

handling training for deck officer cadets. Over the years she also served in some extra-curricula roles: she was the radio relay escort ship for the Sydney to Hobart yacht races, an escort vessel for the Tall Ships' visit to Sydney, the Spectator Craft Control Centre for the 1988 America's Cup, and a training vessel for Royal Australian Navy recruits. But perhaps her most glamorous role was serving as the Bicentennial New Year's Eve party platform in Sydney Harbour for Jamie Packer, his family and friends. Among the guests of honour that night were Nicole Kidman and her then husband, Tom Cruise. Long serving bosun, Max Cassidy was lucky enough to receive a kiss on the cheek from Nicole to celebrate the dawning of the new millennium.

However, the conundrum of rising costs and reduced funding ultimately led to the Australian Maritime College's reluctant decision to part with her and place more training emphasis on its leading edge marine simulation facilities, considered to be a more cost effective training medium. On 29 June 2004, almost exactly 25 years to the

day she was purchased, the Australian Maritime College concluded the sale with her new and present owners.

Classic enthusiasts with a trained eye can clearly see the similarities in detail between this vessel and the former Royal Yacht, and she may indeed be the last remaining part sistership to *Britannia*. The Royal Yacht, like this vessel, was built in 1952, also in Glasgow, and shares numerous similarities in design and integrity. *Wyuna* is 64m in length overall with a beam of less than 12m. Built to Lloyd's LMC, she had a staggering 23,500nm range when originally commissioned.

The Australian office of construction, refit and yacht management company SuperYacht Technologies has recently released plans to convert *Wyuna* into a luxury yacht for clients (see rendering below left). Earlier in the year, following a feasibility study, the company identified the vessel as being in remarkable condition for its age. Her size and proportions were just right to warrant a full conversion to a classic luxury motor yacht. Tony Hashfield, managing director of the group, says that the vessel has been in continuous service for the first 52 years of her life and so much of the vessel is still in its original form that she is a restorers delight. The company's brief at this stage is to retain as much character as is practical but to overlay the modern comforts and thinking of today's large yachts. Having spent sometime on board the vessel during the survey phase, Tony reported that 'it looks like we have come across an exceptional vessel which our client has asked us to take care of and help decide the vessel's future. There is no budget and the beneficiaries of the vessel prefer to be kept private and out of the limelight.'

Capable of global cruising, the re-design will rip out the three English Electric 489kW propulsion units that drive two shafts. Each of these original engines have been in service for over 110,000 hours. Despite the fact that they still get started regularly, they use a very high DC voltage and are



Far left: *Wyuna* at present
Above: *Wyuna* as a pilot vessel in Melbourne in 1952
Right: the original engine room with its three English Electric propulsion units



considered probably a little too 'sparky' for the modern day engineer; to say nothing of a little dangerous if not handled correctly. New propulsion will be installed to attain a cruising speed of between 16 and 18 knots. The vessel has the internal volume for the owners to achieve a lot in terms of facilities and comfort. The refit will create accommodation for up to 18 guests and interior plans include a full-beam indoor swimming pool and gymnasium. The design will also allow for an owners' apartment with its own private balcony deck – a more appealing option for an owner who wants to stay on board for extended periods than the traditional layout found on many of today's large yachts. Up to four classic craft will be positioned on deck while the service craft will be placed on the deck below.

The budget for restoration has been set at between US\$25 and 35 million, depending on whether the vessel is to be restored for charter or private use. There are currently two very different design options – the classic, simple and purist option is along the lines originally proposed by naval architects in 1952. As the owner's representatives, SuperYacht Technologies has been instructed

to detail the design plans and look at both options including a full conversion with the intention of selling the vessel on. The company has been entrusted with advising the owners as the project develops. If a suitable purchaser is found who is interested in completely restoring *Wyuna* as a private yacht, then it will be considered, otherwise, the present owners will continue with the project. Reconstruction work is expected to be completed in Australia, which has all the necessary resources and skill base to rebuild the vessel. However, given that she can move under her own power, the company are also looking at Asia as an option. Three months have been allocated to the re-design and tendering phase and then, depending on the overall requirements, the target of two years has been set for the rebuilding phase, with a proposed delivery in 2009.

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