



WALLYGATOR

by Joyce Tickel

Imagine the boat you would build if your dreams and tastes were not restricted by artificial bounds like economic concerns or lack of imagination.

Some of us dream of a Tartan, or Shannon, or Swan, or Hinckley. Others covet an Alden, Little Harbor or Deerfoot. But if you could really have any boat in the world and could design it, build it and outfit it with all the best and newest gear, you might build a very special boat and call it *Wallygator*.

Luca Bassani, president of Wally Yachts, just finished building the boat of his dreams, a 105' ketch designed by Luca Brenta & Co of Milan, Italy and built by Concordia Custom Yachts in Padanaram, Massachusetts.

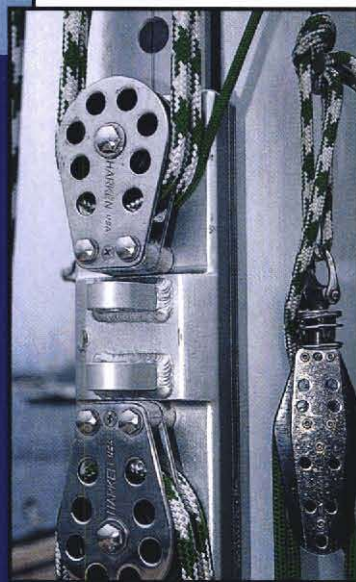
Wallygator epitomizes the Wally philosophy – safe, easy, fast sailing on yachts designed without regard to any rating rule.

Two huge carbon fiber masts spread 5598 square feet of sail, but a truly self-tending jib and mizzen staysail make tacking a one man job. The decks are clean and uncluttered with most lines led to the steering and sail handling station at the front of the cockpit. There a well thought out arrangement of computer monitors, engine controls, and thirteen big hydraulic winches gives a small crew the information and the muscle to control the powerful sails while guests have large areas of deck for safe relaxation.

The running rigging is led through channels under the deck and the self-tacking jib and mizzen traveler tracks are recessed. Sail tuning seems to happen by a magic, effortless manipulation of keys and strings – an exotic instrument of motion rather than music.



AirBlocks with polished stainless steel sideplates.



Mast base details. Note 4:1 and custom maxi spinnaker pole car.



1120 Hydraulic winch

Wallygator — Billy Black Photos

Wallygator is one of the larger composite yachts built and weight has been pared everywhere by choosing the strongest, lightest materials available and by wasting nothing. The interior and furniture are structural components of the hull. They are carbon fiber with an aluminum honeycomb core hiding under a teak veneer. Tradition was abandoned entirely in the design of the navigation station which incorporates all of the expected advances in electronics and computer technology. The navigator's seat is a space age perch of molded carbon fiber that adjusts easily on Harken small boat traveler cars. While similar mega-yachts typically displace over 120,000 lbs, *Wallygator* weighs in at just over half of that.

Brenta and Bassani completely reinvented traditional systems for anchoring, electrical generation, and even propulsion. The later is handled by two retractable jet drive thrusters that swivel to serve as both forward propulsion and thrusters. *Wallygator* can be spun in its own length and parked like a compact car in the tightest of berths.

Despite this open minded, forget the rules approach, they were able to find many of the travelers, blocks, padeyes, and winches in the Harken catalog. Custom parts like Air Foot Blocks and the main sheet traveler cars are stock concepts that were engineered to meet the special needs of lines

led under the deck to recessed tracks.

Among the most elegant of the hardware solutions are the removable padeyes with stand up AirBlocks™. They are supported by "wedding cake" collars to keep them from hitting the deck, but can be unscrewed when at anchor or not in use reducing wear and tear on the blocks — and the toes. The blocks can be removed without tools and as they are unscrewed, a retractable filler screw is drawn up flush with the deck to leave only a smooth, low profile padeye base.

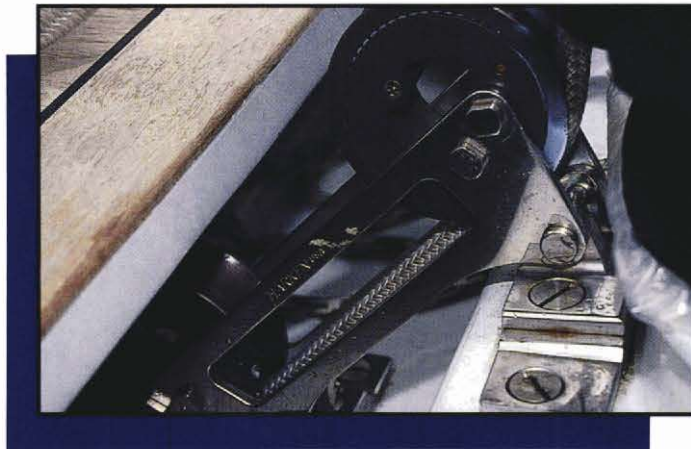
Removable stainless steel toggle padeyes and stand up AirBlocks allow *Wallygator* to be fully rigged for racing in a matter of minutes, but left clean and uncomplicated when cruising.

Custom stainless steel snatch blocks look like jewelry, but feature the same locking mechanism as the standard catalog version. Both are safer and easier to use than the traditional design with a bottom latch. They are perfectly secure, but can easily be opened with one hand — leaving one for holding onto the boat.

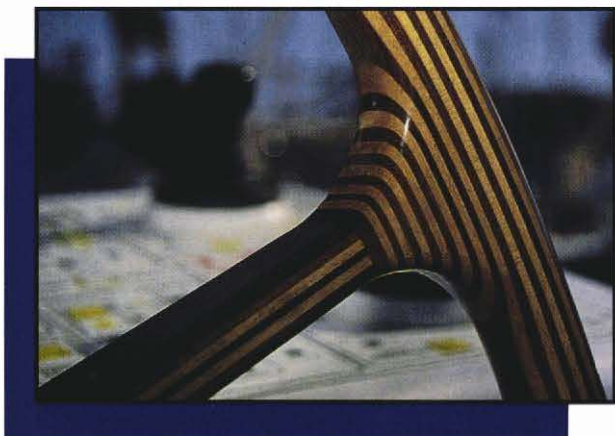
Bassani wanted a boat that he could cruise with his family and friends, or race with a crew of professionals in the "Grand Voile" class he helped to form for mega-yachts that race for line honors outside the IMS rule. These



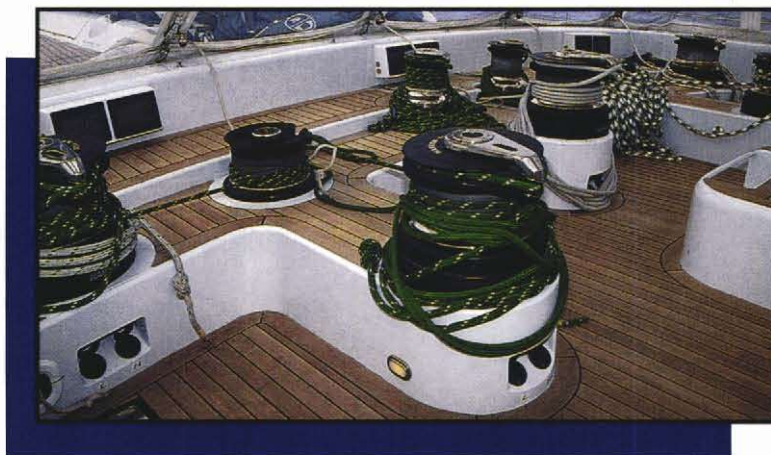
Removable padeye. As padeye is unscrewed, filler plug automatically fills hole to make fitting flush.



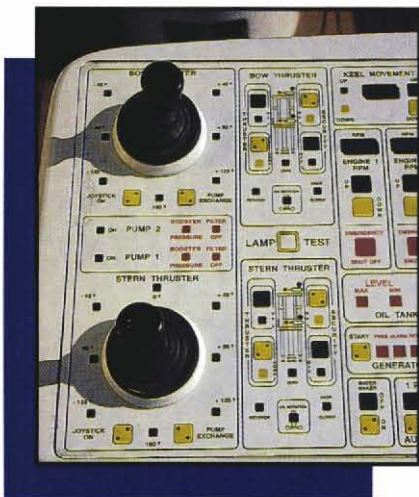
Custom lead block routes mainsheet under deck.



Steering wheel detail — carbon fiber and wood laminate typify the blending of tradition and technology on Wallygator.



Snubbing winch frees other winches. Basically a huge multipurpose stopper.



Control panel — straight out of Star Trek.

seemingly conflicting demands mean that the sailplan that is so easily tended while cruising can be powered up with big reaching Gennakers and spinnakers flown from both spars. Two special snubbing winches are used to free up the primaries for other uses — stoppers are far too small for a boat this size. Titanium AirBlocks with custom bases let Brenta lead most lines to one control area without compromising his displacement goals.

Everything about *Wallygator* is huge and that's reflected in the hardware. The self-tacking jib depends on a custom assembly of two maxi traveler cars riding on maxi traveler track. The genoa lead cars are also maxi cars as is the mainsheet traveler system. The mizzen utilizes a mini-maxi car and track.

The spinnaker pole on a boat this large is always a challenge to handle. *Wallygator*'s sits flush in a well in the foredeck and rides on a maxi traveler car on a special track anodized to blend with the track.

Every detail of this new *Wallygator* is as thoughtfully engineered and finely finished as the Wally Yachts team could make it, but some of the nicest touches didn't cost much money. There are details of bosunry, tricks the very best riggers know, that use standard small boat and dinghy hardware to tend the sheets and lines. The running backstays are snugged up to the mizzen

mast when not in use by a four part block and tackle with a cam cleat and light line. The backstays are attached by a beautifully braided lanyard eye in 'Gator Green' and can be pulled off of the mast and deployed in seconds. The mainsheet has it's own tender to keep it out of the way during jibes, and even the big, stowable dodger is tensioned with little fiddle blocks and shock cord applied creatively. Most of us have to plan months ahead for a simple project like upgrading our traveler or primaries and aren't going to build our dream boat anytime soon, but one of the wonderful things about sailboats is their infinite variety and the freedom that even the most modest of boats offers from the stop signs and time clocks, mail boxes and lawnmowers of everyday life. All boats allow us to fall back to a simpler life and interact directly with nature. Some of us already have the boat of our dreams, and some of us can only make our boats closer to our vision, but we can all share in dreams like *Wallygator* and know that there's always another boat on our horizon, and maybe it will be ours.

Joyce Tickel is the sailing writer for the Newport (RI) Daily News and is a freelance contributor to many other sailing publications. Living in Newport allows her to follow singlehanded racing, world class fleet and match racing events and construction innovations in open class, handicapped and luxury yachts at many of the top boatyards in the world. She has a 50 year old mahogany lapstrake sailing dinghy that she has been promising to get back in the water for 3 years; we're still waiting.