



Southampton
SOLENT
University

What's the whisper about Whisper?

On Friday 12 September Southampton Solent graduate Geoff Holt, the first quadriplegic sailor to sail solo across the Atlantic, will be unveiling the University's latest exciting technological development - an innovation which could change the face of small boat inshore racing.

This year's PSP Southampton Boat Show will give the industry its first real look at 'Solent Whisper' - a 5.9m sailing catamaran with a cutting-edge hydrofoil system.

Designed and built using the state-of-the-art yacht design and engineering facilities at Solent's Warsash Maritime Academy and city-centre campus, the catamaran's technology has already attracted attention from world-class sailors during sea trials this summer.

The revolutionary new hydrofoil system provides stability, ease and safety, which along with an affordable projected purchase price, has the potential to offer America's Cup-style sailing to the masses. The craft's easy and stable sailing style also mean it could prove popular and accessible for disabled sailors.

Primarily designed with ease and safety in mind, Solent Whisper has also exceeded expectations on the speed front. It comfortably achieves over 25 knots and it can 'fly' on its foils in as little as five knots of wind.

The new hydrofoil technology is the brainchild of Ron Price, a Solent yacht and powercraft design graduate who is now Senior Lecturer in Naval Architecture at the University's Warsash Maritime Academy.

The prototype is the result of months of hard work made possible by the technical experience, support and skills from colleagues across the University and the state-of-the-art facilities at both the engineering workshop at the maritime academy and the composites lab at Solent.

"I was very fortunate to have access to the incredible skill and knowledge of the engineering technicians, the support of staff, and use of the superb facilities at the University," says Ron.

It is hoped that a retail production version will be available for the London Boat Show in January 2015. "We are engineering the boat in a way that the design is smart enough to keep the production costs low. I'm hoping that my design ideas will make inshore and small boat racing more accessible and affordable for the average club racer, those who sail for pleasure and people with disabilities," adds Ron.

Southampton Solent University has a reputation for leading the world in maritime education and technology, and Ron is one of a long line of design graduates who continue to shape the world of sailing including: Jason Ker, working on Sir Ben Ainslie's GB America's Cup bid; Guillaume Verdier, who designed the yachts that came both first and second at 2012 Vendee Globe; German Frers Jr; Bill Dixon; Ed Dubois; Rob Humphreys; and Juan Kouyoumdjian.

On the sailing-side world-class Solent alumni include: Helena Lucas, who won Great Britain's first ever sailing gold at the 2012 Paralympics; Paul Goodison who took gold at the 2008 Olympics; and Herve Piveteau who sailed to victory in the Production Boat Class at the Mini Transat 2008, the French equivalent of the OSTAR.

The designer, Ron Price trained at Sandhurst as an Officer Cadet and then spent seven years in the in the Armed forces, before starting his degree in Yacht Production and Design at Southampton Solent University - alongside Paralympic sailing

gold medallist Helena Lucas. Following graduation he started his marine engineering career at Rockport Engineering where he was responsible for Design Systems and Composite Engineering. Ron returned to the University as a lecturer on the Yacht Production degree courses, before moving over to Warsash Maritime Academy as a Senior Lecturer in Naval Architecture, where he currently teaches.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT THE MEDIA OFFICE ON 023 8031 9079 or press.office@solent.ac.uk

About Southampton Solent University

Southampton Solent University offers more than 23,000 students over 200 qualifications ranging from HND to PhD, in subjects such as maritime education and training, fashion and design, media and television, music, health, sport and leisure, business, IT and technology. The University was awarded the 2013 Quality Assurance kitemark for quality and standards of teaching and learning. Solent was voted one of the most creative universities in the UK in a Which? University 2013 poll of students. Solent Business School has been awarded the Small Business Charter Award, which is supported by the Association of Business Schools and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and 'gold approval' by the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA).

About Warsash Maritime Academy

[Warsash Maritime Academy](#) (WMA) - part of Southampton Solent University - has provided first-class education, training, consultancy and research to the international shipping, commercial yacht, offshore oil and gas, and renewables industries for almost 70 years. The Academy provides internationally recognised certification programmes for both deck and engineer officers from cadet level to Master (Captain) and Chief Engineer. It also offers short safety courses to develop skills such as fire fighting and sea survival, and continuous professional development modules for more experienced officers. The use of bridge, engine room and liquid cargo operations simulators are offered for higher level training, including their specialist ship handling training centre, of which it is one of only three major facilities of its kind in the world.

About Warsash Superyacht Academy

Warsash Superyacht Academy (WSA) is the world leader in superyacht training and education. The Academy offers more than 138 accredited deck, engineering and interior courses and other bespoke services to the yachting industry. As part of the world-renowned Warsash Maritime Academy, the teaching faculty includes more than 100 expert maritime lecturers. The scale and range of training facilities is unmatched worldwide. Clear progression routes are available for crew who are looking to further their careers, starting with basic STCW safety training, and leading to both yacht and unlimited officer programmes.