

# ZERLINA's Remarkable Journey



In 1967, Burger Boat Company in Manitowoc, Wisconsin USA, built Hull 216C, the LEIPAL, for Doyle W. Cotton Jr. The Cotton family owned LEIPAL for 18 years before Paul R. Ilyinsky purchased the vessel and named her ANGELIQUE. The Ilyinsky's sold her and she fell into disrepair. Eventually the yacht was abandoned and on the verge of being scrapped. In 2011, Hull 216C was purchased by Bjarke Fugl and Karla M. Polito and renamed "ZERLINA" and her restoration began. Bjarke, whose home is in Denmark, relocated to Florida for seven months to restore ZERLINA. Today, at 44 years old, ZERLINA has just begun the longest journey of her life.

Her initial voyage, from Florida to Denmark, was just the beginning!

**ZERLINA's Journey:** Six weeks and 4860 nautical miles

**Captain/Owner:** Bjarke Fugl and Karla M. Polito

**Crew:** Anders Bjarnø Rasmussen, Richard DeWolf and Robert Keim



**June 12, 2012**—ZERLINA is launched in Green Cove Springs, Florida. Having been restored by her owners, ZERLINA was ready for her voyage to her new home. As it was time to bid farewell, almost everyone from the city came to the docks to see us off. The voyage to Denmark had just begun!

**June 16 2012**—Green Cove Springs, Florida to Jacksonville, Florida

**June 18, 2012**—Jacksonville, Florida to Charleston, North Carolina

**June 26, 2012**—Charleston, North Carolina to Atlantic City, New Jersey

**June 28, 2012**—Atlantic City, New Jersey to New York, New York

We arrived in New York harbor on the eve of America's 236th birthday and found no place to dock ZERLINA. Captain Bjarke, maneuvering in the choppy waters of the Hudson River, brought the nimble ZERLINA alongside the walls of Battery Park, where our new crew members, eager to start the voyage, tossed their bags and leaped aboard ZERLINA.

There is no greater place to enjoy the Macy's fireworks spectacular than on your own yacht in the Hudson River! An evening of fireworks, seeing old friends and creating new ones was what the first day of our voyage was all about. Bjarke, Anders, Richard and Bob were now the team to take ZERLINA to Denmark.

**July 7, 2012**—New York, New York to New Bedford, Massachusetts



The first couple of days were spent taking small trips and getting ready for the Atlantic crossing. We spent a day in New York City where we took the tender into the city and walked to Fin's. We decided that since it may be the last time we saw a real city; we would enjoy singing Neil Diamond's "Ramblin Rose" at the karaoke bar while indulging in the salty taste of fresh margaritas. ZERLINA's final preparations were made; food was stored, loose items were packed for safe keeping, a lengthy systems testing, safety check lists reviewed and drills performed. No matter the confidence of the crew or how stout and dependable the quality of a Burger yacht, safety is paramount. But now, a big decision needed to be made. Which direction would we head? With a democratic vote, we chose the northern route. This route included Greenland, the land of glaciers and polar bears, as opposed to the shorter and warmer route to the popular islands of the Azores, maybe next time.

**July 10, 2012**—New Bedford, Massachusetts to Port Hawkesbury, Nova Scotia, Canada

While crossing Cape Cod Bay, we were joined by a large whale and three dolphins on our portside. Absolutely beautiful!

Earlier that day, Bjarke, Richard and Anders decided that these might be the warmest waters we might be in for some time, so we jumped off the swim platform! Once we realized how cold the water really was, there was an even quicker jump out of the water. It was a sunny day and the temperature of the water was

soon forgotten so we repeated the routine two or three more times. The four of us are different ages, but we all felt like little kids playing in our local swimming hole.

A whale passed us early that day, showing its large tail and slapping the water—by contrast, a Disney and Carnival ship passed in the evening. The moon rose with its fiery glory, does the moon always rise over the ocean so beautiful?

Early on the ninth day of our voyage, we pulled ZERLINA into Port Hawksbury. The hills were a pleasant change of scenery but, when Bjarke called customs we found out that they were a four hour drive away. Waiting aboard ZERLINA made the hills feel even further away, but an older couple in the boat next to us kept us company with their 9-month old puppy and fresh cookies. Puppies, cookies, grandparents!

**July 12, 2012**—Port Hawkesbury, Nova Scotia to Nanortalik; Greenland to Frederiksdal; Greenland to Prins Christian Sund Greenland—one of the most beautiful places on earth with huge icebergs.

The straits of Bells Isle are where we started keeping a double watch for icebergs. During Richard's watch, he spots another whale—a Killer Whale this time. It was noted by all that the whales were always seen on Richard's watch. To our starboard side is Cape Breton Island with vertical cliffs and quaint white farmhouses dotting the shoreline. The waters off Newfoundland and Labrador can be rife with ice and icebergs, so caution is advised. Icebergs are usually visible on radar, but the bergy bits (small icebergs) and growlers (small remnants) may not be.

The moon is getting smaller each evening. The compass slowly and gracefully swings, telling us which way to go. As we are drawing a line to Greenland, we clear the deck of anything that could be lost to the seas in rough weather. Expecting 20' waves on a calm day, what should we expect or be ready for? Of all the boats built in the world, most stay close to their home port, but ZERLINA is in unfamiliar waters, with unfamiliar sunsets and sunrises.

What a week! Nothing was written as the seas of the Labrador Sea were very heavy. The crew watches were now four hours on and four hours off, with two people having a two hour overlap. We zigzagged through the fjords to the weather station on the eastern side of Greenland, called Prins Christian Sund, where we were served Danishes, coffee and juice. The weather report showed a favorable high pressure so we headed out into the arctic, dodging icebergs, growlers and bits for 24 nautical miles.

We arrived in Nanortalik earlier in the week after four days of bad weather and angry waves! Tossing about makes some men tougher and weakens others. No matter which you are; it feels good to have your feet on solid ground. Darkness was still on the shore as we approached Nanortalik, forcing us to take turns on the bow with the VHS giving signals to Bjarke as we navigated the iceberg strewn waters. The fog began to lift and an incredible coastline of jagged mountains, towering icebergs and small islands softened by the power of the eroding waves gave us a view worth the four days at sea. Bjarke skillfully docked ZERLINA and, after crafting a rum and coke with ice from our travels, we jumped ashore.

The next morning we enjoyed fresh bakery and headed back to the boat. Bob had stayed on board to protect the fuel from thieves. Bob and Richard changed the oil and Bjarke and Anders worked on adjusting the starter motor. ZERLINA was carrying the four of us through the most amazing waters with icebergs of every shape and size. We had two goals for icebergs: to get beautiful photographs with ZERLINA and to climb aboard an iceberg and make it our playground.

To get photographs meant we had to be in a different boat, so Richard captained the dinghy while Anders took the photographs. The iceberg we wanted to photograph was simple in shape but with two ribbons of

blue flowing through it with grace and beauty. The ribbons somehow matched the shape of ZERLINA. We spent an hour taking the most incredible photos. Driving the dinghy so the sun would shine through the pure blue streaks, maintaining proper distance from ZERLINA and keeping Anders with the lens pointed in the right direction was Richard's job. It was beautiful, pure perfection, the best, or so we thought. After capturing the best photos anyone could possibly get, we took off towards Frederiksdal.



Just a few miles further east, Bjarke's and Anders' eyes lit up as we saw another iceberg we had to check out. Back into the dinghy and we were off. The right side had a gentle curve to the top, the left side was much steeper, but the two sides were about the same height. What drew our attention to this iceberg was that it gradually sloped to a perfect flat center, just about 3' from the surface of the icy arctic water, providing us a perfect height to climb aboard.

Bjarke donned a bright red US Coast Guard survival suit and was the first one to the dinghy. Richard drove the dinghy and pushed the nose straight into the berg and let the motor run so there was constant pressure between the two. With a successful dismount, the big red Bjarke was running around the ice. Feeling that everything was safe, Anders joined Bjarke and Richard stayed in the dinghy for security reasons.

Climbing onto a huge chunk of ice was like stepping on the moon. Something you just can't imagine, so beautiful and scary at the same time. Tossing the anchor onto the ice, the three of us met and played like little kids seeing snow for the first time. There was a shallow pool, maybe 20 yards across, where we all drank the coolest and most refreshing water ever. Climbing to the top was, to say the least, very difficult and slippery. We slowed as we reached the tiny summit because we didn't know what was on the other side. We were climbing with our hands and feet, but when we reached the top, we were able to stand and face a perfectly blue lake, about 80' across, with the sea between us and the mountains of Greenland. Though it was so inviting to try and go swimming, we were sure the shock of the ice cold water would paralyze us. Instead, we slid down the hill we had just climbed. Not with a sled, or disk, or chunk of plastic, just on our rears, our backs and arms, laughing all of the way. We had too much adrenaline to feel how cold we should have been and, after a few moments of reflecting on where we were, what we had just seen and done, we got back in the dinghy and headed back to ZERLINA.



**July 21, 2012** - Greenland to Thurso, Scotland

**July 30, 2012** – Thurso, Scotland through the Kiel Channel

**August 3, 2012** – Rendsburg, Germany – A sailor's welcome, Bjarke and crew were welcomed by his 80 year-old German grandmother and his parents

**August 4, 2012** - Thurøbund Shipyard, Thurø, Denmark four days before Bjarke's 27<sup>th</sup> birthday. Captain and crew warmly welcomed by friends and family all waving the Danish flag.

The plan for ZERLINA is to cruise around Scandinavia for a few years before she again will cruise the seven seas.



**Captain & Owner:** Bjarke Fugl and Karla M. Polito

