



BALTIC 46 QUEEN ANNE

First ever Baltic returns for 50th anniversary refit

The Baltic 46 Queen Anne, originally named Diva, was the first yacht ever built by Baltic Yachts, so her return to Jakobstad after 50 years made for a fitting and emotional reunion

Baltic Yachts' 50th anniversary is next year, but celebrations have already begun in Jakobstad as the first yacht ever built by the company returned to Finland recently to begin a refit in time for her landmark birthday in 2023.

For Per-Göran 'PG' Johansson and Jan-Erik Nyfelt, who welcomed Queen Anne and her current owner Anders Onsager as they arrived at the dock in Jakobstad, it was a particularly moving homecoming. As two of the five founding 'fathers' of Baltic Yachts, PG and Jan-Erik recognise Diva, as she was christened in 1974, as representing everything the new company stood for when Baltic Yachts came into being – lighter, stiffer, faster!

"The fact that she is still in remarkably good shape, has been in the same family for more than 40 years and that she will be part of the centrepiece for our 50th anniversary celebrations next year, makes her arrival here very special for me and the company," said PG Johansson.

Diva was renamed Queen Anne when Anders Onsager's father Sverre bought the yacht in 1979 and named her after his wife. By then Diva had already achieved a remarkable amount under the original ownership of the Norwegian Theodor 'Teddy' Sommerschild, an Olympic yachtsman who competed in the Mexico City Olympics in Acapulco in 1968 and in Munich in 1972, both in Dragons.

As a yacht with a competitive edge, the new Baltic 46 had caught Theodor's eye at the Hamburg Boat Show in 1974 and a contract was duly signed. The yacht was designed by the Canadian naval architecture partnership of Cuthbertson and Cassian (C&C) who had impressed PG Johansson and his go-ahead team at Baltic for their technical knowledge and success on the race course.

There was a clear synergy between the thinking of PG Johansson and C&C's head designer Rob Ball whose aim was to maximise the use of modern materials and optimise rating under the International Offshore Rule (IOR) which drove design at the time.

Indeed, the C&C 46 was marketed by Baltic Yachts as a competitive racing yacht. The year after Theodor Sommerschild had taken delivery of Diva in Kiel, following her delivery from the Hamburg Boat Show, the Canadians asked if she could be chartered to join their Admiral's Cup team.

This was the golden age of the iconic international offshore sailing event, raced under the IOR, which in 1975 attracted 57 yachts from 19 nations worldwide to Cowes on the Isle of

Wight. The competition, which in those days forbade the use of electronic instrumentation as its use was regarded as an unfair advantage while racing, incorporated the famous Fastnet and Channel races and represented the pinnacle of offshore sailing competition.

Diva was competing against some of the ocean racing greats including the UK's winning team of Battlecry, Yeoman XX and Noryema, Germany's Pinta, Rubin and Duva and the USA's Charisma, Tenacious and Robin.

Although the Canadian team performance was inauspicious, the Admiral's Cup experience 'was fun' according to Teddy Sommerschild's son Johan who sailed aboard Diva with Star Olympic silver medallist in Mexico, Per Ola Wiken.



Jan-Erik Nyfelt and PG Johansson



Diva competed in the 1975 Admiral's Cup for Canada

"We sailed a lot together aboard Diva at the time, but we were not decision makers onboard during AC 1975," he said. "The Canadians complained a lot about salt in their eyes, as they were used to sailing on the Lakes in Canada!"

Diva subsequently returned to Norway and her home port of Hango, south of Oslo, close to the Swedish border from where she was used for family holidays in some of the Baltic's outstanding cruising grounds. She also took part in the Skaw Race and Shetland Race, Faerderseilasen, then one of the biggest overnight races in the world and other local sailing events.

When Sverre Onsager bought Diva in 1979, he inherited a yacht in which a lot had already been invested. Extra winches – 18 in all - a grinder pedestal and an extensive sail wardrobe were all part of the package, and they are still in use today!

Anders Onsager was just a one-year-old in 1979 and over the years has accumulated fond memories of family sailing holidays with his older brother Martin, sister Karen and younger sister Ingerid. "During the summer we were sailing aboard Queen Anne for five or six weeks which left us with some incredible memories," said Anders.

With the boat based largely in Oslo, Anders grew up with Queen Anne. "I was always with my father in the springtime and helped with fitting out and preparing for the summer," he said. By the time he was 15 Anders was able to handle the 46-footer on his own and this led to Queen Anne being made available for charter. At the age of 22 he was a charter skipper.

Not long afterwards Anders made a deal with his father to buy Queen Anne over a period of ten years, an arrangement which he financed by running weekly charter trips to Skagen in Denmark and along the Swedish coast during his holidays from the Copenhagen Business School. "This was particularly popular with younger groups and it was mainly girls who sailed with me," explained Anders.

He then joined the The Royal Norwegian Naval Academy for three years, during which time he served as navigator aboard a submarine. "I found my experience with Queen Anne of great value during my time in the navy, helping my technical, navigation, seamanship and leadership skills," said Anders.

Apart from chartering and cruising, Anders has skippered Queen Anne in a number of races and regattas including the tough Shetland Race in 2004, the crew for which was made up of 12 members of the Naval Academy.

Now, the next generation is enjoying the special way of life Queen Anne can offer. "I met my wife in 2009 – she was part of a group of girls who sailed with me on the yacht – and today we have two children Anton, 9, and Thilda, 11. Like me, they have grown up with the yacht, have a genuine interest in her and say they love her very much!

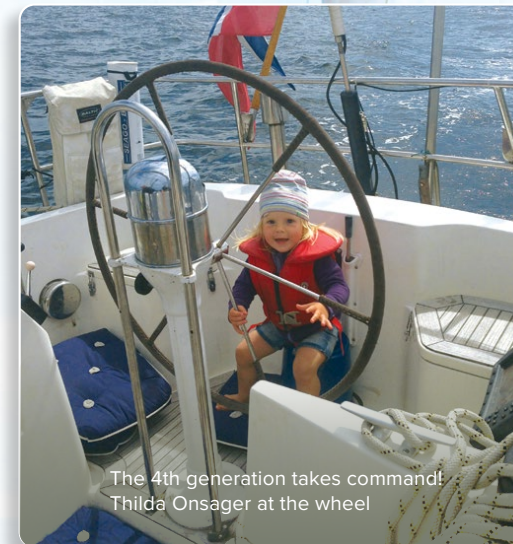
"I am sure Queen Anne will always be there for them and the next generation as well," said Anders.

And with the refit and tender loving care being administered by Baltic Yachts this winter, that should be a given. There will be a replacement for her original Perkins main engine, hull paint above and below the waterline, deck paint, removal of all deck hardware, deck sand and re-caulk and a programme of instrument renewal. Her mast and keel bolts will be checked out, rudder removed and bearings replaced, her large sail wardrobe overhauled and her original Barient winches stripped down and refurbished.

With three new builds launching at Baltic Yachts next year – the Baltic 110, Baltic 111 and Baltic 68 Café Racer, Open Season - Queen Anne will take her place alongside them as the original Baltic-01, a yacht of whose longevity and special place in yachting history her owners can be justly proud.



For more about the first ever Baltic yacht read PG Johansson's Tell Tales blog at our website



The 4th generation takes command! Thilda Onsager at the wheel

Queen Anne is now a comfortable family cruising yacht benefitting from a great performance pedigree

Next – the world?

Before Queen Anne's current refit was mooted, Anders Onsagers' original plan was to take part in the Ocean Globe Race, a circumnavigation starting at the end of 2023 similar in concept to the early days of the then genuinely amateur Whitbread Round the World Race. The idea gripped Anders even though Queen Anne would be one of the smallest yachts in the race.

He approached Baltic to ask if the company would be keen to help with a refit as part of a support package, to which the answer was yes.

A year later a friend told him he had also entered the Global Ocean Race with the appropriately-named Swan 651 Second Wind, the original Fazer Finland which took part in the 1985/86 Whitbread. Anders helped him sail the boat from the Bahamas to Finland in a 29-day non-stop passage taking them north of the UK. En route they discussed the two entries and decided to concentrate on Second Wind's effort, withdrawing Queen Anne.

In the end it was a win all round because Second Wind will compete in the OGR while Queen Anne will enjoy her 50th birthday as a star in Baltic's own anniversary, possibly taking part in the finale, The Baltic Yachts Rendezvous in Porto Rotondo, Sardinia in September 2023.

But it won't be the end of the story. Anders said: "I have always had a dream to sail round the world and I am planning to do that solo nonstop, hopefully in 2025." Aboard Queen Anne, of course!



Anders Onsager

