

Magenta Project and Sunsail to promote women in sailing

One of Sunsail's new fleet of Port Solent-based charter yachts was officially christened The Magenta Project in early March, marking the start of a new relationship between the company and the charity promoting women in sailing. The relationship was announced at the British Marine Spring Expo in February, but the launch of the new yacht - one of a fleet of 25 Sunsail 41.0s arriving in Port Solent this year and next - will signal the start of a programme of female-focused activities.

The plan is to offer women-only RYA courses, race training, career opportunities and mentoring programmes. The project will also allow women to participate in mixed-gender teams at some of the UK's biggest sailing events.



Elaine Penhaul, chair of The Magenta Project, said: "We look forward to exciting times with Sunsail, creating more opportunity for women in our sport, from novices learning to sail, right through to training as Yachtmaster instructors and racing in some of the most competitive regattas in the world."

New Cowes Week trophy for Club Cruiser Class

The Cruising Association will sponsor a new Club Cruiser Class trophy at Cowes Week, scheduled for 8-14 August.

The new Club Cruiser Class is designed to appeal to those sailors who haven't raced at Cowes Week before, and the competition will be run under the ISCRS handicap system.

Cowes Week's cruiser division has been growing year on year, according to race director Laurence Mead, and earlier in 2020 it was announced the division would be split into two classes - Performance Cruisers and Club Cruisers.

The involvement of the Cruising Association seems certain to give participation an added boost.

"It would be great if we can help increase the numbers competing in the Club Cruiser Class divisions and we'll certainly be doing our best to encourage Cruising Association members to enter," says the association's general manager Lucy Gray.

The Cruising Association, with headquarters in Limehouse, London, offers support including practical advice, lobbying and rallies for members worldwide.



Q&A

COLETTE EDWARDS Senior Designer at Gill

What does a clothes designer do all day?

My primary role is to design and develop new product, but this varies drastically from season to season. The process begins by doing market research - this normally involves going to trade shows, speaking to fabric and trim suppliers and talking to sailors. This is often the most exciting part - especially if we are working on big projects like being the official technical clothing partner of the SailGP GBR and USA teams, which we have been for the past two years.

How did you get into this job?

After studying BA Fashion at Middlesex University I wanted to combine my passion for sport with my creativity. I have been designing at Gill for 15 years. There are three other designers and we all share a passion for the outdoors and watersports. It is not a pre-requisite to sail to be able to design sailing clothing. Our expertise is in form, fit and function.

Is your role made easier or harder by feedback from Gill ambassadors?

At times it can be challenging as they tell you exactly how it is. When you've been working on a garment for the past year it can be tough to hear negative comments, but it's definitely necessary. We always have to really dig into the issues and work out ways to resolve things. Sometimes we find things like the fit are very person specific - when you're working with SailGP grinders the circumference of their forearms is not the norm! For the Race Ocean system we launched in December 2019, I worked closely with Conrad Colman. We looked at specifics that only he could give us, like the best angle for the multitool pocket.

Any particular suggestions or requests that stand out?

The relief zip has been an on-going 'interesting' part of my job. Many years ago, we had a sailor who customised his Speedskin. We were all intrigued as to why he had a hole halfway up his suit. Now the relief system is part of



many of our products and has been built in so that lengthy time on the water is as comfortable as possible.

Potentially harmful plastics and neoprene have been key materials for all manufacturers. How is Gill adapting?

Over the years we have been looking at how we can reduce our environmental footprint and we're making great inroads here. There are things we already do like using the Limestone Neoprene, which has less of an environmental footprint than standard neoprene. We are making huge changes in terms of packaging and how to increase the durability of our garments

OS2 has been around for 20 years. What's the secret to its longevity?

The OS2 has been a huge part of the Gill story. For 15 of its 20 years I have been designing it and I'm proud of where it's got to. It was a hit from day one, just what the marine consumer needed and we haven't really messed around with it since

What advice do you offer for keeping foulies in good condition for as long as possible?

By washing your product on the temperature stated on the wash care label, and tumble drying on a low heat, the molecules within the Durable Water Repellence (DWR) are able to re-activate, bringing your waterproof garment back to life! Water-repellent spray should only be a last resort.