

# THE TOP WOMEN IN AMERICAN BOATING

Once upon a time, women were constrained in their outdoor activities both by public opinion and by hot, restrictive clothing. No more. Today, the number of women at the helm is rising. Female boaters have leadership roles in all aspects of the sport, including sailing, powerboating, racing, sportfishing, politics, wakeboarding, and boat manufacturing. The inspiring women we celebrate this month are a few of the most impressive who are setting the trend. *By Louisa Beckett*



## Dean Of Women's Sailing: Doris Colgate

Few women in boating are better known than Doris Colgate. Co-owner, CEO, and president of Steve and Doris Colgate's Offshore Sailing School, with eight locations in the U.S. and Caribbean, she's had a hand in making more than 100,000 students into better boaters over nearly four decades.

Not satisfied with merely educating sailors, she also works on their behalf. Colgate has been a member of the BoatU.S. National Advisory Council since 1997, and serves on Sail America's Marketing Committee.

She and Steve have received so many leadership awards and accolades over the years, there simply isn't space to list them all here.

Colgate literally wrote the book on boating for women: *Sailing, A Woman's Guide*. She founded the National Women's Sailing Association in 1990 and the Women's Sailing Foundation in 1997. She finds working with women very rewarding,

and loves watching the confidence they develop offshore spill over to life on land. "That's such a great feeling," she says.

## Marchesa Of Speed: Katrin Theodoli

The only woman in America — possibly the world — to own and run a high-performance boat company, Katrin Theodoli first experienced boating in the most romantic way possible, during a summer vacation near Rome. "This awesome hull came towards us at full speed and slowed down just in front of us. A charming Italian was at the wheel. I fell in love immediately."

Filipo Theodoli was a Magnum distributor at the time. He and Katrin married, bought Magnum Marine — founded by boating legend Don Aronow in 1976 — then moved to Miami to run the company together. When her husband passed away in 1990, leaving her to raise their son, Theodoli also took control of every

"I try to translate the message to women that when you learn to sail, you get that sense of empowerment."  
— Doris Colgate,  
sailing school owner

## Heavy Medal: Anna Tunnicliffe

Few things in life can equal standing on the podium at the Olympics, listening to the “*Star-Spangled Banner*,” with a gold medal around your neck. That dream became reality for U.S. Sailing Team member Anna Tunnicliffe of Perrysburg, Ohio, who took home the gold in the Laser Radial Class in the 2008 Olympic regatta in Qingdao, China. Tunnicliffe is no stranger to winning. An all-around athlete, she competed in swimming and track events during high school, and turned down more than one track scholarship in order to concentrate on sailing in college.

The 2008 Olympics capped a phenomenal year during which she hung onto her title as the #1

woman Laser Radial

sailor in the world through a series of great finishes at the 2008 Laser Radial Worlds in Auckland, the Delta Lloyd Regatta in the Netherlands, and the Semaine Olympique Francaise de Voile. She even managed to find time to get married in between these events. This February, she was named 2008 Rolex Yachtswoman of The Year. Tunnicliffe’s next goal? Back-to-back Olympic golds.



**“The finish line couldn’t arrive soon enough. As I got the gun, I was so happy and so proud to win for my country.”**

**— Anna Tunnicliffe  
Olympic gold medalist**



## Extreme Dream: Dallas Friday

Winner of an ESPY Award for Best Female Action Sport Athlete in 2004, and voted the #1 Female Rider by *Wakeboarding* magazine readers for the last eight years in a row, Dallas Friday long ago made the transition from water-sports phenom to all-out rock star. She appears in a video game, “Wakeboarding Unleashed”; a cartoon character was created in her image on the

Disney TV show “*Kim Possible*”; she’s had a popular song written about her, and at age 23, she’s the subject of a published biography.

Friday, who grew up in water-ski/wakeboarding mecca Orlando, Florida, won nearly every tournament she entered from 2001 until 2007, when an injury forced her to limit her time on the end of a towline. This year, she’s back off the bench and rarin’ to go. “Wakeboarding is an awesome sport,” she says. “One of my favorite things is to be in a boat all day, hanging with my friends.”

“My goals for 2009 are to have a healthy season, to better myself as a rider, and to get more women involved in the sport.”  
—Dallas Friday  
pro wakeboarder  
(shown in action, at right)



“I absolutely love boating. I get in touch with nature and leave the world behind.”  
— Katrin Theodoli, owner, president, CEO, Magnum Marine

aspect of Magnum. Today she builds sleek, performance machines ranging from 27 to 90 feet, reflecting her impeccable sense of style. “I’ve personally designed numerous boats,” she says, and has worked with Hermès and Roberto Cavalli in creating unique custom interiors.



## People Power: Kris Carroll

Grady-White Boats President Kris Carroll’s childhood summers were spent in Massachusetts. “I’d boat with my dad in Salem Harbor and Gloucester in a converted old lobster boat,” she says. “I did a lot of strip fishing.” She also did a lot of hull scraping. Carroll started at Grady-White in Greenville, North Carolina, as a production clerk in 1975, working her way up through the ranks to be named president in 1993. At the time, she was the only woman president of a company in the U.S. boatbuilding industry. She now also serves on the BoatU.S. National Advisory Council. The secret to her success, she says, lies in build-



**"I have a passion for people getting the most out of life." — Kris Carroll  
president, Grady-White Boats**

ing and empowering the team around her: "I have a passion for people — whether it's my boss, our customers, or our workers." Carroll's philosophy is working: Grady-White has received the J.D. Power and Associates award for "Highest in Customer Satisfaction in Coastal Fishing Boats" eight times in a row.

## Sailing CEO: Dawn Riley

Since she burst onto the scene as the only female member of the team that won the 1992 America's Cup, Dawn Riley has been breaking new ground for women in sailing. She went on to take leading roles in three more Cup campaigns — as captain of the all-woman America<sup>3</sup> team in 1995; CEO of the co-ed America True team in 2000, and general manager of the \$40-million French Areva Challenge in 2006-2007. She also skippered the only all-female entry in the 1993-94 Whitbread Round the World Race, an adventure she chronicled in her book *Taking The Helm*.

Riley, from Detroit, Michigan, learned to sail with the Sea Scouts. She has served as president of the Woman's Sports Foundation, founded by tennis great Billie Jean King. Today, she's CEO of the nonprofit America True Foundation, supporting youth sailing programs across the country. She's on the US Sailing board of directors. Coaching sailing is a new passion. "Sometimes my cheeks hurt when I come in," she says, "because I've been smiling and laughing so much."

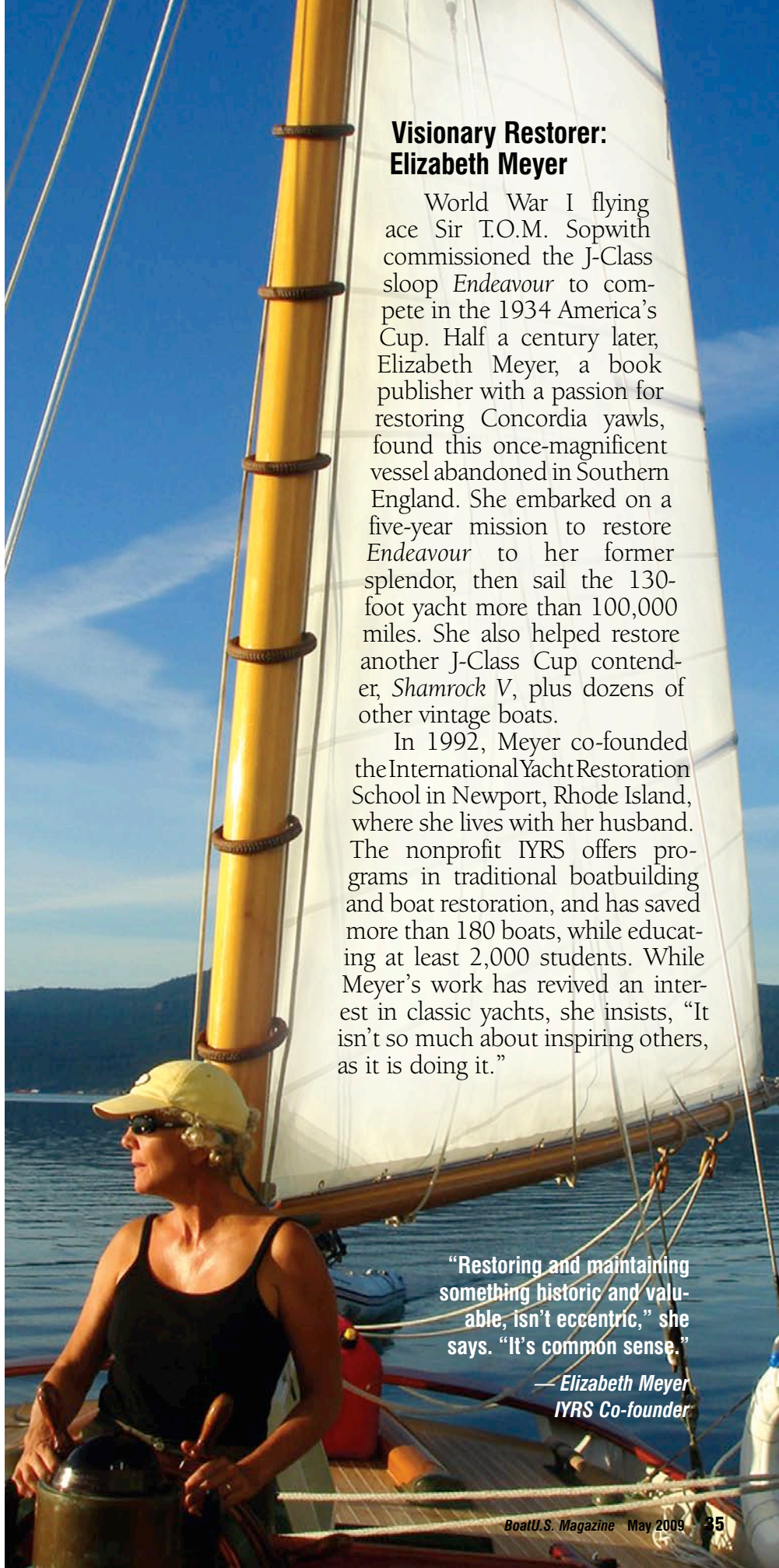
## Visionary Restorer: Elizabeth Meyer

World War I flying ace Sir T.O.M. Sopwith commissioned the J-Class sloop *Endeavour* to compete in the 1934 America's Cup. Half a century later, Elizabeth Meyer, a book publisher with a passion for restoring Concordia yawls, found this once-magnificent vessel abandoned in Southern England. She embarked on a five-year mission to restore *Endeavour* to her former splendor, then sail the 130-foot yacht more than 100,000 miles. She also helped restore another J-Class Cup contender, *Shamrock V*, plus dozens of other vintage boats.

In 1992, Meyer co-founded the International Yacht Restoration School in Newport, Rhode Island, where she lives with her husband. The nonprofit IYRS offers programs in traditional boatbuilding and boat restoration, and has saved more than 180 boats, while educating at least 2,000 students. While Meyer's work has revived an interest in classic yachts, she insists, "It isn't so much about inspiring others, as it is doing it."

**"Restoring and maintaining something historic and valuable, isn't eccentric," she says. "It's common sense."**

**— Elizabeth Meyer  
IYRS Co-founder**





**"When I was 13, I was obsessed. I stalked people, saying, 'You need me on your team.'"**  
— Dawn Riley, racing sailor



**"I'm driven to share the beauty of boating with others — especially women — becoming boaters themselves rather than the bikini-clad, back-deck passenger in days of old."**  
— Kathy Magers, freshwater angler, shown with five generations of her family



## Women In Boating

Years ago, BoatU.S. set out to encourage more women and girls to get involved in boating by sponsoring seminars, regattas, a women's web site, and a message board. Women's match-racing has risen to the highest ranks of competitive sailing since BoatU.S. sponsored the BoatU.S. Santa Maria Cup a decade ago; what was once a fledgling women's training seminar in Southern California 20 years ago is now a must-attend, sell-out event at the Women's Sailing Convention. A new women's seminar debuted last August in the Pacific Northwest; "Ladies, Let's Go Fishing!" has trained thousands of women in saltwater sportfishing, with sponsorship from BoatU.S. Marine Insurance. Several surveys of women boaters by BoatU.S. have revealed the following:

### Women, On Boat Buying:

- 30% bought a boat without involvement from a spouse or significant other.
- 60% shopped for a boat at multiple dealerships; 81% knew what make/model they wanted by reading magazines, company brochures, and visiting boat shows.
- 50% said a builder's reputation was the major factor in the purchase.

### Women, On Boating Education:

- 67% took a formal classroom boating course; 73% had hands-on training.
- 80% want more hands-on training events. Top topics: boat systems (71%), navigation (62%), boat-handling (52%).

Visit BoatUS.com/women for the latest survey results, news, links, or to join the messageboard. — Elaine Dickinson

## Unstoppable Force: Maureen McKinnon-Tucker

In 1992, a 26-year-old sailor heading home from a regatta accidentally tripped over the edge of a seawall and fell 13 feet, suffering a paralyzing spinal-cord injury. But Maureen McKinnon-Tucker of Marblehead, Massachusetts, didn't let being wheelchair-bound keep her off the water. She tried sailing the adaptive Freedom 20s at Shake-A-Leg in Newport, Rhode Island, but wanted more challenge. In 2001, disabled Sonar skipper Dr. Rick Doerr invited her to join



**"When it seems easier to navigate on the racecourse than in life, we just need to push forward."**  
— Maureen McKinnon-Tucker  
Olympian and advocate



his campaign to represent the U.S. at the 2004 Paralympic Games, and McKinnon-Tucker tasted world-class competition.

Last summer, she and her teammate, the late Nick Scandone, made it to the 2008 Paralympic Games in China, triumphed in the keelboat (SKUD-18) class, and she became the first woman ever to win a gold medal in Paralympic sailing. Racing is just a small part of McKinnon-Tucker's focus, however. A wife and mother of two, her toddler was treated for brain cancer last year; he's now doing very well. She's a peer mentor for new paraplegics in the Boston area, and serves as an adaptive sailing consultant, helping other disabled persons to become "a sailor, not a passenger."

## Calming The Waters: Lenora Clark

Helping others enjoy a sport that's brought her hours of enjoyment comes easily to Lenora Clark. A retired U.S. Postal Service executive living in the San Francisco Delta, Clark was introduced to boating by her husband Richard in the '70s; they currently own a 32-foot Bayliner. Clark's entrée to what she terms "the political side of boating" came when the couple served as delegates to the Pacific Inter-Club Yacht Association, founded in 1896 to promote yachting in the San Francisco Bay area. She's also a member of the local Ebony Boat Club and developed its scholarship program, providing "wholesome activities" for inner-city youth. She and Richard have three sons, including an Air Force colonel serving in Iraq. In 2001, Clark joined the board of directors of Recreational Boaters



**“We try to reach a friendly medium,” she says, “where everybody’s interests are served.” — Lenora Clark, boater’s advocate**

of California, an influential nonprofit advocacy group. Then, in 2005, the governor appointed her to the California Boating and Waterways Commission; she’s serving her second term. Clark brings passion to these roles, and a unique ability to give the boater’s perspective on pending legislation. She now also serves on the BoatU.S. National Advisory Council.

## A Lasting Legacy: Kathy Magers

Although her professional sport has been freshwater fishing, Kathy Magers loves boats that take her out to where the bass are biting. “I’ve had a passion for boating since my Grandpa let me steer his bay boat as a child,” she says. Magers has racked up an impressive record. A former Women’s National Champion on the Bass’n Gal Circuit, she was inducted into the Texas Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame in 2002, and the Legends of the Outdoors Hall of Fame in 2005. An advisor to the Women’s Sport Fishing Foundation and the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation, Magers hails from Texas, and is an advocate for family boating. Married for 45 years to her childhood sweetheart, she has five generations of women anglers in her family. “Now I’ve got granddaughters,” she says, “who sit on my knee and steer the boat!”

*The former editor of Motor Boating and ShowBoats International magazines, Louisa now runs her own company, Turnkey Communications & P.R., Inc. She and her husband live in Orlando, Florida.*



**“I like giving women a chance to find a new type of excitement.”**

**— Betty Bauman  
sportfishing school organizer**

## No Yelling: Betty Bauman

This energetic entrepreneur earned her place in the U.S. sportfishing pantheon not so much by catching fish as by hooking other women on the sport. A lifelong angler, Betty Bauman founded the “Ladies, Let’s Go Fishing!” series in 1997. Known as the “No-Yelling School of Fishing,” these popular seminars, held in Florida and other locations such as Costa Rica and Alaska, not only teach participants inshore and offshore angling techniques, but also give them skills to enjoy all aspects of boating and fishing, from backing a boat trailer down a ramp to filleting and cooking their catch. Conservation is a key message. “For some ladies, this is a life-changing experience,” Bauman says. She was named Woman of the Year by the American Sportfishing Association.

