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# WATER CRAFT

## ELECTRIC BOATS: CURRENT THINKING



ENTENTE CORDIALE: LA SEMAINE DU GOLFE  
BENVENUTI ALLA VELALONGA – VENEZIA  
RESTORATION DRAMA: SECOND TIME AROUND



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Join the supporters club!



Gaffer refit: Page 15

Photo: Peter Chesworth

With just a modest trailer-sailer, the whole of Europe can be your cruising ground. And, says Kathy Mansfield, what more inspirational goal than trailing to Venice for...

# La Velalonga



**B**uild your boat – and then sail it with other small and traditional boats in the Lagoon, around Venice, Murano, San Michele... The Velalonga, a sailing regatta for traditional and modern boats of the Venice area, has been taking place every May for five years now, sponsored by local groups plus agencies working to preserve the fragile environment of the Venetian lagoon.

The traditional *Sanpierotas*, their standing lugsails almost lateen in shape, will fly ahead if the wind is abaft the beam: the centre of effort is well astern, the bottom flat and the large rudder acts as centreboard and keel. There will be *Topos*, from the 18th century and *Topas* from the 19th. And there will be modern dinghies and daysailers of all sorts, demonstrating that affordable sailing is as possible in Italy as in Britain, it's just the mindset that needs to change.

A merry group of sailors who like a challenge are designing and building *Dieci Piedis*, boats which can be of any description as long as they are 10' (3.05m) long. A few hardy ones made it around the islands despite the strongest winds in the Velalonga's five year history, starting about 10 knots from the northeast and by mid-afternoon roaring from the

south at up to 21 knots, kicking up quite a sea in the shallow lagoon. For this reason, only 120 of the 150 registered boats actually raced but it made a fine sight with the campaniles of Venice as a dramatic setting.

The mainland yacht club, Circolo Velico Casanova, kept their crane busy and the picnic tables full after the race, with hot showers for those who had taken an inadvertent ducking. At the same time *la Sensa*, the magnificent pageant marking the marriage of Venice to the sea, was taking place off St. Mark's Square; it was an outstanding weekend to be there and the colourful traditional rowing race, the Vogalonga, takes place the following weekend...

*Of which more in our next issue -Ed.*

*With special thanks to Donna and Vincenzo Ciminale*

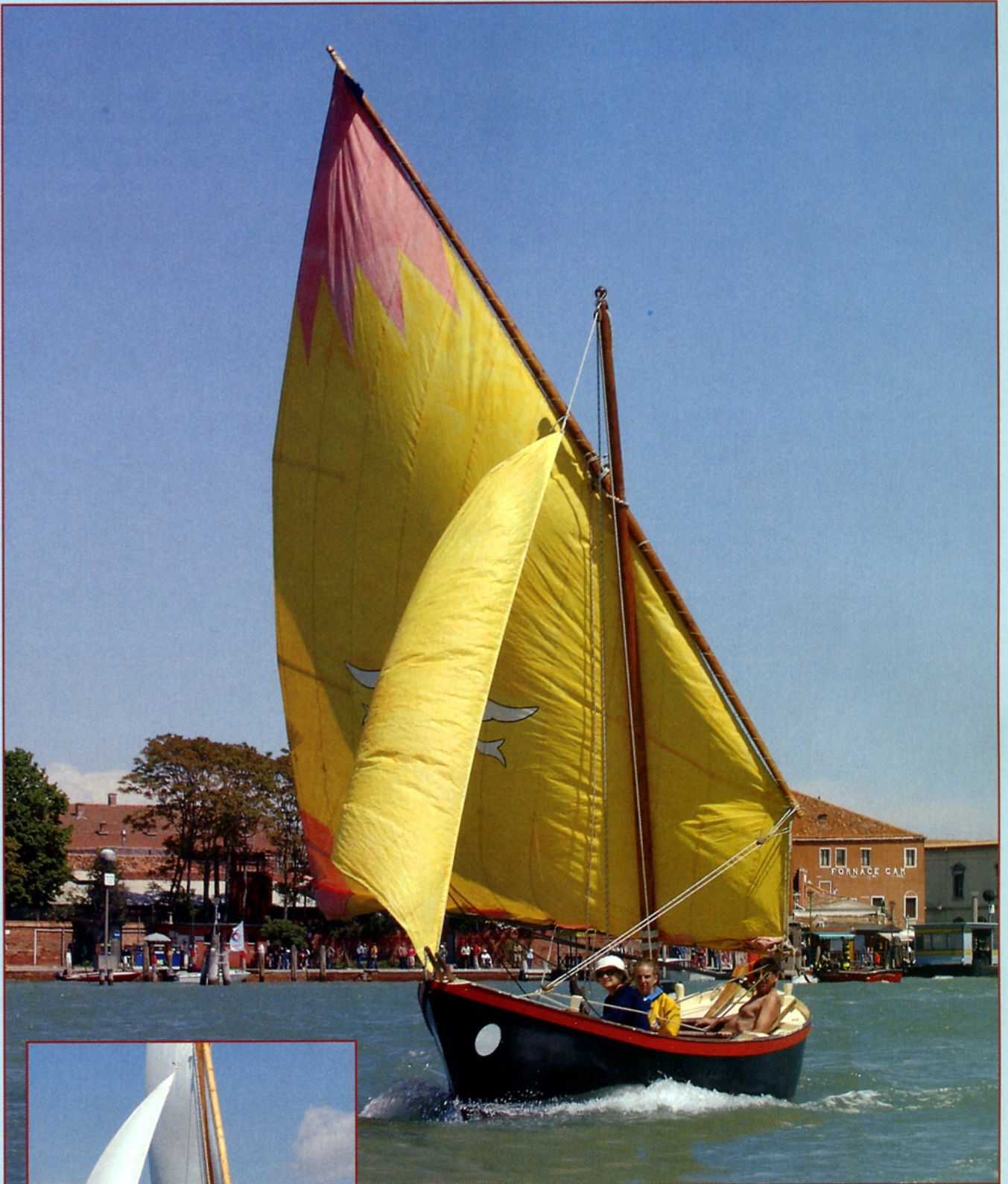
## CONTACTS

[www.velalonga.it](http://www.velalonga.it)

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**This page – top:** The bow of the topo chioggiotto is traditionally decorated with a religious design. **Below:** Marmotta is a traditional sanpierota. **Facing page – top:** Nobile Voltafora, designed and built by her owner, is based on the traditional sailing boats of Venice. **Bottom:** Sanpierotas are traditionally 23' x 5'3" (7 x 1.6m). Note the tiny jib: since there is no centreboard, the deep rudder pulls the CLR a long way aft and thus the CE of the sail plan must be equally far back to provide balance.







**This page, top:** *Kitty Hawk is a Phil Bolger Chebacco boat, professionally built in Venice and fitted out by her owner Vincenzo Ciminale. Below: Claudio Soffrisi's sanpierota Zotolona, built by the Piero Menetto yard on Pellestrina. Facing page: Not all the boats in the Velalonga are traditional. Top: 23' (7m) Bruce Kirby-designed sharpie. Below: At the start, Tridents, Alpha 550s and others create a 'casino' or chaos! Inset: Wooden trophies.*

