G was keen to go and Mr G (affectionately known as Tommy Tom and who referred to Georgia as 'my bride') just said 'Yes Dear!'

Thus started a fantastic relationship between us. After Venezuela I suggested Belize and they knew nothing about it. I explained it was a small country in Central America which has the second largest Barrier Reef in the world, so off we went and the doors were opened to many future adventures. Pretty soon the adventure bug had bitten hard and we were off cruising Labrador and other remote places. They shared the same ideals and principles that I did and we made a great team. I would suggest new destinations, often places that I had never had the opportunity to visit and they would enthusiastically endorse my proposals. One year we went through the Panama Canal five times. Mr G was once heard by the stewardess telling his guests on board that over time he had learnt just to 'Listen to Phil'. For both sides it was a perfect match and I am honoured



PHOTOGRAPH: CLAIRE MATCHES

and grateful to have been so lucky to find such great owners to work for.

Timoneer not only gained a reputation for travelling to exotic destinations but also for participating in many of the early super yacht regattas. Shortly after the launch of the first Timoneer we won, in 1993, the Nantucket Bucket and have since won first place in many of the other regattas, including a couple of Super Yacht Cups in Mallorca and the Dubois Cup in 2011 at Porto Cervo. In 2009 we won the Super Yacht Cup in Antigua, 10 days later Mr G was not well and we had to fly him out on an air ambulance back to the USA. Sadly this was the last time we saw him on the boat as he passed away in April, so he was sailing and winning right up until the end. The Gosnells received a standing ovation at the prize giving that year.

Over the years we gathered a bunch of friends to sail with us on the regattas, we never paid anyone (unlike many other boats) but they were always keen to pay their own airmiles and have fun on Timoneer. Everyone was impressed by the laid back attitude on board and how nice the owners were so we ended up with a very dedicated group.

In 1995 we were at the America's Cup in San Diego before going to Alaska and then on to New Zealand. As the Gosnells were big financial supporters of Team Young America Mr G got to go out as 17th man on one of the races. When he came back I asked him what it was like and he said, 'Gee but those boats are slow!' We had been toying with the idea of a day sailor for Nantucket where they had a summer house and as a result 'Sleighride' was born – a 77 foot high tech carbon day sailer with five tons of water ballast. Sleighride became a familiar sight in Nantucket, skimming across the Sound at 15 to 20 knots with a bunch of grey headed passengers smiling and eating their sandwiches in the cockpit.

In 1998 we started to discuss a new Timoneer. We eventually chose Ed Dubois to design the boat and Vitters shipyard for the build. By the time we started building Mr G was 80 years old! They said they loved the old boat but just wanted a bigger one so there are a lot of similarities, but also many improvements as well. We launched in 2001 and did a shake down across the Atlantic to Nantucket for a cocktail party, turned around and sailed straight back to the shipyard for warranty work two weeks later. America's cup Jubilee and Norway followed right away so no sitting still.

Our cruising had been a bit quiet prior the passing of Mr G as he had been rather frail and could not travel easily and so

Timoneer stayed closer to home. After he died I asked Mrs G what she would like to do and she immediately said 'nothing will change, I am keeping the boat and you are staying aren't you?' Of course I said yes and told her that we can now go off exploring again so she instantly replied 'I would like to go back to Cape Horn!' With the previous Timoneer it had taken me about four years to convince them that cruising the Beagle Channel was really good but they were always sceptical. Finally when we went to Patagonia it turned out to be one of their favourite trips of all time so off we went for a second visit in the new boat with Mrs G. From the Caribbean we went through the Panama Canal and up the West Coast to Alaska for the summer of 2010.

As the season changed we sailed South to San Francisco followed by Galapagos, Easter Island and then on to Chile where Mrs G and her guests joined us in Ushuaia to relive their previous experiences at the far tip of South America.

After Patagonia the boat sailed up north through the South Atlantic for the following summer in the Med. There was no slowing this lady down!

The past few years we have been exploring the Med as far as Turkey. Winters were spent in the Caribbean where she was a frequent visitor on board which all the crew always enjoyed. As late as September 2014 she was on board here in Mallorca with a group of friends and I really enjoyed showing them around the Island.

For all of us, but particularly for Anne and myself, this is the end of an era. We have worked for the family for over 23 magnificent years for which we are eternally grateful.

She will never be forgotten. Sail on in Peace, Mrs G, we love you!

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