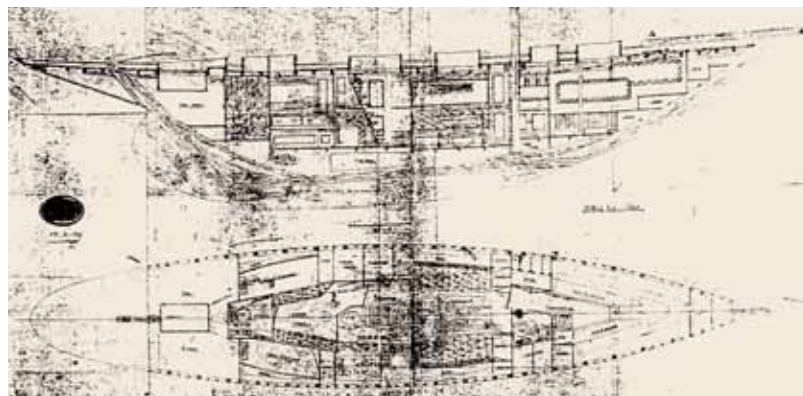




The History

At the beginning of the last century the rapid evolution of yacting brought a rather chaotic situation in regards to rating as applied to regattas. Practically every club of some importance had it's own regulations prejudicing in this way the international status of the competition. To put an end to this situation, a conference, which took place in London in 1906 concerning all the countries involved, established a single rule: the International Rule, which came into effect a couple of years later and was subdivided into different metric classes: 4m, 5.5m, 6m, 8m, 12m, 15m, 19m, 23m. These measurements were not related to the length of the hull, but were the result of the rating formula. When A. Richardson set himself up in 1907 to work on designing WHITE HEATHER, (this was VARUNA's original name), he probably had the need to create a hull which was appropriate to the formula of the 12 meter class, but also the desire to design something which, even though smaller in proportion, was the most similar to the beloved BRITANNIA, GEORGE V's royal yacht. Philip & Son shipyard in Dartmouth had the task of handling the precious Burmese teak used for the construction. Legend has it that a chosen cargo of the exotic timber was imported at the beginning of the 1800's by a Lord, ancestor of the shipowner. The wood was stored to mature in one of the many peat-bogs which surrounded the English coastline while waiting for the right application.



The war destroyed the shipyard archives therefore not much is known about the construction of VARUNA. Successive witnesses say she was used as a trial horse for other 12 meters and also engaged in long cruises in the Baltic sea and along the Scottish coast. The international rating foresaw for it's major different classes, from 8m and above, living space with a minimum of comfort, as the gentlemen who participated in regattas in the Solent

were arriving there under sail on board their "twelves". The 30's brought a change from the splendid gaff rig to the handier Marconi, the installation of the engine and a new name: VARUNA. An English lady descendant of the first owner, and herself owner until the '70's, recalls how in Cowes, where VARUNA cruised frequently, she was nicknamed "Little Britannia", due to her resemblance to the Royal yacht. Quite different from the appearance of the boat in the last thirty years of the century, marked by long-term neglect on the clear Caribbean coast or at the bottom of Mediterranean ports, by poor maintenance and botched pieces of work; the beginning, in a word, of a sad, last route that leads old boats to their final mooring. But evidently, and perhaps due to the personal interest of the Indian divinity, Varuna, in charge of the waters and of the seas and also of the multiple deities in the crowded Hindu pantheon, quite a different karma awaited VARUNA's Fate. And so she awoke one fine May morning in the Imperia shipyard, surrounded by the loving cares of Mario Quaranta and his carpenters.



The Arrival at Imperia

In September 1998 a white sloop with fine lines casts her anchor in the port of Imperia. She has been seen arriving from the West from France, perhaps even from Gibraltar; she bears an exotic, even strange name: VARUNA. The old maritime town has just hit the front page headlines thanks to the Classic and Vintage Yacht Challenge, of which the first was in 1986. But the economy of the port still



lives from more pragmatic coastal trades: oil, corn, fishing; while the classic yachting scene has still a way to go. The cargo sailors and the fishermen were not therefore too impressed by that long counter, by the elegant forward rake, by the little, pretty doghouse. For them, probably, the one that moored at the long pier of Porto Maurizio is just another old boat, a bit shabby, handled by a lovely adventurer, perhaps both on the look-out for their last port. And this looks like a reality, as the boat passes from hand to hand, receives just some survival work, as the funds for serious work to the frames and beams are lacking. Instead, the insult of hundreds of pounds of sawdust and polyester resin attached to the keel in former times, and of the paint removed from the teak planks, which were then just left bare.

And it is in this way that the people of Imperia have seen her for ten long years on the cradle, surrounded by all sorts of wreckage, weeds and rubbish in the post industrial skyline of the ex-iron foundry. Then on a bright May morning of the year 2000, they realized that one element was missing from the familiar landscape: VARUNA was no longer in her place



The Shipyard

In 1982 on the right bank of the Impero stream, just at its mouth, rises Imperia shipyard for the maintenance of wooden and polyester hulls, even if some kinds of traditional construction remain. In 1990 the shipyard management was taken over by Mario Quaranta, a young naval designer from Turin, whose family had a long tradition in nautical construction; his father was in fact building sailing boats in wood already in the late 50's. His appreciation of fine traditional lines led him to own some, and also to race and cruise them. The shipyard could not but gain from this experience, and so, under the shade of the old iron foundry one could see less and less plastic and more and more precious wood.. Many familiar names appeared at the yard, well known in the vintage circuit:

Athena, Rondine II a great Sangermani, owned by Varuna's current owner, the Croix des Gardes, Bonita, Mai Più Bella



Seconda, Dida IV and again, the Nita, built for the Admiral Cup by the Carlini shipyard. Also Mr. Quaranta's personal sailing boat, as well as the FolkBoat and the Alnair IV sailed by a well known Italian journalist, Piero Ottone. Even Tirrenia II, the ninety year-old dark blue ketch of Dr. Loffredo, AIVE President, remained here for a winter renovation, while longer and more difficult had been the restoration of Shelmalier. This Laurent Giles' creation presented some serious deterioration. In the 60's new techniques were experimented with on the Admiral Cup yachts, not

always benefiting from years of testing; so with the complicated structure totally renewed as well as the interior: wet lockers, deck completely reconstructed, etc the Shelmalier is waiting for the beginning of the regatta season to show all her graceful power. It is clear that with this tradition, VARUNA and the Imperia shipyard had, sooner or later, to arrive at a historically important restoration. It is not known which one of the two chose the other; the fact remains that in May 2000, VARUNA and the shipyard met to give way to what Mario Quaranta, living antithesis of self-congratulation, called: "the restoration of the restorations"; twenty-four months of intense work. And now, finally, the old "twelve" restored down to the least details, swings superbly and very much admired at the mooring on the "quai d'honneur" of the "medaglie d'oro" pier in the old maritime town.





The Restoration

In May 2000 VARUNA's hull was completely emptied; the lower planking was taken to pieces to examine the condition of keel and frame. All the fastenings were removed and the strongback in soft iron, were recovered to be used again after having been coated with zinc. The keel, which was practically cast in a casing of polyester resin, was cleared out with enormous effort. Moreover the stern-post and about fifteen frames had to be replaced. The planking, apart from the nails, was in an almost perfect state. Then the rudder had to be reconstructed, while an accurate ultrasonic examination established the condition of the bronze bolts which connect the ballast to the keel. On deck, once taken to pieces for restoration, all the original iron fittings had to be replaced, as were the beams, and the deck reconstructed with two layers of teak 22 mm-thick, identical to the original. The same wood was used for the capping rail, with the margin board in ash. The doghouse placed to protect the companionway, was still in good condition, as was the skylight for which had to be made the glass and bars and be re-varnished. A new engine, a VM



100 HP , was installed with side propeller, as was done in that period for adding steam to sail. Architect Giorgetti, responsible for the philosophy of the restoration, designed the interior according to the original layout recovered from the British Museum. Warm Cherry wood was used for the interior furnishings, and a minimum of instrumentation and modern fittings used – just enough to provide a minimum of modern comfort under way without sacrificing the unique atmosphere of an old 12.

The construction of the mast and spars was undertaken by the Frenchman Gilbert Pasqui in his Villefranche shipyard, by fitting and shaping to the best of his

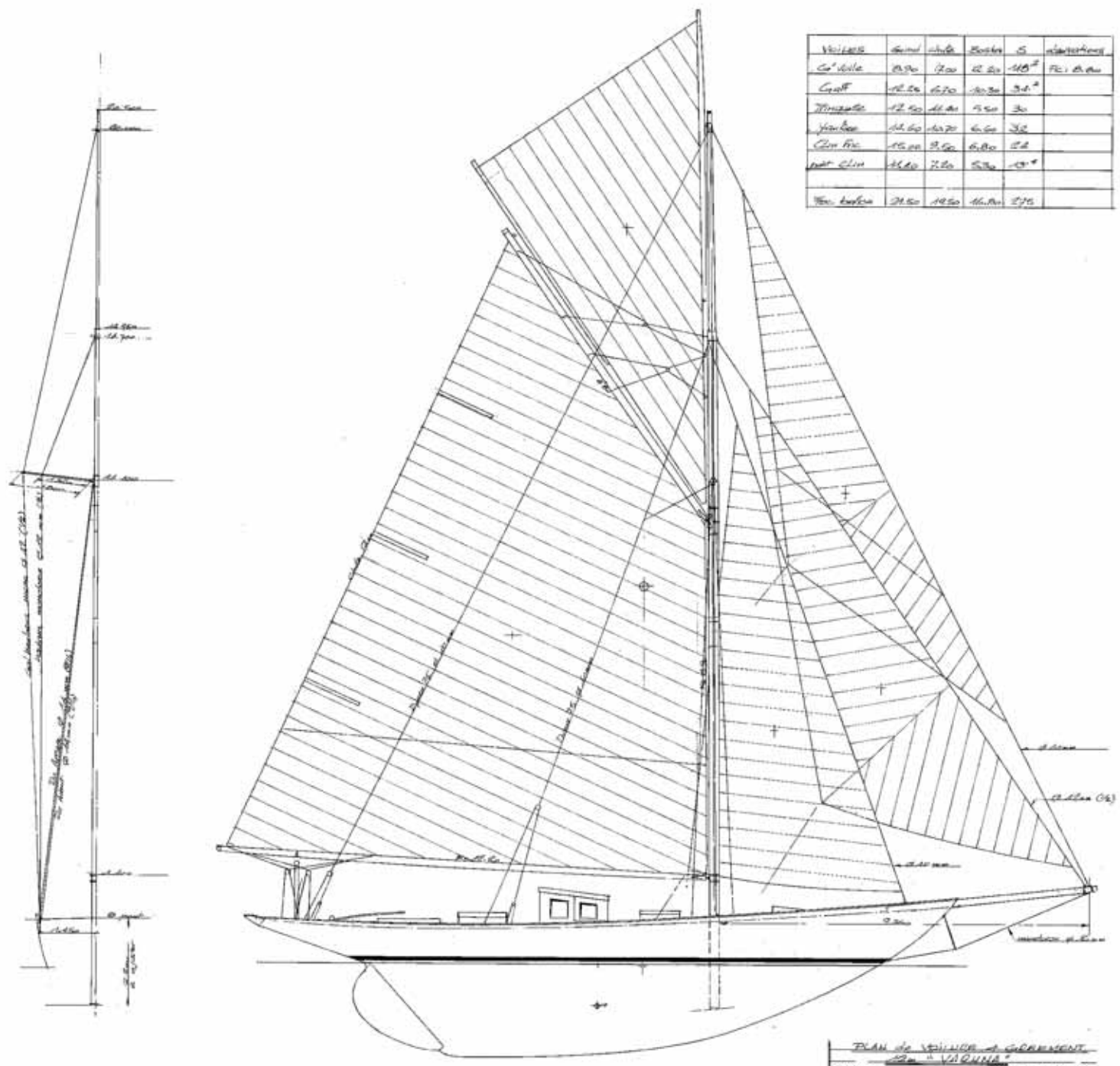


VARUNA
1909

long experience the long thick boards of Pitch Pine and Silver Spruce to Giorgetti's designs, in order to obtain the complicated but undeniably aesthetic structure for gaff rigged sails. It was of course to the original 1909 sail plan that Hood of Milan built their artificially 'aged' Dacron wardrobe: gaff mainsail, gaff top sail, working jib, jib top sail, jib, gennaker. Also the colour of the hull was returned to the original black; while at the beginning and at the end of the golden streak engraved on the upper planking, shine three little, enigmatic ellipses; most probably the personal emblem of Mr. A. Richardson, the designer.



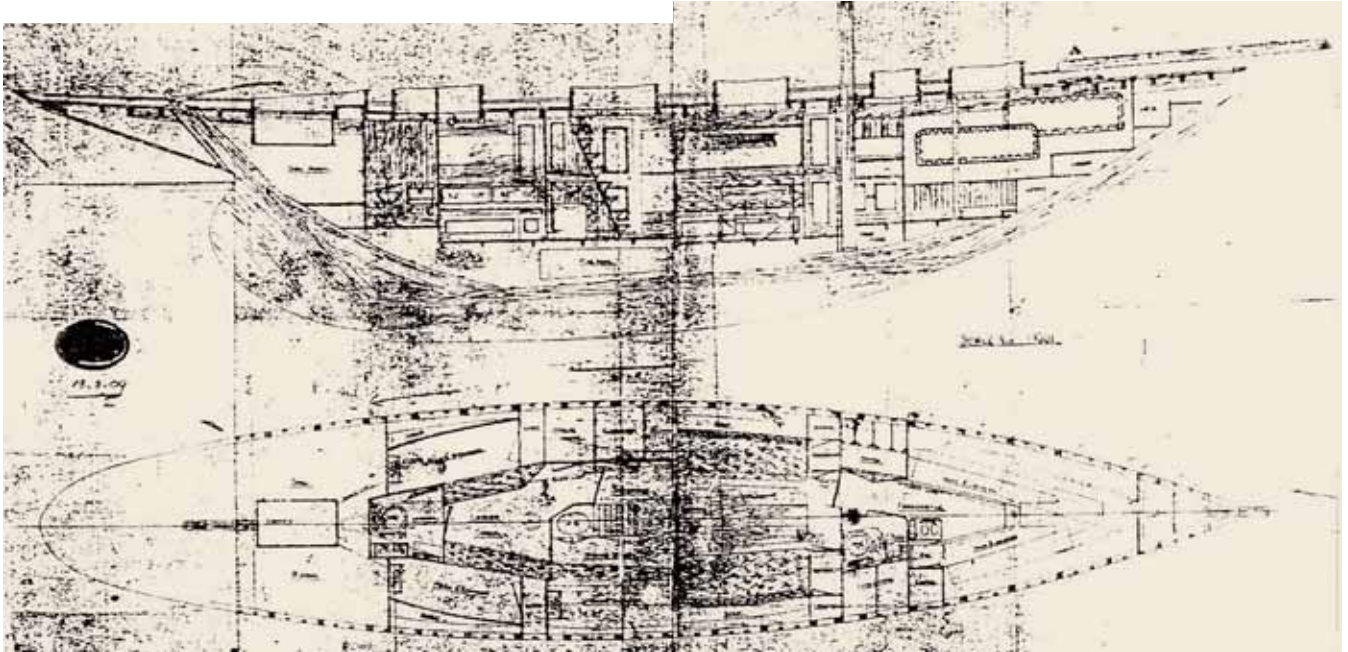
VARUNA 1909



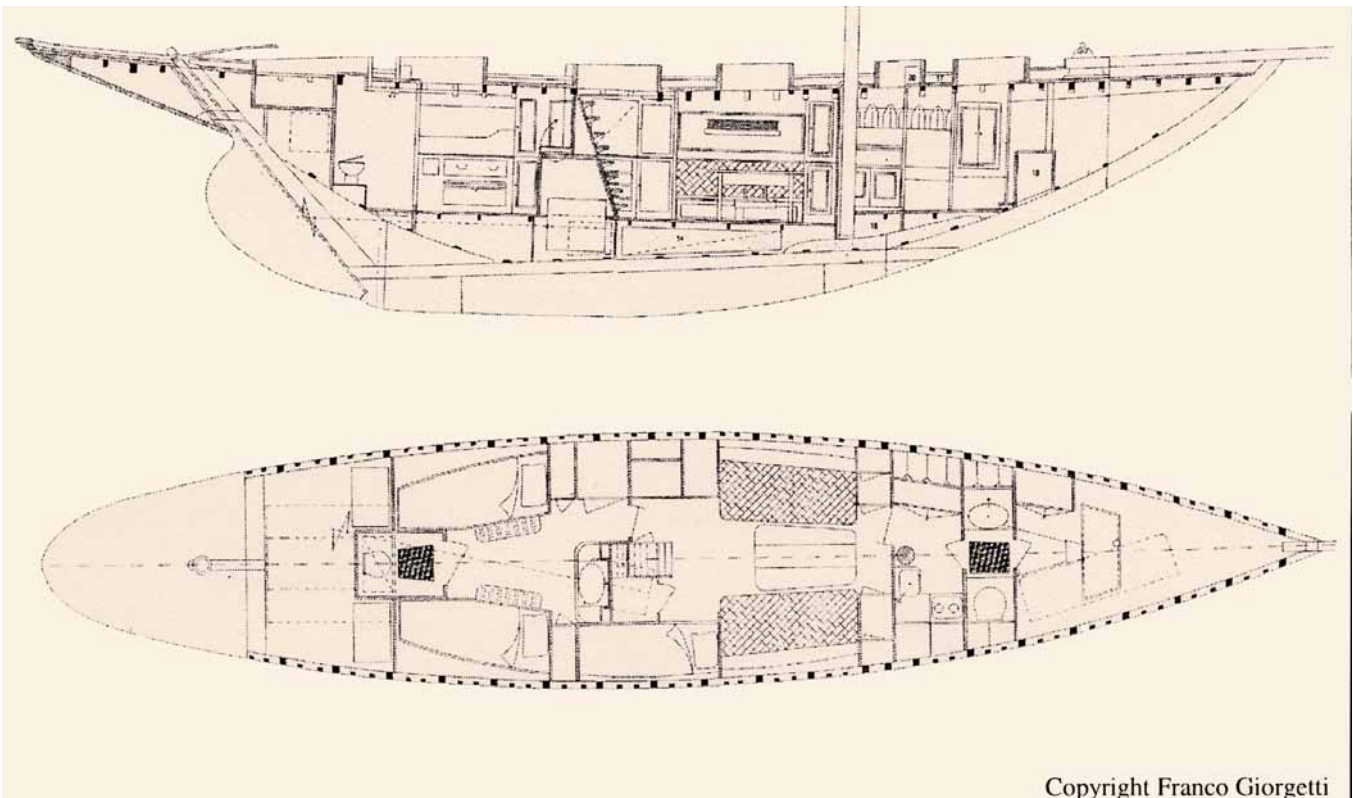
Part	Length	Width	Depth	Area	Notes
Co. Mite	25.00	7.00	12.20	140 ^{sq}	PC, 2.00
Co. B	12.00	6.50	10.30	30 ^{sq}	
Mizzen	12.00	4.00	5.00	30	
Yards	11.00	10.20	6.00	30	
Co. B	15.00	3.00	6.00	30	
Co. C	11.00	7.00	5.00	13 ^{sq}	
Yards	21.00	10.50	11.00	270	

PLAN of SPINNING & GRAMENT
 of "VARUNA"
 ARCHT. ENGINEER
 J. J. J. J.

The original plans in the British Museum



Architect Giorgetti's new design



Copyright Franco Giorgetti



Tecnical Data

Year of the design:	1907
Year of launch:	1909
Designer:	A. Richardson
Yard:	Philip & Son. Ltd
Overall Length.	m. 21,40
Hull length	m. 18,20
Moulded length	m. 13,20
Moulded beadth	m. 3,80
Draught	m. 2,70
Gross Tonnage	t. 28,00

Equipment

Engine VM 100BHP	year 2002
Tender + Jhonson	year 2002
AC/DC Newmar	year 2002
Autopilot Simrad	year 2004
Boiler,refrigerator	year 2002
GPS Geonav 10 Colour	year 2002
Log&Wind B&G Hydra	year 2002
Ecosounder B&G	year 2003
Tel ,VHF Furuno	year 2002
Stereo + Ant TV	year 2002

Sails

Gaff Sail	118,00 sq.m.year 2007
Gaff top Sail	34,00 sq.m.year 2007
Jib top Sail	32,00 sq.m.year 2007
Jib	30,00 sq.m.year 2007
Working Jib	24,00 sq.m.year 2007
Drifter	45,00 sq.m.year 2003
Gennaker	130,00 sq.m.year 2004





Thanks to:

Shipowners :

Mrs. and Mr. Wanda and Luigi Donna

Architect:

Franco Giorgetti

Yard:

Cantieri di Imperia Mr. Mario Quaranta

Yard's carpenters:

Sandro Boidi

Marco Aschero

Alfredo Di Cianni

Daniela Roncallo

Skipper:

Gabriel Simonini

Co-Skipper:

Fulvio Curtoni

Sailmaker:

Hood Veleria, Milano Mr. Marco Pomi

And:

Ambrogio e Giovanni Terrizzano

Nicola Desiglioli

Claudio Darnero

Bellotti Legnami, Como

Toplicht, Amburg Germany

Mare Rigging, Torino

Mistral Marine, Imperia

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Imperia Mare S.p.A.

Photo Lino Pastorelli, Sanremo

