

A REAL OLYMPIC BOAT

She missed the podium in the 1912 games, but this Carl Liljegren 10-M design is enjoying a new lease of life after a major restoration

STORY KATHY MANSFIELD





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There's a plan afoot, a dream, just coming to fruition. The Metre Centenary in Cowes in 2007, celebrating 100 years of the International Rule, highlighted the fact that the Metre classes have been steadily regaining their popularity. The Six Metres are in remarkably good shape, the Eights are more numerous, the Twelves continue to enthral with their America's Cup history, even the Fifteens have grown to four outstanding restorations and are working together to develop the class in all the right ways.

And now the time has come for the Ten Metre class. Some have been sailing in Scandinavia for years, others need to be found or restored. I remember the first time I saw *Pesa*, designed in 1911 by Max Oertz in Germany and with a beautiful shape and sail plan, thinking that she was for me at that moment the epitome of a beautiful classic yacht. Now the Swedish-designed *Marga* has been superbly restored over four years near Rome in Italy and just made it to Les Voiles de Saint-Tropez last year, a boat with an intriguingly extreme shape and fascinating pedigree. Her owners are determined to spearhead a resurgence of the class. It's a very good idea. That's just one of their plans...

And it's also heartening to see that her three owners are refreshingly young, in or near their thirties: Tomas de Vargas Machuca, his friend Igino Angelini and Igino's sister Alessandra Angelini. "It's possible to own a beautiful boat like this at our age," said Tomas, "if you join together with your friends and you arrange a good chartering business. You have to be organised and disciplined and it's cheaper in the long term to restore a boat properly, without shortcuts, and be diligent with maintenance. I've now got a great team of people to work with." Tomas had bought his first classic, the ketch *Delfino*, at the time a well-used club sailboat at Trieste, when he was just 20, having spent a few years in banking and saved up his bonuses. He has yet to buy a house – boats are much more his passion. A few years later, he realised it would in fact be cheaper to have a larger yacht, looked after by a skipper, that he could charter. By now he had become an entrepreneur dealing with German residential housing and also classic car rallies, another

Above: original tiller; new fittings

passion. He did a part exchange with his first yacht to buy the 85ft (26m) 1937 schooner *Orianda* with Igino, which was then restored at Tecnomar in Fiumicino, just outside Rome by boatbuilder Emiliano Parenti.

They charter her six months a year, with about eight charters and several regattas. It was at the Tecnomar boatyard that Tomas came across the elegant Ten Metre classic *Marga*...

HISTORY OF MARGA

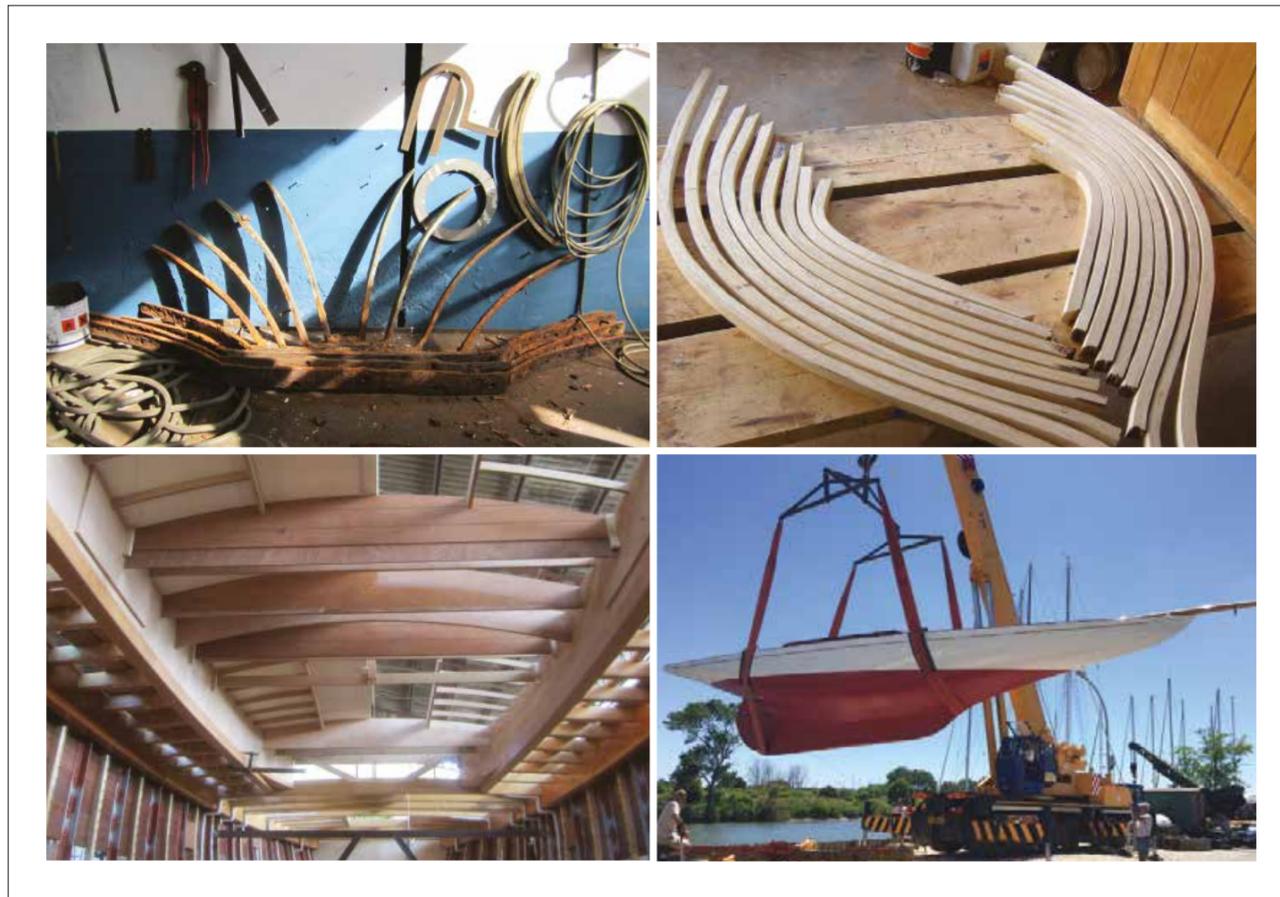
Marga was built in 1910 at the Hastholm Boatyard near Stockholm in Sweden, commissioned by Consul Fredrick Forsberg, who two years later at the Olympics proposed to his wife-to-be on board. She was designed for the Ten Metre class by Carl Oscar Liljegren, (1865-1944), an outstanding naval architect who deserves to be much better known outside his native Sweden. The new International Metre Rule formulated in 1907 inspired him to design a large number of Five, Six and Eight Metre yachts as well as the Ten Metre, *Marga*. He was very interested in extreme sailing yachts, concentrating on speed, along with other Swedish designers of that period such as Brenson, Ahrhamson and Plym. He was awarded a large travel stipend by the Swedish Royal Academy of Science to study naval architecture and engineering in England, France and Germany, and followed this by travelling to the United States where he worked for Nat Herreshoff. He built over 200 boats of all sorts during his lifetime. Before he died in 1944 he published a book, *Naval Architecture as Art and Science*, in which he develops a new treatment of speed factors using differential calculus, and proposes optimum longitudinal lines and the best bow and stern angles. No doubt his thoughts were influenced by his talks with the finest yacht designers of the time and by working closely with Nathanael Herreshoff.

Liljegren gave *Marga* extreme lines, almost more like a linear rater than a Metre class boat, with a long, shallow forefoot, very narrow beam, long overhangs and a much wider stern, flatter underneath, than usual at the time. Enrico Zaccangni points out that "analysing curves, lines and surfaces I always feel amazed and surprised by the harmony and ratio in all her geometry, despite the

Two of *Marga's* three owners, Tomas de Vargas Machuca and Igino Angelini



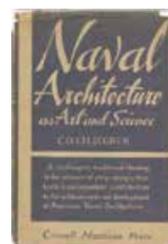
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Above clockwise from top left: original floors; new frames; ready for launch; Oregon pine deckhouse. **Right:** New hollow spars make her much lighter

essential simplicity of a pure racer." She has an aerodynamic shape, curving slightly down towards the ends and sides rather like a racing car and with coamings near the mast that taper in size towards the bow. *Marga* raced in the 1912 Olympics in Stockholm (Forsberg proposed to his wife-to-be on board the yacht there), finishing just off the pace in fourth, in the 10 Metre class. First was the fellow Swede *Kitty*, designed by Alfred Mylne, *Nina* of Finland second, and *Gallia II* of Russia was third. It was not much of a test of ability however, due to the absence of wind and *Marga's* choice of a wrong tack in these conditions. At a Jubileum Regatta, a friendly rerun of the race afterwards, *Marga* won. The 1910-1912 issues of the Goteborg Yacht Club magazine, *Segarbladet*, mentions the name of *Marga* frequently among the winners in those years. Another Swedish magazine of the time described her as having "a strong hull with aggressive forms, even a little brutal, but with a sail plan more beautiful than any other Swedish yacht."

Marga was bought in Copenhagen, Denmark in the early 2000s by Marco Vian, an engineering professor from Rome, who shipped her to Rome, to Fiumicino, as a retirement project. When he realised, as many do, that the job was going to need professional shipwrights and much money, in September 2010 he bowed to the enthusiasm of Tomas de Vargas Machuca, who wanted very much to take the project on. An important and challenging part of the project was researching the

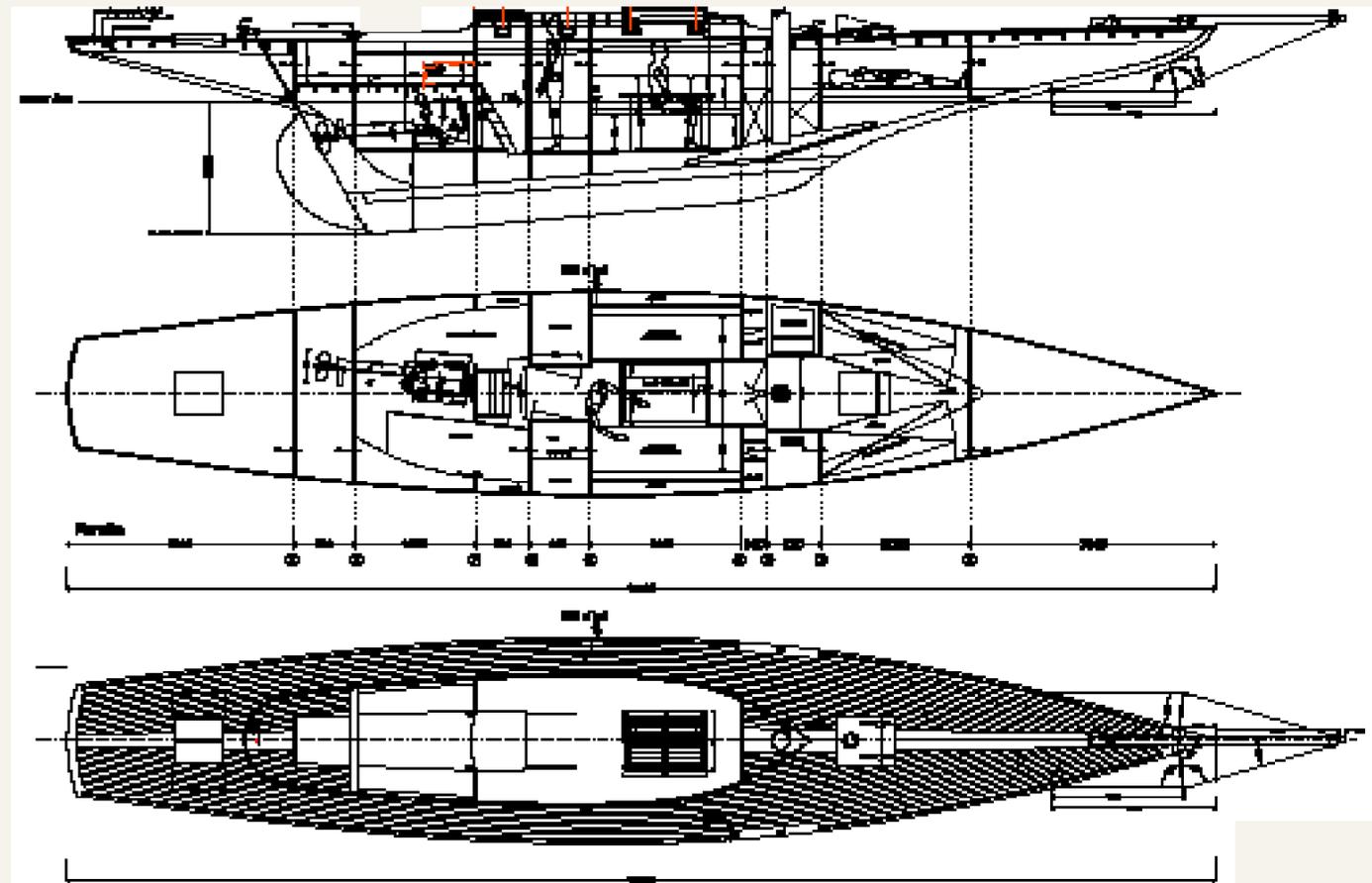


history of *Marga*, and this fell to Enrico Zaccagni of Zacboats. He had only a measurement certificate from the Danish Shipping Register and a crumpled photocopy of the boat racing. Amazingly, there were in fact three *Margas* built in Sweden, all for the Ten Metre class, all around the same time, including one designed by William Fife in 1914, built at the Liljegren Goteborg boatyard. This was confusing, but Enrico knew enough about Fife design and construction to understand that this was the wrong *Marga*. He then found that the dimensions did not fit and the boatyard was owned not by CO Liljegren but by his brother.

Another *Marga* seems to have been designed by Sven Abrahamson and built at the Abrahamson & Borjesson boatyard in Sweden in 1912. Apparently she is in Norway now, and again has different dimensions.

Eventually it was the Goteborg magazine *Segarbladet* of March 1911 that definitively solved the mystery, and this was a great stroke of luck – it had so much information and plans regarding the boat that with the help of the Landini Micelli design office, they were able to design the cabin, inside accommodations, mast and spars to their original specifications.

There was also a question about whether *Marga* was indeed built to the Metre Rule, but that is now confirmed, she was definitely built to the First Rule. Lloyd's Register published her dimensions and details and awarded her a Maltese Cross, in respect of her excellent build to Lloyd's specifications.



After that shrewd bit of detective work, the rest of *Marga's* history is patchy, the boat being listed in the GKSS register until 1914, then again in 1919 until 1924, missing out 1923. At that time she was owned by an IW Thurffjell of Luleå. She spent time in Finland and reappears in the 1970s back in Sweden, rigged as a ketch and sporting an awkward, poorly built, enormous deckhouse, like so many other desecrated classics that were often used as cheap accommodation at a time when wooden boats were at their nadir.

The reconstruction and restoration has been done at Cantieri Tecnomar in Fiumicino, near Rome, which already had a reputation for yacht and tug restorations and where *Orianda* was restored. As much as possible of the original boat was kept. The keel of *Marga* was still sound, also the rudder, tiller, some beam shelves and some of the steel frames (she had alternating wood and steel frames, of excellent quality). The 29mm mahogany planking was carefully dismantled plank by plank and replaced to the same dimension and shape using the exact same style of copper nails, specially made for the job. New fittings were specially crafted by Francesco Berthel. Original specifications have been used, all complying with the first Metre Rule. Cockpit, deckhouse and stringers are Oregon pine, beautifully designed and built, beams are ash.

Her spars have been built of silver spruce by Gilbert Pasqui in Villefrance, who built the spars of other famous classics such as *Tuiga*, *Moonbeam* and



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Partridge. Though built to the original specifications, she is lighter now by 90 kilos thanks to her new hollow spars, and a new, light Yanmar 30hp engine has been installed for manoeuvring, replacing the much heavier engine that had been fitted in later years.

“NAVIGATING ACROSS THE TIDE...”

I spoke with Guido Cavalazzi, who created *Marga*'s sails. Guido works for North Sails and has designed the sails for *Mariska*, *Chinook*, *Leonore*, *Skylark*, *Cholita* and others, and made the kite for *Cambria*. Modern sail material can be cut out more easily than the Dacron that is used for the classics, he explained. “You must include in the design how the sail will stretch, so you must aim in another place, like navigating across the tide.”

Mariska's sails have lasted four seasons, he said, and with a few alterations should last another two or three years. *Marga* has 8oz sailcloth for the main and staysail, 7oz for her headsails. He prefers working with classic owners, who often see themselves as custodians of these historic yachts, and he has enough space in his sail lofts in Galicia, Spain, to lay out very large sails. He's also willing to make the larger sails using two-ply material: two layers of 8oz cloth will be more tightly woven, with smaller yarns that will move less on the bias, than 15oz cloth. The two-ply sail will last longer and will be softer to fold across the boom as well – but the skills for doing this were lost around the 1970s and most sailmakers don't want the extra, painstaking bother. The whole procedure is an art, from the psychology of understanding just exactly what the owner wants, to working with the materials required for classic boats.

AND FINALLY, THE LAUNCH

It was a busy four years of restoration and *Marga* just made it to Les Voiles de Saint-Tropez in October 2015, launched a couple of weeks before with no time for crew training – even so she did well. She has no winches, just as when she was launched back in 1911 – she has perhaps 50 blocks instead, and her crew will relearn the old methods, just as the crew of *Mariquita* and a few

MARGA

- LOD
51ft
(15.59m)
- BOWSPIRIT
6ft 2in
(1.86m)
- BEAM
9ft 2in (2.8m)
- DRAUGHT
5ft 11in
(1.8m)
- SAIL AREA (MAIN)
1,345sq ft
(125m²)

others have done. The mainsail alone is 125m² and yet the boat is only 2.6m wide: with her low freeboard as well, she is a wet boat to sail.

Emiliano remembers the waves breaking on his thigh and then hitting his nose, but he also remembers heading well up to windward, easily reaching 10 knots and powering past *Eva* and other boats.

The mast was too far forward, more blocks are needed for next year, she was maybe achieving just 30-40 per cent of her potential, but by Les Voiles de Saint-Tropez next year, the vintage yachts will have a new star.

Marga would like some other Ten Metres to sail against. The 1938 *Kipawa*, designed by Anker & Jenson, has also been restored at Tecnomar and should be sailing in 2017. Enrico Zaccagni at Zac Boats would like to hear from anyone interested in one of the most important boats of this class, *Tonino*, built in 1911 by William Fife for the King of Spain. She was restored about 15 years ago and has spent the last five years in a shed in Italy, awaiting a new owner. *Rita IV* has just been thoroughly restored in Portugal and is racing again. *Pesa* is sailing in Brittany. Another Liljegren design, *Astarte*, built in 1907, is in good condition, and a modern version, *Astarte II*, might be built in the Netherlands. Tore Holm's *Itaka* from 1934, Johan Anker's 1914 *Moana*, Albert Andersen's 1907 *Dafne* and Christian Jensen's 1939 *Indigo* are all in sailing and racing further north, along with others, and a few have not been traced. The replica John Anker Classic *Addy* and modernised Max Oertz *Stormvogel* are sailing. The Ten Metre Class is on the way, and an association has been formed.

Meanwhile Tomas and his friends are full of plans. Tomas has just bought the John Alden centreboard gaff schooner *Puritan*. Her centreboard configuration means that she can sail up the River Tiber to the boatyard and she will sail this season after maintenance, undergoing further restoration over the winter, when her long propshaft will be replaced by a quieter and more manageable auxiliary propulsion system and her electrics will be renewed, among other work.

Below l-r: the interior remained the same after much research; traditionally crewed, with no winches



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