

Legends of Ontario Sailing Award – OS Gala, Saturday, April 2nd, 2011

I would like to thank Canadian Yachting, the OSA, and the selection committee of the Legends Award, for this rare opportunity to formally express a collective “Thank You” to the gentlemen before us this evening. A Thank You for all the great joy and pleasure, not to say excitement, you have brought our lives with the creation and long success of C&C Yachts.

This being only the second time this award has been presented, I can't very well say this honor is long past due, but I would be remiss if I did not point out that the winners of last year's inaugural award, the skippers and crew of *Evergreen* and *Magistri*, which survived the infamous 1979 Fastnet race, were both sailing C&C designed and built Canada's Cup contenders. So in that respect C&C was very much involved even with the first presentation of this award.

Formed in 1969 with the amalgamation of a design office and three builders, C&C Yachts was a remarkable achievement, which for almost 30 years withstood the onslaught of changing economic times, changes in sailing styles and preference (not to mention rating rules) and changes in consumer consumption habits, while at the same time producing some of the finest sailing vessels ever built, too numerous to even mention in this short space of time. It's not my intention to explore that history in detail; that has already been done exceptionally well by Dan Spurr and Doug Hunter, whose pieces you will find on line, and some of which you see reproduced in the slide show.

Before I discuss what I consider the significance and achievements of C&C, I think it only appropriate that we introduce the recipients of the Legends Award, the Builders of C&C Yachts. I won't ask you to stand or say anything. A short nod or bow would be sufficient. .

George Cuthbertson who with **George Cassian** (Big George and Little George) formed the design firm of Cuthbertson & Cassian. In 1969, these two gentlemen would become the Cs of C&C Yachts, and Cuthbertson and Cassian would become C&C Design Group. We are pleased that accompanying George to night is his wife Helen. Unfortunately, to everyone's shock, George Cassian succumbed to an untimely heart attack in 1979 at the too young age of 46.

Erich Bruckmann of what was at that time Bruckmann Manufacturing, would after the 1969 amalgamation become the C&C Custom Division. Eric at that time was the builder of the C&C designed Red Jacket and Inferno, and was building the Redline 41s. We are also pleased to have Lisa Bruckmann join us tonight.

George Hinterhoeller (George the Third) of Hinterhoeller Yachts Hinterhoeller Yachts would become the C&C Production Division, and at that time was building the C&C designed Red Wing 30 and about to build the Red Wing 35 (which would become the C&C 35), not to mention George's own designs of a little boat called the Shark, and the Niagara 30. (George too has

unfortunately passed away and tonight we are pleased to have George represented by his son Richard).

Rob and Patricia Ball. In 1973, when George Cuthbertson assumed the presidency of C&C, the Design Group would come under the Leadership of Rob Ball, who ably managed that office for the next 20 odd years. Rob had joined Cuthbertson and Cassian in 1968 right after graduating from the University of Michigan in Naval Architecture.

Ian Morch of Belleville Marine, (who is unable to join us from his home in Belleville due to frail health) at the time of incorporation of C&C, builder of the Corvette and Frigate.

It's sometimes hard to remember, or to even believe, that a large number of people in this province could, at one time, make a living designing, building, and selling Sailboats! However, for a defined period in the 60s, 70s and 80s, that was in deed the case, and at the time, anybody who was a part of it considered themselves extremely fortunate. It really was a special time in history. For young kids fresh out of school, of which most of the design office was comprised, it was almost too good to be true. You actually got paid for designing and sailing boats. From an employment point of view, at C&C alone there were 20 to 30 people in the Custom shop in Oakville, 6 to 8 people in Design on Oakville and Port Credit, 8 to 10 people in Head Office and Sales, and 100 to 200 people in NOTL, all engaged in the fine art and business of building Sailboats. I maintain that there were more sailing vessels built in the 25 years between the years 1965 and 1990, than in any other time in recorded history, even during what has been described as the Great Age of Sail. I maintain that we actually lived through and personally experienced the true Great Age of Sail, and that C&C Yachts was to a large extent responsible for creating that era, or at the very least satisfying that demand with superb boats that are still satisfying that demand 30 to 40 years later.

A lot of you in this room probably weren't even born when C&C was formally established in 1969, but it is hard to overestimate the significance of C&C in the history of Yachting and sailing. And I say that from not only an inherently bias Canadian perspective, but also from the perspective of one who has spent a fair amount of time outside the country, particularly on the Eastern seaboard of the US. This was and is a company held in the highest respect by knowledgeable sailors throughout North America and indeed the world.

Even though C&C was officially formed in 1969, I don't think anybody will dispute that in actual fact it all started with a lean and hungry 40 footer called Red Jacket , commissioned by Perry Connolly, designed by Cuthbertson and Cassian, built by Erich Bruckmann, and which put C&C on the international yacht racing map in 1967 when it won its division in SORC, and returned in 1968, to win overall fleet honors. During those same and following SORCs, the Corvette, C&C 35, Redline 41, and C&C 43s, and the C&C 61 were also turning heads and establishing C&C as a

force to be reckoned with on the race course. And of course shortly thereafter there was the occasional Canada's Cup win and Bermuda Race victory to further garner International attention. So taking advantage of that fame and recognition by forming a single company with a design division, a custom division, and a production division only made sense.

And it didn't stop with the designs of George Cuthbertson. Under Rob Ball's design leadership Canada was well represented by C&C in Admirals Cup Racing, including the aforementioned Fastnet, in Onion Patch Racing, which included the Bermuda Race, and several Canada's Cup Races, not to mention innumerable races on Long Island Sound, all the Great Lakes (including Superior), and wherever two or more boats would gather to race or cruise. Classic production and custom boats like the C&C 33, 34, 35 and C&C 40 and 41s, Amazing Grace, Magistri, Silver Shadow, Charisma, Archangel, and many more came off Rob's drawing board and out of the design office under Rob's supervision.

But we should also remember that while all this business restructuring was taking place and all these race wins were being accumulated, C&C was also changing the way boats were being built, sometimes inventing things from scratch, but always from solid engineering principals. C&C was leading a boating industry which was transitioning from traditional wooden construction to learning how to build boats with polyester resins and glass fabrics, balsa and foam cores, from wooden masts to extruded aluminum masts, from cotton sails to Dacron, and welded SS rather than traditional cast bronze, as well as how to use new speed evaluation devices like the towing tank and fledgling computers. There was no road map for any of this, to a large extent it was invented as we went along.

And, I should mention, that all this history and development of design is preserved in the vast collection of the C&C drawings. Both George Cuthbertson and I have been working with Maurice Smith, the Curator Emeritus of the Marine Museum of the Great Lakes in Kingston in establishing, preserving, and making available, the C&C Collection. George has donated all his drawings and documents, from childhood to 1973 to the museum. Two years ago Maurice and I were able to convince Tim Jackett of the present Tartan and C&C Yachts to donate the remaining drawings from 1974 to the early 90s, that he acquired with his purchase of the assets of C&C, to the collection as well. So right now the entire almost 30 years of design output of the C&C design office are housed in the C&C collection at the Marine Museum of the Great Lakes in Kingston. An integral part of the collection process at the Museum is also recording and collecting the oral history of C&C that Maurice and I have undertaken.

So what in particular made C&C Unique among its less impressive competition? That question was easily answered by Butch Ulmer and Howie McMichael at the bar of the Larchmont Yacht Club, when I posed it to them as part of that C&C interview process. Without hesitation and in unison they both answered "**Quality**". Quality was in evidence in every aspect of C&C. The

quality of design and engineering was obvious (Howie said you could tell a C&C almost when it was on the horizon by its distinctive shear line, the angle of its bow and its often stunning good looks). However, that same level of design quality was carried over in the production quality of both the custom one offs and the much more numerous production boats. I should at this point diverge somewhat and acknowledge the genius of George Hinterhoeller in organizing a production shop responsible for building large volumes of the same high quality product, and of Erich Bruckmann for a similar genius but aimed at producing semi-custom or one off construction to exceptional levels of quality. C&Cs were perceived and accepted as well built quality product that would not let you down.

The other area where C&C excelled was in **Engineering Expertise and Innovation**

Keep in mind, that George Cuthbertson, president throughout most of the productive History of C&C was an engineer and designer, not a lawyer or an accountant. Having now worked for some small companies owned by large multinationals, I only now know how important that is and was.

I mentioned the significance of Red Jacket to the founding and success of C&C Yacht. With regard to Innovation, few people know or appreciate that Red Jacket was the first cored hull built in North America. For that reason she was recently honored in an article in Professional Boatbuilder magazine on the 40th anniversary of her SORC win. Remember this was in the early days of composite construction, when wood and aluminum were still winning on the race course. It's interesting to note that Big George himself was working in Fiberglass with Peter Davidson in the 1950s building Water Rat dinghies, one of which he still owns. This incorporation of leading edge materials and innovation continued through the history of C&C, from Rod Rigging, to aluminum toe rails, fiberglass overhead liners and interior pans with integral structural grids, to designing and building our own masts and rigging, to Kevlar and carbon fiber construction.

Which brings me to the next important factor in the success of C&C its People:

The people we honor today had an unerring ability to attract the best people in design, building, sales and marketing. Not only did everyone want to be part of a success story, most of them wanted to contribute to achieving that success. We had Americans coming north in a reverse brain drain to work for C&C, of which Mark Ellis and George Hazen may be the best known. Not to say that the way forward was well defined and agreed upon by all. When you get a group of talented and strong willed individuals together there are bound to be differences of opinion about any number of subjects. So I'm sure George will attest there was no shortage of dynamic conflict within the company, which led to both departures and arrivals. But when I talk to anyone associated with C&C, they inevitably look upon their time with C&C as one of the

most satisfying and exhilarating experiences in their lives. In that respect, C&C was, as Greg Nicoll termed it, also functioning as what would now be called an “incubator” developing talent and spinning off other companies like Goman and Express Yachts, Gilbert Yachts, not to mention Hinterhoeller Yachts, and other design firms like Mark Ellis, Steve Killing, Neil Gilbert, and Mike Volmer, all of whom have made significant individual contributions to the art and science of yacht design since their days at C&C.

But I think the factor which George Cuthbertson would want to stress most about C&C was that C&C was run as a business. That is certainly true while the original management was intact. You could argue, with the benefit of 20/20 hindsight, about the wisdom of some of the decisions made, but those decisions, right or wrong were based on business fundamentals, not the whim of a capricious owner. That would come later in the history of C&C and would ultimately lead to the demise of the company.

So on behalf of all of us who have had the good fortune to be associated with these gentlemen, and on behalf of those who have had the pleasure of owning and sailing a C&C, I extend a collective Thank You and congratulate you all on the receipt of this long overdue recognition. At this point I suggest we all stand, raise our glasses, and salute C&C Yachts and all those who were responsible for her creation. To C&C Yachts!

Rob Mazza