



# WIND IN THEIR *Sails*

BY KEITH W. STRANDBERG

## SAILING HELPS OFFICINE PANERAI SOLIDIFY ITS IMAGE, MEET NEW CUSTOMERS AND GIVE BACK

For the seventh year in a row, Officine Panerai is the title sponsor of the exciting Panerai Classic Yacht Challenge (PCYC). Having long ago forged its reputation as the original watch and instrument supplier to the Italian Navy, Panerai relishes its long association with the sea. And it's difficult to imagine a better sponsorship initiative for this brand than one involving sailing and classic yachts. It just makes sense.

“Classic yachts express an amazing blend of uniqueness, authenticity, passion, craftsmanship and timeless beauty, and this is exactly the same mix that a piece of *haute horlogerie* holds,” says Angelo Bonati, CEO at Officine Panerai. “Moreover, the association to the sailing world is natural for a brand like Panerai: our historical link with the sea was forged in the early years of the 20th century. Undoubtedly, becoming a key player in the classic yachting scene has helped us to gain recognition in the sailing world from some who may not have been part of our historical clientele but were very close to Panerai’s values.”





Panerai Luminor 1950 8 Days Chrono Monopulsante GMT (PAM 275)

This year, the PCYC ranges from Europe to the US and back again, including regattas in such exotic locales as Antigua, France, Italy, the Isle of Wight, Marblehead, Nantucket, Newport and Spain. These events are exciting for the great yacht racing, but it's also a spectacular sight to behold when so many beautiful classic yachts gather on the same stretch of coastline.

"When I attend any of the regattas, I feel happy and proud—not just because I love the sea and classic yachts but also because I see a long-term project becoming real, day after day. Panerai is becoming a real protagonist of this highly fascinating world," Bonati details. "There is also something more personal that is key for me: the sense of freedom that the sea inspires. The sea brings me back to my childhood, evoking extraordinary adventures from my fantasy."

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—ANGELO BONATI

Eilean in Antigua



Eilean competing in the Antigua Classic Yacht Regatta



## GLOBAL POSITIONING

Follow the teams competing in the Panerai Transat Classique in real time at [transatclassique.geovoile.com](http://transatclassique.geovoile.com)



Black Watch receives the North American Circuit Trophy from Panerai NA's Rafael Alvarez in the PCYC 2011

### OCEAN CROSSING

New on the sailing calendar this year is the Panerai Transat Classique, a special 4,000-mile transatlantic race for classic yachts, organized in partnership with the Atlantic Yacht Club. Casting off from Cascais, Portugal, in early December, dozens of classic yachts will set their bearings for Barbados. More than 40 classic yachts entered the Panerai Transat Classique in early registration,

including some of the grandest and best-known classic yachts like *Pen Duick II*, *Moonbeam IV* and the *Blue Peter*.

"When I first considered sponsoring the Panerai Transat Classique, I immediately saw the opportunity to be part of a unique event, expressing the strong passion for the sea that universally unites boat owners, skippers and crews," Bonati explains. "Dozens of classic yachts crossing the Atlantic Ocean represent an unmatched sight, but also a courageous challenge to 'time and tides.' Thus, the race adds something new to our presence in the classic sailing world."

The winner of the challenging ocean race will receive a special edition Panerai watch (limited to 500 pieces) with the Panerai Transat Classique logo engraved on the back. "The special edition watch created for the Panerai Transat Classique is special not only for the beautiful engraving on the back of the case but also for the specific functions linked to the race itself," Bonati explains. "So far, all the special edition watches created to celebrate the Panerai Classic Yachts

Challenge have featured specific functions—chronographs or extreme water resistance, for example—somehow linked to the world of the sea and the regattas. The exciting news now is that we have been working for five years on a brand new movement for a timepiece with all the functions for competition of the regatta." Those hoping for more specifics about the special watch and its functions will have to wait until September for further details. Panerai isn't saying anything more as of press time.



PCYC awards ceremony in Antibes, June 2011





Panerai prepares for a Sailing Heals event onboard the Nantucket Lightship to benefit Nantucket Cottage Hospital

## GIVING BACK

Through its involvement with classic yacht racing, Panerai has been able to give back to communities by arranging sailing events on special yachts. “We all live in the same world, and we are not blind, so even as a luxury brand, we are perfectly aware that there is more to life,” Bonati explains. “Giving back is a must and a highly rewarding experience.”

*Eilean*, Panerai’s fully restored 1936 Bermudan ketch, has become an important part of the Panerai Classic Yachts Challenge worldwide. “*Eilean* gave us the inspiration to help people in need enjoy the beauty of sailing and the sea,” says Bonati. “Since the beginning of the restoration, we knew that *Eilean* would be the perfect tool for these kinds of initiatives: her patrimony of beauty had to be shared with others. In the US, where the Panerai regattas are closely connected to the local communities, we founded Sailing Heals to be a vehicle to obtain these same goals.”

Sailing Heals is a program that provides special sailing experiences to cancer patients, survivors and caregivers. “We partner with volunteer sailors to offer our VIP patient guests and their caregivers a great day on the water,” details Trisha Boisvert, executive director of Sailing Heals ([sailingheals.org](http://sailingheals.org)). “It’s terrific to see the smiles come out, they just get bigger and bigger as the day goes on, and you can see the stress and fatigue just melt away. It also gives people a great experience. I was talking with a woman in New York recently who has stage-four breast cancer and small children, and she is really looking forward to going out on the water with them, so they can have another great memory as a family. Each new request becomes our mission for the next outing, and the sailing community, fortunately, always comes through. It’s a wonderful community of givers.”



Panerai Luminor Submersible Titanium (PAM 0025)



“Panerai NA was looking to do something in the communities where they host regattas, and when they asked their clients, most said that cancer had touched their lives in one way or another, so Panerai decided to tie in the beautiful and rare world of classic sailing in a way that would do the most good and still celebrate the sea. That became our initial focus.”

“Since then, we have found so many generous host captains, classic sailors and boat owners alike,” she continues. “Panerai opened the doors to provide sailing experiences to many who would not otherwise have the chance. Whether it’s on a classic boat or a modern fishing boat or yacht, any day on the water with good, caring people can be a healing experience.”

“I had the opportunity to join a group of young guests last year in Porto Rotondo, during the Vele d’Epoca regatta,” Panerai’s Bonati recalls. “We had dinner together, and, on the following day, they had a short sailing lesson with our captain before going aboard *Eilean*. I stayed apart, watching them and learning from them. And if you ask me what I learned, the answer is simple but essential: smile to live. I will never stop saying how lucky we are to spend moments with people who know what suffering means and who do not give up.”

In the final analysis, it seems that everyone involved in Panerai’s sailing initiatives gains something intangible and unforgettable along with the incomparable experience of sailing, whether for competition or relaxation. Panerai could hardly hope to do better than that.

[panerai.com](http://panerai.com), [sailingheals.org](http://sailingheals.org)



Sailing Heals outings in New York City and Palm Beach

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