



The Story of Nautor's Swan

The story of Nautor's Swan has its roots 300 years ago in a landscape where temperatures can fall to -30°C in the depth of winter and the sea may be frozen five months of the year.

The unforgiving landscape around the small town of Jakobstad in Finland is an unusual birthplace for a company whose products have come to embody luxury and quality in the sailing world. However, Nautor's Swan's vision of combining traditional craftsmanship and age-old traditions with the most advanced technologies of today, flourishes when nurtured by the sense of mysticism and the hardworking ethos that surrounds the Nordic culture.

In 1966 this unique environment inspired Nautor's Swan's founder, Pekka Koskenkyla, to initiate serial production of fibreglass yachts, taking advantage of Jakobstad's long history of boat and ship building that started in the 17th century. Koskenkyla's main vision was to be the best, a philosophy that has remained unchanged throughout Nautor's entire history. Today Nautor's Swan is a leader in the luxury yacht market and is globally recognised as not only the producer of well-crafted, sumptuous cruisers but also superior racing yachts capable of mastering all the world's seas, under any conditions. For sailors around the world, Nautor's Swan yachts hold a unique place in their hearts.

In 1998 Leonardo Ferragamo and a group of investors saw the potential in the Nautor's Swan brand. The craftsmanship and undeniable quality of these yachts impressed Ferragamo so much that he headed a successful bid for the company. This initiated a whirlwind of change, the results of which have firmly placed Nautor's Swan at the forefront of the international sailing world.

The Tip of the Iceberg

The origins of this company lie with a man who started his career as a paper sack salesman in a small town near the Arctic Circle. Educated in the USA, Koskenkyla had the vision to utilise hundreds of years of Finnish boat building history to produce a series of superior yachts. By employing the best yacht designers at the time, Sparkman & Stephens, the foundations for one of

the most prestigious boat yards in the world were laid. The initial concept of Nautor's Swan was to produce a highly crafted but strong yacht that combined speed and competence in racing with comfort and manageability.

Fibreglass was the primary building material, with the trimmings in wood. At the heart of this concept was quality, a core competence that has never left the Nautor's Swan production process. Few objects on earth are crafted with the level of care as Nautor's Swans. Teams of boat builders in Finland, many of whose fathers and grandfathers were also in the profession, spend painstaking hours crafting each section of the yacht by hand. The level of detail is such that a sample of the deck of each yacht is kept at the factory, so that an exact replacement could be made if required.

The first Swan 36 was delivered in spring 1967 to British sailor Dave Johnson, who skippered the yacht with remarkable success in tournaments around the British Isles. These racing achievements generated immense positive feedback that established Nautor's Swan as a manufacturer of high performance racing yachts, feedback that was soon converted to increasing sales figures.

A Developing Portfolio

As a result of these racing triumphs owners soon demanded upgrades to their existing Swan 36 models; in response Nautor's Swan produced the Swan 37. As the market trend moved towards bigger models the company also diversified range into a 43 ft model.

In contrast to this overwhelming success, fate was soon to deal a blow that would have ramifications for years to come. Shortly before Christmas in 1969 the Assembly Hall of the Nautor's Swan boatyard burnt to the ground destroying a dozen hulls in various stages of production. As a result Koskenkylä was forced to sell stakes in Nautor to finance rebuilding.

Nautor's Swan continued to expand despite this setback and fulfilled the expectations placed on it at the beginning of its history. With the production of the Swan 55, Nautor first entered the market in which it now thrives; large, luxurious yachts with opulent interiors that are fast, seaworthy and a joy to sail.

This continued growth was punctuated with racing successes for Swans around the world, the highlight of which was victory for Sayula II, a standard Swan 65, in the first Whitbread Round the World Race in 1973/74. These successes were later enhanced by Nautor's Swan's signature regattas such as the Swan European and American Regattas and its flagship bi-annual Swan Cup, proving the racing capabilities of these yachts.

Nautor's Swan entered a new era in 1979 with the appointment of German Frers as designer, who continued to demonstrate a good balance of competent racers and comfort in his design. To this day, the Frers design office continues to push the boundaries, whilst maintaining the hallmark of Swan. One of the most exciting examples in recent years was the birth of a new breed of Swan in 2001 - the Swan 45. This model saw Nautor's Swan embark on its most ambitious project to date,

creating a true racing yacht with its own class, which quickly became globally recognised. Its success soon led to the establishment of Nautor's latest one-design model, the Swan 601, which will provides one of the first owner / driver class within this size range.

Today the expansive Swan portfolio charts the journey that Nautor's Swan has travelled, from the inaugural Swan 36 to the ambitious Swan 131.

The current SwanLine features the following models:

Swan 45

Swan 46

Swan 53

Swan 56

Swan 601

Swan 62

Swan 70

Swan 75

Swan 82

Swan 90

Swan 100

Swan 112

Swan 115

Swan 131

In addition to the models within the SwanLine, in 2005 Nautor's Swan entered into a groundbreaking partnership with the New York Yacht Club and German Frers design team, to produce a new one-design racing yacht, the Club Swan 42. This new model incorporates a retractable bow sprit, the first time this feature has been utilised on any Swan, as well as the most technically advanced materials and construction to create a light and extremely fast yacht. Heralding a return to traditional, Corinthian one-design racing, the Club Swan 42 will be introduced to the NYYC's members initially, then marketed to other prestigious yacht clubs around the world to build a truly international class of these streamlined performance yachts.

An Eye for Quality

After the acquisition by Leonardo Ferragamo in 1998, Nautor moved into a new era, one that has seen the initial vision of Nautor's Swan enforced and developed, establishing it as a truly global company.

The portfolio has expanded and his ambition for Nautor's Swan to become one of the most innovative yacht manufacturers in the world has been realised. With the opening of a new, hi-tech boatyard capable of producing yachts over 100ft, the future continues to look bright both for pure luxury and for revolutionary technology. This important development to the business was a result of

a long-standing collaboration between the city of Jakobstad and Nautor's Swan, spanning over many years of yacht building history. With the new 100, 112, 115 and 131 footers, the company was entering the Custom Yachts segment in earnest. Capacity was strained, and the original facility just was not suited for yachts of this size.

Nautor's desire to expand and build a waterfront facility for production of larger yachts dovetailed well with Jakobstad's ambitions to ensure that boat building, a major source of employment and a crown jewel of the region's business life, would continue to develop favourably. In September 2000 the ambitions of the two parties resulted in the formation of the Boatbuilding Technology Centre (BTC) in Pietarsaari.

The Nautor's Swan brand has been transformed; whilst retaining all of the aspects that made Nautor's Swan yachts revered throughout the world, the company has been moulded into a new organisation. It fulfilled a lifelong dream with the creation and subsequent success of the grand-prix racing team Nautor Challenge. This team represented the highly technical and competitive arm of Nautor's Swan, entering such events as the 2001/2002 Volvo Ocean Race, where the Nautor Challenge syndicate ran a two-boat campaign, skippered by Grant Dalton and Lisa McDonald. This ambitious presence in the international racing circuit has successfully put Nautor's Swan at the forefront of competitive sailing and has provided invaluable technical information to be utilised in future Swan design.

However, the growth of the Nautor's Swan brand does not stop here. Nautor's new facilities and experienced workforce at the BTC, have provided the company with the perfect infrastructure and expertise to establish Nautor's Swan Custom. Launched in 2004, Nautor's Swan Custom is able to deliver unique yachts of the highest quality that meet every owners needs. Current projects include the Brenta 76, Tripp 78 and Swan 131, all of which will see Nautor's Swan work with the owner and designer to bring their ideas to fruition, applying their expertise to every step of the build, even through to the launch.

The Nautor's Swan Family

1,900 Swans have now been produced, almost all of which are still in use. Being a Swan owner is now a passport to a community passionate about its sailing and proud to be part of the Swan vision. The company recognises that its most powerful exponents are the Swan owners themselves and so strives to create a lifestyle for these ambassadors that reflect the importance of the Nautor's Swan 'family'.

The added value of being a Swan owner is to have the opportunity to be part of ClubSwan. This official members club for Nautor's Swan provides a forum in which owners from all over the world can be united by their love of sailing and can enjoy the tangible camaraderie that has become a hallmark of owning a Swan yacht.

Most importantly for every ClubSwan member, is the chance to enjoy their Swan and share their experiences with other owners at a broad range of Nautor's Swan events staged in the most exclusive destinations around the globe. The highlight of the racing calendar for Swan owners is the biannual Rolex Swan Cup, held in Porto Cervo, Sardinia. This is traditionally an event that embodies the essence of Swan in its glamour and quality of sailing. Along with the Rolex Swan European and American Regattas, and the recently established Swan 45 Gold Cup, these events combine to make an impressive regatta portfolio.

It would seem that Koskenkyla's vision of becoming the best in the world has become a reality. The uncompromising quality of building materials, the craftsmanship and the attention to detail ensure that no other boat builder can surpass Nautor's Swan yachts in terms of image and prestige. From the vision of a Finnish salesman has emerged an idea that cannot be questioned - nothing beats quality.