



September 30, 2001

New York Sailors Winners With Symbolism

By **HERB McCORMICK**

For many of the country's top female sailors, the place to be last week was Chesapeake Bay, the site of the 2001 Rolex International Women's Keelboat Championships, which this year was contested in J/22's.

Befitting the quality of the competition, three of the four sailors aboard the winning entry in the 61-boat fleet were former winners of the watchmaker's prestigious Yachtwoman of the Year Award: the skipper, Cory Sertl, of Rochester; the 2000 Olympic silver medalist in the 470 class, Pease Glaser; and an Annapolis, Md.-based sailor, Susan Dierdorff Taylor.

And another woman from Annapolis, the sailing coach Dina Kowalyshyn, added an extra dash of local knowledge to the star-studded team.

Capping a dominating performance, Sertl's team wrapped up the victory last Thursday and did not need to sail Friday's final race. Some 50 places aft in the standings, however, a quartet of sailors whose home is New York Harbor were also clear winners in their own right.

At 39, the Manhattan-based skipper Danielle Gallo does not wear an engraved Rolex on her wrist, nor does she harbor Olympic aspirations. She competes in the sport for one pure reason: She's simply wild about racing sailboats.

"There are some amazing sailors here," Gallo said about Sertl and others in the fleet.

"There've been times we've gotten off the starting line near them, but we can't stay with them because they know all the tricks of the trade. But it's great sailing against them. They're really fabulous."

A graduate of the Rhode Island School of Design and a self-employed creative director who works in advertising and publishing, Gallo grew up on Long Island but was not bitten by the sailing bug until she joined the Manhattan Yacht Club in 1993.

"I hadn't raced before but as soon as I started I really got into it, I just loved it," she said. "It was just so exciting and so much fun."

Based in the city's financial district at the North Cove Yacht Harbor, in normal times the Manhattan Yacht Club's 400-plus members have access to the club's impressive fleet of J/24's and Lasers, and a weeknight racing program with spring, summer and fall seasons.

But with the club's headquarters just a long block from the site of the World Trade Center ruins from the terrorist attack, the club's commodore, Michael Fortenbaugh, said that sailboat racing now is a low priority and that it is unlikely that this fall's racing program will resume.

But Fortenbaugh had guarded optimism about the future. "It'll take time, but this part of the city will come back and be better than ever," he said. "We represent just a small part of it, the recreational aspect, but that's important, too."

Gallo, one of the club's three dedicated female racing skippers, has competed with distinction

Advertisement

Technology Update

[Finally--a "cure" for bad breath!](#)

[Natural de-icer means you'll have to shovel less this winter](#)

[Get instant warmth in the coldest conditions](#)

[Record TV without the commercials](#)

[Vision expert creates lamp to reduce eye strain and glare](#)

[Private DVD theater puts a floating 6-foot screen right before your eyes](#)

[You can't change the weather, but now you can be prepared](#)

[Why spend hundreds on a bigger monitor enlarge the one you have](#)

Click for the complete story

Advertisement

in regattas throughout the Northeast and the Caribbean. She landed a berth during the recent America's Cup Jubilee in Cowes, England.

In addition to her accomplishments on the race course, she was honored in 1998 with the club's annual Sportsmanship Award. "I like the camaraderie and the teamwork in sailing," she said. "But I also really enjoy giving something back and helping other people and bringing them into it."

In the immediate aftermath of the terrorist attack, Gallo's sponsors for the Rolex, the New York Harbor Foundation, briefly wavered in their support of her campaign. Ultimately, however, the foundation, one goal of which is to build awareness of the harbor as a site for sailing, saw value in backing her effort, Gallo said

"They thought the best way to show we're going to rebuild our city was to have the foundation and the harbor represented at a national event," Gallo said. "It's really important to show people that New York is moving forward."

So with her sail trimmer and fellow club member, Theresa Hichborn, and New Jersey-based sailors who regularly race on the harbor, Kristen Gantt and Lara Bertekap, Gallo set off for the Chesapeake.

Swapping the swift currents of New York Harbor for the shifty winds of the Chesapeake, Gallo and her mates turned the keelboat event into a learning experience. But after the events in her home city, it was not only easy for her to remain philosophical about her scores, but also to sort out the things that truly matter.

"We're not doing great and that's frustrating, but we're here, we're sailing and we're making some good friends," she said. "Sure, I'd like to do better but in the big scheme of things, well, it's not that important."

[Copyright 2001 The New York Times Company](#) | [Privacy Information](#)