



Holland, and Ian Ainslie, who represented us in Atlanta, Bruce was South Africa's best hope for an Olympic medal in the Finn. Both Roy and Ian were protégés of Bruce."

MESMERIZED

"As a teenager I was mesmerized by the stories Bruce told of living and campaigning on the European Finn circuit. His other great friend, flat mate and travelling companion was Gilbert Lambole, famous for our swing test. Initially, when they rented an apartment together neither spoke the other's language but this was no barrier. The lingua franca was Finn speak. All I ever wanted to do was sail a Finn. Happily, Bruce and I became lifelong friends. A great moment was teaming up with him to campaign a J22 in an International Championship."

In his first year at university Philip bought an old Elvstrøm Finn hull as an insurance write-off for GBP 20.

"It had a great big tear in the starboard side after a capsizing in Durban harbour, ending up on to a pylon in a falling tide. Robin Greaves, who has done many Finn Masters over the years, and I, repaired it. It was my pride and joy. Imagine as a student owning a Finn built by the great man himself."

"To become a Finn sailor one joins the ranks of an elite brotherhood of sailors. The skill sets of successful Finn sailors include extreme athleticism, a capability for clever tactical racing and a fine understanding of many integral technical challenges for setting up the boat. Relatively small differences in boat speed have to be exploited with highly concentrated effort. These attributes make for a complete sailor capable of taking on the challenges of many other classes as is evident from the exceptional track record of former Finn sailors in other disciplines of the sport."

"But, more important than any of this, is the Finn culture of 'Sail hard, play fair'. As fierce as the competition is, off the water archrivals can, and do, still socialize."

Philip has also raced a J22 at a worlds level as well as competed on board both small and large offshore keel boat races including trans-Atlantic and Indian ocean crossings, with a fifth over the line finish in a Sydney Hobart race.

"The attraction of being challenged for an extended period at sea in the company of like-minded sailors is most rewarding. However, nothing comes close to the sheer exhilaration of racing a Finn in big breeze head-to-head against equally determined competition followed by the pleasure of a cold beer and a hot meal with Finn friends afterwards. The only thing that is almost as good is racing the newly launched pocket rocket Cape31."

FINN MASTERS

Having attended every Finn World Masters since 2003, his run of 17 was only broken in 2020 by COVID-19.

"The Masters are a unique opportunity to race against the great names of the class, other competitors at one's own level

BELOW: PHILIP AT THE 2016 WORD MASTERS IN TORBOLE, LAKE GARDA, ITALY IN THE BIGGEST FINN FLEET OF ALL TIME (PHOTO: MICHAEL KURTZ)
OTHERS: AT THE 2019 WORLD MASTERS IN SKOVSHOV, DENMARK



and meet many old friends of many years standing. The Masters are so full of friendship and competition it keeps the fleet coming back year after year."

"I have three memorable Master's experiences. The most important was the first one as it started the annual pilgrimage. The mixture of intense competition on the water in Schwerin, Germany, followed by the exuberant après ski after the sailing in a wonderful marquee lined with long tables and filled with happy sailors quaffing huge jugs of beer and eating numerous German sausage rolls non-stop for a week was fantastic. I was hooked for life."

"My second most memorable Masters was 2007 in Murcia, Spain, because it was my best overall result with a 17th place. The third best Masters memory is all the others rolled into one happy recollection of friends, both on and off the water, and very often their travelling companions. No other regatta event comes close to the experience."

He has some quite strong opinions of the Masters format

"Of all the debates we have had on the Masters format over the years the one thing I would never change is the mixing of the age groups all together in a fleet that races against each other at the same time. The opportunity to sail gunwale to gunwale with the best, even if it is for a short time, is too big an opportunity to be missed. This is particularly so for someone who, for understandable political reasons, was not allowed to sail with the best in the world when a young man."

"I suspect that given numbers in recent years we may have to settle on four or five venues that can accommodate a fleet size of 350 boats and rotate annually around these locations. The European Masters and National Masters events, with smaller numbers, would then utilize the many other great venues Europe has to offer."

"Something that should be considered more carefully is a co-ordination of Masters' events around the time of the World Masters. Many who travel from outside Europe could then make an extended holiday of the trip and doing more regattas than just the Masters is a great way to capitalize on the visit."

SOUTH AFRICAN REVIVAL

About 10 years ago Finn sailing in South Africa was much rejuvenated following the establishment of the Pata Finn Africa

project, headed by Greg Davis and Philip, "with the help of a special Finn friend, Gabor Antal."

"We have built some 20 boats and masts as well as a unique boom designed by Ali Serritslev, another Finn Master. This was used by PJ Postma of Holland in the 2012 and 2016 Olympics. By the way we still have 20 blanks of these on-weight ultra-stiff booms left. Together with some imported boats there are around 30 modern Finns that compete annually at a national level. Given our weather during the year we have an almost continuous 12-month season with multiple provincial and local club championships taking place around the country."

"We even have young sailors who already aspire to join the World Masters so there will be more South Africans coming to join the fun quite soon."

Philip first became involved in the activities of World Sailing when he was made President of South African Sailing in 2014.

"At first my involvement was as a member of the African Sailing Confederation (ASCON) but subsequently I was elected to Council, the Events Committee and the Governance Commission."

In November 2020, it was election time within World Sailing and Philip stood as one of eight Vice-Presidents. These take responsibility for the overall direction and operation of the federation.

"Over the next four years my particular responsibilities as a VP is to be the Board's liaison person for Corporate Governance, Communications, Constitution Committee, Oceanic & Offshore, Racing Rules and, of course, Africa."

Most Finn sailors have an interesting story to tell unrelated to sailing, something unusual or remarkable. Philip is no different.

"I am deeply interested in the Origins of Homo Sapiens. I am a trustee of PAST (Paleontological Research in Africa-) which does special work supporting the science across Africa and especially in my country South Africa, which is a Cradle of Mankind. It is also the promoter of an initiative educating people at a time of xenophobia worldwide that all human beings are 99.9 percent alike. There is no master race – only one human race."

[Ed: Of course it goes without saying that if there were a master race, they would probably be Finn sailors.]

The Finn Masters wishes Philip the best of luck and success in his new role within World Sailing.

