



PANORAMA





JUST THE WAY SHE WAS, BUT
Better

*Pendennis gives
new life to the
classic Camper
& Nicholsons
motoryacht
MARALA.*

story **ALAN HARPER**

MARALA

LOA:

191ft. 11in. (58.5m)

BEAM:

26ft. 6in. (8.08m)

DRAFT:

12ft. 6in. (3.8m)

CONSTRUCTION:

steel/aluminum

SPEED (max./cruise):

15/12 knots

RANGE:

4,000 nm

GROSS TONNAGE:

499

NAVAL ARCHITECTURE:

Camper & Nicholsons

EXTERIOR STYLING:

George Nicholson

INTERIOR DESIGN:

Muza Lab

BUILDER:

Camper & Nicholsons

REFIT:

Pendennis

© Camper & Nicholson
Archives

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on this opener of the yachts
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P

erfect proportions, an elegant sheer and a confident presence just the right side of regal: Marala could only have come from a handful of yards, and your first guess will probably be right.

She launched in 1931 from Camper & Nicholsons in England, and, at 193 feet (59.5 meters) length overall, was one of the largest yachts of her day. Now, just out of a three-year refit at Pendennis in Falmouth, England, she is not only in top form and ready to resume her illustrious career as a thoroughly modern motoryacht, but is also astonishingly original, with a uniquely authentic onboard ambience.

“She has been restored to her 1950s profile,” says Chris Lawrence, her captain, known to one and all as “Lawrie.”

Certain changes made during the war or shortly afterwards have been retained,

such as her extended upper deck; the fatter, more pleasing funnel shape; and, most important for Lawrie, the enclosed wheelhouse. Bulwarks that had been added were taken off.

“So, she’s the only yacht to come out of the yard shorter than when she went in,” Toby Allies, joint managing director at Pendennis, says with a smile.

Earlier in her career, Marala was chartered by crooner Frank Sinatra, played host to the artist Salvador Dali, and entertained the French actor Alain Delon as well as sundry European royals. She has cruised to Scandinavia and the Caribbean, and throughout the Mediterranean. New owners came and went, along with new names—Zapala was one, Gaviota IV another—but then, in 1962, she was bought by Robert de Balkany, a French retail developer, who loved her just the way she was.

He based her in Piraeus, Greece, cruised to Venice and the Côte d’Azur every summer, and looked after her carefully, never missing an appointment with the Lloyd’s surveyor. To this day, according to Lawrie, she is the oldest vessel to have remained continuously “in class” on the register.

De Balkany kept Marala for 53 years, until his death in 2015.

Direction: Nos in ta rem
octus nocrum talabem
publinclus hocum nos
actem essestu iam
loc omnes inum forit.
Onementrum quamei faci
sedienatus, sulicie



She came to her current American owner, her fifth, as a perfect time capsule. After an engine rebuild in Malta in 2019, she was shipped to Falmouth to undergo the sort of keel-up refit for which the Pendennis shipyard has become renowned.

Design work on the new interior was entrusted to Muza Lab, a studio in London. As much wood as possible was saved and reused, including the mahogany joinery of the deckhouse. New paneling and furniture were created in the period style using shipyard drawings, watercolors and photographs, and the 1950s-look fabric finishes were replaced with designs to match the new owner's tastes. Patina was preserved, such as the old scars and bolt holes in the wheelhouse sole, testifying to changing generations of equipment during almost a century of seafaring.

"The old spruce floor in the owner's suite is quite special," Lawrie says. "It was protected under carpets and had been planked on end. Pendennis relaid them flat, and they're in beautiful condition."

It could hardly be said that they look their age; they appear to be as good as new, but this timber came from shipyard stocks that were already 300 years old when her builders first fitted them. Equally authentic is her original windlass. It might have been converted from electric to hydraulic operation, but it still proudly bears its maker's brass plaque: "Emerson Walker Limited, Gateshead & London."

Marala's early history reads like a roll call of prominent British industrialists. Designed—of course—by Charles Nicholson and constructed by Camper and Nicholsons in its Southampton yard, Marala was built to the order of Montague Napier, the third generation of a legendary engineering family whose company made record-breaking cars and boats, and then aircraft engines. When Montague died at 60, before he was able to take delivery or even give his beautiful new yacht a name, she was launched and registered under her yard number, and known simply as 388.

Charles Nicholson sold her to another manufacturing magnate, Sir Charles Richard Fairey of aviation fame. He named her Evadne, and she was soon playing her elegant part among the rich and famous, hosting the Crown Prince of Norway during the Coronation Regatta, taking aviatrix Amelia Earhart to meet her fans in Cherbourg, France, and gracing the Solent during Cowes Week in England.

Her destiny was not to lie in a life of idleness and luxury, however. Or, not at first. At the outbreak of World War II in 1939, perhaps mindful of all the money he had made selling aircraft to the Royal Navy, Sir Charles handed his yacht over to the British government for the duration. M/Y Evadne became HMS Evadne.

Many yachts, launches, ferries and small craft suffered the same fate, their brightwork dulled by naval paint, their pristine decks

pockmarked by the hobnails of service-issue boots. Most of them had a quiet time on routine patrol and escort duties, but the elegant Evadne—with a 4-inch gun mounted on her bow, a couple of depth-charge launchers, and a 40-millimeter "pom-pom" on her upper deck (where she now sports a magnificent copper hot tub, surrounded by original teak gratings)—found herself in the thick of it on at least two occasions. In the Strait of Gibraltar, she severely damaged a U-boat that was later caught and sunk, and in the Irish Sea, she shot down a German aircraft. "Or so we believe," Lawrie says. "We're still researching that one."

Unusually, Evadne's war was documented by not one, but two of the men who served on board. Harold Taylor was her first mate when war broke out, and stayed aboard, rising to first lieutenant and then to captain. His memoir, A Captain's Tale, was published in the 1980s. Commander A. H. Cherry, an American banker from Wall Street who volunteered for the Royal Navy before the United States entered the war, also served aboard Evadne. His book, Yankee R.N., came out in 1952.

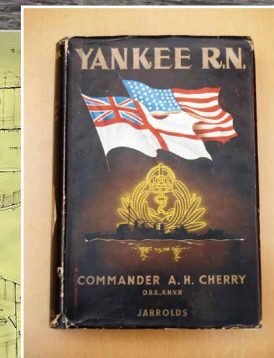
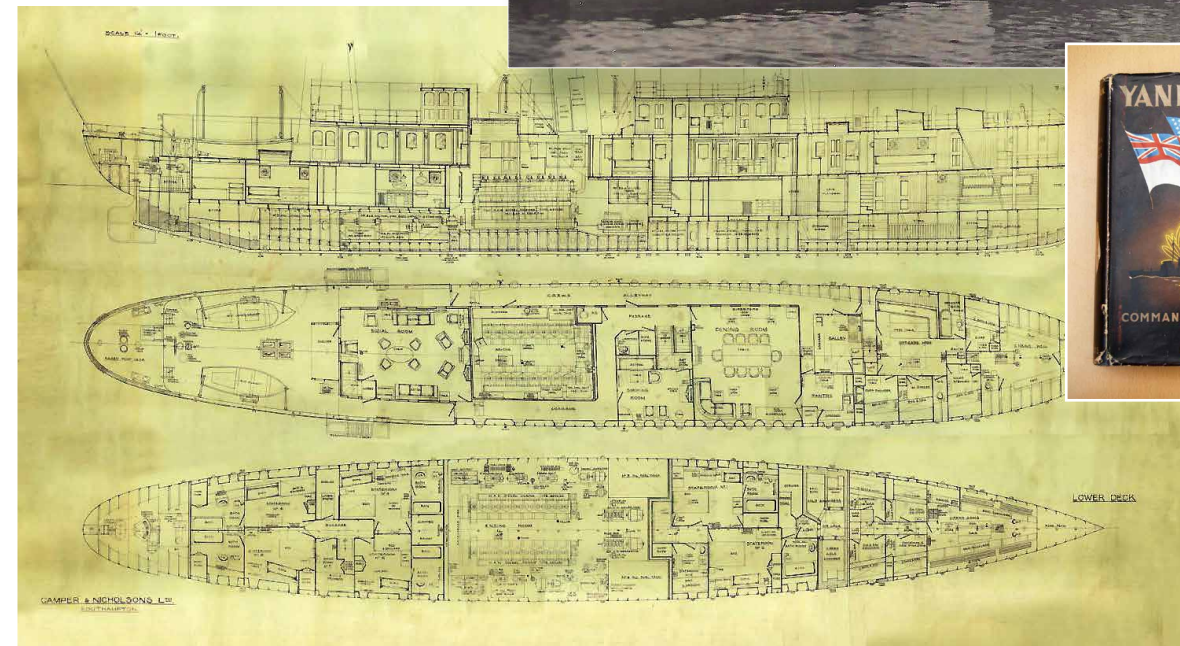
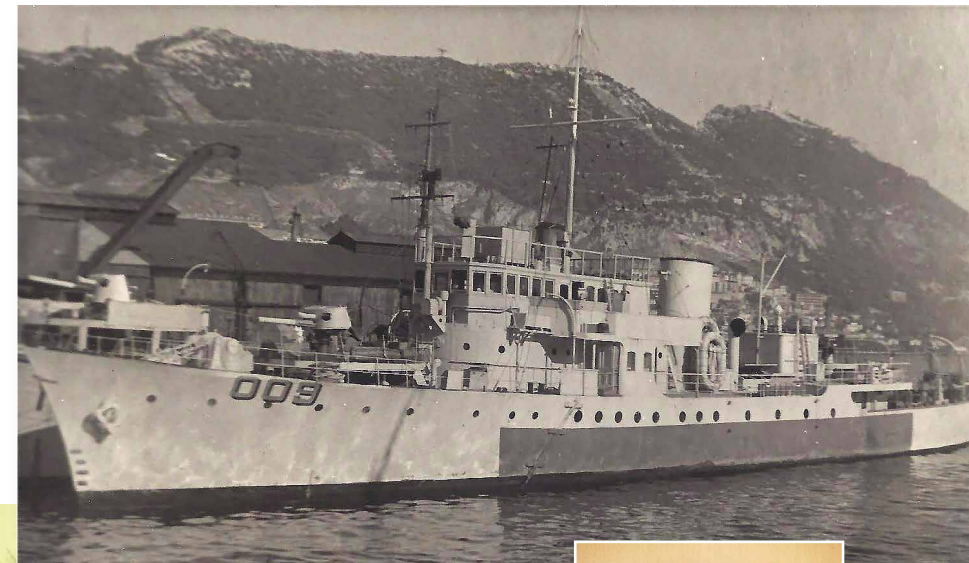
The original brass engine telegraphs that these men would have been so familiar with are still connected and fully functional. Although using them would lend even more authenticity to the Marala experience, Lawrie admits to preferring the electric push-button controls mounted alongside.

Marala might have been modernized, but she is still far from modern. There is no physical link between the wheelhouse

and the engine room. The helmsman makes his request, and the engineer, far below, fulfils it.

"With the electrical system, a light comes on when the engineer acknowledges the order, so I know it has been received," Lawrie says. "We also have an audio link, so I can talk to the engine-room crew. For example, if we're coming into port, I can give them notice that in five minutes I will be wanting to engage reverse. And there's CCTV too, so I can see the order being carried out."

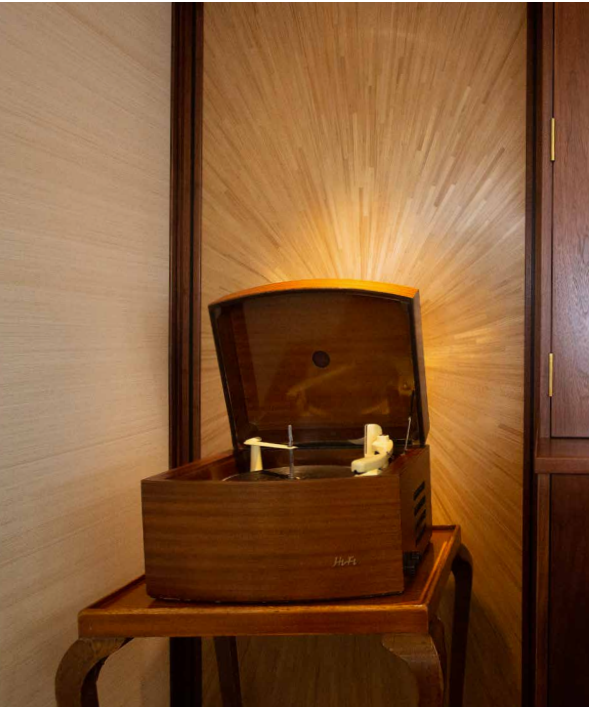
“Here is the spot for the dek on this opener of the yachts section, beautiful boat.”



Direction: Nos in ta rem octus nocrum talabem
publinclus hocum nos actem essestu iam loc
omnes imum forit. Onementrum quamei faci
sedienatus, sulicie njnte, C. Nos dios, clabem
nissa intemposus consil utus venterv ivivatu
effrei poterips, utebat,



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In a throwback to the era of fully manned machinery spaces, Marala’s original twin eight-cylinder MAN diesels are mounted just abaft midships in a two-deck engine room. These are authentically low-revving ship motors, relaxed and reliable, producing 750 horsepower each and moving Marala into “slow ahead” at just 110 rpm, with her 12-knot cruising speed coming up at 250 rpm. The pistons span nearly 14 inches in diameter.

Before reverse gears, the only way to get the propellers turning the other way was to stop the engines and restart them in reverse, a task that raised the need to think ahead when coming into a harbor to a whole new level.

“It does take some getting used to,” Lawrie admits with a laugh. “You request reverse, and then you wait. You’re on a 190-foot yacht, just drifting, with no power. It doesn’t feel right.” But the old engines haven’t let him down yet.

Marala left Falmouth in August, bound for the Mediterranean—an old yacht, perhaps, but entering a new era. ♦

For more information: pendennis.com

