

The Making of the Yacht *Fazisi*

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Translated from the Russian

Создание яхты «Фазиси»

Igor Mironenko. Typeset by the author, 30 September 2016

FIRST ENGLISH EDITION — translated from the Russian into Australian English. The Russian text is the text of record; where the two differ, the Russian is right.

This translation has not yet been read by its author. It is complete and it has been checked, but until he has been through it, it is a proof and not a final text. The pale reference beside each paragraph — FAZ-01-001 — is there so that anything wrong in it can be named exactly; it never changes, and a correction quoted against it lands in the paragraph it came from.

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Synopsis

The book tells of the building of the yacht *Fazisi* for taking part in the round-the-world sailing race, the Whitbread Round the World Race 1989–1990.

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In the whole history of Soviet sailing a Soviet yacht took part in a competition of that rank only once.

FAZ-01-002

The book is documentary. All the names and events are – real.

FAZ-01-003

In describing the events the author relied on factual material preserved in his archive.

FAZ-01-004

The book's text is supplemented by many photographs.

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The book is intended for a wide circle of readers. It will be of particular interest to those readers interested in the history of sailing.

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Creating the Yacht *Fazisi*

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Dear friends!

On 2 September 2014 it was 25 years since the start of the round-the-world yacht race in which the Soviet yacht *Fazisi* took part. By now the story of that event has been covered in reasonable detail, both in several books and in films. But for a number of reasons there is not much information about how the yacht was actually built for a project that goes on stirring people connected with sailing to this day. And not only them. So I will take the liberty of filling in some of the gaps in the story of how the yacht *Fazisi* was created. Let me say at the outset that I want to describe events I took part in personally. In those cases where I have to refer to episodes I did not witness myself, but was indirectly involved in – I am counting on my friends to prompt me if I get the account wrong.

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Prologue

It hardly needs saying – the round-the-world race is the dream of any yachtsman. I was no exception to that rule. And then, in July 1988, at the Kiev Cruising Yacht Club, Alexei Grischenko told me (in strict confidence, naturally) that there was a chance of getting into a round-the-world race. An active group of sailing enthusiasts was preparing such a program, and one of the key people in that group was Vladislav Murnikov. And that a training sail was being got ready on a yacht on the Black Sea, and Alexei had been included in her crew. That, I suppose, was all the information Lyosha shared with me at the time.

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Why "in strict confidence"? Because the idea was a very tempting one and nobody wanted to say "hop" until they had jumped over. Anyone who has ever started something big will understand that. Why did Lyosha tell only me, and nobody else in the yacht club? Let my friends answer that one themselves. I will only say (for those who do not know me) that I have been in sailing since 1975, and by the time of that conversation with Alexei I had three yachts behind me, in whose building I took the most direct part. Plus a fair number of miles sailed.

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Anyway – Alexei took part in the training passage, and after he got back we carried on with the conversation. At the beginning of September 1988 Vladislav flew to Kiev and we took *Gonta* out for a run down the Dnepr, and at the same time to talk over the round-the-world project in more concrete detail. A lot of questions were asked. Some Vladislav could answer more definitely, others – he could not answer. But remembering all of it now, I think all those questions were both to the point and beside the point at the same time.

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The key points of the whole conversation were:

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1. There is a program and there are people ready to back it financially.
2. The boat has to be built in the time left before the start. (Well, that is obvious enough – without a boat there will be no start either)
3. The yacht

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will be built in Poti, at the Poti Ship Repair Yard. The yard is ready to back it.

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4. Alexei will be chief builder and skipper of the boat.

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That last point I want to stress especially. I sometimes come across remarks from less well-informed people that Alexei was only the boat's builder from the very start of the project. That is not so. He was both builder of the yacht and skipper of a crew that was only then being formed. And how events developed afterwards – I will tell later. As a result of that meeting the decision was taken. Alexei leaves for Poti at the end of September and, once settled in – he will let me know. Then I too will have to resign from the works and come to Poti. Alexei was also given the right (as skipper of the yacht) – to choose the crew. Obviously priority went to yachtsmen with a lot of experience of building yachts. Vitya Kamkin from Dnepropetrovsk and Vitya Yazykov from Lazarevskoye, not far from Sochi, were invited into the project straight away. They were both very knowledgeable yachtsmen and yacht builders.

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At that the circle of yachtsmen Alexei had told about the coming race came to a stop for the moment. There were several reasons for it: First – nobody wanted to create unnecessary fuss.

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The policy was – let us start the job and then see whether we have the right to pull men away from their everyday concerns. Nobody gave anybody any "guarantees". Everyone did it of their own free will and wish. And people's situations are all different, after all... Second – at the early stage Vladislav was also going to select crew members and put candidates to Alexei for approval.

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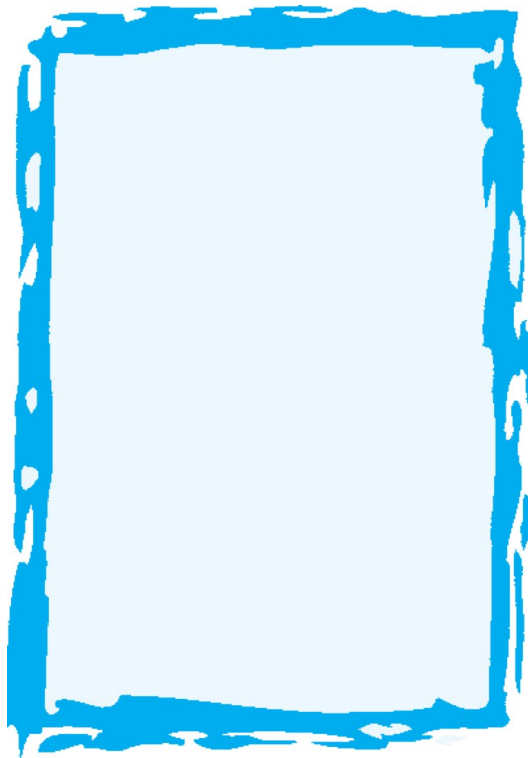
Third – the lads on the training passage – were to join the building of the yacht in Poti. And how many men that would be – we did not really know.

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The meeting aboard *Gonta* was the end of our "initial" stage on the road to the round-the-world race.

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PROLOGUE



Poti, 1988

At the end of September 1988 Alexei flew out to Poti. He resigned his post as senior engineer at the Institute of Cybernetics. At home he left his wife Lena, who was expecting a child. They had only just married, so the parting was not an easy one. Alexei and I agreed that as soon as he was settled in – he would let me know and I would start getting ready to leave Kiev. From the moment he left I went into standby mode. We kept in touch by telephone, but getting a call through from Poti to Kiev was no simple task. FAZ-04-001

A month and a bit went by. At the beginning of November Alexei rang me and said – get going! I started putting through my resignation from the works. That took some time as well. On top of that, as always happens in these cases – at exactly that moment I was offered the post of deputy chief engineer of the works for production automation. And a choice had to be made – stay at the works and take the post, or go and build a yacht for the round-the-world. The choice I made was for the yacht. FAZ-04-002

I want to say that I was not the only one facing that dilemma – which to choose? Alexei, and Vitya Kamkin, and Zhenya Platon – and many, many others besides were put in front of the same question. FAZ-04-003

And then just try it, make up your mind – throw over all you have built up, a settled life, a career – and step into the unknown. FAZ-04-004

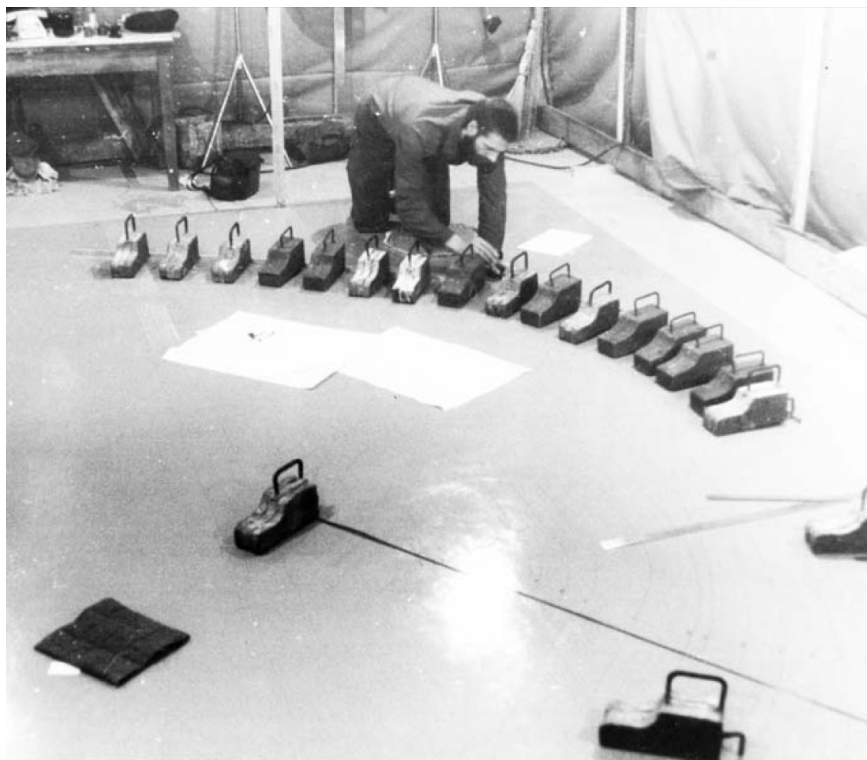
Even if it is a very tempting one! I will say that not everyone offered a part in the project could take that step. But the overwhelming majority – took the step forward and did not look back. Be that as it may – towards the middle of November I flew to Sukhumi, and from there, by bus – got to Poti. The bus dropped me at the gate of the Poti Ship Repair Yard when it was already night. The man on duty at the gate explained how to find the works *profilaktoriy* (the trade union's live-in rest-and-treatment house). I got to it, found the room. I walk in – Lyosha is sitting there drinking tea. The meeting, of course, was a joyful one! FAZ-04-005

By that time Vitya Yazykov and Valera Safiullin had already arrived to build the yacht. Vitya I knew well – he had been to see us at the Kiev Cruising Yacht Club more than once. Valera I met for the first time. He was an old friend of Vitya's. But very soon we became good friends. I met one more man – Andrei Chasovsky. He had come from Leningrad – he was doing the lofting for the yacht. Together with Vitya Yazykov and Valera. Andrei was not in the proposed crew, but as a loftsmen he was – of the highest grade. I think – Vladislav Murnikov brought him into the project. But unlike us – he was on secondment, from his own enterprise in Leningrad.

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The next day, first thing – we went to the shop, to meet the management, the production side and what had already been done on the boat. I was introduced to the manager of the hull assembly shop – Vakhtang Kavtaradze. Then to the mould loft, where Vitya and Valera were drawing out frames and making templates. After that we paid a visit to the yard's technical department, and I met the engineering staff. Volodya Ches – one of the yard's engineers – was our technical liaison. It was through his department that we got the tooling drawings for assembly/welding of the yacht.

FAZ-04-007



Andrei Chasovsky at work.

FAZ-04-008

What with getting to know the yard, moving into the *profilaktoriy*, etc.

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the day flew past unnoticed.

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The main organisational questions about me were settled fairly quickly. The next day I could already start work. My first job was – erecting the assembly jig for the future yacht. Alexei gave me the assembly drawing of the jig, done by the yard's design office, and told me to find Vakhtang. He would show me where the boat was going to be built. And Lyosha himself had run off somewhere. He always had enough on his plate, and leading anybody about by the hand – there was simply no time for that. Our approach to the job was simple: there is a job – you take it and you do it. And the fewer leading questions you ask – the better. Work it out yourself. And only in extreme cases did we ask each other for help with some piece of work.

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Vakhtang walked me over to an empty patch of asphalt in the shop (the shop was enormous, they built *Kolkhida*-class craft there on a production line) and said: "Here is your dream – you can start bringing it to life." And he smiled as he said it. I was given two Vitaly Ivanoviches to help me – same name. They told me straight away that they could cut metal or they could weld. Drawings they did not understand. Anyway – they were waiting for my instructions. They were good workers and we got on from the first day.

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Of course I was a bit nervous. You always want to look good, manage competently, make only the right decisions, know the answer to everything. But that only happens in films. And even then – not in all of them. For now I had to start setting out the assembly jig on bare asphalt and work out solutions as I went. But as they say – the eyes fear it, the hands do it. We set it out, checked it twice – it all matched. We started cutting metal, assembling the structure of the jig. Within a week the structure was starting to look right. You get used to any job. And when it comes off as well – better still!

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We spent whole days at the yard. This was the *nulevoy tsikl* (the "zero cycle", the jargon for everything before building proper), which only led up to building the yacht. But you cannot do without it either. Alexei spent much time in the yard's production engineering department, going through and studying the drawings of the future yacht. The method for building the boat was being worked out. After all, nobody, including the yard men who specialised in aluminium shipbuilding – had built a structure like this before.

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And in any new project – always plenty of mismatches.

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The design documentation, done by the lads from Mobile – the design office Vladislav Murnikov brought into the project, was on the whole supplied in sufficient quantity. At least at that moment, with a set of drawings like that, we could start building the hull itself. The rest of the structure – the deck, the cabin top, the hull fit-out and so on, was still being developed and given only in general form. But work on the design went on all the time and we understood that by the time we needed those assemblies – the documentation would be there. Our job was – to concentrate on what we could already start doing. And that was – the hull of the yacht, first of all.

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Every evening, after work finished (and we finished around eight in the evening), we would gather in the room and study the drawings. And think about the method for making individual parts. Drawings are drawings – but you still have to tie them to what the yard can actually do. When we found some inaccuracy or contradiction in the drawings – that spot was marked for later agreement with Vladislav – if it was a serious slip. Or for discussion with the yard's production engineer – if we had questions about making it. Bit by bit we were getting used to the boat, if you like. Later, once the building was actually under way, we had a very good picture of what followed what and why. And which drawing to pick up to check one detail or another. So our evening sessions were not fruitless.

FAZ-04-017

Our living arrangements were not badly set up. On top of that, we were not fussy. After all, we were doing work we loved and found interesting! We lived right inside the yard, in the works hostel, which sort of served the functions of a *profilaktoriy*. I do not know, mind you, who the works trade union was restoring to health in there. So the hostel was mostly used to put up men on secondment when they came to the yard. And that is where we settled in. It was convenient in the sense that it was about 200 metres to the shop. And you are there. No time was lost travelling to the yacht and home again. We started work at eight in the morning. Then there was the lunch break – an hour. In that time we managed to eat and then lie down in the room, on the floor (without taking off our padded jackets, it being winter) for another 20 minutes. And back to the shop, until the end of the working day – five in the evening. Then we went to supper and after that – we would go back to the shop again – for another couple of hours to bring the launch of the yacht closer. We finished somewhere around eight or nine in the evening. To start with, we worked that way for about a month. On Saturday and Sunday we came in to work as well. So our Monday began on Saturday, in the most literal sense! But before long we came to the conclusion that we simply would not last at that

rate. So we decided to leave Sunday for rest after all. And that is what we did. We worked to that timetable practically until the very end of building the boat in Poti. With the one difference that towards the end we did not work after supper. We finished our working day around six in the evening – and went to supper. To come back to the boat the next day.

FAZ-04-018

I should say that both the yard workers and the *profilaktoriy* staff treated us well. To start with, mind you, at the yard they looked at us – as some sort of curiosity. What sort of lads are these, what are they building? Then again – men are judged by their work. So they were sizing us up – and what can these lads do? Other than dream? But we did not disappoint our onlookers. And very soon we were on the friendliest terms with the yard's people. But with the menu in the *profilaktoriy* canteen I personally never did establish "friendly relations". And nor did anyone else on our team. The main dish was – rice and chicken. Or chicken and rice. For variety. And what is more – there was always more rice than chicken. I personally am not a great fan of the rice diet.

FAZ-04-019

And I think – even a rice fan would not have held out long.

FAZ-04-020

So we tried to vary our menu – as best we could.

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Fortunately – Poti is full of greens of every kind. There you have coriander, and parsley, and radishes, and whatever you want. And you could buy all of it right by the works gate. In the early days – those were our longest trips – to the gate and back. We simply had no time to go into town.

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We also had *salo*, cured pork fat. Vitya Yazykov had brought *adjika* with him, the Georgian pepper paste. And so you take a piece of black bread, on it – a layer of *salo*. Then – the *adjika*. And on top you fix it all down with coriander. It came out very nicely indeed! That dish certainly brightened the nutritional gloom of our canteen. We lived two or three to a room. In the early period there were few of us, so small rooms in the hostel were available. Later, as the crew grew – we had to take bigger rooms, which sometimes held seven people or more. But on the whole it was all quite comfortable.

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Time went on, we worked, and in the end the question started to come up – what about pay for the work? An enthusiasm is an enthusiasm, romance is romance – but none of that is accepted as payment for food and the other things you need. The money we had with us – was not endless either. Even with our tiny expenses.

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Not to mention that everyone had families left at home. They have to be kept as well. We naturally put that question to Vladislav. And he cannot settle a question like that on the spot. It all got redirected back to Poti, to

the Poti branch of the Fazis company, which was one of the parties to the project. I am writing about it briefly, the whole chain was a great deal longer, and I was after all building a yacht, not dealing with administration. So I may well be leaving something out. Then again – 26 years have gone by since.

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The fact is that we were sitting on a real financial sandbank. And our status at the yard was not very clear. The accounts department needs properly made-out papers to put a wage through. We are – not men on secondment. They do not take us on at the yard. The yard had no plan to build a yacht for a round-the-world race. And if that is so – then there was no budget for it either. The yard simply gave us building space and supplied the metal out of "saved" resources, essentially. Of course, work was going on to legalise the order, if you like, but it was being done in parallel. Not in advance. And for the moment we needed to think up something to patch the financial holes at least somehow. The yard administration met us halfway (not on its own initiative, of course, but only after guarantees from Fazis and from Viktor Tikhov, first deputy chairman of the Poti *gorispolkom*, the city executive committee, that it would all be made out properly). It was decided to put us on the books – as yard workers. But then other difficulties came up. The only trade they could take us on in was hull assembler. And everyone had – diplomas from secondary and higher educational institutions. We thought for a long time how to

FAZ-04-026

"get round" that obstacle. With me it turned out simplest of all – besides my engineering diploma I had a fifth-grade *razryad* as a turner and a fifth-grade *razryad* as a toolmaker, the Soviet trade grade, both written into my work record book. So they put me down as an assembler-welder of aluminium vessels. Fifth grade. So I became a "straight fives" student. I never saw that many "fives" (straight 'A's) in my school reports. With Alexei it was harder – he had no registered manual trade. There was an entry saying he was – a senior engineer. In short, they found him some post or other. Paying 40 roubles a month. I laughed and said he was now – a financial magnate! I was paid 70 roubles. For the grade.

FAZ-04-027

The question of Vitya and Valera was settled the same way. But the wages stayed simply laughable! And only later, somewhere around February 1989 – was that question settled in our favour. We got into the work and the days flew by. There were still four of us. But do not think that we were the only ones moving the project along. Enormous work was going on in different directions. Including – the selection of the crew. Vladislav, who had been living this project for two years already – organ-

ised a training sail on the Black Sea in the autumn. The yacht's crew included lads from Odessa (Seryozha Stanetsky and Tolya Verba), from Sochi (Valera Alekseyev and Vitya Pogrebnov), from Dnepropetrovsk (Vitya Kamkin). Those are the ones I remember. The lads went to sea in the autumn to get a feel (even if only roughly) for what the Southern Ocean is. The Black Sea passage included a call at Poti.

FAZ-04-028

Navigational work on the round-the-world race was going on. That is a very big piece of work. Sergei Akatyev was handling it, the man Alexei had suggested Vladislav bring into the project as a competent navigator with much yachting experience.

FAZ-04-029

Which Sergei indeed was. He and I had sailed *Gonta* in the Black Sea Cup and the Baltic Cup, plus in a lot of local races. Sergei was a professional naval officer. He served as a navigator on nuclear submarines. On top of that he is a talented artist. The map of the world he prepared with the route of the round-the-world race – hung in our room above the table. As if reminding us what we were there for...

FAZ-04-030

Besides this there was constant work on the yacht's design documentation – that too took a mass of time, effort and money. Plus – the search for funding. And that means work with potential sponsors, the need to convince people that your project – is the best thing that can happen to them in their lives if they join it. I am sure that everyone who had a hand in this project, and all the more so – those who took decisions and carried them out – could write a separate book of his own about every event I have listed. Vladislav Murnikov, Skip Novak and Zhenya Platon have already done exactly that, as it happens. But let us go back to Poti together. Three weeks after the start of assembling the assembly jig – the first frames could be set up on it. The jig came out a massive structure. We were all afraid of welding distortion during hull assembly (which the yard's "old hands" had been frightening us with), so we did not stint on the metal for the jig!

FAZ-04-031

But the trickiest and most laborious work was – reproducing the contour of the deck. The deck had a very big sheer and the assembly jig had to reproduce that contour exactly. For that we had to mill a hundred-odd channel sections to different lengths. And weld them to the working surface of the jig in a set order. Then an aluminium pad was fixed to each support. And the frame itself was welded to that. Although the marking out and assembly procedure is quite tiring and laborious – it gave us no surprises. It all came out very nicely indeed. By that time the main lofting had been finished by Andrei Chasovsky. Vitya Yazykov and Valera Safiullin had put together the first series of templates, from which we were to cut the

frames out of aluminium sheet. With a stiffening strip then welded to that web. And that was when it started!

FAZ-04-032

The first frame had to be thrown away straight after welding. The welding pulled it so far out that it went beyond every conceivable machining tolerance. All the welding was manual argon-arc TIG. Semi-automatic MIG sets were only just arriving at the yard then and nobody knew how to handle them properly. But excellent welders (and women welders!) – those there were. So the whole thing rested on manual welding. Never mind, the lads thought – the first pancake always comes out a lump. We will try again. With a change in the sequence of the welds. We did – and the result was not much better than the last one! There was something to think about there! A fine business – you cannot even make a frame properly, we have been tumbling about for half a day already, and still in the same place. At this rate – how long is it going to take to build the boat? And there is nobody to ask for advice. Nobody at the yard had ever welded structures as delicate as these. And the products the yard men were used to were not notable for thin metal. A council gathered – Alexei Grischenko, Valera Safiullin, Volodya Ches, several more of the yard men. We tried making a frame once more. That did not come out either. But experience was gained. I do not know who came up with the idea of how to cut the frame's web out of the plate so that after welding it would lie exactly to the template.

FAZ-04-033

I think it was a collective decision after all. At that time I was still working on the jig and took no part in making the first frame. Although they were all busy not far away. Only towards the end of the day Lyosha came over beaming and said there was a method! They cut the web not to the template but to a particular contour, keeping only the width of the web unchanged. And when the stiffening flange was welded on – the welding distortion itself brought the frame to the required size. That was our first victory in aluminium shipbuilding!

FAZ-04-034

I should say that towards the end of making the frames Valera got so good at it that they came out for him – exactly in accordance with the drawing. And the time spent on making the frames – was minimal.

FAZ-04-035

The start of building any yacht is considered to be the laying of the keel. Before that – everything that happens is only preparation for building. As soon as the first frames were made – we started setting them up on the jig. We began from the middle of the boat and moved out symmetrically to the bow and the stern.

FAZ-04-036

We set up the first four frames and braced them. But that is not yet the laying of the keel. The keel plates have to be welded in between the frames.

We were naturally striving towards that moment with all our hearts. The day was already over, but we did not put it off.

FAZ-04-037

With our own hands we set the keel sections up and I, as best I could – tacked them with the welder. My hands, of course, were shaking a little from the excitement. When we had finished – we all stood next to one another and looked at the thing that was starting to turn into a yacht. What we talked about – I no longer remember. But everybody's mood was a festive one.

FAZ-04-038

The laying of the keel – that is an event that has to be marked.

FAZ-04-039

A tradition. And a good one at that. We invited Vakhtang Kavtaradze (he was with us that evening) and the six of us set off to our hostel to mark the occasion. We had a good sit-down. Celebrating a victory – is always pleasant. Vakhtang felt like the birthday boy himself. After all, it is in his shop that a yacht as unique as this is being assembled! He promised on the spot to send us the best welders in the shop, so that we would have no downtime on the welding. With our own hands we could only tack the elements of the structure to each other, but the final welding – had to be done by professionals. I will say that a promise like that from him was no small thing at all. As I have already written – at the initial stage the yard had no funding for building the yacht. Sending a highly qualified welder (and even two) to our jig – he had to find a way to pay for their work out of some other financial reserves. And a highly qualified welder – is not some general hand. His wage will be higher than many a shop manager's. So go and find the money. But Vakhtang kept his word. Next day we were introduced to a woman welder. Her surname, unfortunately, has faded from my memory.

FAZ-04-040

Let those who were there remind me. And actually we called her – Aunt Anya. She was older than us, this was her last year of work at the yard before her pension. She came from Sevastopol herself, and during the war she was evacuated to Poti together with her parents. And so she stayed here to live and work. By the way – the whole Poti Ship Repair Yard is the Sevastopol Ship Repair Yard, evacuated during the war. Aunt Anya was a welder sent by God! Any thickness of metal, any of the most awkward places to get a weld into – Aunt Anya welded them so that it took our breath away in admiration! And always – never one to say no. When the hull assembly was already in its final stage and we were doing the deck and the superstructure – Aunt Anya was in demand everywhere. And even so she managed to work with everybody. Ever since then I always tell my stu-

dents at the institute that the best aluminium welders I have had occasion to meet – are women. Let the men welders not take offence at me.

FAZ-04-041

Before long representatives of the Fazisi administration came to congratulate us on the start of building the boat. Viktor Tikhov came too. Besides his post as first deputy chairman of the *gorispolkom* of the city of Poti, he also headed the Fazisi joint venture – one of the first advanced self-financing enterprises of PTMO (the Poti inter-branch association). By and large, it was thanks to him that building the yacht became possible at all. He always supported us – as best he could. They all congratulated us on the start of the building and wished us every success. Promising, for their part, every possible kind of support. The attention from the management was pleasant, of course.

FAZ-04-042

A week after the laying of the keel Vladislav arrived in Poti.

FAZ-04-043

We were waiting for him impatiently. After all, however much you discuss technical questions over the telephone – it is not the same as being able to settle a question on the spot. On top of that, as I mentioned earlier – long-distance calls were no simple business. We had to ring from the yard's head office, quite often – only late in the evening.

FAZ-04-044

So Vladislav's arrival was very timely.

FAZ-04-045

What interested us first of all were the answers to the technical questions, of which a fair number had piled up by then. After all, the documentation for the boat, as I have already said – was still at the development stage. And the further we got into the structure – the more varied questions came up. At that stage we were still not taking some technical decisions on our own. First – the designer of the boat – is the designer of the boat. And his word – is final. Second – we did not yet have the sort of experience to object with authority, quickly, to the point – if we disagreed with the design solution being proposed.

FAZ-04-046

And not simply object, but propose on the spot an alternative solution that satisfied all the requirements of the boat's structure. And could be carried out efficiently. That experience came to us later. And thanks to that later experience – Vladislav was able to concentrate on the outward side of the project (sponsors, delivery of equipment, paperwork), and to hand the building of the boat over almost entirely to Alexei Grischenko's control. But that – came later. And now – we were waiting for answers from Vladislav.

FAZ-04-047

Some questions Vlad was able to answer straight away, others – no. After all, he was not developing the boat's design on his own. The Mobile team was involved in this project and the drawings for the boat came from

them. In the end we came to the conclusion that a representative of Mobile needed to come to the yard and spend some time with us. After all, by and large they too – had no experience of building yachts like this. A secondment like that would do them good. The technical side of the question was settled for the moment. The documentation we already had, plus all the engineering questions agreed with Vladislav – allowed us to carry on building the boat without slackening the pace.

FAZ-04-048

The second question, no less important – was how things stood with the crew. A day or two before Vladislav arrived Nodari Teneishvili joined us – a merchant navy sailor living in Poti. He heard that a yacht was being built for the round-the-world race and came to the yard immediately. With the firm intention of joining the team building the yacht and later on – of taking part in the race. His sailing experience consisted of sailing as navigator on the *Sedov* – the sail training ship of the Kaliningrad seamen. But his enthusiasm was so great that there was no reason to refuse him. We explained all the conditions to him, and that – "no guarantees". He agreed to everything. We introduced him to Murnikov. Vladislav had no objection either. But five men – is not a crew. We say to Vladik: "Listen, with that many people – a One Tonner (a yacht 12 metres long) would do us perfectly well. What do we want a maxi for?" In jest, obviously, but there is a grain of truth in it too. He says that he is working on the question and the crew is about to come into Poti on the yacht they are doing their training sail on. And after that the ones who pass the selection will be put on the books at Fazis as employees of the company and sent to Poti. The yacht was due to arrive any day now. This was somewhere in the first ten days of December. We too were to be re-registered as employees of Fazis. After all, we were still "highly paid" workers of the yard!

FAZ-04-049

Anyway – at that moment those were the two key questions.

FAZ-04-050

The design documentation and the crew. On both we got more or less satisfactory answers. Besides that, Vladislav told us that Dennis Conner was expected – an American yachtsman, a star of the first magnitude in sailing. He was being invited with the aim of attracting sponsors' money, first and foremost. One of the potential sponsors lined up was Pepsi-Cola.

FAZ-04-051

And Dennis Conner had worked with that company for many years running. And it would be easier for him to convince the company's management of the advantages of investing money in our project. If, of course, he wanted to do it. And Vladislav was hoping that he would. In any case we, for our part, had to receive the distinguished guest properly. So that he would see that our round-the-world project – is not propaganda but reality.

FAZ-04-052

For us this was no ordinary event. I should think so, to see a man – a legend of sailing. A yachtsman who for a number of years defended the America's Cup – one of the most prestigious sailing competitions in the world! A man who lost the America's Cup to the Australians in 1983, so as to bring it back again in 1987. We began waiting for the meeting with him as soon as Vlad told us of his (Conner's) intention to come.

FAZ-04-053

A few days later the yacht with the crew of future round-the-world sailors came into Poti. We were glad to see Vitya Kamkin among them. Three of us knew him very well. And had been waiting for when he would finally join the building of the yacht. Lyosha told him as much: "...come on, finish with this riding about on yachts and come to Poti. We are missing you very much indeed." Vitya did not have to be talked into it. He was already striving towards Poti with all his heart. Now he had to go to Dnepropetrovsk – to resign from his job and go through all the same procedures we had gone through earlier. By profession Vitya is an architect. At that time he was working in the office of the chief architect of Dnepropetrovsk. In sailing and in yacht building alike Vitya was far from a novice. He headed a team of yachtsmen in Dnepropetrovsk who were building a yacht of the same type as *Gonta*. As such – we got to know him when we were building *Gonta* ourselves. He came to Kiev to see how we were getting on. So that he could then start building the same sort of yacht himself. Our friendship has continued ever since. He and his friends built an excellent yacht. By the time he was leaving for Poti – the yacht *Dnepr* was in her third season on the water.

FAZ-04-054

With the rest of the crew that came in Alexei was better acquainted. Tolya Verba and Seryozha Stanetsky he knew from the Black Sea

FAZ-04-055

Cups and the Baltic Cups. Valera Alekseyev and Vitya Pogrebnov – from Sochi. There were lads from Moscow, from Leningrad... I no longer remember who was from where. We all got to know each other, of course, and started telling and showing them what was what. We watched the listeners' reactions. After all, we would have to carry the job on together with them. On top of that two men among the arrivals (if not more) – were potential candidates for the post of skipper of the yacht.

FAZ-04-056

Here I must clear the situation up a little. At the very beginning of the account (in the prologue) – I said that Alexei Grischenko was both the builder of the yacht and her skipper. After Vladislav read what I had written – he made some corrections. It would be more accurate to say (thanks to Vladik for the correction) that Alexei was one of the candidates for skip-

per. Vladislav had several candidates in mind. And that, of course, is logical for a project like this.

FAZ-04-057

Alexei's level of qualification as a yacht skipper was not one bit lower than that of all the other candidates put forward. And as a yacht builder – he had no equal on that list at all. Then again – in our understanding (those of us who were already in Poti) – the skipper of the boat had to be with the crew. Under other conditions (if the boat had been built by somebody else, if we had had time for training and so on) – the choice for the post of skipper could have been made on different criteria. But under our conditions – the main criterion of selection for the skipper was precisely the work on the yacht in Poti. Think about it yourselves – how can you pull people together if you are yourself off somewhere nobody knows (even if you are doing important and necessary work for the project), and then you turn up and – hello, I am your skipper. Add to this the further factor that the skipper would have had to command not novices, but very experienced and knowledgeable men. Who, on top of that, were slogging away at building the boat 12 hours a day with no days off. To say as well that practically all of us had yacht skipper's certificates. And they were not bought but earned, through years of effort in sailing. So in what way could a skipper like that earn the authority and support of the crew?

FAZ-04-058

Given that we had nine months left before the start? And there was no boat as such yet? I personally know only one way – and that is through working together with the crew. Shoulder to shoulder, if you like.

FAZ-04-059

That is exactly why the question of potential skippers was not seriously considered by us. For us the skipper was Alexei.

FAZ-04-060

Even if in the early stages he was not officially confirmed. But little by little it was all heading that way.

FAZ-04-061

It is interesting that Valera Alekseyev (one of the candidates for skipper) – said straight out that he doubted whether we would manage to build the boat at all. Having looked at what had been done by the time he arrived in Poti – he left for Sochi. Vitya Pogrebnov, his friend, also from Sochi, came back to Poti later (when we were welding the hull plating to the framing), but then he too left. Tolya Verba and Seryozha Stanetsky, after the winter passage on the yacht was over, went home and started sorting out their affairs for the move to Poti. Of the rest of the men on that training passage I somehow cannot recall anybody else. If I have missed something, let them remind me. I will only be grateful.

FAZ-04-062

At about the same time Dennis Conner arrived too.

FAZ-04-063

As often happens – the waiting for the event was brighter than the event itself. Dennis was constantly surrounded by a group of people we did not know. Only Vladislav stood out against that background. He met Dennis, organised his trip to Poti, and also acted as interpreter.

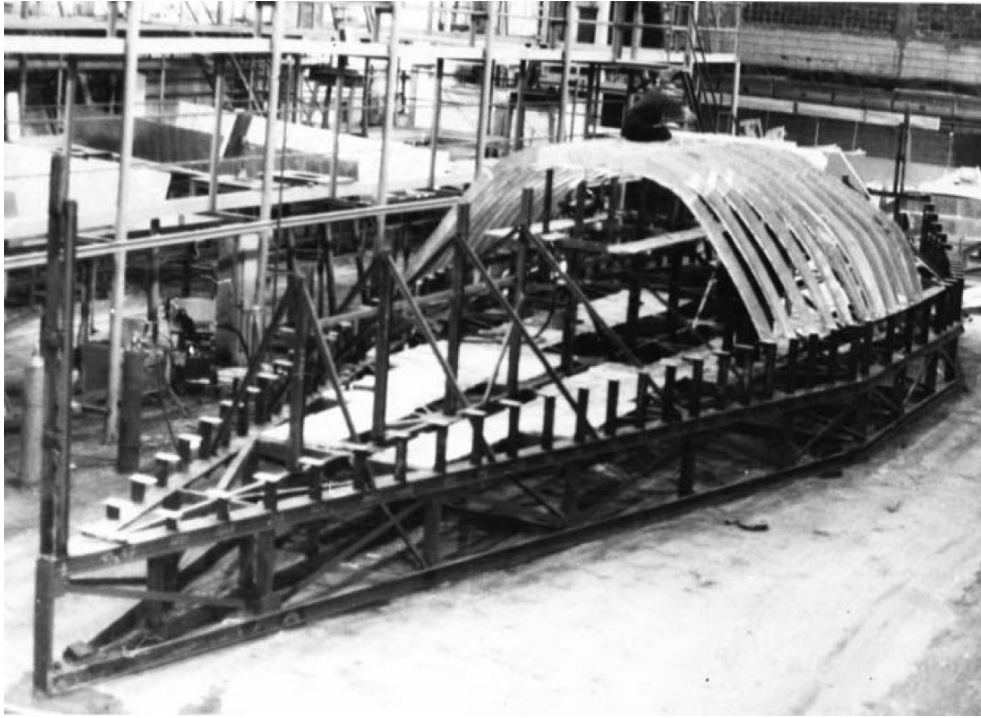
FAZ-04-064

Conner was interested in our enterprise. He looked over the building of the boat, and came to see us in the hostel. He went out to sea with the lads (and with a pile of press photographers on board, naturally). According to Vitya Kamkin – it was blowing pretty hard out there. The weather was wintry. But all the same – they decided to set the spinnaker. They set it, but soon the boat was thrown into a broach (dragged into a deep heel). The people on deck grabbed – whatever came to hand, so as not to fall over the side. A dark, stormy sea, a sky covered in rain clouds, with snow out of them now and then... There were impressions enough! Afterwards an article appeared in the newspaper to the effect that only crazy Russians can carry full sail in a stormy sea! On parting Dennis Conner gave Alexei a poster about the coming round-the-world race, on which he left his dedication. With his wishes for success in the project. We hung the poster on the room wall. And there our meeting with the celebrity ended. We never saw him again.

FAZ-04-065

Be that as it may – there were still the five of us. The work went on without slackening the pace. The working day – twelve hours. Sometimes more. But the results were there to see too. After all, every day new frames were added on the assembly jig and the boat grew bigger and bigger. Our experience grew to the same degree. At the yard they already knew us by sight and by name, always greeted us, helped if help was needed. Anyway – the atmosphere was perfectly normal. Of course, tiredness was gradually building up in us, but somehow we did not notice it then. When there is something new every day – you do not think about tiredness. Forward and only forward!

FAZ-04-066



This is how the yacht's framing looked shortly before the new year of 1989 came in.

FAZ-04-067

Before long Vitya Kamkin arrived. Our ranks had grown! Vitya needed no long explanations about what was what. The job on the assembly jig went faster. And it was in that line-up – Alexei, Vitya Yazykov, Valera, Vitya Kamkin, Nodari and I, that we saw out the end of 1988.

FAZ-04-068

Poti. January – February 1989.

FAZ-04-069

The new year of 1989 was coming closer. Lena, Alexei's wife, had a daughter, and they named her Dasha. Just before the New Year we decided to go to Kiev. Alexei had not been home since the month of September, I – since November. Anyway, there was a whole set of reasons to get away for a few days. Before the trip we went to the local market and bought a bag of mandarins each. And a few lemons as well. In Poti all this fruit had just ripened and there were masses of it at the bazaar. The price was reasonable. A fruit present like that would be very welcome in Kiev for the New Year. We packed and off we went. Vitya Yazykov left for Lazarevskoye, where he lived. He had the shortest way home. Vitya Kamkin stayed at the yard. He had only arrived recently – so he was the one left to mind the place. And Valera Safiullin. Valera came from Alma-Ata and going home that far was not really convenient for him. So he decided to stay.

FAZ-04-070

So Vitya Kamkin had company.

FAZ-04-071

At New Year at the yard (according to Vitya) – there was nobody at all apart from the two of them and one woman off the *profilaktoriy* staff. Well,

except for a guard still on at the gate. And otherwise – there was absolute silence. So for them – it was probably the quietest New Year.

FAZ-04-072

Alexei and I got to Kiev without incident. From the airport we went our separate ways home, agreeing in advance on the day we would fly back. We could not stay long in Kiev. Although Lyosha, I think, would have liked to spend a week or two with his family. And with his daughter, and simply to have a rest.

FAZ-04-073

After all, he was the oldest of us in years and the load was gradually starting to tell on him. But even so – he could not allow himself that, understanding perfectly well – how important every day spent on building the boat was. The fact is that when we met a few days later at the airport and I asked how he had spent them, he answered: "I mostly caught up on sleep..."

FAZ-04-074

How I spent that New Year I no longer remember. In earlier years we always saw the holiday in at the yacht club. It was noisy and cheerful. This time I saw it in with the family. Of course, there were questions – what and how, all my family wanted to know what it was we were doing in far-off Poti? I answered all the questions as best I could. And we had mandarins to go with it, of course... The next day, 1 January, I went to the yacht club. I wanted to see my friends, my own crew, and to look at how my boat was getting on? I was building my own boat then and left for Poti having only just finished the deck.

FAZ-04-075

I got there, but there were few people at the club. I remember Volodya Troshin was there – and we sat a while in his little cabin. There were questions and answers there too... The day went quickly. And a day after that Lyosha and I were flying back to Poti again.

FAZ-04-076

The holidays ended – the working routine began. And still in the same line-up. New people were apparently due to arrive by then, but – there was a hold-up here, a delay there. There are always reasons. Right to the end of the first ten days of January nobody appeared.

FAZ-04-077

In our hostel a small migration of peoples took place. At first Alexei, Vitya Yazykov and Valera Safiullin lived together in one room. And I was with Vitya Kamkin – in the other. But in the room where Alexei lived – we had the immersion heater and, actually, the food store I spoke about earlier. It was all set up conveniently. So after work finished we would gather in that room, drink tea and talk. But all that is fine for a while. In the end Lyosha says: "To hell with the lot of you and all these sit-downs. You will never get any sleep this way. Vitya – you move into this room, and I will be with Miron (that is, with me) – in the other." We gathered up all the tech-

nical documents and dragged them from one room to the other. But the immersion heater and the tea stayed in the old room all the same! And we went on gathering there in the evenings. Now Vitya Kamkin says to us: "Take your immersion heater and clear off out of here! There is no going to bed early because of you lot!" Anyway – the evening tea-drinking had to be limited in time. And that limit was strictly enforced by the owners of the room. One evening, when we had already gone off to our own rooms after tea, Alexei said to me: "You know, I think I should withdraw my candidacy for the post of skipper of the yacht. And stay only the builder. But of course, with the obligatory condition of taking part in the race. Of all those who are building the boat. This project is too big for one man. And by splitting the duties we can carry out the plan more successfully. What do you think?" I answer him that I understand his misgivings. To be skipper of the boat and builder at once – that is a very big task. But who will replace him – as skipper? Who, in his view, is a suitable candidate for that post? Of all the supposed candidates – we have seen none at close quarters and do not know what they are like. "You – I say to him – know all these people better than we do. Who can you suggest?" Lyosha thought for a bit:

FAZ-04-078

"There is Tolya Verba – apparently a serious man. He races a lot, won the cup on the Baltic, and his crew is not bad. It seems to me he is a suitable candidate." "Well then, let us discuss the idea with the lads tomorrow. And it is late now – let us get some sleep."

FAZ-04-079

The next day, in the evening, Lyosha raised this question, during our regular tea-drinking. On the whole we understood that Alexei's proposal was right. But we did not want to land in yet another uncertain situation. There are enough worries with building the boat as it is, and now a dual command as well. Vitya Yazykov knew Tolya Verba a little – after all, he raced on the Black Sea more than we did, since he lived there. But he did not know him well enough to be absolutely sure the choice was right. Vitya Kamkin had sailed with Tolya on the recent autumn passage. And Valera and I – we hardly knew him at all.

FAZ-04-080

Even so, Lyosha's opinion that Tolya Verba – was a suitable candidate for skipper was accepted. We all trusted Alexei unconditionally – so we had no doubts that his choice was the right one. It remained to discuss this proposal with Vladislav. After all, he was the one selecting candidates for the post of skipper, but as an overloaded man he simply had no physical time for all these tasks. Our thinking was that once Tolya arrived – he would take on the selection of the crew. After all, we could not find anybody either, sitting in Poti and building the boat twelve hours a day. By our

initiative we were freeing up the time Vladik so badly needed. Now he could ring Tolya directly and offer him the captaincy, knowing that he had support and would not have to explain his choice. That is what we did. We got in touch with Vladislav and told him about our proposal. He had no objection either. Although he knew Tolya Verba only so-so. But Alexei's word counted for a lot.

FAZ-04-081

Before long Tolya arrived in Poti. He would have come earlier, but resigning from his job took more time than he thought. He arrived full of energy and initiative. And no wonder – an offer to be skipper of the first Soviet yacht getting ready for a round-the-world race! There is something to be proud of!

FAZ-04-082

Our first close acquaintance with Tolya somehow put us on our guard.

FAZ-04-083

He immediately started asking a mass of technical questions that need not have been asked, and trying to organise our working day with schedule charts and the like. Very soon it became clear to us that he was no specialist in yacht building. Plus his manner of addressing us was bewildering. One of his favourite forms of address was "kid". Something like – "kid, do not worry, it will all be fine." Or – "kid – have you done such and such?" We just exchanged bewildered looks. And Vitya Yazykov asked him straight out: "Tolya, who are you talking to, me?" Vitya was practically the same age as him. We tried to work out where turns of phrase like that came from. Vitya Yazykov tried to explain to us that it is just the Odessa way of talking. And on top of that Tolya's crew was made up mainly of cadets from the Odessa nautical college. They were all not only younger than him, but also to some extent dependent on him. After all, Tolya was a teacher at that nautical college. That is all very well, but we had nothing against being addressed respectfully. All the more so from a man we had put forward for the post of skipper ourselves! And that respectful form of address was exactly what there was not.

FAZ-04-084

Then again, over that time we had formed a team, small maybe, but a very close one. And we understood each other at half a word, at half a glance. A sense of humour was not foreign to us either. But our humour had no touch of one man's superiority over another. And here we came up against a situation that did not fit into our usual framework of relations.

FAZ-04-085

Well all right, we thought, Tolya – is a new man, let him bed in at the yard, and then we will see. Clearly he wants to get to the bottom of everything as fast as he can. Only in a day or two – there is no way to do that. So he needs not only to pester us with questions of every kind, but also to do more work himself. Then clarity on the subject will come to him too. It is

only a matter of time. And that Tolya – is a man with an active attitude to life – that was plain to see. It is just that this activity was not yet directed at anything.

FAZ-04-086

As skipper of the boat, Tolya took up the organisational questions of the future crew. To start with we explained to him that we work at the yard for the idea, so to speak. It would not be bad if he took up the question of payment for our work. Because there was no longer any point waiting for a decision from Vladislav. And not because he had given up on the question, but because Vlad was being pulled to pieces as it was. Anyway, we left that question for Tolya to look into. On top of that you could talk to him directly, since he lived together with us.

FAZ-04-087

The second immediate question was the question of food.

FAZ-04-088

We had had quite enough of rice with chicken. So we asked Tolya to raise the subject with the management. Perhaps they would issue some extra ration at least. For variety.

FAZ-04-089

And the third question, though rather – the very first. The crew.

FAZ-04-090

So where were the men who were supposed to be the best of the best? After all, the selection passage had been run, it gave results, and we expected that almost straight away we would have a team of the very best specialists on every question of sailing and yacht building. But so far only Tolya Verba had come. To Tolya's credit – he settled the questions of pay and food well. Even if it took another month or thereabouts, he came up to the mark. But with the crew – there was a hitch. A few days after he arrived he announced to Alexei: "Miron cannot be taken into the racing crew." Alexei stared at him in amazement and asks – what on earth had brought on a decision like that? "Miron, says Tolya, wears glasses, and in a race that is no good at all." "You know, Tolya – Lyosha answered him – maybe Miron was born that way. I have sailed thousands of miles with him. So do not rush to conclusions. I have not yet seen your lads at work, and without him – a lot here will come to a stop." This conversation Lyosha passed on to me, of course. After that, Tolya never raised the question of my taking part in the race again.

FAZ-04-091

After Tolya came his close friend Sergei Stanetsky. They had sailed together on the yacht *Almaz* for many years. Sergei was a ship's electrician. But since the electrics were still a long way off, he took on work on the hull assembly. He was a sociable man, with a good sense of humour, and hard-working. His arrival was a good addition to the team. After that, however, the thing took a somewhat unexpected turn. Tolya did not hide his part in the round-the-world race project. Rather the opposite – at his own

yacht club he talked about it openly. He is a well-known man in sailing and everybody who knew him started coming to him. With the question, could I not join too? Tolya answered them all roughly the same: "Here is the telephone number of Vladislav Murnikov in Moscow. Ring him – if he gives the go-ahead, then come." The lads naturally rang Vladislav and said that Tolya had said to ring him. Vladislav, knowing that Tolya was acting as skipper of the yacht, said much the same thing to them all: go to Poti and join the team. After all, he thought that all these lads were ringing him not out of the blue, but after a serious selection. And it was quite otherwise! As a result a stream of people poured into Poti, sailing enthusiasts, yes, but with an absolute absence of any practical skills in yacht building. They had to be put onto jobs, but what can you give a man if he is seeing welding almost for the first time in his life? Or metal-cutting equipment? I say nothing about drawings. They had all graduated from the Odessa Nautical College and worked as navigators in the Odessa Shipping Company. And laying off courses in the ocean was still a long way off for us...

FAZ-04-092

Each of us was given two or three men. And we brought them up to speed – as fast as we could. After all, time is going by and nobody is going to move the start of the race for us! We tried to do everything we could so that the new arrivals would not feel like spare men. But that too did not always come off. Just try explaining a job to a man which for you – is not too difficult, and for him – he does not know which end to start from. And there is no time for "training". It has to be at once, and well. And fast on top of that. A very tricky job. Sometimes the lads simply stood and watched how one thing or another was done. Then they took on similar work themselves. And we had to check on them. That is why a sort of division of the team into "Kievans" and "Odessans" appeared. And it was not necessarily connected with where this or that man had come from. It simply worked out that most of the technically competent specialists came from Kiev. And not only at the initial stage of the project, but later on as well, when extra welders or hull specialists were needed. But anybody who stood out for hard work, drive and knowing the job, sort of ended up in the "Kiev" group. Need I say that Nodari and Vitya Kamkin, Vitya Yazykov and Valera Safiullin – all belonged precisely to Kiev? There is nothing unusual in that, from my point of view. In any team – be it a research institute or a works – there are always leaders on the production side. You only have to look at the Board of Honour by the gate of any organisation. The only difference was that under normal conditions leaders could form gradually. Building up experience, getting to know the production side, etc. And un-

der our conditions you had to be a leader straight away. That meant – being able to do a lot of things, taking responsibility, not waiting until you were told – do this or do that, but approaching the work creatively, showing sensible initiative. Even if you are doing the job on your own. And it was exactly those leader's qualities that most of the lads newly arrived from Odessa did not show. There were of course some very capable lads as well. Oleg Belomytsev, for example. He arrived a little later than the main group of Odessans, but very soon he could carry out all sorts of jobs on his own. He did not need to be "kept on a lead". By trade he was a ship's engineer. That helped him find his feet faster on the building of the yacht.

FAZ-04-093

I cannot leave out Gena Korolkov and Volodya Kulinichenko – capable lads and hard workers. Even if they had no great shipbuilding experience, the wish to be among the team's active men – that they had. And little by little that gave its positive results. But for now we had to think hard about what to do with the new arrivals and how to go on? It became clear to us that the expected "super-professionals" were not coming in any great numbers and that we had to look for people ourselves.

FAZ-04-094

One day in the middle of January, when the lads from Odessa were only just starting to arrive, the door opened and a young bloke stood in the doorway of the room. He introduced himself – Yura Doroshenko, from Sevastopol. "I read a piece in the paper, he says, that a yacht is being built in Poti for the round-the-world race. The round-the-world – that is the dream of my life.

FAZ-04-095

So say what you like, but without me – no way!" Just as with Nodari before him – Yura had such a stock of enthusiasm that nobody could say to him: "You know, we already have enough men." Yura, like most of the new arrivals, was a professional navigator. But unlike most of the newcomers – he had a decent amount of experience in yacht building. Not to mention that his stack of diplomas, tickets and certificates of every kind was no less than two inches thick! He had raced both in the Olympic classes and in off-shore races. He knew many members of the Olympic sailing squad. After all, there was a sailing school in Sevastopol, headed by Valentin Mankin.

FAZ-04-096

Anyway, Yura Doroshenko convinced us very quickly that he had to be with us. All the more so because, having got to know the "Odessa gang", we understood – the shortage of qualified specialists – was plain to see. He knew Tolya Verba a little too. Yura was introduced to him and, after some details had been agreed, went back to Sevastopol. To resign from his job and arrange his move to Poti.

FAZ-04-097

Yura turned out to be one of the people we had been short of.

FAZ-04-098

He was a leader in exactly the sense of the word I described above. He fitted into the team very quickly and his contribution to building the boat could be felt from the very first days. The *profilaktoriy* was pretty full by now. The lads were put up in one of the big rooms. The small ones were practically all taken. Tolya started talking about putting the crew up in one of the Poti hotels instead of the works *profilaktoriy*. But that idea found no support with Alexei. Nor with any of the "old hands". Even if conditions in a hotel would have been better, we would then have had to spend time travelling to work and back. And every hour counted. On top of that, in the lunch break you could nip up to your own room and at least drink a decent cup of tea. Or lie down on the floor. Tiredness was already starting to make itself felt and minutes of rest were valued. And with a move to a hotel that possibility disappeared. We stayed in the *profilaktoriy*.

FAZ-04-099

As the number of new arrivals grew – so did the number of sit-downs at table. Before that it had never entered our heads to organise drinks and a bite to eat. Not because we kept to a "dry law", but because we simply had no time for it. And no particular wish to, either. We knew each other well and there was no need to "get closer" over a drink.

FAZ-04-100

Most of the lads from Odessa – knew each other well. And us – they did not. And like it or not it came out as two groups of a sort. That is understandable – after all you are always drawn to the man you have points of contact with. Parties were organised, and we were invited to them too. It is well known, after all, that nothing brings a team together like a collective booze-up. Well all right – once is fine, twice – still more or less, but not regularly, surely?! And here it was almost once every three or four days – somebody's birthday, or some other occasion. One of these events ended in a small embarrassment. One of the Odessans had a birthday. By then many of them had already spent a couple of weeks at the yard. They had got their bearings a bit. They decided to invite Vakhtang Kavtaradze – the shop manager. He said he would come.

FAZ-04-101

In the evening we all gathered in the big room. Vakhtang was running late and we decided to start without him. We would pour him a "penalty" glass later... After a while Vakhtang arrived. And you could see that he had already marked something somewhere. And fairly solidly. But he was still steady on his feet. We poured him one and asked him for a toast. If you are late – then you speak. We pointed him at the birthday boy, and he wished him all the best. In the traditional way. We drank and had a bite to eat. The talk was going more briskly now... We poured again. Again Vakhtang is asked to say something. At this he thought a bit, and then he says (with a

Georgian accent – you have to hear it, of course): "Actually I do not really know any of you here. Now I know Lyosha, Valera, Vitya Yazykov, Igor and Vitya Kamkin. And where is Vitya?" (and he looked round at all of us. And Vitya had just gone off to Dnepropetrovsk for a couple of days, to get his back seen to). "Ah, he says – Vitya has gone away, I know. Now those are the lads I want to drink to. And you I do not know, who you are." Well, we all went quiet, an awkward situation, but somehow we let it slide. We drank, and the talk started up again... At this Vakhtang takes the floor himself and holds forth much louder now: "You I do not know. And what you do – I do not know either. Now I know Lyosha, Igor, Valera, Vitya Yazykov and Vitya Kamkin. And where is Vitya?" (and again he looked round at all of us). "And Vitya has gone away, I know. Now those are the lads I want to drink to again." And he drank it, as it happens.

FAZ-04-102

At that point the party fell apart. Lyosha nudges me in the side: "Listen, we have to get Vakhtang out of here, or with those "diplomatic" pronouncements of his he will say too much." Anyway – on some pretext the two of us led him out of the room and helped him down to the ground floor. Then Lyosha says to me: "I will walk him to the gate myself, and you go back. Well, some party that was, for crying out loud." Funny and not funny, basically.

FAZ-04-103

I went back, we sat a while longer, but it was not the same, of course. We went off to our rooms – after all, tomorrow it was work again. Before long Lyosha came in. He says to me: "I only just got Vakhtang as far as the gate. There some driver he knew took it on himself to run him home. So I handed him over from hand to hand." And that is how that birthday ended.

FAZ-04-104

After that, at one of the meetings Tolya called from time to time, it was decided to move all such celebrations to a day off, or better still – to combine several birthdays into one and mark them all at once. Where possible. So nobody put on parties like that for the next few months. A few days after that "celebration" Vitya Kamkin came back and Yura Doroshenko arrived. Building the boat was nearing the stage of laying the plating on the hull framing. On the assembly jig stood a genuine whale skeleton, made of aluminium. But at the same time it all looked quite elegant. Vakhtang added another good welder to our gang – Tolya. Again I cannot recall his surname, unfortunately. Tolya was the same age as us, maybe a bit younger. He had done a bit of karate somewhere, or had not, but he used to show us the snake stance. There is a position like that in karate, apparently. That was when we started pestering him really hard with all our different welding requests – then he would make a snake's head with his hand

and say he was going to bite the lot of us! But we were not too frightened. Sometimes you call him over – something has to be welded out. And there he is perched somewhere on top of the hull, welding out the next joint. You shout to him – "Tolya – Zmey Gorynych, come on, fly over here, this joint has to be dealt with" (Zmey Gorynych is the three-headed dragon of the Russian fairy tales). And he would fly over, snorting sometimes, of course. After all, we did have to pull him off other work. And who enjoys that? He was an excellent welder and we quickly made friends with him. He was with us right to the end of building the boat in Poti.

FAZ-04-105

Among the other yard workers Alexander Dorgobetov also stayed in my memory. Everyone called him simply Shura, although he was getting on in years. An experienced shipbuilder, but easy to deal with. He was always ready to help us, although he was not permanently attached to us. I remember his hands, maimed by a cutter. We worked with air-powered cut-off saws for cutting up aluminium. An effective thing, but a dangerous one. It was an air motor with a handle. A tool-steel milling cutter was fitted to the motor, 120 mm in diameter and 3–4 mm thick. A brittle thing, and used wrongly – it would shatter to pieces. And it was a cutter like that that maimed Shura's hands at some point. Good thing it did not take them off altogether.

FAZ-04-106

We worked a lot with that tool ourselves. And our cutters sometimes shattered too. But fortunately, nobody was maimed. And nobody was even seriously scratched.

FAZ-04-107

In order to lay the plating on the hull – the hull framing has to be bevelled. That means – taking off the allowance left on the frame webs so as to give a fair line along the length of the hull. This work is very much needed and necessary, but completely thankless. Day after day the newly arrived lads filed down the edges of the frame webs with special files, to give a fair transition between the frames. You file and file all day, and there is apparently no result to be seen. After all, nothing on the assembly jig changes. Setting up frames is a different thing altogether. You set one up – and the result of the work shows straight away!

FAZ-04-108

But the lads patiently got on with their job. Among the many lads bevelling the hull I remember Yura Firsov and Ramis Faizulin. Ramis by that time was actually already USSR champion in the 470 class, if I am not mistaken. And here he had to take on a job he was not at all used to. The hull was bevelled for almost a month. But they all did it splendidly!

FAZ-04-109

The day came when we could start laying the plating. How to lay it and tack it to the framing was discussed in the yard's technical department, and

by us in the evenings. It was a monumental task! The plating was of varying thickness – on the bottom a 30 millimetre plate was actually welded in, for the ballast keel to be bolted to later. Closer to the deck – the plating was 2.5 millimetres. The bottom – eight in places, six in others – depended on the loads in that part of the hull. We had a layout drawing showing where each plate went on the hull. But that was where the technical documentation ended. Then again, on the other hand – there is not much you can draw here. A lot of it is simply done in place. The main problem – how to bend a plate to the shape of the hull?

FAZ-04-110

How do you press it up against the framing? After all, for welding the plate has to be pressed against the frame web with a minimum gap. And what forces that takes! The hull of a yacht – is not the hull of a barge. There are no flat areas here. And how will the weld distortion behave? After all, we remembered our first frame very well... And the shop's production engineer kept scaring us that even if we did lay the plating, then after the hull was released from the assembly jig – the residual welding stresses would pull it about so much that the yacht would turn into "elegant shorts"! If we laid that plating at all. He, being an experienced specialist at the yard, did not much believe this scheme would come off. Experience, of course – is the best cure for enthusiasm. And we had more enthusiasm. Later he did come to appreciate that we had the knowledge as well. Tolya Verba was of no use in these questions either. But he did draw up schedules, which little by little was starting to annoy us. Here you are already straining with all you have, and on top of that he wants you to confirm dates for making this or that. But – a skipper is a skipper. For the moment we held ourselves in check. Tolya was thinking more on the scale of a sports team, which should be training in the gym, lifting weights, running hundred-metre sprints. One of the Odessans who had come, Sergei Kiselyov, was very nearly a professional PE coach. And we, the "Kiev gang", if you like – had no time for that. And for perfectly understandable reasons, I should think. Be that as it may, by the end of January the first plate had been laid.

FAZ-04-111

It was formed first on a special press to give it its initial shape, and only then, on the hull itself, pushed home to the framing by every means available. The hull material was AMg-61 – an aluminium alloy for seagoing vessels. A magnificent material, and I am not afraid to say – the best in the world for its mechanical properties. I later came across aluminium ship-building both in America and in Australia, so I speak from personal experi-

ence. But the material – is elastic, like a spring. And by the time you press it to the hull – you will have strained a bit.

FAZ-04-112

Of course, Aunt Anya was our main welder. We had not got to mass assembly yet, so she coped perfectly well. And she advised us where a weld should go in earlier, where a bit later. Her experience in shipbuilding was – something else! The plating we only tacked to the framing, while the butt seams between the plates were welded out in full. The idea was – to assemble the whole boat first, and only then weld out everything that had to be welded. In that way we avoided big initial weld distortion. Plus – a saving in time. After all, when the work face is ready – you can bring as many welders to the assembly jig as you like – there is work enough for all. And it can be done quickly. The work went on in parallel. After all, we had not finished assembling the hull framing – the frames in the bow and in the stern were still not set up. Not many of them, but even so. We split up into sections and tried to work so that the ones already assembling the plating – did not catch up with the ones finishing the framing of the bow and stern. Valera and Vitya Kamkin were assembling and setting up frames, with the help of the lads from Odessa – Pasha Sologub, Oleg Belomytsev, Volodya Kulinichenko, if I am not mistaken. Yura Doroshenko, Nodari and I – were assembling the plating. Gena Korolkov and Sergei Stanetsky helped us, and there were other lads too, but I no longer remember them all. Our welders were Aunt Anya and Tolya "Zmey". Vitya Yazykov was still off in the mould loft as before – finishing the templates for the missing frames. Somebody was with him there too.

FAZ-04-113

It seemed the number of men had gone up, but the volume of work had grown many times over. And again we have a problem – a shortage of qualified lads. The ones we have – are already at their limit as it is. And ahead – still no end of work! There is no help to be expected from Tolya Verba with yachtsmen who are also yacht builders. We had already understood what level of technical grounding his lads had. One evening, during our evening tea sessions – Lyosha raised the question. That is just what he said: "Come on, think about who else we can bring into the project, or we are going to choke here." We started thinking, but neither Valera nor either of the two Viktors could suggest anything on the spot. That is because we all approached the selection of people far more seriously. There were certainly people in the country who would have fitted the project perfectly. But we did not know them. They themselves – maybe did not even know about the round-the-world race being got ready. Although information had already started appearing in the press. Yura Doroshenko, after all, saw a piece. And

dropped everything to join the crew. But so far we had not heard from anybody else in that way.

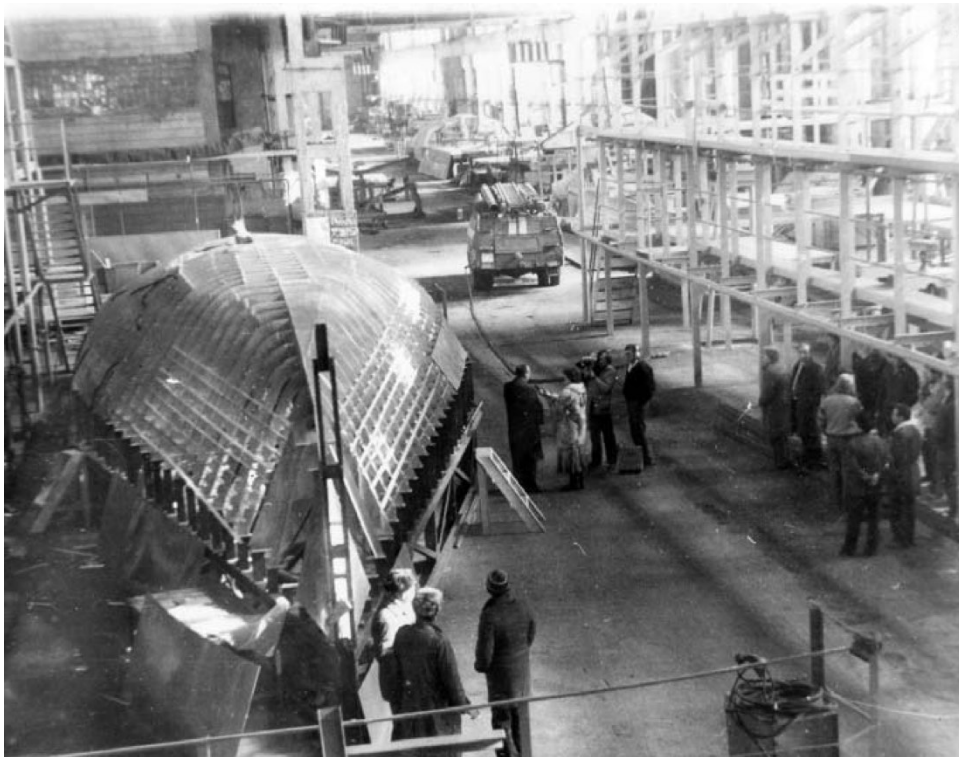
FAZ-04-114

Alexei said that a decent candidate – was Zhenya Platon, from the Kiev Cruising Yacht Club. He had sailed with him in the Black Sea Cup, and Vitya Yazykov sailed with them then too, as it happens – so he knew Zhenya a little as well. Plus Zhenya was a technically competent man. And his yacht-building experience was not bad either. Anyway – between us we found one candidate we could ring and invite into the project.

FAZ-04-115

Later on, when we had gone off to our rooms for the night, Lyosha said to me: "This boat – is a project for the lads from our yacht club. Only there are the people who can do the whole thing. But unfortunately, I simply will not be able to work with some of them. After all, endless arguments will start – how to do it better and better. And where do you find the strength for endless discussions like that?" Alas, I understood him perfectly...

FAZ-04-116



The first plates of plating go on. On the left of the photograph, worked aluminium plates ready to be set up. Viktor Tikhov is giving an interview. Photograph taken on 18 February 1989.

FAZ-04-117

The next day we told Tolya Verba that we needed Zhenya Platon. Tolya did not object. Alexei rang Kiev and tracked Zhenya down. He told him what was what and what was being offered him. Anyway – in the second half of February Zhenya arrived in Poti. Like all the rest of us – he had to resign from his job and come into the unknown, even if by now it was the sort of unknown – you could put your hand on. On top of that he was getting

ready to defend his candidate's dissertation. But his research supervisor said to him: "Young man – the chance to take part in a round-the-world race comes once. Go. And you will defend the dissertation later. It is not going to run away from you." With that send-off Zhenya left Kiev. At the end of January – the first days of February two lads from Mobile arrived at the yard. It was mainly Alexei and Volodya Ches from the yard's technical department who dealt with them. Well, and we – to a lesser degree by now. The lads from Mobile tried to give us technical support, but by that time our knowledge and experience were greater than theirs. So it was more a case of our having a dialogue with them along the lines of – what could be changed in the boat's structure to make her easier to build? Without any loss of the sailing qualities designed into the yacht. All the changes we agreed during the time we worked together with them – were entered into the design documentation. However, some of the parameters they had put into the design – never stopped surprising me. And not only me. For example, the displacement of the boat (calculated) – was 16 tonnes.

FAZ-04-118

What that figure rested on – is hard to say. Not on real shipbuilding practice – that is certain. I had a suspicion that the lads had taken that figure – as a base, from the displacement of the winner of the previous Whitbread Race – the yacht *UBS Switzerland*, aluminium as well. But that boat – is 58 feet long. And *Fazisi* – 76 feet. So the figure seemed unreal to us.

FAZ-04-119

The ballast keel was supposed to be five tonnes. Plus – internal ballast. But internal ballast is not as effective as ballast in the fin. All of that affects the stability of the boat. For comparison I will say that on *Gonta* (a yacht only 33 feet long) – the ballast was 2.2 tonnes. On a yacht displacement of five tonnes. Of course, the comparison may not be entirely sound, but then we did not have much choice of what to compare with. When we put these questions to the lads from Mobile – the answer was: "during the race the crew has to sit on the rail and hold the boat up." I asked them – had they ever raced in the Baltic Cup, for instance? It turned out they had not. Their whole yachting experience came down to one-day races, at best.

FAZ-04-120

We had no time to discuss all these fine points at length, though. We asked Vladislav to send us designers from Mobile and they came. All we had to do was choose the best of what they could offer. And to try, while doing it, to bring in as few changes as possible. To some extent we managed it.

FAZ-04-121

We had no questions about the deck yet at that time. Although the lads from Mobile had already brought some documentation with them, we left

going through it in more detail until later. Right now – all our attention was on the hull plating and nothing else!

FAZ-04-122

The subject of endless worry was welding loads and weld distortion. We thought about it constantly – how to reduce them, how to control them? To settle these questions we brought in specialists from the Kiev E. O. Paton Electric Welding Institute. But here, by and large, we met with disappointment. The institute's staff came to Poti. They went over our work, gave some recommendations, but more – of a general direction. I read those recommendations. They were supplied in the form of a report.

FAZ-04-123

Then they proposed applying a special paste to the back of the weld before welding, so that the weld would cool faster.

FAZ-04-124

The paste had been developed at the Paton Institute.

FAZ-04-125

We used that technology, but apart from trouble – nothing came of it. In the first place – with the paste applied you had to increase the welding current to heat the metal through. And that is exactly what we were trying to avoid – excess heat loading. In the second place – when it was heated the paste started to run and ran wherever it liked. And it had to be cleaned from the welds. Aunt Anya was very unhappy about this "innovation". We soon gave it up too.

FAZ-04-126

We tried to master the semi-automatic MIG sets. As I have already said – for the yard this was something new and nobody yet knew how to work with them. Though they had bought good equipment from Finland. The Kemppi company. To master the new equipment they invited a specialist in semi-automatic welding from the Paton Institute. We started welding test pieces and comparing – where is the distortion greater?

FAZ-04-127

Of course, the weld the Paton man laid – was very handsome. And the distortion compared with arc welding – was substantially less. But all of it was done in "hothouse" conditions – on a table, in a comfortable position, etc. When it came to practical application, the result was a good deal less impressive. In the end, for a long time the semi-automatic set they had allocated to us just stood there idle. But it looked thoroughly modern. And only later, when the final welding-out of the hull was being done, did we start using suitcase MIG sets. But our lads were up to the mark! The yard had plasma cutting, but only one man worked on it. And of course, as a monopolist, he was hard to get at. One day he went off sick. And we urgently needed the keel plate cut out. Its thickness – 30 millimetres, you do not get through that straight away with a plain air-powered cut-off saw. Vakhtang says: "Sorry, you will have to wait – the man will come back off sick leave and cut the lot for you. We need it ourselves, and here we are

waiting" And Vitya Kamkin says that this is a job he knows – when he worked in the north he did plasma cutting of metal. Vakhtang gave the go-ahead for Vitya to be let near the plasma torch. And Vitya managed it splendidly! At that Vakhtang started asking Vitya to help the shop out and cut them the material for the *Kolkhidas*. Their plan was in trouble because there was no plasma cutter operator. Vitya did everything he was asked. Vakhtang was very pleased. It stands to reason that all this only added to the respect for us in the eyes of the yard men. And after that Vitya cut metal on his own whenever we needed it and the man responsible was not on the spot.

FAZ-04-128

Another piece of good news – was that Tolya Verba managed to organise proper wages for us. For that he had to travel both to Moscow and to Poti to meet the heads of Fazis. In the end we were all transferred onto the staff of Fazis, and the ones who came later – were signed on to that organisation straight away. At least – the hopeless shortage of money was over and we had the chance to send money transfers home. But Tolya's style of leadership left a lot to be desired. He started having problems with Vladislav over certain questions. And the further it went – the more of them. Tolya reckoned (and not without some grounds, it has to be said) that he understood sailing as such better. And on that ground he argued with Vladislav fairly often. But the whole project – is not only sail. There is a mass of details of every kind here that have to be tied together without end. It seems to me Tolya did not entirely realise that and was rather too categorical in some of his judgements, when questions could have been settled otherwise, more diplomatically, if you like. In the debates that went on between them, mutual respect was being lost. Plus – the slip-up over selecting the crew. After all, in the end it became clear that Tolya had not coped with selecting people by the criteria that had been agreed from the very start. And he tried to blame Vladislav for it, as it happens, saying that it was Vladislav who had sent them to Poti. But nobody was going to change anything. On the principle that you do not change horses in midstream. Tolya remained skipper of the crew as before.

FAZ-04-129

Alexei Grischenko, as it happens, never moved from the position that the head of the whole project – was Vladislav Murnikov. Even when the project came to its final phase in the building and Vladislav was not appearing in Poti (and we did not trouble him either, because by then we could take decisions on the building ourselves) – Alexei always stated clearly that Vlad – was the top of the project. With all his shortcomings and his advantages. And criticism of Vladislav he let quietly die away. And

after all there is always something to criticise the bosses for! What else do I remember from those two months? Mostly, that we worked, worked, worked. There were failures sometimes too. Lyosha gave me the job of making the boat's stem. Not just the framing, but the plating of it as well. So that it could then be set up on the assembly jig – as one assembly, whole. And bending the plate was a complicated business – a varying radius along the length of the stem, plus various structural members. The radius relatively small, and the plating material – well, a spring, what else. I tried it this way and that – I cannot find a method. A day goes by – I am still fiddling about. Another day – and I have not got much further. And on top of that Tolya Verba with his "planning meetings": "Mironushka – when will it be ready?" Good thing he had stopped calling us "kids". I explain to him that I am not sleeping at night as it is – racking my brains over the problem. And what he wants is a firm date. In the end I told him that when I had done it – I would say so straight away. And a firm date – the Lord God alone knows. Anyway – I never did do it on my own. We had to bring in the yard's workers. And they came up with an original method. They turned a long cone out of aluminium bar – about a metre and a half long. Which followed the radius profile of the stem. And on that – they bent the plating plate. After which – they welded all the stiffening members into the shell that resulted.

FAZ-04-130

And it came out very well indeed. I will say honestly that I did not think of a solution like that. Afterwards that cone lay about beside the boat for a long time. Until it was machined into parts of some sort.

FAZ-04-131

As reinforcements for the crew – Zhenya Platon arrived. He brought work overalls with him too. "Good man," I say, "work gear is not easy here." And he says to me: "Well, I did come to work, after all." We had a laugh...

FAZ-04-132

We put him up in the hostel and introduced him to Tolya so he could make out his papers. We changed and went off to the shop. Zhenya took on the assembly of the hull plating. He picked up what was going on very quickly and he and Aunt Anya got on well together. They formed a proper gang of their own – the two of them plus Seryozha Stanetsky and Gena Korolkov. Apparently so. Zhenya fixes a plate to the framing, Seryozha and Gena press the plate up where Aunt Anya wants it. And she welds it to the frame. In exactly the same way Yura Doroshenko worked with Nodari and Tolya – "Zmey Gorynych". Anyway – the job was moving forward. Even though there were still not enough men. And we were thinking about that problem too. But for now the question was not being settled.

FAZ-04-133

A week after Zhenya arrived a young bloke came into the shop.

FAZ-04-134

He started asking – who is building the yacht for the round-the-world here? I do not remember who he ran into first, maybe Alexei. We went on with the conversation in the hostel. The bloke introduced himself – Volodya Musatov, from Zaporozhye. He had read an article in the paper saying that a yacht was being built for the round-the-world and rushed straight off to Poti. Familiar, is it not? By that time, by the way – articles about our project in the papers were starting to appear more often. And Vova reacted to what he had read instantly. We heard him out with interest. We already had very good experience with volunteers like that. Yura Doroshenko and Nodari, as you remember.

FAZ-04-135

Volodya told us about himself and we understood – this was the man we needed. Vova had worked at Aeroflot, something to do with radio communications there. Anyway – he fitted into the team almost straight away. He did not even go back to resign from his job, but stayed with us that same day. In effect – he ran away from his job in Zaporozhye. Only a bit later – some six days on – he went to Zaporozhye to settle up with his job for good and come back to us on a legal footing. Otherwise he could not even be signed on to Fazis. Volodya, like Yura – turned out to be a splendid acquisition for the team! The first thing he took on – was making templates together with Vitya Yazykov and Andrei Chasovsky. Then he started working on the machine that did the initial bending of the plating plates.

FAZ-04-136

Very soon he became a real specialist in that area.

FAZ-04-137

And that is how the first two months of the new year, 1989, went by.

FAZ-04-138

There were six months left before the start of the round-the-world race.

FAZ-04-139

Poti, March–April 1989

Spring was coming on. Outside it had got noticeably warmer. I should say – the climate in Poti in winter was perfectly acceptable. There were never any hard frosts. Though of course we had to wear padded jackets. The work of assembling the hull was going well. Bit by bit the sequence of assembly had been worked out, we had simply got used to the job. A feel for the metal appeared, if you like. Those lads who did the "muscle" work, that is, pressed the plates against the hull framing – thought up all sorts of devices, of the "first-class lever" kind, and used them very successfully.

FAZ-05-001

I remember how at a later stage of the hull assembly Vitya Pogrebnov (he came to Poti somewhere in the middle of March) – showed me his own invention for pressing the shell plates against the hull. He hung an extra weight on a long lever and that way – his own effort was cut to a minimum. By that time we already had several cabinets of tools, which I locked up in the evening so the yard men would not "borrow" them. Not because they wanted to "spite" us, but because sometimes a man needs to get something done in a hurry, and there – somebody's air-powered cut-off saw is lying about unattended. He picks it up, does the job, and to put it back – he forgets. That happened sometimes. Alongside the hull we started on the deck. Alexei gave me the job of getting to grips with the drawings and thinking through the tooling for assembling the deck sections. I should say a few words here about the methods of making decks on yachts.

FAZ-05-002

There are two main methods. The first (and the simplest) – is when the deck's fore-and-aft centreline (the central longitudinal axis) – is a straight line from bow to stern. That way – the deck is a part of a cylinder, which the hull cuts through, as it were. All the deck beams (the deck's transverse framing) have the same radius and the deck itself bends in one plane. But with that – the line of the side will not be straight, it will be curved. I hope that is clear. The second method – is to keep the line of the side straight. That looks more elegant (perhaps), but the deck's fore-and-aft centreline

will then be a curved line. And all the deck beams will have different radii. Plus – the bending of the deck plating itself will have to be done in two planes. And that – is not very convenient in production terms. For plastic yachts, where the deck is moulded in a mould – this is not so critical. But for aluminium shipbuilding (or wooden, where the deck is made of plywood) – the first option is preferable. On *Fazisi* the deck was a third and quite radical option. The deck had a very large sheer along the hull. And with that – all the deck beams were straight, without camber. Of course, for making the beams – that was convenient. But the structure of the deck itself – was a production problem of no simple kind. When we started studying the deck drawings more closely – it turned out that the designers had allowed for a deck thickness of one and a half to two millimetres. With an enormous number of reinforcing members, placed close to one another, to support a thickness like that. We doubted the soundness of that decision straight away. But even so – we decided to try making the sections – as the designers proposed. To begin with I took on making the deck welding jig for the bow section of the deck. On a huge aluminium table I welded up a whole grove of aluminium tubes (in a definite order, of course), which were to support the deck plates. Once I had welded it all – I trimmed them

FAZ-05-003



Assembling the deck welding jig. Andrei Chasovsky photographed me at the moment when I had finished welding on another pylon.

FAZ-05-004

to height, and added small plates to the tube ends. The whole structure followed the camber of the deck. The idea was roughly the same as with the hull assembly jig. With the one difference that the deck plates would be laid down first (taking the shape needed), and the framing then welded to them.

FAZ-05-005

Together with Pasha Sologub we did the final marking out of the deck welding jig. Everything was ready for laying the first plate. But the longer we fussed about with the preparatory work – the more and more doubts took hold of us about the success of this venture. After all, every day we were getting more and more experience in working with aluminium. And we could already see which solutions were workable and which – would not pay off. Even so, we decided to try making at least one deck panel. We laid an aluminium plate on the jig. Its thickness was one and a half millimetres. We tacked it to the jig. We started setting up the framing and it was immediately clear that metal that thin could not be welded. Everything thin and ringing – welding warps it instantly. And that – only on the tacks. And to weld the panel up completely?

FAZ-05-006

It would come out a washboard, not a deck.

FAZ-05-007

We decided to put the experiments with making the deck off for a while. It, as such – was not holding us up yet. There was still time before the hull assembly finished. We started thinking – how to beat the new problem. One of the solutions – to try semi-automatic MIG welding again. We had to master it anyway – the advantages both in welding speed and in smaller welding distortion were on the side of the MIG sets. But then a completely stupid problem came up. The welding wire that was at the yard – would not go into these machines! It was bigger in diameter! Ideally – we needed 0.9 millimetre wire. 1.2 millimetres would have done too. And what we had was plenty of wire

FAZ-05-008

1.5 mm. And that not on spools – but in coils. The wire that came with the MIG sets – had long since been burnt up on welding experiments of every kind. And no new deliveries were expected any time soon. To solve the problem, a decision was taken to draw the wire we had down to a smaller diameter. That could be done in Kiev. Anyway – they got me ready for a work trip. They even made out a travel allowance from the yard and paid for the train ticket – just like a proper human being. Only I looked more like a donkey when I shuffled along the platform looking for my carriage. I had fifteen kilos of wire in coils (wrapped in sacking) on each shoulder, plus I was carrying another ten kilos of mandarins with me. For the family and the children, so to speak.

FAZ-05-009

The trip, on the whole, was a good one. At the works they put part of the wire through the drawing dies fairly quickly and we got what was needed. I did not wait for the second part and, taking what was already done – left for Poti. The Kiev men promised to send the second part later. Which they did. Afterwards I had to drive to Sukhumi for the rest.

FAZ-05-010

It came out less than expected (Lyosha was even surprised about it), but the reason was that in the drawing the wire kept breaking and it often came out that the remainder was not a commercial length. It simply had to be thrown away. But even what we did get – was enough for almost all our needs afterwards.

FAZ-05-011

I write about this and I think – what a time that was! Now I have my own machine shop, with a complete set of welding equipment. When I need wire for my MIG set – I simply ring my supplier and the wire is brought to my door. Any kind. Ready to use. Ah, if we had had those possibilities back then... But there was still no positive result with welding the panels. The first attempt was so discouraging that we decided to halt all the experiments with welding the deck and to look for other solutions. On top of that there were not enough hands on the hull assembly again. So for a while I went back to hull work. I was mostly putting in the structural framing members needed. That procedure consisted of marking out, making and welding in the intermediate stringers and keelsons. They were intercostal – that is, each piece took up only one gap (one frame spacing) between the frames. You cut out a part like that, fit it, then clamp it with a sliding clamp between two frames. Then you tack it with the welder – and done. You put together a keelson like that – and you call Tolya or Aunt Anya to weld it up. And while Volodya Musatov was getting the next shell plate ready on the plate rolls – they welded up those keelsons. The work is monotonous, basically. But it has its own specifics, like any other work.

FAZ-05-012

Once, already at the end of the working day, I came down off the boat, stood to one side and I am looking at the work done over the day. Zhenya Platon came over, then Valera Safiullin, then someone else. And several of the lads from Odessa decided to fit one bracket plate between the frames. At the end of the day, to get a start on tomorrow. I should say that the distance between the frames was somewhere around 750 millimetres. So to set the part in place and hold it with a sliding clamp – you need a certain knack and coordination of movement.

FAZ-05-013

I do not remember who it was, but on his own – it did not go well for him. Then another lad from Odessa started helping him. It just happened that there were about four of them milling about there. Again it does not

come off. Either the bracket falls, or the clamp slips, or the packing drops out... One more man came over. Still

FAZ-05-014

– no success. Finally – the four of them beat that bracket plate. Well, we were watching all this and one of us (maybe me – I will neither dispute the authorship nor claim it) – asks: "Three guesses – how many Odessans does it take to fit one clamp? A hint: three – is not enough." Anyway – we laughed, and the lads on the boat were not delighted, naturally. But they joked it off somehow too.

FAZ-05-015

You could of course ask – and why did we not rush over to help? Well, after all, there were already four men there as it was. Only getting in each other's way. Besides, we were in a sort of calm mood, if you like. Mixed with tiredness. There was no wanting to go anywhere or do anything. The day was over. We just stood and watched. And so a comment like that broke out. But the joke had no admixture of poisonous mockery or sarcasm in it, I will say honestly.

FAZ-05-016

The picture reminded me very much of a scene from the film comedy *Jolly Fellows*, where Olya was trying to hit a note and drinking raw eggs for it. And they kept breaking and breaking. And then Anya (Lyubov Orlova) could not stand it and hit the note herself, cleanly and beautifully. The mother came running and exclaims in delight: "Olenka – the eggs helped!" Well, Olenka went off upset... Why am I saying this? Just this, that as a crew – we were still only in the making. And getting to know each other in the work, first of all. Even though two months had already gone by since the arrival of the lads Tolya Verba recommended, and we had got used to each other to some degree, every now and then – a feeling of dissatisfaction would prick at you. After all, they were supposed to be the "best of the best"... That is where jokes of that kind came from. But it happened extremely rarely, and it was more humorous in character than deliberate sarcasm. The proof of it is that many years on we still write to each other, and when it was needed – we help each other too. With Oleg Belomytsev, for example, I worked together in Florida, several years after our round-the-world. With Tolya Verba I kept a strong friendship for many years after *Fazisi*. With Gena Korolkov I kept in touch for a long time. Volodya Kulinichenko and Oleg Belomytsev sailed under Zhenya Platon's command on *Hetman Sahaidachny* in the second round-the-world... But all that would come later. And for now – we were only beginning our road together.

FAZ-05-017

By the way, Genka Korolkov – he actually held first place for telling all sorts of jokes and funny turns of phrase.

FAZ-05-018

Some of them we still use in conversation to this day. For instance, you ask a mate – what were you talking about with so-and-so? He answers you: "Oh, nothing much, 'Halva-Biscuits'." And we both laugh! And it is a line from a joke about Vovochka that Gena told us once. The joke, unfortunately, is not quite fit for print. But I think – those who were there will understand me. And they will smile!

FAZ-05-019

Closer to the middle of March Tolya Verba arranged meals for us on the scale of the USSR national team. We were issued special vouchers which we could redeem at one of the Poti canteens, the one a contract had been made with. A good thing, and the lunches were tasty, but again – it had all been set up without any thought for saving the time needed to build the yacht. At the lunch break we had to gather at the shop gates, where a bus was waiting for us (Tolya arranged that too). Then about ten minutes went on getting to the canteen. Then – lunch itself. Very tasty, as it happens. That was not lunch in the *profilaktoriy* – that is for sure! And they served quickly. After that – everyone gathered into the bus again and drove back to the yard. We got to the yard right on the siren. So from the bus we went straight to the shop.

FAZ-05-020

We went like that a couple of times – tasty it certainly was, but you would also like to rest at least a little over lunch. And here it comes out that the only place you can shut your eyes is in the bus. And bit by bit we started giving up those trips. In the *profilaktoriy* the food may be poor, but at least you do not have to go anywhere. It is – a stone's throw from the yacht's building site. At first Alexei and I started skipping the lunch trips. Then Vitya Kamkin, Zhenya and Valera joined us too. For the very same reason – there is no resting at lunch. In the end we decided that whoever wanted to could go into town. And whoever did not, could eat in the *profilaktoriy*. Bit by bit the group going off for lunch got smaller and smaller.

FAZ-05-021

Well, the meal vouchers we went on getting regularly. A thought came to me – to trade those vouchers at a "reasonable price" – at the canteen. I came to terms with the staff on favourable conditions and traded my own vouchers. Part – in money, part – in food. It came out very "commercial" indeed! And everyone happy. I say to the lads (the ones who did not go to the canteen) – let us cash in your vouchers the same way. Anyway – I took that mission on myself. But the manager of the canteen, Zauri his name was, squeezed the canteen staff out of my deals with them and took it all on himself. In short – the profit fell. But all the same – it was better than travelling there and back every day. Later we gave those vouchers to our

wives when they came. And they went there with pleasure. The cooking, as I have already said – was good.

FAZ-05-022

Besides the vouchers Tolya Verba arranged dry rations for us. There was Moscow sausage in it, sprats, chocolate, something else. So on that front – life was looking up.

FAZ-05-023

And the hull plating was a pleasure to look at! Every day there were fewer and fewer open patches left. Confidence started to appear – the boat could be built on time. Though of course, we still did not picture well enough what that would take. An article about us appeared in the local paper. About a boat for the round-the-world race being built in Poti. There were even two photographs from "the scene of the action". In one – Nodari and I, looking out between the frames, and in the other – a portrait of Aunt Anya. She, of course, was very pleased. And so were we.

FAZ-05-024

Of the design problems that we solved brilliantly – this one stayed in my memory. The lads from Mobile sent us the working drawings of the deck, as I have already said. Among the items shown in those drawings were the chainplates – the assemblies that attach the mast's standing rigging to the hull. But they were not designed with much thought for production. Especially – the forestay chainplate (the bow rigging that supports the mast in the fore-and-aft direction). The chainplate was welded into the forward bulkhead, which has to be a solid one – in case of a collision. So the boat would not be flooded if water started coming in as a result of hitting an iceberg, for example.

FAZ-05-025

The structure of the chainplate had been designed in such a way that all the loads from the forestay were taken by the welds alone. The shape of the chainplate itself did not spread the forestay loads into the hull. Besides that, the deck's reinforcing framing came in at that spot. So the assembly was very heavily loaded. Plus – large changes of section, which is undesirable.

FAZ-05-026

We pointed out all these shortcomings to the lads from Mobile, but they could not offer anything better. So Alexei, Volodya Ches and I got together in the yard's design department.

FAZ-05-027

We looked over all sorts of options a long time, the board was well covered in chalk... When Alexei says: "And why not make this chainplate not a box shape (as Mobile proposed), but out of thick plate, and give it the shape of a triangle? The apex of the triangle will be the forestay attachment point. And weld the triangle itself into the bulkhead" As soon as he said it – it all became instantly clear as day! After that we only worked up a few details of how the deck framing joined the bulkhead – and that was it.

Before long the drawing of the new chainplate was done and it could be started on. It was made from aluminium plate 25 mm thick. In order to weld it into a three millimetre bulkhead – the thickness of the chainplate metal was milled down to the size required. This was to be done on the huge NC milling machine that was in the shop.

FAZ-05-028

The yard's programmer made the program for machining the part.

FAZ-05-029

They loaded the punched tape into the computer. The miller fitted an end mill some 60 millimetres in diameter and clamped the blank. He switched the machine on and gave it the command to run. The table travelled and without slowing down – drove the blank into the rotating cutter! The cutter cracked from the blow as if it were an ordinary match! And the machine did not even drop its revs. I stood right there and watched the whole thing.

FAZ-05-030

The miller scratched his head: "Yes, he says, the programmer has muddled something..." He pulled out the tape and went off to sort it out. Before long we got the part. It was made superbly! And we welded it into the bulkhead straight away.

FAZ-05-031

One more incident from that time stayed in my memory. Once Vitya Yazykov asked me to sharpen a blade for the circular saw. No problem – a familiar job. He made templates and I sharpened the blade for him periodically. I took a grinding wheel and put it in an air grinder. I clamped the grinder in the vice. And that day the air pressure in the yard's line was unusually high. I do not know why. Anyway – I switched the grinder on and started sharpening the blade's teeth. And I feel the revs are higher than I would like. After a while the wheel flies apart and a fragment hits me on the index finger of my left hand. Blood pouring, I switched everything off, gripped the finger and by a roundabout route (so that none of the lads would see, and none of the shop foremen either – what would they want with an industrial injury?) I went to the works first-aid post.

FAZ-05-032

And it was on the ground floor of the *profilaktoriy*.

FAZ-05-033

I got there, sat down – and wait for someone to see to me. I warmed up there, and suddenly passed out. They brought me round with smelling salts. The first sensation when I opened my eyes was: "what a good rest that was!" The whole body felt completely renewed. As if there had not been months of endless work... They bandaged the finger, I put a mitt on so it would not show and went back to the shop. I am walking along and I think to myself all the while – how can you possibly feel this light! Just as if I had been born again! But bit by bit everything came back to normal. Only the memory of those sensations was left. And even now I remember

it with surprise – how about that? And the scar stayed on the finger. As one of the reminders of those days... Of the more cheerful episodes of that time, here is one. Nodari was marking his birthday. He decided to invite us all to a restaurant, for a change. So as not to celebrate in the *profilaktoriy*. And a woman from the Nikolaev shipbuilding yard had come to the yard on secondment. A pretty girl, she was. Well, Zhenka Platon, being a gentleman, asked Nodari whether this girl could be invited to the party? Nodari of course answered yes.

FAZ-05-034

We gathered. Zhenya was actually in full dress and wearing a tie. He had brought not only his work overalls with him but a good suit as well. So he looked very impressive. And the girl came dressed up. The initiative to invite her had been Zhenya's and he was apparently her escort for the evening. We came in a big party (nearly the whole crew was there). We sat down, drank, ate, gave the toasts – everything as it usually goes at a birthday. After a while dance music started up. Zhenya had only just got himself ready to ask the girl to dance – and here is Vitya Yazykov, quick as that – and he was in ahead of him. All right, Vitya took the girl off, Zhenka winced a little, but said nothing. Swallowed it, basically.

FAZ-05-035

The dance ended, Vitya brought the girl back to her place, thanked her. We go on celebrating. Everyone had cheered up a bit by then. Dance music started up again. Zhenya had just set himself to ask the girl to dance (and apparently it was about time) – when Vitya Yazykov, quick as that – took the young lady off again. Zhenka now felt a little out of sorts, but somehow he got through that too. The dance ended, the girl came back, and everything seemed more or less all right.

FAZ-05-036

At last, the third time, the music started. This time Zhenya was not letting his chance go. He asked the girl to dance – she agreed. Out they went, dancing. And the tune – neither one thing nor the other. We were grinning, and Juki (Jumberi Tsomaya, one of the crew), watching all this, says: "In Georgia we say – whoever buys the girl dinner is the one who dances her." We all fell about! All of this was simply bits of our life. When we could – we took our minds off the work, to recharge somehow, to break away from the endless run of cares. But even taking our minds off the building – we still thought about the yacht. The yacht had become inseparable from us. One day, reading Viktor Konetsky's book *Beyond the Cape of Good Hope*, which Vitya Yazykov had brought from home, I came across this sentence (I am quoting from memory): "Long cares we can bear only if we love the object of our cares not out of fear but out of conscience. And love it exact-

ingly." That sentence made a strong impression on me. And I thought that that sentence could be the motto of our project.

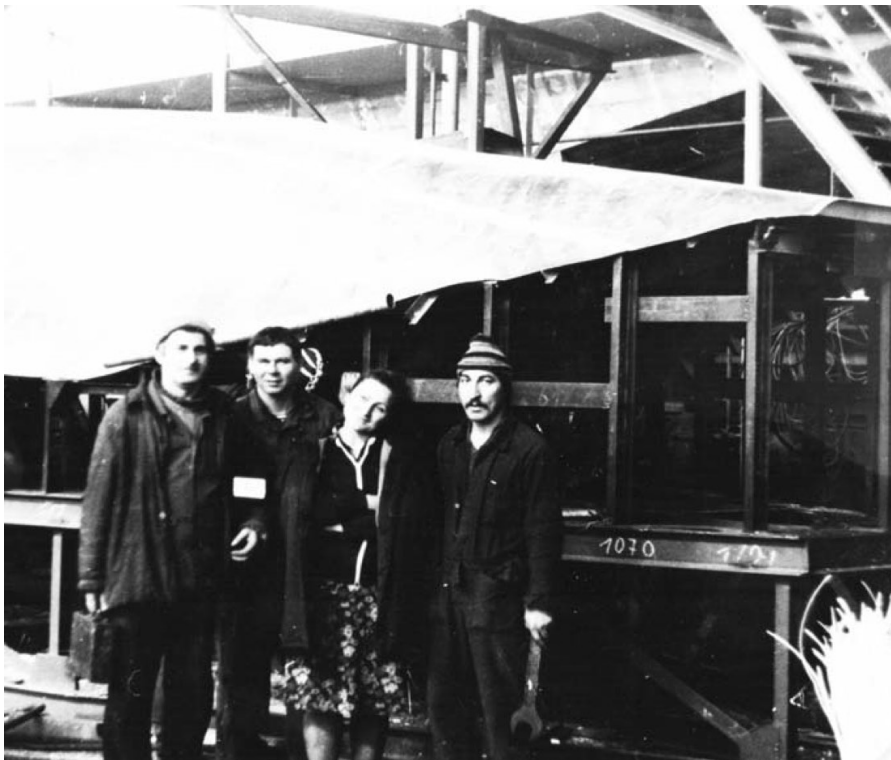
FAZ-05-037

And all round the shop nothing but slogans of the "The Five-Year Plan – in Three Years" sort and the like. Everyone could not care less about them. That "visual agitation" had not inspired anyone for a long time.

FAZ-05-038

I asked the shop administration to help with putting up a slogan of our own. With no admixture of the Party and the government. To my surprise I got the go-ahead and soon the yard's artist painted us a board on plywood. When it had all dried, I fixed the board above the yacht, on the scaffolding rail where the *Kolkhida*-class craft were built. The letters came out a bit small for that height, but quite readable all the same. I think all the lads took that slogan to heart bit by bit. In any case, right to the end of our time in Poti, it stood there above the place where the yacht was built. If Viktor Viktorovich Konetsky had known that a line from his book was inspiring the builders of a round-the-world yacht – he would have been pleased, I suppose.

FAZ-05-039



Not long before the turn-over of the hull into its normal position. Left to right: Alexei Grischenko, the hull assembly shop's storekeeper (I do not remember her name, unfortunately), Valera Safiullin, Vakhtang Kavtaradze – head of the hull assembly shop.

FAZ-05-040



The same time, only shot from the yacht's stern. Left to right, facing us – one of the shop's workers (again I do not remember the surname, unfortunately), Alexei Grischenko, Mimoza – the shop's crane driver, Valera Safiullin. Valera is holding a spanner of threatening size. With it he slacked off the nuts on the studs holding the assembly jig down to its foundation.

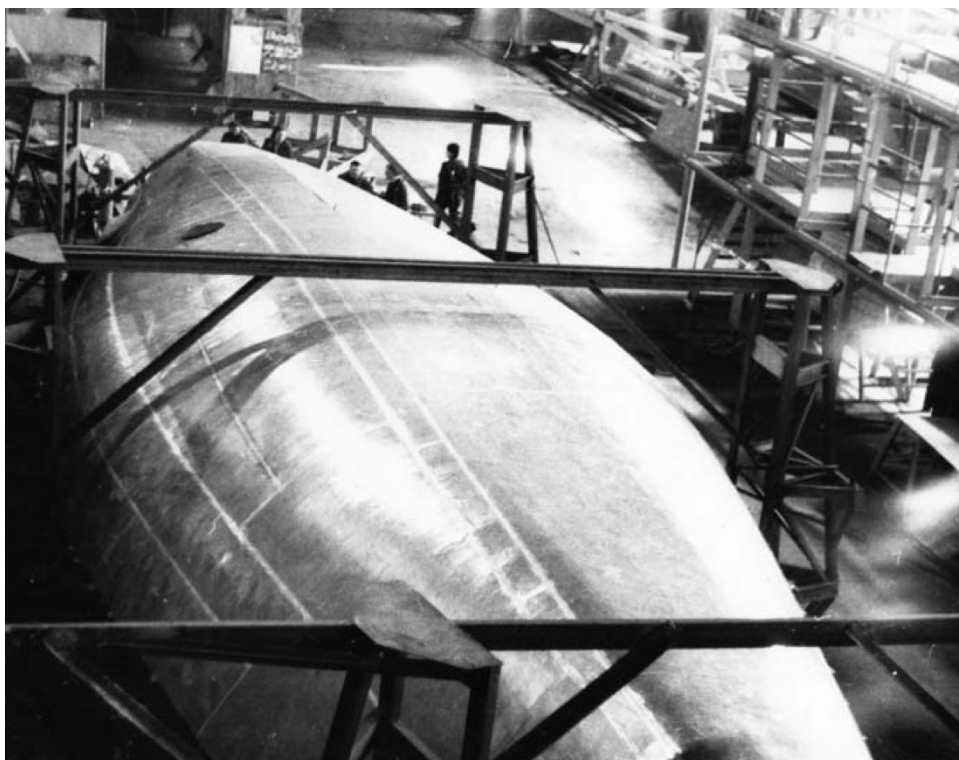
FAZ-05-041

And then at last the day came when the hull plating was completely laid.
We all felt like winners!

FAZ-05-042

Even the shop's production engineer started smiling at us far more often. And nodding his head approvingly.

FAZ-05-043



A minute for a smoke. Left to right: Yura Doroshenko, Valera Safiullin (leaning on the assembly jig), Pasha Sologub, Sergei Kiselyov, Ramis Faizulin (if I am not mistaken). In the foreground – practically the Worker and Kolkhoz Woman group. On the left – Sergei Stanetsky. Gena Korolkov is holding an air-powered cut-off saw. Instead of a sickle. The character in the beret at right – the shop's production engineer.

FAZ-05-044

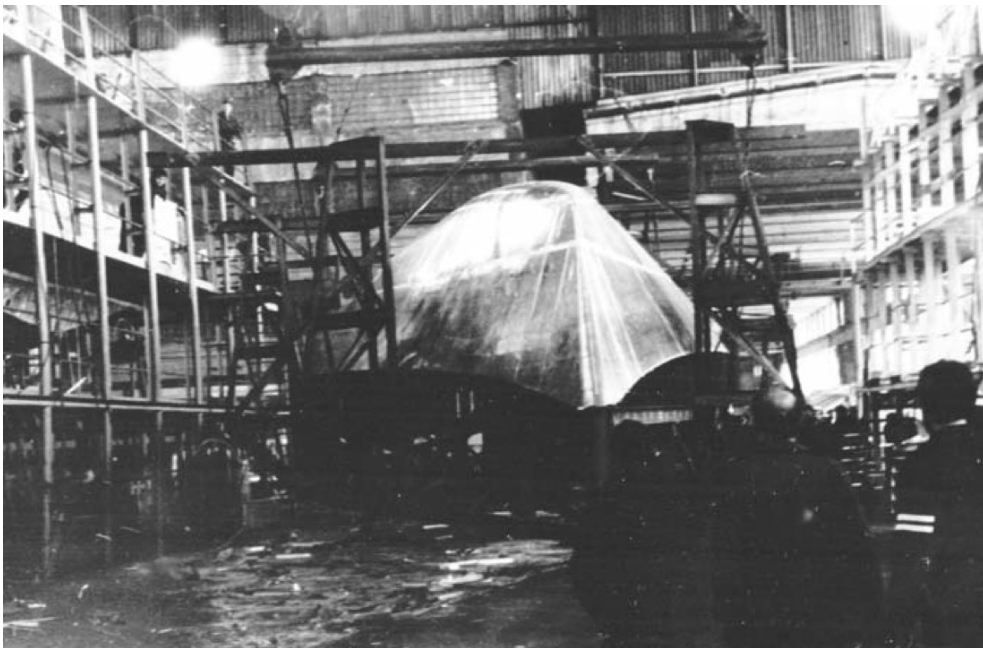


This is how the hull looked with the plating laid. It was hard even to fit the whole of it into the frame. The round black patch on the hull – nothing other than a mat to sit on. Sitting straight on the aluminium was cold.

FAZ-05-045



One more view of the hull. All the shots in this series were taken on 23–24 March 1989. FAZ-05-046



Left to right, back row: Yura Doroshenko, Valera Safiullin, Ramis Faizulin, Pasha Sologub, Volodya Kulinichenko, Sergei Kiselyov, Volodya Musatov. Front row – on the left a lad from Odessa (I cannot recall the name). Next to him – Sergei Stanetsky. FAZ-05-047

We assembled the yacht's hull keel up. Now it had to be turned over into its normal position. That too was no simple engineering problem, worked out by the yard's technical department together with Alexei and the shop's riggers. For the turn-over, the shop's two overhead cranes were put to work plus a Kato mobile crane.

FAZ-05-048

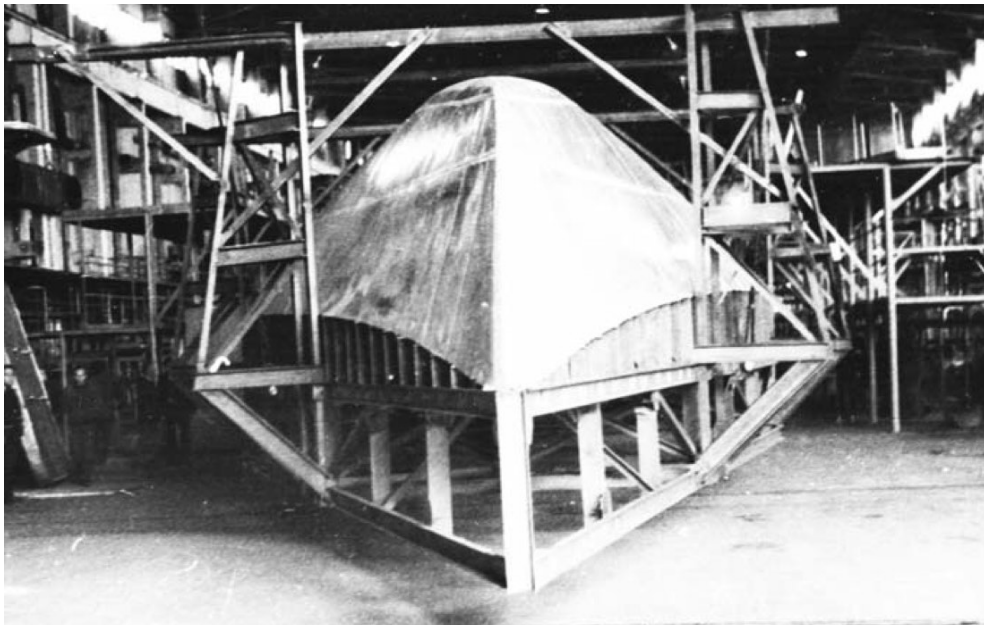
The whole turn-over operation took two days altogether. On the first day we got everything ready, rigged the guys needed, made all the wires fast. Then – we shifted the yacht aside, to make room for the turn-over. When the boat was shifted, we had to spend a couple of hours clearing the area under the jig. Over that time a great mass of all sorts of

FAZ-05-049



The yacht has been moved off her original place. Now you can see how much rubbish built up under the hull during the build. At left on the scaffolding, the board with our slogan.

FAZ-05-050

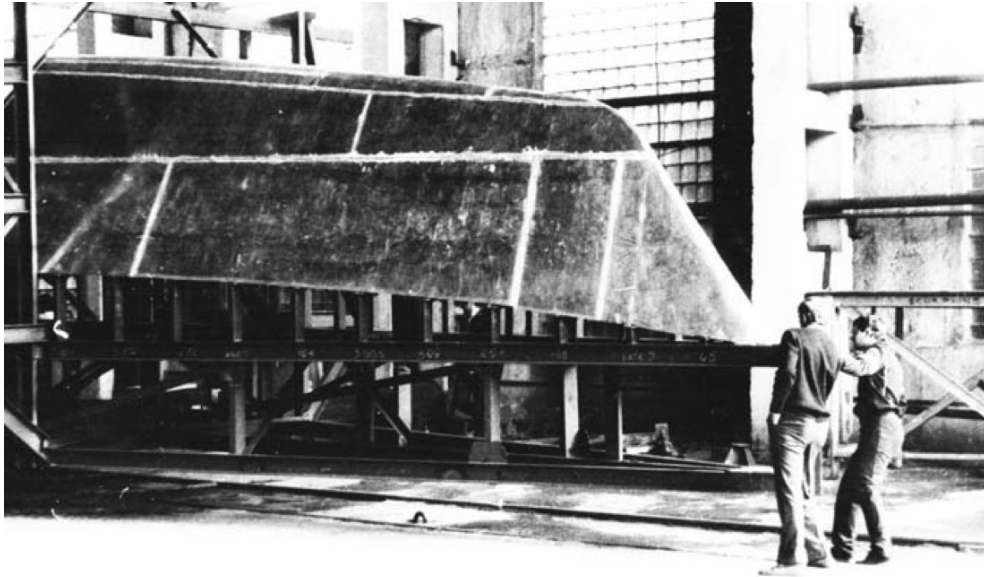


offcuts and other building rubbish had piled up there. And regular clearing was impossible because of the construction of the assembly jig itself. While we were busy with all that – the day was gone.

FAZ-05-051

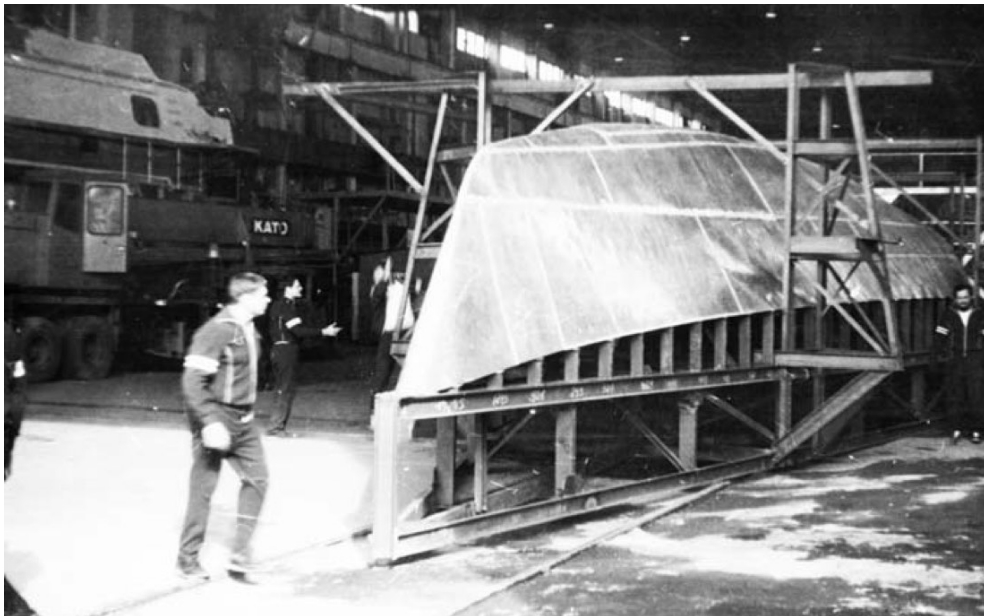
The next day the turn-over itself took place. A lot of people gathered in the shop – most of the yard men put aside all their own work to see an event like that. The whole operation went – like clockwork. A few days before that our friends from Kiev had come to us – Artyom and Lena Sokovnin. And my parents. Dad had a camera – so I am left with a small collection of photographs from those days. You can see it in the shots – those were happy days of our life!

FAZ-05-052



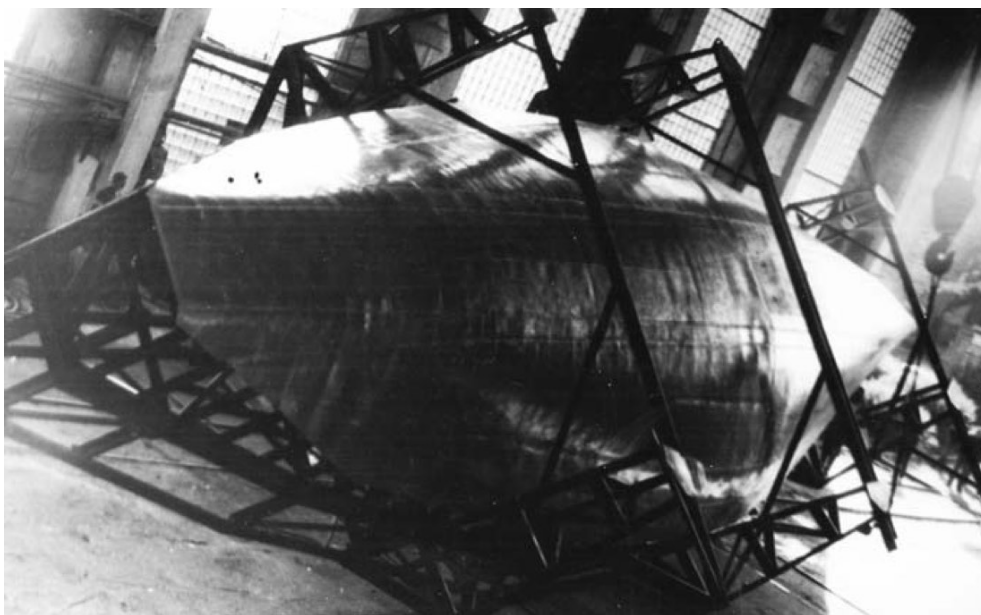
Left to right: Artyom Sokovnin, Vitya Yazykov, Igor Mironenko.

FAZ-05-053



The structure is in the air already!

FAZ-05-054



Vitya Utchenko (on the left) and Igor Mironenko. We are looking over some parts...

FAZ-05-055



*Lyosha Grischenko (on the left, in the foreground) is looking the hull over before the turn-over.
Right behind him – Igor Mironenko. On the right – Zhenya Platon.*

FAZ-05-056



Here it is, the long-awaited moment!

FAZ-05-057

A little more and the yacht will be on an even keel!

FAZ-05-058

After the yacht was on an even keel – we decided to get up a picnic outdoors. For it we bought meat, wine and everything that goes with such occasions. We drove out into the forest, where we got a shashlik going. We lit a fire and grilled the meat on the coals. Vitya Yazykov had marinated the meat for the occasion. It all came out very tasty! We spent the whole day outdoors. Simply resting from all our cares. Unfortunately, holidays end quickly. Once again we are in the working routine. Now there are two main questions on the agenda. The first – to carry out the final welding-up of the hull, and the second – making the deck.

FAZ-05-059

On the first question arguments flared up among us – how to do the welding-up of the hull? Without releasing it from the assembly jig, or release it and weld all the joints in free space, so to speak.

FAZ-05-060

I was for welding without releasing the hull from the assembly jig. From my point of view – that would have made control of the welding distortion simpler. But those for free welding said that the distortion could be measured every day, and that releasing the jig from the hull would let the deck work start earlier. The second version won, the one Zhenya Platon backed. We also had arguments – by how many millimetres the hull would bend along its length once it was fully released from the jig. The figures named were of every kind – from a hundred millimetres to half a metre. The most radical deformation of the hull was predicted by the shop's production engineer, naturally. The arguments were hot, bets were even laid. During one of those arguments I said that the hull would not move at all.

It would not go anywhere after the jig was released. They shushed me, of course, but I did not go deeper into the argument. In the end the assembly jig was disconnected from the hull and dragged aside by crane. Careful measuring began. When everything had been measured, Lyosha announced the winner. "Miron turned out to be right," he said. "The deviations from the drawing dimensions – practically zero!"

FAZ-05-061

Of course, I cannot say that when I made that guess I could back it up with scientific calculations. But knowing the metal, the method of assembling the hull, the welding procedure we were using, I supposed that it would come out exactly like that. And I turned out to be right.

FAZ-05-062



The detached assembly jig looks like a prehistoric beast!

FAZ-05-063

On the floor are the small aluminium plates the frames were welded to during assembly on the jig. Now Valera (starboard side, aft) is cutting them off so they will not get in the way when the deck is assembled.

FAZ-05-064

The final welding of all the elements of the hull framing began. Not long before the hull was turned over one more talented welder was added to our team – Vitya Utchenko. He came from Kiev, from the Leninskaya Kuznitsa yard. At that yard they built aluminium missile boats for the Navy. There were experienced welders there. And we had yachtman friends working at that yard. And it was through them that we came to Vitya Utchenko. We had him put through to us on a long-term secondment.

Vitya was a magnificent welder! Probably of the same class as Aunt Anya. And just the same way – always there, no complaints or grievances about the hard parts of the job. When he and Yura Doroshenko were welding up the fuel tanks built into the hull – he actually had to stand practically on his head to get into some of the places that were hard to reach. So you can imagine for yourself.

FAZ-05-065

So the three of them – Vitya Utchenko, Aunt Anya and Zhenya – did the final welding-up of the hull framing. Zhenya measured and watched where the bow and stern had shifted after a day's work. If down – then the next day the upper elements were welded. If up – then the lower ones. By controlling the hull's movements that way we got very good results. In the end the difference between the design dimensions and the real ones, after the final welding – came to under fifty millimetres. And that on a hull more than twenty-five metres long!

FAZ-05-066



It is hard even to imagine – how much welding work it took to build Fazisi!

FAZ-05-067

The second serious question was making the deck.

FAZ-05-068

The time for experiments was over – we had to actually start making it. An idea came up – to try making the deck panels by resistance welding. The yard had a machine like that, but it did not work. So Tolya Verba and Sergei Stanetsky took on getting it going again. And they got it going!

FAZ-05-069

We made a couple of panels straight away. And true enough – there is practically no distortion. But the panel comes out flat only. And we need one with transverse camber! That is exactly what the welding jig was made for. Only there is no way of combining the two into one. If the deck had been made as a cylinder (the first version, which I explained above) – there would have been no problem.

FAZ-05-070

The panel could have been pulled down onto the beams without much trouble. But in our case – that was impossible.

FAZ-05-071

On top of all that – the strength of the plating itself was plainly not enough. A millimetre and a half – that is not serious. Drop a hammer from the mast and it goes through the deck (on the second leg of the race, as it happens, Viktor Yazykov dropped a hammer from the mast onto the deck. It crashed down next to me. But in the deck – only a dent was left. Because the deck was three millimetres). Plus – fastening anything to a deck like that – took masses of extra reinforcement of all kinds. You cannot just bolt something to the deck – it tears straight out!

FAZ-05-072



Getting ready to lay the deck.

FAZ-05-073



Planks are lying on the beams. We walked on them while there was no deck.

FAZ-05-074

We put all these questions both to the lads from Mobile and to Vladislav, but without much success. By that time some sort of conflict had come to a head between Mobile and Vladislav. It came to breaking off the contract with them in the end. And Vlad himself could not help much either. The project had already gone into a stage where controlling every event with one man – was simply impossible. So as not to go on about it at length – I recommend reading the books written by Skip Novak, Zhenya Platon, Tolya Verba and Vladislav Murnikov. I do not have Vlad's book yet, but even from what Skip, Zhenya and Tolya have written – you can understand what an incredible strain there was with the project all that time. I mean not only the building of the yacht itself, in this case.

FAZ-05-075

In the end Vladislav left the decisions on technical questions to Alexei's discretion, and Alexei only agreed the decisions we took with Vlad, kept Vladislav informed. Alexei's proposals on the structure of the yacht were approved by Vladislav practically always.

FAZ-05-076

One day Vakhtang Kavtaradze, looking at all our battles with making the panels, says: "Listen – we use extruded panels for the decks of our *Kolkhida*-class craft, maybe it is worth you trying them too?" We had been eyeing them too, but their material section was three millimetres. If it had been two and a half at least... And the panels are simply splendid, with the stiffeners already formed in them, and the material itself – AMg-61, the marine aluminium alloy – left nothing better to wish for. These panels were made in Moscow, by the Institute of Light Alloys, VoVILS. We decided to give them a try after all. We started from the middle of the hull, on

the port side. I still have a photograph from that period, which is why I remember it in such detail. At first we wanted to cut slots in the

FAZ-05-077



We are laying the deck panels. On the port side you can see the slots in the beams for the stiffeners. But those slots were never needed.

FAZ-05-078

beams, so as not to cut through the panel's own stiffeners. But after the very first sheet we gave that idea up. Pulling the panel down onto the beams turned out to be practically impossible. So we decided after all to cut the panel's stiffeners where they crossed the beams, pull the panel's plating down onto the beam, tack it with the welder, and then – weld gussets (small connecting triangles) in between the stiffeners and the beams. And that is what we did. The job moved along faster straight away. As soon as we had the deck assembly method worked out in principle – we split into three gangs: three men work forward, three – aft, and two – assemble the central cabin top with the cockpit. I was on the cockpit and the cabin top. The connecting gussets needed came to – a whole mountain! Gena Korolkov cut them without a break. He became a real master of the air-powered cut-off saw!

FAZ-05-079



Alexei is inspecting something on the deck. On the floor lies the next deck panel ready for fitting. On the forward bulkhead you can see the triangular chainplate welded into the bulkhead. FAZ-05-080



A short smoke break during the deck assembly. In the cockpit, left to right – a welder from the shop (Vakhtang sent him over to help us. And his name I do not remember either...). Right behind him – Edgar Terekhin, then – Rami Leibovich and Volodya Musatov. FAZ-05-081

Aft – Tolya "Zmey Gorynych" is getting ready to weld some part on at Vitya Kamkin's request. Vitya is supporting the part from below. Volodya Kulinichenko is about to climb onto the boat. Nodari Teneishvili is working on the joint between the deck and the hull. FAZ-05-082

When all the structural elements of the hull had been welded up, we checked the hull dimensions once more to find out the final distortion. It turned out to be quite insignificant for a structure like that. But here another problem came up. The bottom floors in the forward part of the hull were fairly deep. And when the welding of the hull was finished – they fell over. The welding distortion pulled them so hard that they came to look like a propeller. They had to be brought back up to their original position.

Otherwise no ABS surveyor would have passed the boat. Zhenya Platon and I took that job on. It all had to be done quickly, so that work could go on both on the hull and on the deck. He and I stayed on for the night shift. On top of the day one. I heated the floors with the welder (in a set sequence) and Zhenya held them with every kind of fixture. The welding pulled the floor in the direction we wanted, and when the floor cooled – after the holding fixtures were taken off – it stayed in the position that was needed. We were at it half the night. But we did it all well. Of course, the marks of our efforts stayed visible on the floors, but after painting – nobody would ever have said that "radical measures" had been applied to them. We had to think about welding distortion constantly.

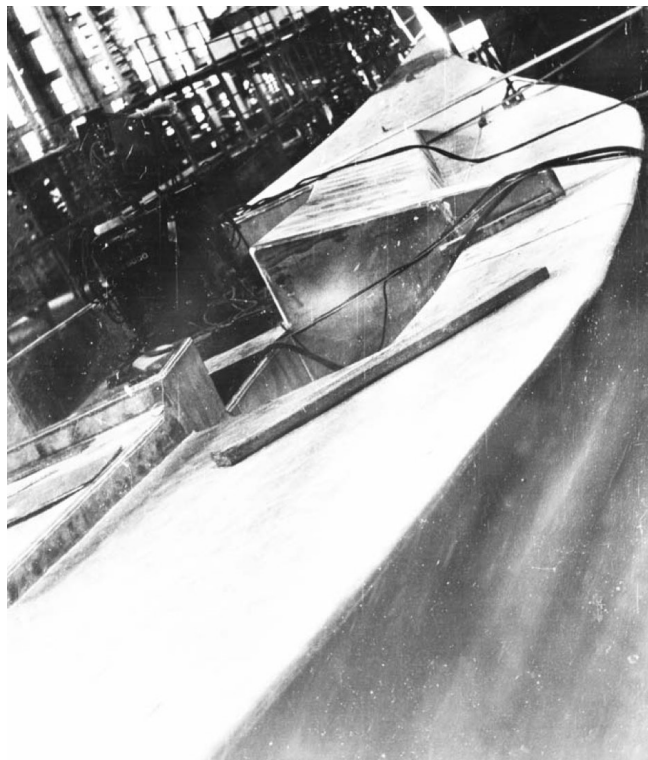
FAZ-05-083

One day we were doing something on the deck and suddenly there was a loud, sharp noise. It came from the area of the port shroud chainplate. We froze, waiting, but after that – nothing happened. We started going over the shroud chainplate area carefully. The assembly was fairly complicated, and there was plenty of welding in it. It turned out – one weld had cracked. That was the result of thermal loads. We rewelded the seam, and inspected all the other critical spots.

FAZ-05-084

We found nothing else suspicious. That was the only time a weld cracked on us. Nothing like it ever happened again.

FAZ-05-085



The deck takes on its finished look.

FAZ-05-086

By the end of April the deck was largely assembled. The assembly itself presented no particular difficulties. But then another worry appeared. After the final welding up of all the stringers and frames – the hull came to look like "Danube Waves". There were sags between the deck beams as well, though not so noticeable (that was one of the advantages of using panels). FAZ-05-087

It is interesting that, just when we had finished assembling the hull plating, an article about an Italian shipbuilding firm came my way. In the article the Italians reported with pride that they could weld plating up to three millimetres thick with no residual welding distortion. I thought at the time: "What are they so pleased about? On our topsides – two and a half millimetres – and it all looks very decent." And then I understood. And appreciated it! FAZ-05-088

We started thinking – how to fair the hull to an acceptable state. FAZ-05-089

You cannot do it here with fairing compound. Far too much would have to go on to level the dents. FAZ-05-090

We turned to the Leninskaya Kuznitsa works again. Yury Yakovlevich Brezkin came out to us, a Kiev man we knew well. He had a great deal of experience in straightening aluminium hulls. And it was together with Vitya Kamkin that he took on the straightening of the hull (and the deck) of *Fazisi*. The work was monotonous and long, but the lads managed it very well. FAZ-05-091

So another two months went by in Poti. The time was coming when we had to start thinking about the internal ship's systems and everything else that makes up a yacht. FAZ-05-092

Poti. May – July 1989. FAZ-05-093

The spring in Poti that year was marked not only by the warmer weather but by unrest in the republic, connected with the new currents. Words like strike, protest demonstration and others came into everyday use, words connected in our memory more with 1917 than with the reality around us. For a time all this had only a surface tint to it, but even so one of the strikes caught us too. The works employees did not come in to work. We could not allow ourselves that. But nobody had any complaint against us. The works employees said as much, that they understood us and had nothing against our carrying on with our business in spite of all the upheavals going on around us. Fortunately – the unrest did not go on long and outward calm was soon restored. FAZ-05-094

We now had two main questions on the agenda. FAZ-05-095

The first – to bring the hull to a proper state. After all, even after all the straightening work done by Yury Yakovlevich Brezkin and Vitya Kamkin,

you could not call the hull ready for painting. A layer of fairing compound had to be laid on to fill the unevenness that was left, and the hull sanded back afterwards. And the second job – the ship's systems. That means – the design, manufacture and installation of the pipework and the tanks for fresh water, the heads, the bilge system, the fuel system and the electrical distribution. Plus the installation of the engine. To that you have to add making the sole boards and the system for holding them to the hull so they do not fly off in all directions when she heels, making and welding in the bearing housings for the rudder stock, making and fitting the reinforcing members for mounting the deck gear – winches, blocks, traveller tracks, casting the internal ballast blocks, etc. This is only a general (and far from complete) list of everything that had to be done. And after all, behind every item lies a countless number of small things that also have to be done, because without the one – you will not have the other!

FAZ-05-096

For all these items we did not even have design documentation. If there were any preliminary drawings – they were of a very general character. By that time the collaboration with Mobile had ended, and Vladislav himself simply could not physically take on design work. He was loaded beyond all limits with the work on external relations.

FAZ-05-097

At one of the meetings we started discussing – who would take on which assembly. Alexei read out the list of jobs and invited volunteers to step forward and take responsibility for one section of the work or another. But somehow the offer was met without enthusiasm. People got shy, got doubtful... You can understand it, of course. Everything had to be done blind, and most of those present did not have shipbuilding knowledge deep enough to put themselves forward boldly for one section of the work or another. Here Vlad takes the floor (he was in Poti just at that time) and asks those present: "What is this – have we got nothing but navigators here? You have to be bolder! There is no time for long deliberation and discussion.

FAZ-05-098

You have to take it and do it! Otherwise we will never get to the start of the race..." Gave initiative a bit of a spur, so to speak. Anyway, Yura Doroshenko took on the fuel system and the installation of the engine. Plus – he also handled the casting of the internal ballast bars. He melted down lead from whatever came to hand (batteries, cable insulation) and poured it into a special mould. Oleg Belomytsev took over the water system. Vitya Kamkin – the fitting out of the galley and other items of the interior. Zhenya Platon – the steering gear. I was making the sole boards and all sorts of odds and ends about the hull, of which there were always plen-

ty. In particular – I made the heads enclosure. Out of the trial one-and-a-half-millimetre deck panels, as it happens.

FAZ-05-099

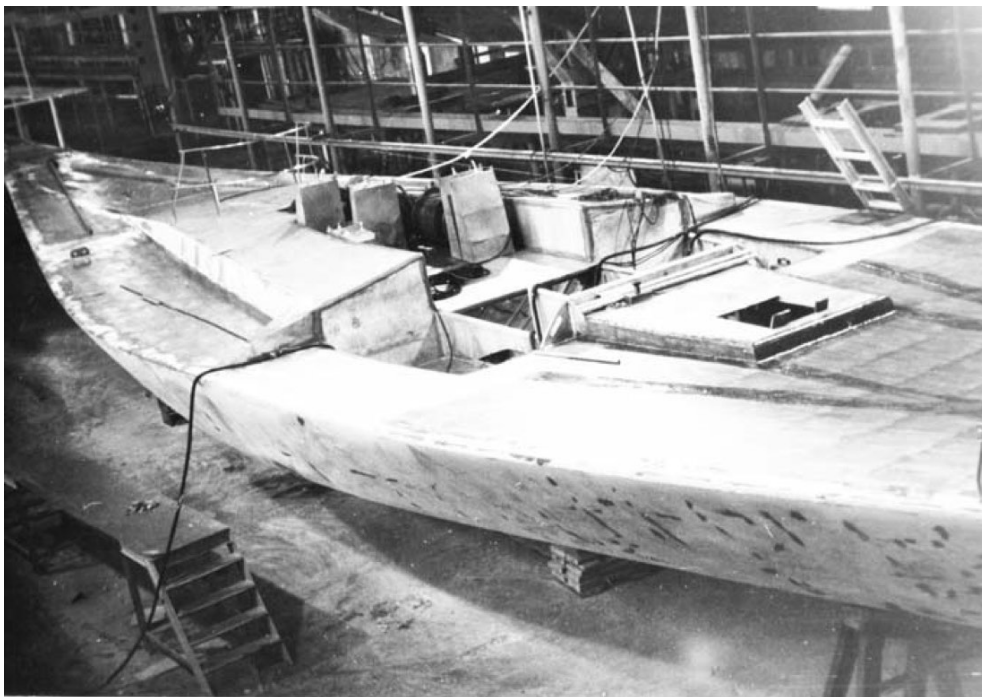
For the enclosure – they were a wonderful fit!

FAZ-05-100



Zhenya is working on the rudder skeg.

FAZ-05-101

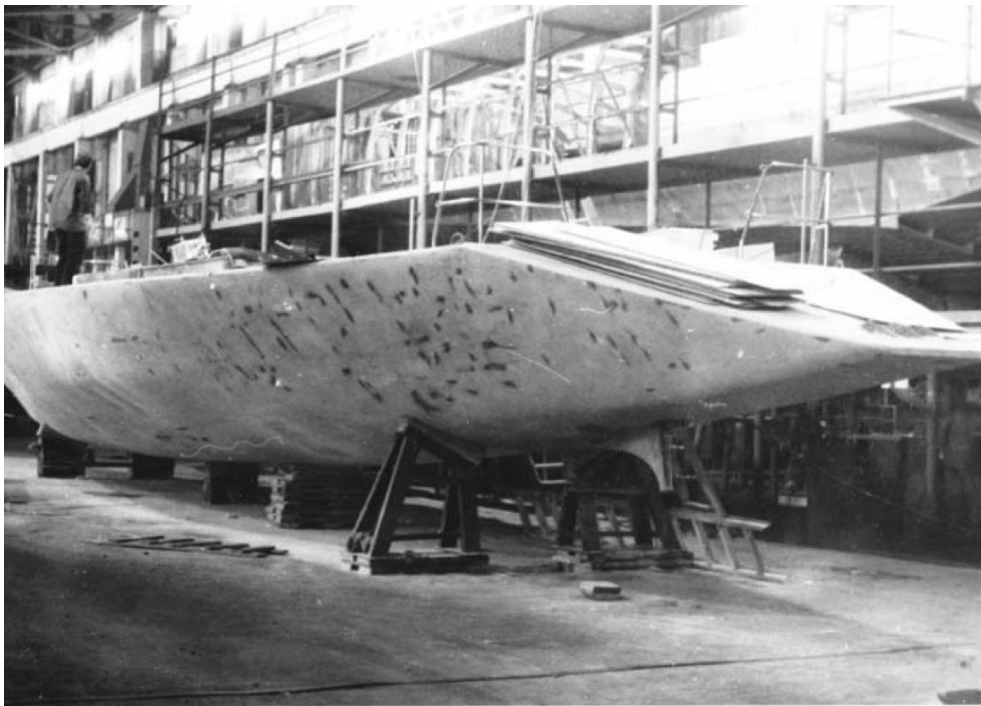


Zhenya Platon (left) and Vitya Kamkin.

FAZ-05-102

Everyone else, who did not have a piece of the boat's equipment to handle – was asked to concentrate on bringing the hull to a proper state. But once again – nobody had any idea how that was to be achieved? Of everything we knew about fairing compounds – only one option was available to us – epoxy resin filled with microballoons. We knew nothing better. And so Tolya Verba, Sergei Stanetsky, Gena Korolkov, Volodya Kulinichenko, Vova Musatov, Sergei Kiselyov and many others spent whole days mixing this compound and putting it on the hull. A simply ghastly job! The curing time of the resin is quite long, and under its own weight it slowly ran down off the topsides. It had to be worked back into place with spatulas the whole time. The next day the unevenness was sanded back and another layer of compound was put on the hollows that were left. And so on – day after day. All the lads working on the fairing of the hull were covered in epoxy dust from head to foot! And with all that the efficiency of the work was very low. By reason of the complete absence of a proper fairing material. Of whose existence we did not even know at the time.

FAZ-05-103



The deck is ready. Only the plate over the engine compartment left to weld in. But that – a little later. The hull shows the lads' efforts on the fairing. In the cockpit stand the drinking water tanks. They were removable.

FAZ-05-104



A view of the yacht's hull from below. On the stern lies a bundle of thin plywood sheets. These sheets were used for the interior lining around the hanging bunks.

FAZ-05-105

This is what fairing the hull looked like in Poti.

FAZ-05-106

Besides the allocation of jobs, at that same meeting the question came up of crew members going home for a rest. Understandably – we were all working without sparing ourselves. And Tolya Verba suggested bringing in a practice where a couple of men, after a certain time spent on building the boat – go off home for a few days or for a week. I no longer remember the exact length. The idea met with approval from the lads from Odessa. Vitya Yazykov supported the initiative too. But Alexei took a cool view of the suggestion. All for the same reason – there is no time for a long break away from building the boat. He refrained, however, from saying so flatly. Although he knew that his opinion would be backed without reservation by Vitya Kamkin and by Zhenya Platon and by me, and by everyone who had started building the boat. Then I took the floor and said that I thought the idea of scheduled leave was not economic. "We are all here because we want to make our dream happen. So leave will have to wait. And we should concentrate on getting the jobs in front of us done as quickly and as well as possible.

FAZ-05-107

But so that it is not too sad altogether – let our wives come out to us. And we will find somewhere to put them up." Of course, I did not bring the house down, but the idea of leave was dropped. Vitya Yazykov took me

to task for it afterwards. He was apparently thinking of slipping off to Lazarevskoye for a week. I asked him – so why did you not object at the meeting? And he to me: "Well yes, you try objecting here. You spoke – everyone went quiet." Anyway, we had a laugh...

FAZ-05-108

In the end that is exactly how it worked out. Our wives started coming out to us in Poti. They stayed sometimes in the hostel, but more often in a hotel in Poti. And the food side was all right too. After all, we had coupons for the local canteen, which we did not use because it was so far from the works. And for our wives and children that was an excellent option. So it all sorted itself out.

FAZ-05-109



Four photographs taken one after another in the room where we usually drank tea. Igor, Alexei and Valera. On the wall you can see the poster Dennis Conner gave us.

FAZ-05-110



Valera against the window.

FAZ-05-111

Vika and Zhenya Platon.

FAZ-05-112

Vitya Kamkin at the table. Above the table – the world map with the round-the-world route, made by Sergei Akatyev. It was simply a day off, a good spring day. Ira Mironenko took the photograph.

FAZ-05-113

One more piece of news, which Vlad brought us and which we took with the liveliest interest – was the arrival in Poti of Skip Novak. Skip Novak – one of the best-known round-the-world yachtsmen. In the 1985–1986 round-the-world race he led the yacht *Drum*, and before that he had done two round-the-world races. Anyway – for us the name of Skip Novak meant rather more than the name of Dennis Conner. From what Vlad told us we understood that Skip would be doing consultancy work on the project. Naturally, with his experience of round-the-world races – this was strong support for the whole project!

FAZ-05-114

Although apparently everything had more or less settled down and the work on the boat was going ahead successfully, a split was appearing in the team itself. Some of the lads began to doubt the project would succeed and decided to leave. Some decided that a career was more important than sailing, others that it was not worth losing a sailing season for the doubtful (in their view) chance of the boat taking part in the round-the-world race. So Pasha Sologub, Yura Firsov, Ramis Faizulin, Vitya Pogrebnov, Sergei Kiselyov and several more of the lads, mostly from Odessa, left the crew. Of course, losing people is always a shame. But nobody could offer them any guarantees either. So all that was left to us was to wish them all the best.

FAZ-05-115

And as reinforcements Rami Leibovich and Edgar Terekhin arrived in the crew. They had come as early as April, during the assembly of the deck.

FAZ-05-116

Both – from Riga. They came on their own initiative, when they heard about the building of a yacht for the round-the-world. They read about it in the paper, rang Vladislav, came to an arrangement with him and came out to Poti.

FAZ-05-117

So there were more of us now. Their technical level may not have been very high, but their level of diligence over the job they were given left nothing to be desired. They fitted into the team practically from the very first days. Sergei Akatyev also came, from Kiev. He too took an active part in making some of the boat's equipment items. And there were more than enough such assemblies. There was work enough for everybody!

FAZ-05-118

I want to mention one more man. His name was Sasha. From Leningrad. He too came on his own initiative. He stayed with us several months, up to the launching of the yacht in Poti. He worked on the fairing of the hull, which, as I have already said, was hellish work. But I think that his supply-getting streak was a great deal stronger. In any case – it was he who went to Leningrad and brought us back a coil of six-millimetre stainless wire for the guardrails. By modern standards that may look like a trifle, but not at all in those years, when everything had to be "got hold of". And later on he helped us out with supplies. But for some reason or other he did not make the main crew. And after that his trail was lost...

FAZ-05-119



The hull is broadly finished. Getting it even to this state – took incredible effort from a lot of the lads. And all through not knowing modern methods in yacht building...

FAZ-05-120

On the deck in the blue trousers – Gena Korolkov. You can see the plywood sheets for the interior lining lying beside the cabin top.

FAZ-05-121

Besides the departure of part of the crew, the question of the yacht's skipper came up with us again. Tolya Verba, for all his good qualities as an administrator, an organiser and a doer – never did manage either to establish contact with Vladislav or to bind the remaining team into one whole. Part of the reason for the second may have been that he often had to be away from Poti on project business, and in Poti itself he had to spend a lot of time in various offices. Although on the boat he worked tirelessly too. But even so he did not manage to earn the same standing that Alexei had. Plus his endless criticism aimed at Vladislav was a strain as well. On

Vladislav himself, and on all the veterans of building the boat, if you like. In the end we began to insist that Alexei reconsider his position and take the skipper's job on himself. Of course, it was an enormous load on Alexei, but he could see too that with Tolya in the skipper's role, things were not shaping up for the best. After long talks and discussion of all the "fors" and "against", Alexei's role as skipper of the boat was confirmed by the Fazis management. Which we were all glad of. Maybe some of the lads from Odessa did not much approve of the decision, but even so – the thought of leaving the project did not visit them. They stayed as active members of the crew as before. Tolya Verba, to his credit, did not go in for wounded ambition either. "The king is dead – long live the king. Sail – above rank. I will be happy to take part in this race in any post."

FAZ-05-122

That is about the whole of his comment on the change that had taken place.

FAZ-05-123

And he stayed true to the project right to the end, when he flew out of Uruguay after the finish of the fourth leg of the race... Besides the direct participants in the race (though as yet only the builders of the yacht), Vladimir Forvarchuk from Odessa and Volodya (I have half-forgotten the surname, unfortunately) from Feodosia came out to help us (and the yard's technical department). Sasha Struzhilin came out from Leningrad as well. He and I had long-standing friendly ties. Vitya Yazykov – he had actually built a boat to his design. Before he came to *Fazisi*. And after the round-the-world – he raced her in the singlehanded race across the Atlantic! Both Volodyas handled the ship's systems. They did the preliminary drawings, and then documented what had been done. They spent a lot of time with us in the shop too. They were easy and pleasant to work with.

FAZ-05-124

One more charismatic figure appeared among us – Valery Alexandrovich Chumakov. Vlad brought him in as a man who knew his way around administration. I personally knew about Valera only what Valentin Mankin wrote about him in his book *The White Triangle*. By all appearances – he was a good racer, he raced Finns. Edgar knew him (Valera) well (as a former member of the USSR national team), and so did Yura Doroshenko, since he raced in the Olympic classes too. For us, the offshore men – Valera was less well known.

FAZ-05-125

Valera Chumakov handled the liaison with the Foreign Ministry, as far as I remember. After all, we had to get foreign passports – and so all the form-filling business went through him. I remember how one day we got together to have photographs taken for the foreign passport. For those you needed a white shirt and a tie. And what we had to hand – padded jackets

and canvas mittens. But Lyosha turned out to have a tie put by, by some miracle. So we put it on one after another. The shirt we borrowed somewhere too. And that is how that photograph has survived with me...

FAZ-05-126

One more occupation appeared for us, different from the yachting concerns. On one of his visits to Poti Vladislav came in the company of a German. His name was Gerd Budzek. A young bloke, he had studied in Moscow at one time and spoke Russian fluently. He handled the work with sponsors and had flown to Poti to see what was going on with us and to tell us about his work. In the course of the meeting he said to us: "Lads, in the West practically everyone can make themselves understood in English. So it will be very useful for all of you to refresh what you learned at your institutes, so that you can at least communicate at a basic level. Please do not waste time, start working through English textbooks and phrasebooks. I understand that it is hard and that you have no time, but this knowledge will be very useful to you later on."

FAZ-05-127

Out of our whole team only Zhenya Platon had practically fluent English. At the Moscow institute where he studied, very close attention was paid to that subject. And now he could make full use of what he knew. Seryozha Stanetsky had a decent level of the language. And that was about all. Everyone else's knowledge was at the level of the Soviet forms, where against the question about foreign languages you answered: "I read and translate with a dictionary". Budzek's appeal did not go unheeded. Some of us had Russian-English phrasebooks with us. And so at lunchtime each of us tried to improve his English – as best he could. I had two phrasebooks. One – for tourists and one, a bigger one – for officers of the Navy. The first was a bit simpler. That one I gave to Lyosha, for him to swot up. I myself took on the study of the second phrasebook. Every day in the lunch break we went up to our room and spent 15 minutes on reading and memorising English phrases and expressions. I personally made this a strict rule for myself. 15 minutes, but every day.

FAZ-05-128

Of course, this was in no way adequate teaching, but after a while I could already, after a fashion, put together a phrase like: "Soviet destroyer *Fazisi* requests permission to enter port". And a couple of everyday phrases: "Hello, how are you?"

FAZ-05-129

Lyosha also tried to remember at least something from the phrasebook I gave him. But it was going very badly for him. The reason for it – enormous tiredness and the excessive responsibility for the job he had been given. All his thoughts were only about the boat. Get it done, get it done, get it done – those were all the thoughts that had hold of him. And that

does not help with learning foreign languages. And he often dodged the work with the textbook. I told him off for it a bit, but he would laugh it off with something like, "when we run into it – we will sort it out". Bit by bit he gave up the lessons altogether.

FAZ-05-130



On the yard grounds.

FAZ-05-131





One of our rare trips into town. Looks like the May Day holidays. Left to right – Igor Mironenko, Sergei Mironenko, Alexei Grischenko, Zhenya Platon, Viktoria Platon.

FAZ-05-132



The same group, but Lyosha is taking the photograph. Next to me – my wife Ira.

FAZ-05-133

To be in town and not drop into a bar – impossible! The food in the bar was good and the beer was cold. Little Seryozhka was not drinking beer yet. In his glass – the local lemonade.

FAZ-05-134

The same May holidays. Seryozhka and Alexei on the beach. That was very nearly our only trip to the beach in all the time we were in Poti.

FAZ-05-135

The work on the yacht itself did not leave me with impressions as vivid as the early stage of the building did. On the whole – we understood that we had made the boat. Every day we were only adding more and more fit-out items to the hull we already had. And bit by bit fewer and fewer items were left on the list of jobs.

FAZ-05-136

Somewhere in the middle of May the long-awaited deck gear for the yacht arrived. That is blocks, winches, winch drive systems – "coffee grinders", deck padeyes and a lot more odds and ends besides, including even the little blocks for adjusting the bunks. All of it had to be sorted out and an inventory made. To start with. And then – fit it on the deck, and take it off again afterwards for the final painting of the deck. All this gear roused an undisguised interest in us.

FAZ-05-137

Everyone wanted to touch it, turn it, hold it in his hands.

FAZ-05-138

After all, until then we had only seen gear like that on the pages of foreign yachting magazines. And here – we are holding it in our own hands! There was something to get excited about! Soon two specialists in installing the gear came out to us. Bruce Ditter from Barient Sparcraft and Phil Wardrop. Phil handled the electrics and electronics, and Bruce was the specialist in installing deck gear. There was a delay with installing the electronics, because we were not ready yet. The last assemblies were still being welded up, the last holes still being drilled. So he mostly hung about with nothing to do, in the company of Sergei Stanetsky, who looked after him as interpreter. With Bruce we started work almost as soon as he arrived. He showed us where to put the winches, the turning blocks, the traveller tracks and so on. He was a good specialist and under his direction we fairly quickly fitted all the extra reinforcement needed and then – the gear itself. The boat looked more serious straight away!

FAZ-05-139

I am leafing through my pocket notebook, left over from those days.

FAZ-05-140

Here is the list of all the blocks that arrived in Poti. Here is a sketch of a special fastening for the sole boards. About a hundred and fifty parts had to be turned to it. Here is a sketch of the foundation for the jib sheet turning block. After several versions the shape of a horse's hoof was chosen. And Gena Korolkov made both foundations beautifully. They are still on *Fazisi* now. The layout of the stanchions and the rails. Some more sketches, apparently even done by Skip Novak. His handwriting, at any rate...

FAZ-05-141

But building the boat – that is not all of it. The boat has to pass an inspection for compliance with all the requirements of the Rules of Construction. The American Bureau of Shipping (ABS) – the organisation that carried out the inspection of yachts for round-the-world races.

FAZ-05-142

Vladislav organised the visit of the surveyor from ABS. We all waited for the surveyor's arrival with some nerves. And especially – Alexei.

FAZ-05-143

After all, until then we had only had to deal with the Technical Commission of the USSR Sailing Federation. And that is not the same thing.

FAZ-05-144

Alexei read through the ABS rules for building vessels many times over. He collected every drawing, every building document. He spent countless hours in the yard's technical department, together with Volodya Ches, getting ready for the surveyor's arrival. And then the day came. The surveyor went over the boat thoroughly (to start with), and then, accompanied by Alexei, Volodya Ches and Zhenya Platon, withdrew to the yard's technical department, where he set about going through the documents on the building of the boat. Zhenya Platon translated the surveyor's questions and Alexei's answers. That is where the advantage of fluent English told in full! Plus the fact that Zhenya knew the boat inside out as well. The meeting went on for several hours. The surveyor asked for one paper, then another. Everything was in complete order and provided in full. Lyosha had prepared thoroughly, as always! The meeting ended with the issue of a certificate confirming that the boat met all the requirements ABS sets for the structure of yachts for ocean races.

FAZ-05-145

When it was all over, Lyosha told me: "Imagine it, the surveyor asks for one paper – I give it to him. He asks for another – I have that one too. And so on for nearly two hours. After that he did not ask for anything. And I had nothing left either!"

FAZ-05-146

Getting the certificate was a big victory in the building of the boat. We all felt lifted. And Alexei – all the more so!

FAZ-05-147

Of the events not connected with building the yacht, I should mention the wedding of Nodari and Eliso. This was in the middle of May. Our newlyweds invited the whole crew to mark the day. The celebration was at Nodari's home, in his town. It was about an hour and a half to get there.

FAZ-05-148

We were of course very glad for Nodari. And he had been radiating joy about the coming wedding for several weeks already. The whole team chipped in for a wedding present. Then Tolya Verba arranged a bus, so that everything would be ready on the wedding day. When the day came – we put on the best we had and off we went.

FAZ-05-149

The trip was not only pleasant but interesting. After all, we had not been anywhere far from Poti all that time. And here was a chance like this.

FAZ-05-150

We drove in a happy mood. A wedding – that is a good thing!

FAZ-05-151

We arrived. Nodari and Eliso met us and introduced us to their relatives and friends. It was all very warm, like being at home. Georgian hospitality – you have to experience it for yourself! Everyone became good friends straight away!

FAZ-05-152

The ceremony itself was not very long. The usual official part, so to speak. The bride looked a beauty! We were very glad for Nodari and Eliso.

And the feast afterwards – that is a separate subject. The table, of course, was groaning with every kind of Georgian delicacy. And it was all simply wonderful! Except, perhaps – the suckling pig. That was the first time I tried it and it made no impression on me. The shortcoming of the piglet, however, was fully made up for by an excess of excellent Georgian wine.

FAZ-05-153

And there were no limits on that at all!

FAZ-05-154

By tradition you are supposed to give a toast. And not just one. Usually the man giving the toast is handed a horn of wine. A horn because you cannot set it down on the table without draining it first. You gave the toast – you drink the horn of wine! But there was no horn. An ice-cream bowl was used instead. Though technically you can set it on the table without finishing the wine – nobody dared to do it! The bowl held about a litre. And it was filled without stinting. Anyway – each of us had to give a toast (we did it with pleasure, of course!) and after that everyone was merry. But it was not just one toast. All sorts of "Alaverdi" and other local traditions came into play...

FAZ-05-155

Poor Tolya Verba was not much given to wine at all, and here he had to take part without ducking out. And he did not disgrace himself. He managed. But he remembered that wedding for ever. Twelve years later Tolya wrote to me in one of his letters about coming to Poti after the round-the-world. And how they welcomed him. So he kept comparing that welcome with Nodari's wedding!

FAZ-05-156

FAZ-05-157

We sat on until late in the evening. The bus driver had the saddest time of anyone. But by way of consolation the newlyweds' parents gave him a jerry can of wine, to smooth over his sober solitude somehow. Naturally he put it to use once we were back in Poti.

FAZ-05-158

We were not let go empty-handed either. I no longer remember how much they gave us for the road, but all the way to Poti we went on being glad for Nodari and Eliso. Some, mind you, "perked up" and spoiled the look of the inside of the bus. Which upset the driver a great deal. He told us off for it, but we promised to help with the cleaning. Anyway – we got to Poti without any particular incident. The wedding was a great success, no question. Everyone who took part in it surely remembers those days. It is just a pity that those days are already so far away from us...

FAZ-05-159

At roughly the same time as the ABS surveyor came, Skip Novak arrived too. Before that he had spent a week or more in Moscow, where, by the way, he met Alexei. Lyosha had gone there on some business or other – and Vladislav introduced the two of them.

FAZ-05-160

The meeting with Skip was far more interesting than the one with Dennis Conner. We asked him about round-the-world races as best we could – and he tried to answer our questions in the form easiest to understand. Zhenya, Sergei and Vladislav translated the questions and the answers. At the end of the meeting Skip showed us a video film about the yacht *Drum* in the previous round-the-world. He was skipper of that yacht. The meeting was very interesting for us. I think for Skip too.

FAZ-05-161

Skip was planning to stay in Poti until the yacht was launched. There was not long left until that moment. He was put up in the works *profilaktoriy*, along with us. He is a yachting man, so the absence of certain comforts you get in Sheraton hotels, for instance – was nothing new to him. Though afterwards he described our dwelling with a laugh in his book.

FAZ-05-162

As I have already said – the main work on the boat was already done by the time Skip arrived. So he was more often giving recommendations for improving one element or another on the boat. For example – the guard in front of the wheels – that was his suggestion. We had not thought of it. He suggested moving the bow bulwarks closer to the yacht's midships – another idea that turned out to be very practical later on. One more valuable suggestion from him was – taking the inboard drain outlets in the helmsmen's cockpits out to the opposite sides.

FAZ-05-163

That way the cockpits drained very quickly at any angle of heel. And there was plenty of water in them during the race! And a lot of other small things that you can only understand and see if you have a lot of experience of ocean racing. And Skip had more than enough of that experience!

FAZ-05-164

The last element of the deck structure was the section over the engine compartment. It was to be welded up after the engine was finally installed. After that – the engine could only be taken out of the boat by stripping it right down to pieces inside the boat. This sort of design decision does occur in yacht building. Even if not often. Yura Doroshenko handled the installation of the engine in the boat. The diesel was Polish, as it happens. The yard got these diesels to fit out the lifeboats they built. And one such diesel came to us. It ran for us without fail.

FAZ-05-165

Yura did a colossal job of tying the engine to its foundation and to the angle gearbox. Plus – he built and connected up the fuel and cooling systems. We had two fuel tanks on each side, welded into the structure of the boat. Just making sure that not one weld leaked – took incredible effort from Yura and Vitya Utchenko. The two of them hunted down the smallest leaks and cured them. And our fuel tanks never leaked! I wonder whether they have been repaired since? The valve distribution system itself looked

like an octopus – there were that many inlet and outlet cocks in it. After all, we had not only the diesel but a diesel generator too, which we were to install later. And that one had to have both fuel and water led to it as well. Anyway – it was an enormous set-up, and Yura ran it successfully.

FAZ-05-166

The day came when the engine was fully installed and connected up to all the systems. I think we even tried it out in the shop, running it for a short time. Everything worked perfectly.

FAZ-05-167



Not long before the first launch.

FAZ-05-168

Now all that was left was to weld in the last deck plate over the engine, paint the hull and the yacht could go into the water. I should explain here the reason for what looks like such a hasty launch of a boat that had neither keel nor rudder yet, and whose hull itself still needed its final finishing. The thing is that if we had brought the boat up to racing condition in Poti – we would not have made the start at all. Skip raised this question with Vladislav after he had gone over what had been done by the time he arrived. And as a man who understands yacht building – he suggested thinking seriously about taking the boat to England, to finish her there to her final form using all the best technology in world yacht building. That thought very soon took the form of the final and only decision. And Vladislav together with Alexei set about carrying it out. It was decided to move the hull we had to England by aeroplane. It was a very ambitious decision, but at the same time, if it came off – it gave us an enormous saving

of time. Not to mention the publicity for the whole project, better than which you could not imagine!

FAZ-05-169

Alexei went to Kiev and came back a few days later with excellent news. He had managed to agree the whole operation with a Kiev airline that handles freight. For carrying our boat, together with all its components and the whole crew, a *Ruslan* freight aircraft was allocated.

FAZ-05-170

But simply to slip away from Poti after so many months of work and contact with so many people would have been, at least, bad manners. That was clear to everyone. On top of that, a campaign had been run in the town itself to publicise the coming round-the-world race. And everyone was keen to have a look at the boat that was going to represent the country on the wide ocean.

FAZ-05-171

So it was decided to hold a public launch of the yacht. With a city-wide festival laid on.

FAZ-05-172

But before the "official ceremony", so to speak, the plan was to put the boat in the water inside the yard. First – we had to make sure that no surprises would happen during the public show. Second – for us, for those who built the boat – this was the real launch. And we wanted to do it without extra eyes and without extra fuss.

FAZ-05-173



I am studying some document or other. Rami Leibovich took this photograph and gave it to me when we were already in England.

FAZ-05-174



Shifting the yacht onto the trailer to tow her to the launching area.

FAZ-05-175

On the morning of 30 June the boat was rolled out of the shop with a tractor. She moved slowly towards the port crane. We all walked now beside her, now off to one side – looking over our creation. After all, until then there had simply been no chance to look at the yacht from a distance!

FAZ-05-176



Under the open sky for the first time! In the foreground, left to right:

FAZ-05-177

Igor Mironenko, Alexei Grischenko, Oleg Belomytsev.

FAZ-05-178

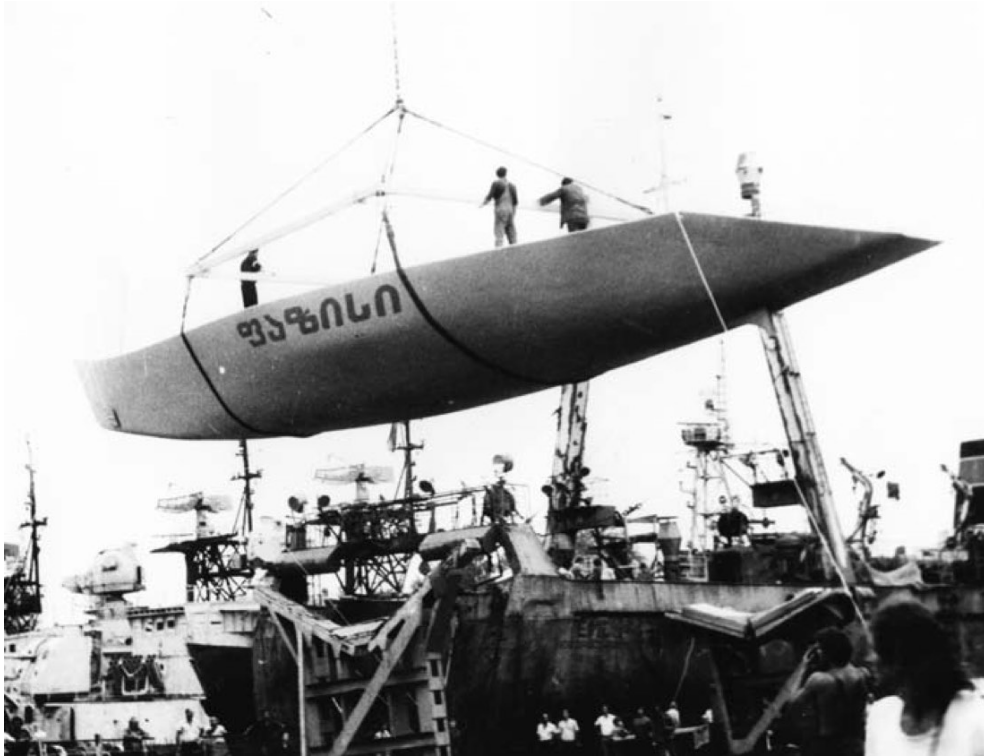


We keep getting closer to the launch. To the right of Alexei (standing side-on to us) – Juki Tsomaya. Behind Juki you can see Valera Safiullin.

FAZ-05-179

Second from Alexei's left – the hull welding shop's production engineer.

FAZ-05-180



We arrived at the spot. The plate hung at the bow – a special device for breaking the champagne bottle successfully. So as not to damage the hull itself. The "device" worked very reliably!

FAZ-05-181



A little longer – and the yacht will meet her element for the first time!

FAZ-05-182

At last the boat reached the launching area. Everything was ready, the slings passed, the hook made fast... And we waited for Vladislav. The

launch was set for twelve. The time comes, and he is not there and not there. And no knowing when he will come. There were no mobile phones then, naturally.

FAZ-05-183

We waited about an hour. In the end Alexei took the decision to start the launch without Vlad. The crane lowered the boat almost to touching the water and Eliso – Nodari's wife, broke the bottle of champagne against the plate fixed to the stem. After that the boat was lowered right down onto the water and she rocked freely on the small ripple.

FAZ-05-184



The bottle of champagne is already in Eliso's hands!

FAZ-05-185



This is the moment! We had been going towards it for eight months!

FAZ-05-186

The first minutes on the water.

FAZ-05-187

It was a wonderful moment for everyone there, and for us – all the more so! We all jumped down onto the deck and started going over the boat from the inside – checking whether there was a leak anywhere. Everything was perfect! After that – we just stood on deck, laughing, joking, talking about something or other... It was our day!

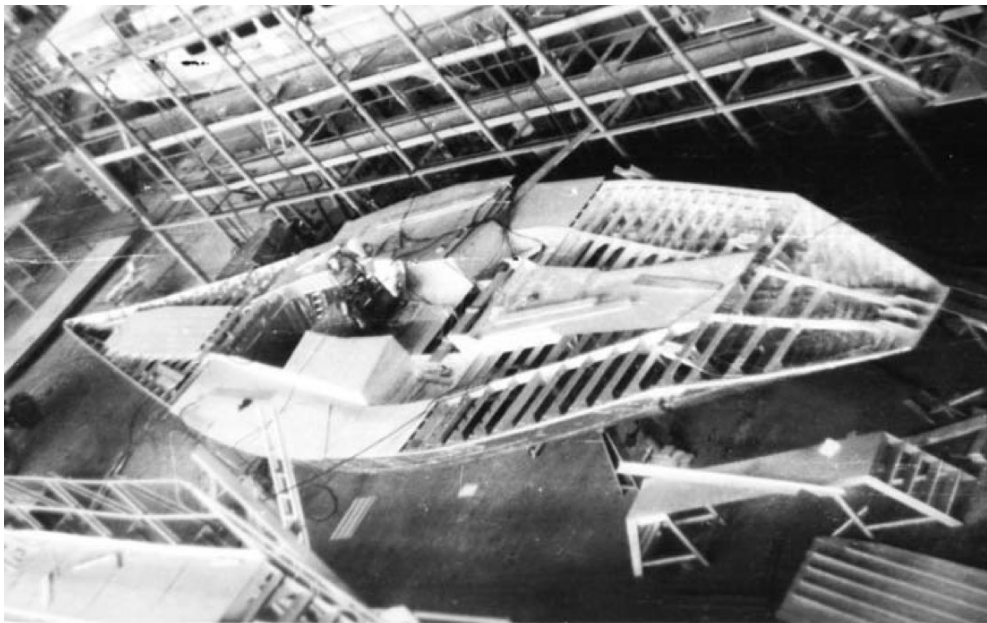
FAZ-05-188

About 40 minutes after the launch Vladislav arrived. Where he had been held up – I do not know. But he was of course upset that he had not been there for the very first (and the most real!) christening of the yacht. Lyosha managed to calm him down somehow all the same. In the end Vlad started smiling and congratulating everyone on the successful launch of the yacht. After all, for him too it was a historic moment – the first result of his many years of work and striving!

FAZ-05-189

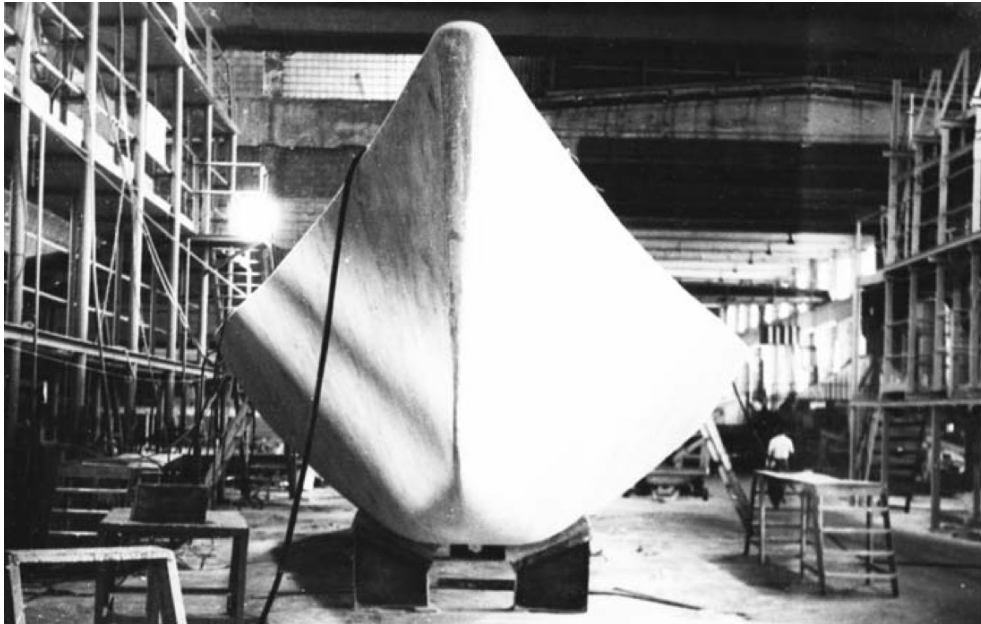
After a while the yacht was lifted out of the water and set on a barge. To be taken out in the morning to the water of the passenger port, where the official ceremony was to be held. It was already the end of the day and we all went off to our rooms, knowing that tomorrow we would not have to jump up early in the morning and go to the shop. Instead a grand celebration was waiting for us!

FAZ-05-190



THE MAKING OF THE YACHT FAZISI





THE MAKING OF THE YACHT FAZISI





The Launching

port. By that time they had already put up the stands, the microphones, posters about the coming race and the rest of the trappings. In the harbour itself two Olympic-class dinghies were parading about, as if waiting for their younger but bigger brother.

FAZ-06-001

People came in from all over the town and very soon the whole square was packed solid. Everyone was waiting for the coming ceremony of the launching of the superyacht. And then the barge with the yacht standing on it appeared in front of the crowd. On the side of the yacht the name *Fazisi* was written in blue letters, in Georgian. Two men were standing on deck – Zhenya Platon and Volodya Kulinichenko. They were acting as riggers – they had to make the lifting slings fast to the crane hook. They were dressed in orange overalls, which stood out brightly against the yacht. It all looked very well organised.

FAZ-06-002

As usual at ceremonies like this – first there were long speeches. Viktor Tikhov spoke, Vladislav, Alexei said a couple of words and Skip Novak too. Speakers are often ignored, but the sight of the yacht ready for launching drew attention to the speakers themselves whether you liked it or not. On top of that, credit where it is due – they did not abuse the patience of the assembled public too much.

FAZ-06-003

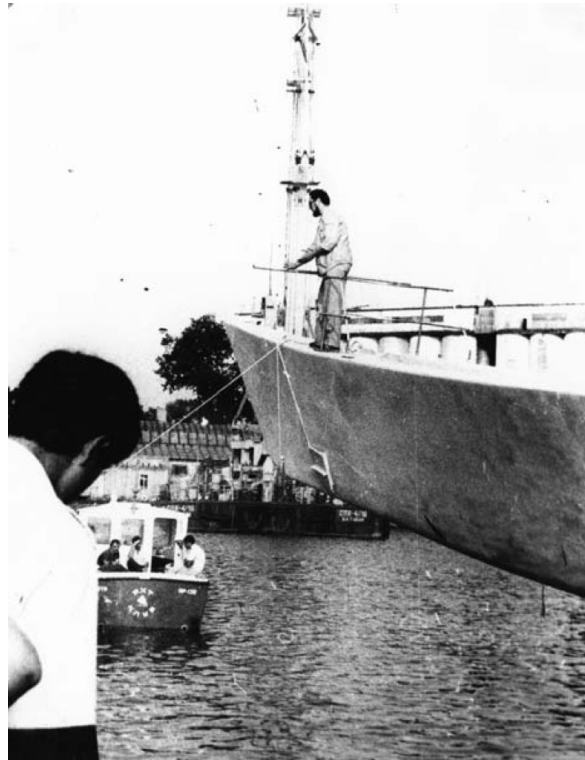


The yacht appears before the people of the town of Poti. On deck, on the left – Volodya Kulinichenko. On the right – Zhenya Platon.

FAZ-06-004



THE MAKING OF THE YACHT FAZISI



A few minutes before the yacht's next christening. At the microphone – Alexei Grischenko. As you can see in the photograph – the christening ceremony did not go unnoticed. The crowd in the square – nowhere for an apple to fall!

FAZ-06-005

Not one event took place without Pepsi-Cola advertising.

FAZ-06-006



The bottle of champagne is ready for use!

FAZ-06-007

When the speeches were over, the floating crane took the yacht off the barge and lowered her smoothly almost to touching the water. Then Nana Alexandria, the well-known Georgian chess player, exactly as Eliso had done the day before her, broke a bottle of champagne against the boat's stem and the yacht was lowered onto the water. Everyone there burst into loud applause, very nearly turning into an ovation!

FAZ-06-008

They gathered us all on the deck of the yacht and photographed us a countless number of times from every possible angle. There was no way at all we could complain about a lack of press attention!

FAZ-06-009



A happy Zhenya Platon strides along the deck! The christening of the yacht went off successfully!

FAZ-06-010



After the launching of the yacht. Left to right: Rami Leibovich, Nodari Teneishvili, Vitya Yazykov, Igor Mironenko, Volodya Musatov, Alexei Drosdovsky, Sergei Stanetsky.

FAZ-06-011

One more photograph of the team. Left to right: Edgar Terekhin, Zhenya Platon, Vitya Yazykov, Igor Mironenko, Alexei Drosdovsky, Sasha from Leningrad, Yura Doroshenko, Rami Leibovich, Nodari Teneishvili, Sergei Stanetsky, Alexei Grischenko, Volodya Musatov, Skip Novak.

FAZ-06-012

The celebration went on right through to the evening. A stage had been set up on the square in front of the sea terminal, and performers showed their art on it. Flags were flying, posters... In the sea terminal building the restaurant was pressed into service for receiving the guests. There was plenty of everything, the smiles did not leave our faces! The next day the yacht went back to the shop again. There was a week left before the boat was to be sent off by aeroplane. And we used that time to finish as much of the work on the boat as we could. But we were working in a more human regime by now. There was no need to give everything we had for 12 hours a day. What we could do before leaving Poti – fitted comfortably into a normal working day. And even quicker. So we had time to rest a little, to have lunch and supper without hurrying, to listen to music, to drink some wine... To relax, in a word. For music we had a cassette of a concert by Alexander Rozenbaum, which we listened to endlessly. To such a degree that even now many verses from those songs are remembered by heart!

FAZ-06-013

Of the big jobs, we had to make a cradle for moving the yacht to the aeroplane and to prepare two 40-foot containers with various loads for sending to England. The cradles were designed by the yard's technical department and the yard men made them as well. Which was a good help to us. Valera Safiullin in particular handled preparing the containers. He had experience of working with container shipments – so he took that question on. Together with Tolya Verba.

FAZ-06-014

Besides all the gear that had come to Poti but was to be fitted in England – into the containers we put the whole of the internal ballast (about five tonnes), aluminium sections and sheet aluminium for unforeseen jobs, a couple of air-powered cut-off saws, some of our personal things (but not much) and a whole storehouse of food – dry-cured sausage, tinned goods (plenty of sprats, as it happens), chocolate, brandy and vodka, wine. Anyway, one container had a very attractive content. There was probably about a tonne of good things in there. It was being taken to be used in England, to save on buying food. And for official entertaining as well.

FAZ-06-015

And then on 7 July the boat was taken out of the shop for the last time. Early in the morning we loaded her onto the floating crane and a tug towed the crane with our boat on it towards Sukhumi. There we were to transfer

the boat onto a semitrailer and take her to the airport. Where she would be loaded into the aeroplane. Together with the containers, which set off for Sukhumi by road. When the crane with the boat had gone – we had almost a whole day to ourselves. Some went to the beach, some into town... Our wives had come out to a lot of us, a couple of days before the launching of the boat – so we spent the time with our families. We went into the shop several times – to have one more look at the place, empty now for ever, where we had spent so many days...

FAZ-06-016

In the evening the yard administration laid on a farewell supper for us in the yard canteen. All the workers of the hull shop who had helped us all these months were invited, and the technical department staff and men from the other shops too. Vakhtang was there and Aunt Anya and Shura Dorgobetov, Mimoza the crane driver (Valerka was in love with her), Volodya Ches, Tolya "Zmey Gorynych" and many others.

FAZ-06-017

There were, naturally, representatives of the administration, including the yard director. We were glad to see them all together and beside us. The tables were laid richly, and on top of that Nodari had brought a jerry can of wine.

FAZ-06-018

So there were no "dry" toasts.

FAZ-06-019

But for our part we made an annoying slip.

FAZ-06-020

In the run of toasts and good wishes not one of us said "thank you" to the yard workers themselves. So Vakhtang decided to put that omission right himself. He stood up and, as if on our behalf, thanked all the yard men who had taken part in building the yacht, and did it beautifully. We felt awkward that we had not had the sense to speak that way ourselves. But our applause was the most sincere there was. Thanks to Vakhtang – he saved the situation!

FAZ-06-021

The next day we all got into the bus and went to Sukhumi. We got out on the beach and settled down to wait for our convoy to arrive. Before long it came up and we set about unloading the boat and transferring her onto the semitrailer.

FAZ-06-022



While we wait for our convoy to arrive we are devouring some local fruit or other. Left to right: Gena Korolkov, Sasha from Leningrad, the crane driver, Igor Mironenko, Sergei Stanetsky, Vitya Yazykov. Volodya from Feodosia is walking over to us from the car. This photograph and all the ones that follow in this series were taken on 8 July 1989.

FAZ-06-023



THE LAUNCHING



And here is our floating crane!

FAZ-06-024



Helping to moor the floating crane to the bank.

FAZ-06-025

First in the chain – Nodari Teneishvili.

FAZ-06-026



A little longer – and the yacht's first sea passage will be finished.

FAZ-06-027

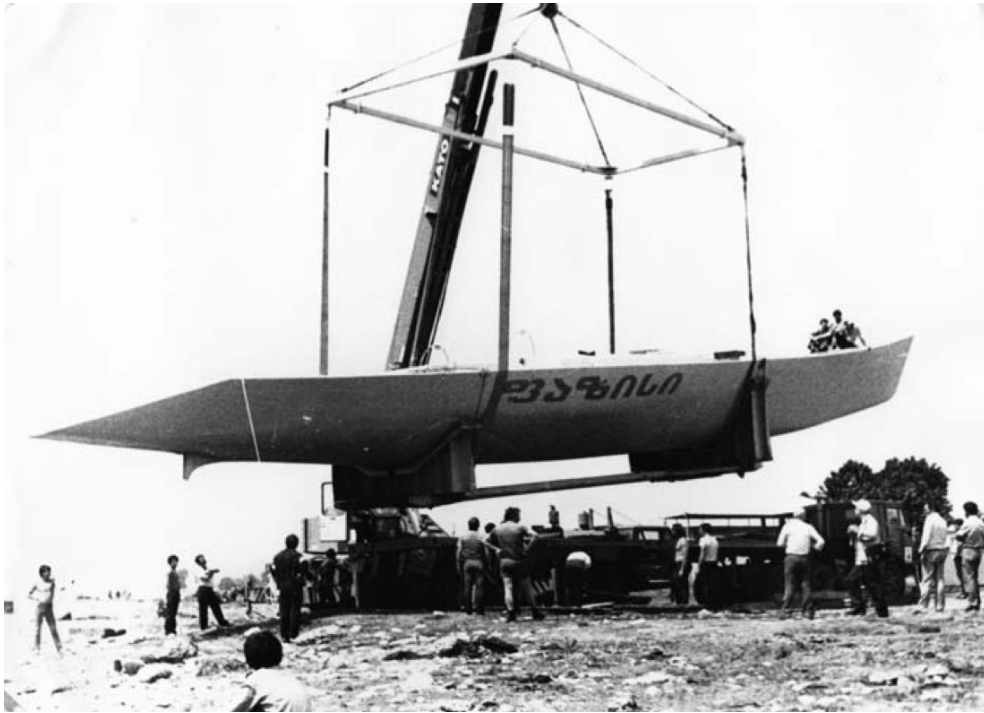
The yacht on the shore. Vakhtang has come to see how we are getting on?

FAZ-06-028

The floating crane set the boat down almost at the very edge of the water. It could not reach any further. So we used one more crane – a powerful Kato. With its help we moved the boat several times, closer to the road. After that they brought up the semitrailer and we loaded the boat onto it. There was no shortage of men wanting to ride on the deck of the boat. We all clambered up onto her, except our wives, who were with us too. They followed behind us in the bus. Ira (my wife) – had a camera. So I still have a small collection of photographs from that period of time.

FAZ-06-029

THE LAUNCHING



We are moving the yacht closer to the trailer. Alexei is discussing something with the crane driver.

FAZ-06-030



The yacht is almost on the trailer now...

FAZ-06-031



We got to the airport without incident. But there it turned out that our load would not go through the airport gates. We had to drive right round the airfield and unload the boat over the airport fence. We managed it fairly quickly and before long the yacht, together with the two 40-foot containers, was standing not far from the runway where the *Ruslan* was to land.

FAZ-06-032

We have arrived at the unloading point...

FAZ-06-033

Just to get the yacht over the airport fence – and that is it for today.

FAZ-06-034

Before long the aeroplane arrived and taxied over to our spot. We were all keen to go aboard the aeroplane and the crew allowed us to do it. While they were getting acquainted with our load – we were studying the aeroplane. When will a chance like that come again – to go aboard the biggest aeroplane in the world (at that time)? And to walk about it without any restrictions? For all of us it was a very interesting event!

FAZ-06-035

The aircraft crew looked over our boat and said they would think about how to secure her on board. They also said there was no need for us to stay at the airport. They would let us know when they were ready. So we got into the bus and went back to Poti, to wait for the call from the aircraft crew. Only Alexei went off to make out the shipping documents and to meet some management or other. He got back in the evening. For his return we laid on a perfectly decent supper. We sat a while at a well-laid table, but we did not sit over it very long. After all, in the morning we had to go to Sukhumi again. In the morning Alexei told us that we were flying out today. The aircraft crew had done the loading of the yacht and the contain-

ers themselves, and the aeroplane was completely ready to fly to Kiev. For us that was a complete surprise. We had thought we would be another day at least fussing with securing the load in the aeroplane. And here was news as good as this.

FAZ-06-036

It did not take us long to pack. We said goodbye to the *profilaktoriy* staff, wished them all the best, thanked them for the care they had surrounded us with all these months. Then we got into the bus and with a small feeling of sadness drove past the yard shops we knew so well for the last time. The Poti stage of our round-the-world race was over. Goodbye, Poti! You were a hospitable town! England was waiting ahead of us.

FAZ-06-037

Hamble. July–August 1989.

FAZ-06-038

The departure from Sukhumi went off without any delays. Coming aboard the aeroplane, all we could do was admire – how neatly and professionally the aircraft crew had secured both the yacht and the two containers. The lads had done a very good job! The An-124 *Ruslan* – a two-deck aeroplane. The lower deck – for cargo. The upper – meant for personnel. The aeroplane was built to a Ministry of Defence order, naturally.

FAZ-06-039

So everything was aimed at minimum comfort – maximum capacity. The seats were ordinary aluminium benches. There were practically no windows. So that nobody would peep out – to see where we were flying!

FAZ-06-040

There was room to spare for our whole company. And soon after take-off we stretched out on the floor – some here, some there. It was about an hour and a half to fly to Kiev.

FAZ-06-041

Before long we landed at Borispol airport. The Moscow flight was planned for the next day. Those who lived in Kiev – went off to their families instantly. And the rest of the lads were put up in a hotel or stayed with friends. Lyosha went off to his wife Lena, I went to my parents. Zhenya went tearing off home as well.

FAZ-06-042

I wanted to drop into the yacht club as well, but clearly there was no time. So I spent the rest of the day and the evening with my family.

FAZ-06-043

The next day we were at the airport again. The flight first to Moscow, to get all the necessary foreign travel documents, and then – to London, Heathrow airport. Not many people saw us off in Kiev. Only our wives – those of us who lived in Kiev. So the parting was a short one.

FAZ-06-044

Having landed in Moscow we all got off the aeroplane and moved into the waiting hall. I think it was even some sort of separate hall, for the crews and passengers of special flights. We had to spend very nearly two days in that hall, waiting for all the formalities to be settled. We slept in

the aeroplane, sipping Georgian wine and eating something with it from the delicacies we had put by. But at last it was all settled and we could fly!

FAZ-06-045

Gena Korolkov and I asked the aircraft captain – could we settle ourselves in the crew cabin? Having got the go-ahead, we ran off there straight away. The crew cabin was a great deal more comfortable than the common deck, plus the chance to be in the pilots' cockpit during the flight. A chance like that never comes up at all.

FAZ-06-046

So Genka and I were in real luck!

FAZ-06-047

Besides simply an interesting flight, we also got a piece of the Aeroflot service for crews flying an international route. Which was a set of delicacies, including black caviar. In those days international flights were a rarity. So the provisioning of aircraft crews was quite out of the ordinary. And so we got a small share of that magnificence too.

FAZ-06-048

It is three hours' flying to London. When we had gained height, the captain switched on the autopilot and left his seat. So Gena and I took turns "driving" the aeroplane in the captain's place. The crew told us everything willingly. And we told them about our business. Anyway – the flight was very absorbing!

FAZ-06-049

We flew out of Moscow at three in the afternoon. And we landed in London at three in the afternoon. That is because we were flying from east to west. So here too we contrived to save three hours.

FAZ-06-050

Straight after the landing we were handed out T-shirts and caps with the Pepsi-Cola markings. We put them on at once, so as to look like a single team with a massive sponsor behind it. The matching posters appeared as well, and we fixed them to the sides of the yacht. Anyway – the first impression we made on the reporters there was a very good one.

FAZ-06-051

I should say here that nothing appeared at the wave of a magic wand. Behind this whole campaign and its apparent ease stood enormous and painstaking work by Skip Novak and by Vladislav and by many, many people. Skip Novak set out his own version of what was happening in reasonable detail in his book, which he brought out as soon as the round-the-world race was over. In several chapters he describes what had to be gone through and lived through so that the project would not go to the bottom because of financial difficulties. I, for my part, want only to tell about the crew itself, about how we brought the boat up to the start. But I ask readers not to forget for a minute that behind all our work there was another, parallel piece of work going on, providing for the project financially. We, the ones who built the boat, often did not even know all the details of that work. So I ask my readers to remember that!

FAZ-06-052



We have arrived at Heathrow.

FAZ-06-053

Soon a big semitrailer and a crane came up. The boat was set on the trailer and we drove off in the direction of Southampton, not far from Hamble marina, to drop the boat into the water there and reach the marina itself by river. Our yacht was over size for English roads.

FAZ-06-054

We were put up in the hostel of one of the local universities. On the way there – we made a short stop at the Sheraton hotel, where they treated us to beer and sandwiches. But English hospitality – that is not Georgian hospitality. Here you have to pay for hospitality. And in our pockets we had less than ten roubles even. You were not allowed to take more. And as for pounds – we had not so much as heard of them!

FAZ-06-055

Anyway – the hotel staff covered that bill out of their own wallets. All we could say to them was thank you. Having had a bite – we set off on our way again. My first impression of England was – how sharp everything looks. The roads are marked out with reflective elements. In a car's headlights they lit up so that you could see every detail of the road. All the houses, the fences round them, the lawns, the parks – everything had a sharp outline. There was none of a collapsed shed standing here and there, or a road full of holes and potholes... Everything level and clean. For me it was the first trip abroad – that is why these impressions stayed with me somehow. We got to our new lodgings and settled into our rooms.

FAZ-06-056

Each of us was given a separate one. Yes, this was not the *profilaktoriy* in Poti! Everything around gladdened the eye with cleanliness and tidiness. And there were no mosquitoes! In Poti they had been eating us alive!

FAZ-06-057

Having rested after the flight, we set out early in the morning for the boat. To drop her into the water and tow her to Hamble, where we were to bring her finally up to racing condition. The passage went well. We all sat on the boat and looked at the world around us. And the local people looked at us and could not make it out – what is that thing moving along the river there? At the marina they lifted the boat out onto the bank, secured her and we started settling in. Our two containers arrived there as well. Besides that – there was one more container, set up as an office. So the start we had made was not a bad one.

FAZ-06-058

Skip introduced us to three local people who had been hired by the Fazis company to help us. This was Monica Tingey – she handled the secretarial work and the organisation of our team as far as what, where and when went. The other two – Jim Saunders and Hamish Laird – a friend of Skip's from his Antarctic expeditions. Jim and Hamish handled the buying of everything we needed for the boat.

FAZ-06-059

The first-priority job was, of course, to bring the boat's hull to a decent appearance. To start with Skip hired some people or other who in theory were supposed to be "professionals".

FAZ-06-060

But very soon he sacked them, with a row. That gang was distinguished by professional incompetence and foot-dragging. Beyond that – nothing. Fortunately – a small private boat-finishing company turned out to be close by and free. Before long they were already working on our boat. Ian Armstrong ran that small gang. Ian quickly organised a work schedule that took in not only his own men but most of our crew as well. To start with – Ian and his team industriously stripped off the fairing compound we had put on. Practically down to bare hull. I am not entirely sure – whether there was really such a need for it, but there was no arguing. Told to strip it – we stripped it. When that process was finished – that was when we finally saw what

FAZ-06-061

modern materials in yacht building really are!

FAZ-06-062

The fairing compound Ian's gang used was light and it set almost instantly. It went on in a thick coat straight away, so there was no fiddling about with intermediate fairing. And it did not run at all! The way you laid it on the hull – that was the way it stayed. It is another matter that in places we had to lay it on up to 25 millimetres thick. To hold the shape of the hull lines at the measurement stations. The design of the yacht was very innovative (let us put it that way) and the tolerances for deviation from the lines plan were extremely small. And that means that when the hull was measured we could miss the rating. Residual distortion from

welding of course did occur. Avoiding it was simply impossible. And so as not to land in an awkward position at the measurement – we had to lay on extra fairing compound. Places like that were mostly amidships. Towards the bow and the stern the hull looked more respectable. Fairing it there took far less effort. Of course, this whole procedure added weight to the boat's overall displacement, but there was nothing to be done about it. All that was left was to hope for luck, that the boat would measure in. Though we were not yet worrying about that very much. We dealt with problems as they came up. And there were more than enough problems for every day! I should say here that the rating situation had been worrying us back in Poti. Both Alexei and Zhenya Platon were very well up in measuring boats under IOR – the rating rule in use in those years. Zhenya had actually written a special program for calculating the rating by entering the boat's parameters into a computer. And he offered to run that analysis. He had used that program when he optimised the rating for the boat he raced on in the Black Sea Cup. His boat took second place that time, and a rival's boat, which also used Zhenya's program – first. But Vladislav for some reason was cool about the offer. And now here we were working somewhat by guesswork.

FAZ-06-063

I also want to say that fairing aluminium hulls with fairing compound is nothing out of the ordinary. It is – normal practice. A few years after the Whitbread I worked at a yard in Florida. We were repairing a large aluminium motor yacht. There was certainly no economising on hull weight there – that is for sure! The aluminium was of solid thickness everywhere. And even so I saw fairing compound up to an inch thick on her topsides. So the design miscalculation over the fairing compound has to be put down as well to none of us having any experience of building aluminium yachts. After all the fairing work was finished – we had to sand off the high spots and get the hull ready for painting. The rough sanding work was done quite marvellously. Round the boat they put up something like a grandstand – with the seats facing the boat. Then Ian took a plastic tube about 5 metres long and fixed a strip of abrasive paper to it with double-sided tape. Each of us stood on his own "grandstand". All together we held the plastic tube, pressing it against the hull more or less diagonally. On Ian's word we would start moving along the boat on the "grandstand".

FAZ-06-064

So – each of us worked the section right in front of him. The boat was heeled over to make it easier. When we had done one side – the boat was heeled the other way and the whole procedure was repeated on the other side. That took two days or so, no more (let me remind you that in Poti we

spent a month on this "sanding", if not longer!) Then the last small finishing jobs were done and a thin coat of primer filler was put on. Which also had to be sanded. After that – the hull was sprayed with primer. That operation, and the final painting that followed, were done by Ian and his gang.

FAZ-06-065

The whole procedure, including painting the hull and the deck, took about two weeks, if not less. We could only admire the efficiency with which it was all done. We did not fair the deck – there was no need. We simply painted it light grey with a non-skid additive. Which was table salt. In time it dissolved and the deck became less rough. But to start with – if you slipped by accident you would take the skin off up to your ears – that was how sharp the surface was.

FAZ-06-066

Two weeks after we arrived in Hamble the hull of the yacht was finally ready for the keel, the rudder, the diesel generator, the deck gear and everything else to be fitted. Again we split up by areas of work. Sergei Stanetsky, Volodya Musatov and Tolya Verba – took the electrics and the electronics. Now Phil had a full load too – all the work on the hull was finished – nothing was in the way. Yura Doroshenko, Oleg Belomytsev and Vitya Kamkin were finishing the installation of the galley, the heads and the diesel generator. Valera Safiullin and Volodya Kulinichenko – took the sails. Vitya Yazykov and Edgar Terekhin – the mast, which was due to arrive at any moment. Gena Korolkov helped me and Zhenya to install the deck gear. Rami, Nodari and Juki (he had flown to England as well) – took the general ship's work. Anyway – everyone had a specific job. And in all that bustle it was Alexei who had the hardest time.

FAZ-06-067

Lyosha, as skipper, spent practically all his time in the office.

FAZ-06-068

Together with Vladislav, Skip and Monica Tingey, who was our secretary and our shore manager for everyday matters. For days on end he was a witness to negotiations and conversations of some sort, but had not the slightest chance of taking part in them himself. After all, it was all in English.

FAZ-06-069

Vlad translated the substance of the talks for him, but that is far from a simple job! And there is not always time for it. You have to react to a situation quickly. So the translation often came after the fact, so to speak. Anyway, the situation Alexei found himself in was simply dreadful! To be the formal leader and have no information about what is going on – I do not know how even to describe it. After all, if in Poti we always went to Lyosha for the final word on this or that question, now – we mostly went to Skip. Or to Vlad. I actually dealt more with Jim, because I was ordering all sorts of fastenings for the deck gear through him. And so, willy-nilly,

Lyosha was left somewhat to one side. For Alexei it was a cruel time. Again – with the English language Lyosha had not moved a millimetre. He still did not know practically a single word. Well, he had picked up a bit, of course, but it was all at the hello-goodbye level. And communicating by gesture and expression – that he could not do. Incidentally, that sort of communication is – a talent too, of a kind. I have watched people like that twice. The first – is Juki. It did not bother him in the least that his English was – about what Russian is to an Englishman. He could always find a common language with whoever he was talking to. And after that – it is easier. And by the fourth leg of the race, in New Zealand, he could already put his thought across to an English-speaking listener quite successfully. And the second time – is a friend of mine from the Kiev Cruising Yacht Club, with whom I sailed from Australia on *Gonta*. But that is quite another story. For all the rest of us (apart from Zhenya and Sergei) – the English language was a problem too. After all, when you are talking to a man face to face, you are not going to look in a dictionary every second. Since everyone had a specific job on the boat, each of us, before putting some question to Skip, Jim or Hamish – would work the subject up beforehand by writing out the words he needed. And then, with that set – he would start a "business" conversation. In my pocket notebook all those first words are still written down. There you have "screw", and "nut", and "washer", and a lot of other technical terms besides that are missing from an ordinary phrase-book. To start with, before going to Jim, I would pester Zhenka for the translation of this or that term. But he got fed up with it too – translating for everybody. So I asked Hamish and he bought me a small dictionary. And that is what I used. The rest of the crew solved the problem of talking to people in roughly the same way. And little by little the level of language among most of the lads improved. And Alexei, being responsible for everything and for nothing in particular – could not concentrate on anything. That is why morally and emotionally he had the hardest time of all. We knew all the jobs by heart. Nobody had to be chased along. If anything it was the other way round – the man responsible for this or that area did not want anybody else interfering in his work. Unless he asked for help himself. But that happened very rarely. Every man was diligent, resourceful and single-minded in carrying out the work he was given. That is why we were able to do what we did. The locals about the marina could only wonder at our capacity for work. And they admired it! Add to that the fact that most of the English had only seen Russians on television, and then – marching in military parades. And here – a completely different picture! By

that time we had already moved into a seamen's hotel in Southampton. Of course, the university hall of residence was cosier, but it was somewhat further away and, most important of all – the students were due to arrive there by August. Anyway, we had to move out. In the seamen's hotel we settled in two to a room.

FAZ-06-070

Only Zhenka grabbed a single room. We used to gather at his place for that. To discuss something, or to mark something when the occasion arose. Though occasions for "marking" – you could count them on one hand...

FAZ-06-071

I shared a room with Alexei. As far as possible I tried to get him out of the room, at least to go downstairs, sit in the bar in the evening and have a glass of beer. But more and more often he refused these cultural outings. Pleading tiredness, being busy, something else... But more often tiredness, of course.

FAZ-06-072

Our daily life as such was fairly simple. In the morning we had breakfast at the hotel (that was included in the services the hotel provided). Then we would gather in the lobby and drive to Hamble. We got there by eight in the morning. We had two minibuses. Zhenya drove one of them. The other – Valera Safiullin. Most of us either had no driving licence at all, or had a licence but no driving practice. But Zhenya and Valera managed the driving with pleasure.

FAZ-06-073

At midday we would gather in the Steinlager tent – a stall set up by enterprising New Zealanders right inside the marina. The meal itself (lunch) was paid for by Fazis, but a pint of beer with it – that was your own money!

FAZ-06-074

Zhenya and I decided that one day he would buy the beer for the two of us, and the next – I would. So every second day I had real practice in the English language. You do want a beer! And every other day – I got my beer "free". A pint of beer cost two pounds. Sometimes I even found a coin like that lying right inside the marina. Which brightened the budget a little. Plus – blackberries grew everywhere round about and after lunch we would go and pick them.

FAZ-06-075

The question – where did we get the money even for small expenses like that? In the very first week after we arrived in Hamble, at one of the meetings, Skip handed out 20 pounds to everyone and said that we would be getting the same amount once a week. As far as I know – he paid that out of his own pocket. Fazis reimbursed him, but that was later. And for the moment – he simply supported us as best he could. It was on those 20 pounds a week that we "lived in style"! Until Valera Chumakov started pay-

ing us a little money out of the company's budget. But money for the whole project was a constant squeeze!

FAZ-06-076

We organised supper by our containers, right there in the marina. Actually not "we", but Alexei Drosdovsky. He is a doctor by profession, worked in Afghanistan for two years. From Odessa. He came into our crew because under the conditions of the race a qualified doctor was required on board the boat. And Skip insisted on having a doctor on board as well. I think Volodya Forvarchuk recommended Alexei as a knowledgeable doctor and a yachtsman. But the condition was that the doctor would double as cook.

FAZ-06-077

But here there was a hitch. As a doctor Alexei may well have been good. Fortunately, we never had occasion to test his talents in that field. He was a decent yachtsman too. In any case – on deck he did not lose his head when he had to act. But as a cook – he was useless. He could not stand the job. And he carried out his duties in a slapdash way. I even heard a story that he once went to the shop with one of our lads. For food for the evening meal. He picked out some sausages for the evening. He is buying a whole batch, and the shop owner asks: "How many dogs have you got?" And Alexei answers: "Sixteen"! It turned out he was about to buy a batch of sausages for dogs! What a hound! And most often we brightened our evenings with tea, tinned sprats and dry sausage. Had we carted all that from Poti for nothing? Anyway, in England we ate a very "healthy" diet... After the final painting of the hull, the yacht was taken out into the open air. She looked – like a new toy! Now we had to fit the keel and the rudder – and she could go into the water. The mast too was due to arrive at any moment and Vitya Yazykov together with Edgar Terekhin were waiting for the time when they could get to work on it.

FAZ-06-078

We were in a hurry (as usual), because the launch of the yacht was planned for 2 August. Reporters, various guests of the first rank and even local performers who knew Soviet songs and dances were being invited for that date. In short – a fine celebration was being got ready.

FAZ-06-079

Zhenya and I took on the fitting of the keel and the rudder. We started with the keel – it had arrived in Hamble a few days before. When we all saw it for the first time, we doubted that a keel like that was enough for our boat. The side profile looked good, but the cross section was somewhere around 150 millimetres! And that with the whole structure about 4 metres long!

FAZ-06-080

The impression was that we were looking at a table knife. Narrow, long and thin.

FAZ-06-081

But there was no time for giving way to doubts and discussion.

FAZ-06-082

And what could that discussion have changed anyway? So we set about fitting this keel – as it was. Technically – it is not a difficult job. We had experience of fitting keels – had we built all those yachts at the Kiev Cruising Yacht Club for nothing? The only difficulty (a relative one) – was drilling the holes for the keel bolts in an aluminium plate 30 millimetres thick. We had to drill from underneath upwards, and the drill diameter was some 35 millimetres. The drills we had brought with us – would not take bits like that. So we borrowed a massive drill in the marina, one that would wind the two of us round with it when the bit sometimes grabbed on its way out of the hole. But on the whole we managed it in a day. We fitted the keel, pulled up all the bolts, faired the join between the keel and the hull – it all looked as if it had stood there all its life!

FAZ-06-083

There were no problems at all with fitting the rudder. All the work of welding in the rudder-stock bearing housings had been done very neatly back in Poti. So assembling the whole steering gear went like clockwork.

FAZ-06-084



Not long before the launch of the yacht at Hamble. The keel and rudder already fitted.

FAZ-06-085

After the keel and the rudder – back we went to work on deck and below deck. We still had to fit the halyard turning blocks, the rope clutches and the padeyes, and prepare the boat for the mast to be stepped (and that means – sorting out the hydraulic mast jack for tuning it, to begin with, and preparing the opening in the cabin top for the mast). Coupling all the coffee grinders with shafts under the deck and connecting them to the sheet winches... I think listing every item would take at least a page. Now add to this that the time left before the start was – one month!

FAZ-06-086

We all worked – like men possessed. And we avoided pulling a mate off his own job to ask for help. Only – in the very last resort! And if the case was not a last resort – then you jolly well did it all yourself and did not get in your mate's way. One day I witnessed a scene like this: Tolya Verba was connecting up the steering cables inside the boat. And he needed something out of the container. He did not feel like going to the container – that meant climbing down and so on... He put his head out on deck – to see who could be pressed into a trip? And on deck at that moment were Zhenya, Vitya Kamkin, me and somebody else. And all of them busy – no heads coming up. He looked us over and pronounces: "Bloody hell, on deck – nothing but bastards, nobody even to send to the container!" He knows that with us – where you sit down is where you get off. And not out of spite, but all because of being flat out. Just then Yura Doroshenko stuck his head out of the hatch. He was busy securing the internal ballast. He had heard Tolya's tirade, naturally.

FAZ-06-087

Tolya says to him: "Yura – nip over to the container, bring such and such." And Yura says to him: "Well, Anatoly Yakovlevich – you do not even count me as a bastard any more!" We all just fell about laughing! Tolya had to go to the container himself...

FAZ-06-088

A pity Tolya is no longer with us. He would be laughing along with us now...

FAZ-06-089



The Passage to England

for the launch. The mast was still not finally ready, but the management decided not to wait for it to be stepped. Too many different people were involved in the coming launch and putting it off was impossible. The launching ceremony went off without a hitch and was laid on lavishly. There was no shortage of reporters, and just as little shortage of party food. The boat and the crew – everyone was wearing Pepsi markings – wherever you cast an eye. Even the christening of the boat (another one) was done not with champagne but with a bottle of Pepsi-Cola. The sponsor was simply obliged to be pleased with our efforts!

FAZ-07-001

After the boat was launched – Alexei Grischenko and Skip Novak took up position on the stern – each holding the flag of his own country.

FAZ-07-002

We all stood behind their backs. The still cameras clicked without stopping. And the video cameras rolled just as steadily. But if you look closely at the expressions on our faces in the photographs from those days – you can see that we were all pretty tired by then. At the launch in Poti we looked happier...

FAZ-07-003

Two days later the mast was fully assembled and stepped in the boat. The first sail was set for 6 August! We went out in the morning with specialists in spars, sails and electronics on board. They had to satisfy themselves that everything worked as it should. Several reporters from various newspapers were also present, so that they would record the historic event. And write about it truthfully, in glowing terms!

FAZ-07-004

A first sail actually (and several of the ones after it too) should be done without outside eyes. All the more so – without eyes that do not understand much about sailing. But we did not have much choice. We had to build the boat and publicise the whole project at the same time. And that is a very risky business. Because on a new boat there is always something not right. And reporters are just waiting for some sort of stuff-up so they can focus on it.

FAZ-07-005

And this time too – we had only just started hoisting the mainsail – it turned out that the boltrope was thicker than the luff groove in the mast. A mistake by the sailmaker. We started setting the jib – the wire part of the jib halyard turned out to be longer than it needed to be. As a result the wire had to be wound onto an aluminium drum. And the anodising on the drums does not like that. The wire stripped a bit of it off. Since these mistakes were the mistakes of Western specialists – indulgence was shown towards them. As if to say, these things happen... But if something did not come off for our team – then obviously, in the eyes of certain members of the press, we were "useless Russians"!

FAZ-07-006

Even so, the first sail went relatively well.

FAZ-07-007

The boat moves, the diesel works, the deck gear too. Since we had not managed to test the sails – we went back to the marina. The mainsail was taken off the boat (about 100 kilograms in weight, as it happens) and carried to the mould loft. Valera Safiullin and Volodya Kulinichenko spent almost the whole night changing the boltrope and by morning the mainsail was ready to hoist. The riggers shortened the wire tails of the halyards so they would not reach the winches. Anyway – by morning we were ready to go out again.

FAZ-07-008

The second sail went better than the first. The mainsail went up, then the jib. We went out into the Needles Channel, where at that time there were yachts – entrants in the Admiral's Cup. We looked very good! We were not in the race, but every yacht that passed greeted us with cheers and waving. We answered the greetings and tried not to get too much in their way. We are not in the race, after all.

FAZ-07-009

A little way down the channel we turned round and, off the wind, set the spinnaker for the first time. With the Pepsi-Cola logo, of course. The boat looked very striking, there is no denying it. I think many of the spectators, both on the water and on shore – could hardly believe that this yacht had been brought to Hamble only about three weeks earlier as a bare hull.

FAZ-07-010

Our victory was obvious!

FAZ-07-011

After the yacht's first successful appearance "in society", the tension eased somewhat. Of course, not for those who were busy finding the money. In that area the passions had just come to the boil. The best thing here is to read the books by Vladislav Murnikov and Skip Novak, to get the measure of all the twists and turns of the sponsorship of our project.

FAZ-07-012

I am only talking about the building of the yacht itself.

FAZ-07-013

And so we had some sort of moral breathing space. We were still working hard on the boat, but she was already a yacht that could go to sea. Now we were improving things and finishing off the necessary parts of the boat properly. And that – is always endless work. A couple of times we were invited to meet the crews of other yachts – entrants in the round-the-world. That was how we came to visit the crews of *Maiden* and *UBF Finland*. The meetings were very interesting and friendly. I remember how at the meeting with the Finns we looked at them as at some sort of giants. All of them – close to two metres tall, and their character is Nordic, steadfast. But drinking – they are no slouches. After several pints – our English was all up to the mark. There were no problems with communication. Skip took us out to his friends in the country once as well. It was an interesting trip. After all, our routes did not vary much. Hotel – marina, marina – hotel.

FAZ-07-014

Just once Zhenya Platon, Vitya Kamkin and I decided to visit the local Tesco shopping centre, to see what it actually was? Yes, it was interesting to see the affordable abundance on the shelves. Given the wholesale absence of everything and anything in the Union. But we did not walk about there with our mouths open. We looked, we bought a bottle of brandy, a pineapple and bananas. With those goods we shut ourselves away in Zhenya's room. And we grabbed a couple of tins of sprats from our container. That was how we marked our visit to the supermarket. There was another funny thing – once, after work, we decided to go out into the town, just to walk around the area. We dragged Alexei along with us so he would not sit in his room on his own.

FAZ-07-015

The four of us – Lyosha, Zhenya, Vitya Kamkin and I – were walking along the street. By the bus stop we stopped and were discussing – where to head next? There was a rubbish bin standing beside us. I happened to glance at it – right on the top lay a five-pound note. I pulled it straight out and say to the lads in surprise: "Look at that – there is money lying about right in the bin! Just pick it up." And they say to me: "Great, you are shouting us a beer. There is a bar – come on, let's go!" I say: "And what makes it my shout?" And they say to me: "We do not find money in bins, after all!" We laughed and went to the bar, of course. Five pounds did not last long. The next sail was a week later. For that one the boat had been better prepared. A week of hard work had not been wasted. But the outing itself came out a mess.

FAZ-07-016

As usual – the boat was packed with outsiders. Nothing could be done about that, unfortunately. The wind this time was quite fresh. We started hoisting the mainsail and something jammed. Either the main halyard car

or something else. We start trying different ways of clearing the fault. We are in a hurry, one thing gets suggested, then another... Everyone is starting to swear already, and the job is not moving. Vitya Yazykov is sitting up the mast in the bosun's chair – barking back at the advisers. Anyway – noise, uproar... During yet another attempt to grind in the main halyard there was a crash and the jib halyard shot up into the sky, tearing out the deck padeye it was made fast to. It turned out by accident that the switch on one of the coffee grinders was set to the jib halyard winch and not the mainsail halyard winch. But all the attention was on the mainsail, naturally. And when six big lads are grinding on one winch – you do not feel the load. Anyway – the halyard flew high, and tore off a spreader fairing on the way as well. And wrapped itself round up there.

FAZ-07-017

The language on deck was – all to the point! The English-speaking guests of course did not understand a bloody thing of the conversations, but they laughed heartily. Nothing pleases the press like other people's troubles. And that day we had more than enough of them. Skip stood silently at the helm. Lyosha could not help with anything either. And Vlad felt out of his element. After all, he was the one who had to listen to all the jibes.

FAZ-07-018

We got on top of the situation somehow, but the mood was no longer the same. We went back to the marina, to lick our wounds. Sensible people took what had happened with understanding. Just breaking in a quarter-tonner – and you will make a pile of mistakes. And here – a maxi. And only the second sail at that, and with a mixed English-Russian crew. But there was no shortage of idiot critics either.

FAZ-07-019

After that Skip started pressing Vlad to take a couple of people into the crew with experience of sailing maxis. Vlad did not resist much. But practically all the experienced yachtsmen were already tied up in the crews of other yachts. Skip suggested to Jim Saunders that he join us. And he wanted to, only his wife was about to give birth. It did not work out for Jim. So for the time being we stayed as we were.

FAZ-07-020

Right, we got through that one too. The next event on the agenda was a trip on the yacht to London. It was not an excursion but a qualifying passage – a compulsory requirement for entrants in the race. And of course – the sponsor's program as well. The departure was set for the following week. Literally on the night before we left, Monica Tingey brought us a set of wet-weather gear with the Pepsi logo. All of it was sorted out at sea.

FAZ-07-021

The passage to London – 400 miles. For us this was the first long passage where we could watch the boat without rushing. And not only the

boat, but the comfort on her, the food, the clothing and much else.

FAZ-07-022

We went out early in the morning. Before long the wind got up and we had to carry reduced sail. But even under moderate canvas the boat was confidently doing 12 knots. Then the gale began to ease. Closer to midday we were already carrying full mainsail and spinnaker. The weather settled cool and sunny. Just wonderful weather!

FAZ-07-023

The boat went easily under sail. A couple of times we surfed down a wave at 16 knots. Skip said that *Drum* – his previous Whitbread boat – could never show that sort of speed in those conditions. All that was very pleasant to hear. Vlad was pleased with what was happening as well. He walked tirelessly from bow to stern and back, looking over the hull, the wave patterns on it and everything else that interests the designer of a boat. We made the first lunch on the yacht. A local girl, Lizzie Wallace-Jones, had bought the food for the passage and packed it up.

FAZ-07-024

At first there was confusion – what was where? Alexei Drosdovsky could not sort out what was in the packets straight away, and Lizzie was seasick and lying in her bunk. But we managed somehow. The second time Vova Musatov took the cooking into his own hands and made a magnificent supper! So it was not a matter of the English language, I think...

FAZ-07-025

There was also a problem we ran into unexpectedly. That is – keel cavitation. Up to then – we had not noticed any vibration on the fin. Because we were sailing short distances. And here on a long passage – as soon as the boat reached 10 knots – the keel started to "sing". And the higher the speed – the stronger it got. And 10 to 12 knots for a maxi – is working speed! The hum in the boat was such that it started to get on our nerves. And on the nuts of the keel bolts. Even wire-locked – they slowly started backing off. I checked them by hand from time to time. Fine, the nuts can be welded up. But what do you do about the vibration?

FAZ-07-026

I asked Jim what he thought about it? He answered:

FAZ-07-027

"Take a tape recorder and record the sound on tape. Then you can sell it as the *Fazisi* song." Jokes are jokes, but we had no answer to that question. We decided we would think of something later. Early in the morning we passed the Thames Barrier and went up the river. One of the main events was *Fazisi* passing under Tower Bridge with the bridge raised. The event was planned for the next day, and for the time being we moored up alongside an old pub, where we had a good breakfast. After that we shifted the boat to another berth. We were all let into the city for practically the whole day. Hamish Laird invited Zhenya and me to go out of town in the evening, to his friends. Which is what we did. And before that – we walked about

London, getting to know its sights. Time flew by. The next day we passed under the raised Tower Bridge, carrying the spinnaker with the Pepsi logo. The view was very beautiful – the photograph was carried in all the main London papers. I should also say that yachts had never passed under

FAZ-07-028

Tower Bridge under sail. And here – such a unique occasion! No sponsor could have dreamed of publicity like that! After passing the bridge we moved to one of the marinas on the Thames, where a champagne reception was laid on in our honour.

FAZ-07-029

It was all very well organised. The press gave us the most flattering reviews. Soon we are at sea again, on the way back to Hamble. The trip back went just as pleasantly as the trip to London. All the boat's systems and equipment worked well, nothing needed changing urgently. We all did a splendid job!

FAZ-07-030

Hamble: Preparing for the Start

sails – we gave press people rides and trained ourselves.

FAZ-08-001

We had one item left on the boat – the in-water measurement for stability. On 24 August, early in the morning, we went out to the place where this measurement was done. It did not take long and a few hours later we were back in the marina.

FAZ-08-002

Before long the results came in. Our keel turned out not heavy enough for the boat and did not give her the required stability!

FAZ-08-003

To come within the rating we needed a keel twice as heavy! Nine days left to the start of the race... Everyone was in a state of shock. Alexei Grischenko actually took to his bunk and spent the whole next day in his room. Where do you find a keel to meet the new requirements? A week before the start? That is already in the realm of fantasy! For the rest of the day we hung about the marina, waiting for some sort of decision. Skip Novak rang everyone he could get through to with the question – did they have a suitable keel? But none of it came to anything. Towards evening it was decided to lift the boat out of the water. The keel had to come off anyway. And after that – we would see how it went.

FAZ-08-004

In the morning Zhenya Platon, Vitya, Yura Doroshenko and I got to the marina ahead of the rest of the crew. Zhenya arranged to have the boat lifted ashore and before long she was standing in the keel blocks. We started slowly undoing the keel bolts. The rest of the lads turned up a little later too. Suddenly we look – Skip is tearing over to us. And he tells us that purely by chance a keel had turned up from *Rothmans* – one of our competitors. Skip had seen the keel being wheeled across the marina on a trolley. To be melted down. *Rothmans* had had a different keel fitted about a month before that. Skip got straight on to Lawrie Smith – the skipper of *Rothmans*, and in the end they sold us that keel at scrap value. Now we had to take our old keel off quickly and even quicker – fit the new one. And then do the measurement again.

FAZ-08-005

But simply to take one fin off and put on another, heavier one – that would be too easy. A change in the ballast weight meant increased loads on the hull structure. And if so – we had to satisfy ABS all over again that the structure was sound. For the preliminary calculations and proposals on strengthening the hull Skip brought in Tony Castro – a local naval architect. Tony had his own company that did this sort of work.

FAZ-08-006

To start with Vladislav Murnikov and Skip drove over to Tony. Before long they came back with preliminary proposals for strengthening the hull structure. When we went through those proposals – we clutched our heads! We had to re-weld almost half the hull! But studying the first proposal in more detail – both Zhenya and I started asking questions – where had this strange information about the strengthening come from? It plainly took no account of certain features of the structure already on the boat. The visit to Tony had to be repeated. Skip and Zhenya went this time. Vlad stayed on the boat.

FAZ-08-007

Before long they came back. Together with an engineer from Tony Castro.

FAZ-08-008

He wanted to see the boat's structure for himself. As it turned out, Vladislav had given Tony early drawings of the boat by mistake, which did not show all the structural assemblies actually on the yacht. Hence such a horrifying proposal for strengthening the structure. When Zhenya looked at the drawings he picked it up straight away and pointed out to Tony the discrepancies between the old drawings and the boat's structure – as she is. After the engineer's visit – a second proposal came from Tony. Under it – we had to weld several reinforcing strips onto the existing frames. Nothing had to be welded on the hull itself. And that means – no need to make good the hull's outside paintwork after welding either. All this changed the whole business!

FAZ-08-009

But easy to say – weld on the missing pieces. The boat, after all, is practically ready to go to sea. That means the whole interior fit-out, the insulation, the bunks, the electrical cables are already installed. And they fall in the area of the proposed welding. As does the structure of the galley. Plus – take out the internal ballast. And that is – several tonnes of lead in pigs. But that is not the main thing. The main thing is the boat is fuelled almost to the brim. And the welding had to be done right in the area of the fuel tanks!

FAZ-08-010

Zhenya and I were taking the old keel off and preparing to fit the new one. The rest of the lads started stripping the boat out inside to get at the frames. On top of that they had to be sanded back so that they could be

welded. You cannot weld over a painted surface. Valera Safiullin and Volodya Kulinichenko set about altering the sails – they had to be cut down to "force" the boat into the required rating. But the most massive job fell to Yura Doroshenko!

FAZ-08-011

He had to drain all the fuel out of the yacht and gas-free the tanks. He organised the drums, hoses and pumps himself. Worked all night. I do not remember exactly whether anyone helped him. I think he did the whole thing on his own. The fact is that the next morning the boat was ready for welding.

FAZ-08-012

The welder we got was a capable one. Skip had found him somewhere. By the end of the day all the required reinforcement was in place. Now the only thing left was fitting the keel. Zhenya and I borrowed a powerful drill again. This time the holes were bigger in diameter and there were more of them. The keel was twice as heavy! But we managed. Though not without effort.

FAZ-08-013

Next morning we sat the boat down on the new keel. All the new holes lined up exactly. And the old ones we simply filled.

FAZ-08-014

They were amply covered by the flange of the new keel.

FAZ-08-015

The flange stuck out of the hull a little, but there was no time to tidy it up. Ian Armstrong filled the projections in quickly and painted it all with antifouling. So the projections did not stand out too much.

FAZ-08-016

Now began the feverish reassembly of everything that had been taken off the boat to get access to the working area. That took another day, if not more. At last – time to go out for the next measurement.

FAZ-08-017

After the in-water measurement and the final calculation our rating came out one hundredth below the maximum rating allowed for maxis. Two days left to the start of the race!

FAZ-08-018

All the boats entered in the coming race – had already gone to Southampton. We were the only ones in the marina. The day before the final measurement a Georgian delegation arrived in Hamble, headed by Viktor Tikhov. We were glad to see Vakhtang Kavtaradze among the guests. But we did not get a proper talk on the first day. Measurement day was full of worries not only about the boat, but about the crew as well. Lyosha decided not to sail the first leg. He seemed completely worn out by the past month and a half. All those upheavals had left an indelible mark on him. The smile had gone from his face, he was constantly worried, sometimes even with obsessive ideas about the boat. And the worst was that we could do little to help him. After all, we were not in much better shape ourselves. The one thing we hoped was that once we got to sea – there would be few-

er worries and Alexei could get back on an even keel. With all that – he both wanted and did not want to sail the first leg. Inner contradictions were tearing him apart. In the end he decided to put off his part in the first leg and join for the second. Vladislav wanted to sail with us in his place. But at the last moment it was all changed round again and Lyosha went with us. And Tikhov gave Vladislav the job of looking for new sponsors. Because Pepsi, after all our efforts – had left us to our fate anyway. And the money only lasted as far as Australia.

FAZ-08-019

Once it became clear that we were starting in the race – the Fazis administration hired a big tent, put up right on the marina grounds, and a celebration dinner was laid out in it. There were not many guests from the other crews, although invitations had been sent out. But a few people came, even so. There was no end of delicacies. That was where we really let ourselves go! And somewhere in the middle of the party Vakhtang drew Lyosha,

FAZ-08-020

Vitya Yazykov, Valera, Vitya Kamkin, Zhenya and me over to one side.

FAZ-08-021

"I want to sit with you separately," he said in a soft Georgian accent. We found a cosy corner and spent the rest of the evening with him. We remembered the days gone by, over brandy and good Georgian wine...

FAZ-08-022



The Start

under sail we came in to the Whitbread boats' berth in Southampton. Our arrival was met with hearty applause from everyone present in the Whitbread village. Skip Novak put the boat neatly into the place allotted to us. The building of the yacht was finished. Less than 20 hours remained before the start of the round-the-world race.

FAZ-09-001

Afterword When I began writing these pages almost two years ago I wanted to fill in some of the gaps in the story of how the yacht *Fazisi* was created. And to remember once more all those with whom we made our dream of the round-the-world race a reality. Those were interesting and unforgettable years of our lives. To those who are still only dreaming of round-the-world races, I can wish one thing: May your dreams come true!

FAZ-09-002

The crew of the yacht Fazisi

First name, surname	FAZ-10-001
Age Trade	FAZ-10-002
Sergei Akatyev Valery Alekseyev Sergei Borodinov Yury Doroshenko Alexei Drosdovsky Alexei Grischenko	FAZ-10-003
Brian Hancock ("Mugsy") Mark Hauser Ronald Jourdan Viktor Kamkin Gennady Korolkov Vladimir Kulinichenko Rami Leibovich Igor Mironenko Vlad Murnikov Eugene Platon Viktor Pogrebnov Thierry Rannou Jim Saunders Valery Safiullin Sergei Stanetsky Nodari Teneishvili Edgar Terekhin Dale Tremain Jumberi Tsomaya ("Juki") Roger Vaughan	FAZ-10-004
Anatoly Verba Viktor Yazykov Vladimir Musatov	FAZ-10-005
Oleg Belomytsev navigator sailing coach sailor navigator doctor elec- tronics engineer businessman sailor sailor architect navigator engineer waiter engineer engineer mathematician sailing coach journalist engineer engineer engineer navigator sailing coach boatbuilder sailing coach editor journalist engineer sailor electronics engineer engineer	FAZ-10-006
Place of residence	FAZ-10-007
Kiev Sochi Moscow Sevastopol Odessa Kiev	FAZ-10-008
Took part in building the yacht	FAZ-10-009
Took part in the legs yes no no yes no yes	FAZ-10-010
3, 4, 5, 6 4, 5, 6 4, 5 1, 2, 3 1, 2	FAZ-10-011
USA no N.Zealand no France no Dnepropetrovsk yes Odessa yes Odessa yes Riga yes Kiev yes Moscow no Kiev yes Sochi no France no Great Britain no Alma-Ata yes Odessa yes Tskhaltubo yes Riga yes N.Zealand no Poti no USA no	FAZ-10-012
1, 2, 3 1, 2 3, 4, 5, 6 3, 4, 5, 6 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 3, 6 1, 2, 3, 4 4, 5, 6 4, 5 1, 2, 5, 6 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 1, 6 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 2, 3, 4 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	FAZ-10-013
Odessa Sochi Zaporozhye yes yes yes	FAZ-10-014
1, 2, 3, 4 1, 2 no	FAZ-10-015
Odessa yes no	FAZ-10-016