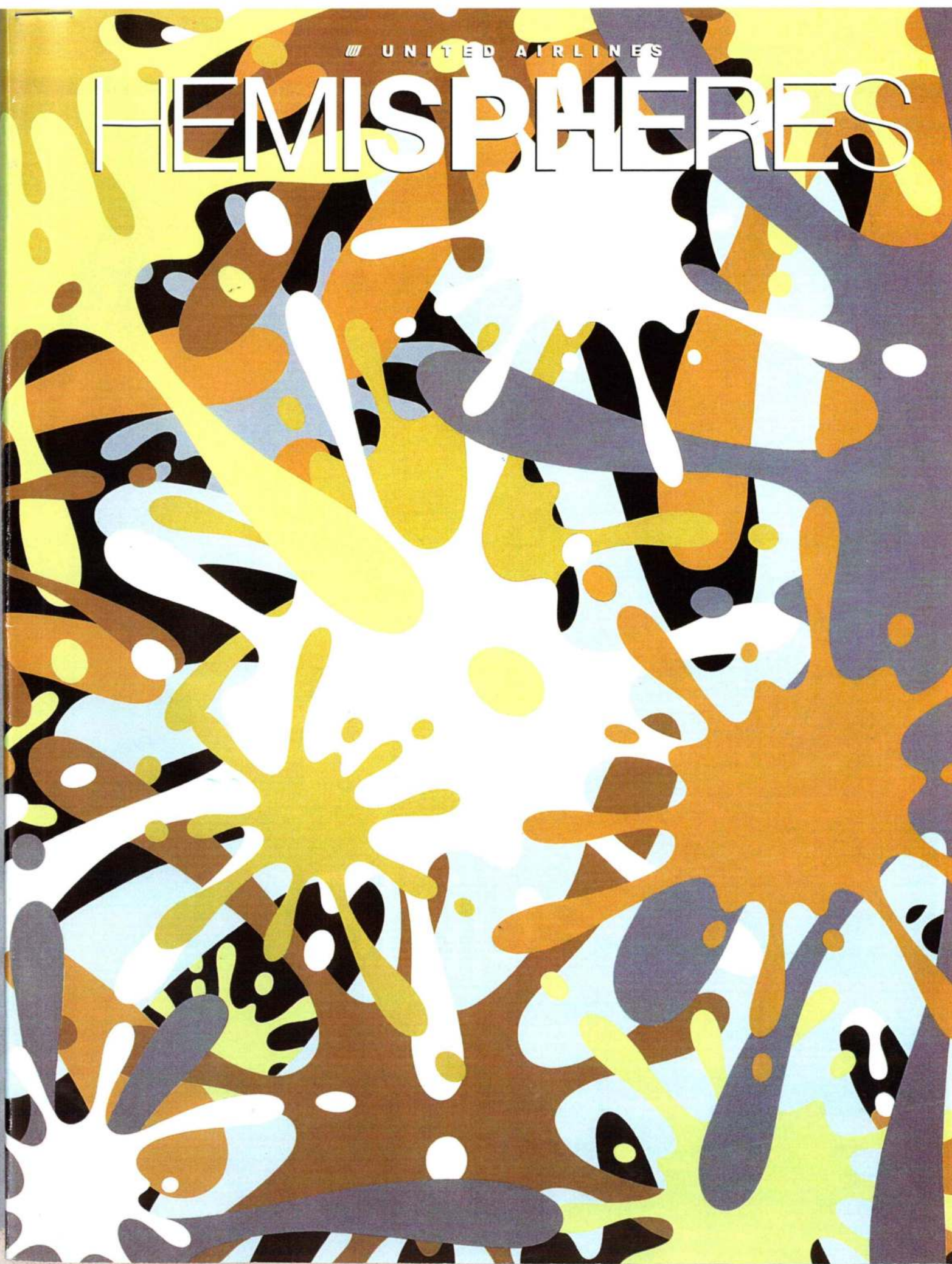
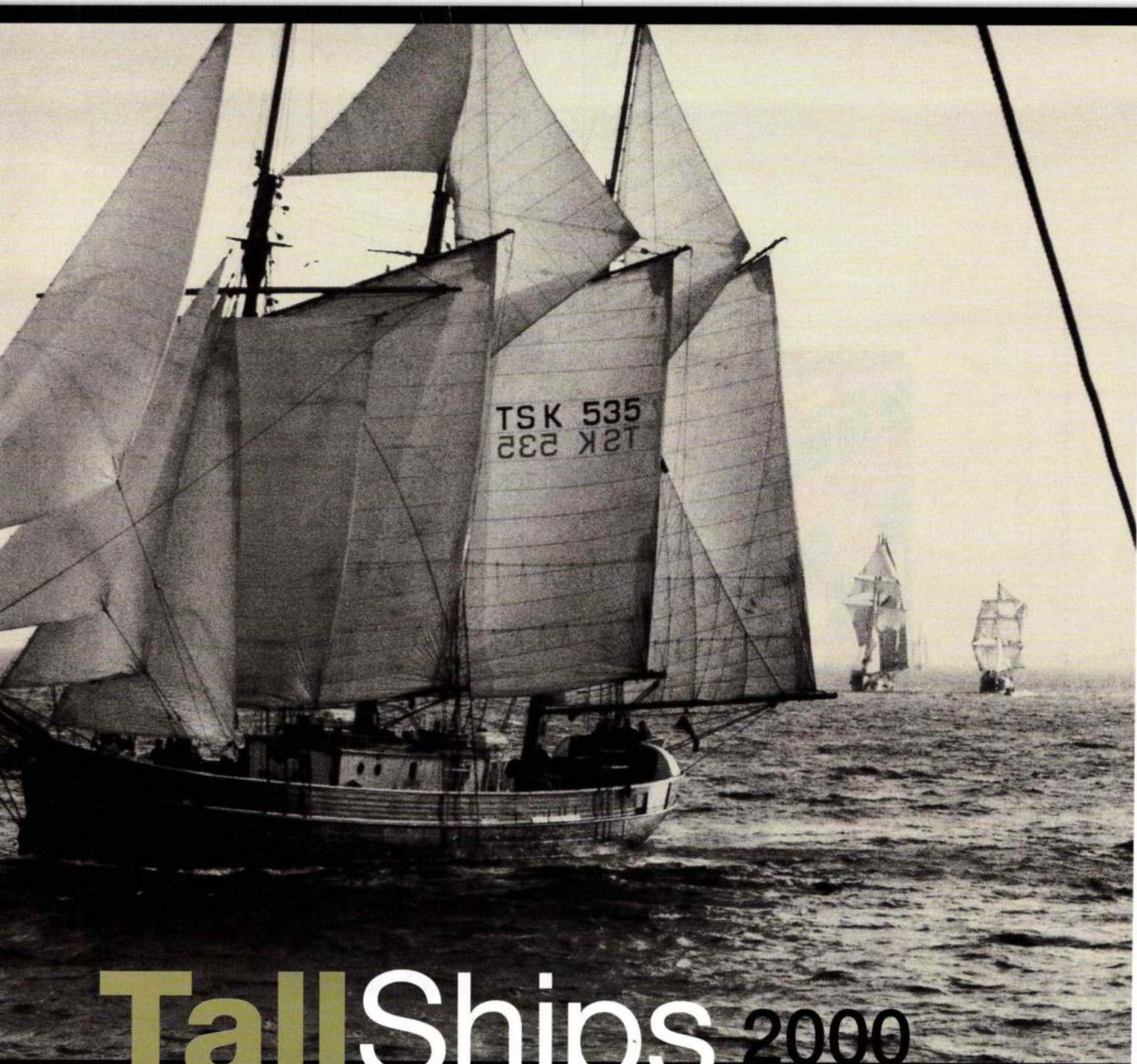


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Tall Ships 2000

By Todd Jarrell / Photography by Charles J. Easler III

I HAVE BEEN TOO LONG AND FAR AWAY FROM THE sea. The Jeep I'm driving leans and nods through the blacktop turns and asphalt swells, rolling and banking, afloat on the hard ground and awash in new spring green. In the middle distance, a squadron of high-voltage towers stalks across the farmland, erect and resolute against



the rise and fall of the undulating countryside. The afternoon sun's lower edge dips from beneath the cloud cover, and these galvanized towers, each in turn, come aglow in the sunset's amber bath.

I am suddenly flooded with both memories and anticipation, for the gleaming towers on that verdant expanse appear to me as tall sailing ships put to sea, masts crowded with canvas and bright against the two-tone blue of deep ocean and clear sky. Though land-bound now, I know that the tall ships are coming, and I am soon to join them.

From April to August of this year, grand tall ships from the age of sail are plying the coasts of Europe and North America in what is one of the planet's most spectacular millennium celebrations. Tall Ships 2000, the largest gathering of these sailing vessels in the modern age, is being hosted by the International Sail Training Association in conjunction with the American Sail Training Association. Greater in number than even the Spanish Armada, these fleets represent the ultimate in romance and adventure.

Old World ports such as Genoa, Italy; Southampton, England; and Cádiz, Spain, had massive celebrations and then sent the fleets westward to Bermuda. Following the island festival, the ships disperse to visit a number of America's most historic and important ports as participants in Operation Sail 2000 (OpSail 2000): San Juan, Puerto Rico; Hampton Roads, Virginia; Baltimore, Maryland; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and New York, New York, to name but a few. The Fourth of July gathering of ships for the Parade of Sail in New York and the run to Boston promise a record-setting attendance of the big ships. From Boston, the race is on for Canada's Halifax before sending the majestic fleet back across the North Atlantic for the final festival—Sail Amsterdam.

By any standard, these events are impressive, featuring scores of the world's tall sailing ships crewed by thousands of young people from dozens of countries. Guests may tour the massive Russian training ships *Kruzenshtern*, *Sedov*, and *Mir*; the practical Polish *Dar Młodzieży*; and the ornate Italian *Amerigo Vespucci*. The United States' pride, the *Constitution*, makes her cameo, and the U.S. Coast Guard's *Eagle* escorts the fleet. The list of nations and types of vessels attending is exhaustive. Here is the famed forest of masts with ship after ship resplendent in colorful dress flags and lights strung along miles of rigging. Tens of millions will enjoy the parades, concerts, and cultural events, and all will thrill to witness the gallant palisades of sail and walk the decks of their own imaginations.

In 1956, a similar gathering showcased the world's remaining wind ships for the first time. The idea was to remind the world that losing these ships would be a loss for us all. Dubbed the Tall Ships' Race by an enthusiastic press, the event reawakened the public to the beauty of these sailing giants, encouraging international friendship through the camaraderie of common purpose.

A unique system applies here. Each ship takes on young trainees supported by a crew of seasoned sailors. The race legs alternate with "cruise in company" legs, allowing some trainees temporary exchange to different nations' vessels during the noncompetitive stretches. This offers opportunities to experience other cultures and, most important, make new friends. Whether naval, merchant marine, or privately held, these ships serve as the world's leviathan ambassadors during the Tall Ships' Races.

Tall Ships 2000 Ports of Call

H amilton, Bermuda	June 9–12
C harleston, South Carolina	June 16–20
W ilmington, Delaware	June 22–25
N ewport, Rhode Island	June 29–July 2
B ourne/Canal Entrance, Massachusetts	July 8–9
B oston, Massachusetts	July 11–16
H alifax, Nova Scotia, Canada	July 20–24
A msterdam, Netherlands	August 24–28

Wind ships were once mankind's most vital vehicles, the far-ranging satellites of the age of discovery. It was tall ships not so unlike these that, at one time, introduced the world to itself. Conquerors, colonists, zealots, and adventurers crossed and recrossed the hemispheres, the plot lines of their charts stitching together the known world with the new. Religions, new foods, and philosophies all were carried on the wind ships to a world that was, like a child, only beginning to comprehend its own size, shape, and cultural complexities. At one time, ships like these touched virtually every shore of the planet, and in recent years the festival quaysides have swarmed with thousands of people who've come to bask in the grandeur and pay respects to a common heritage.

These vessels, like their crews, each possess singular personalities and carry strong and weak points, talents, and quirks. For the novice, the attraction of a tall ship is a kind of

infatuation. To most hands serving her it is a friendship, but to some it is a love, founded in sweat and bound in mutual trust. The sailor's adage, "One hand for yourself and one hand for the ship," describes the implicit partnership here: Each does its part to keep both safe and above the waves. Nature is the third member of this triumvirate, and the tall ships that dance out on the broad, blue ocean do so to the myriad tunes called by Her. And She knows them all. Every one.

I will attend the Tall Ships 2000 race with Canada's Tall Ship Millennium Challenge. This Nova Scotia-based, non-profit organization is sending 500 young Canadians—aged 15 to 25—as trainees with the tall ships fleet this year. Each will have a unique, personal experience: different goals achieved and difficulties squarely faced. The rewards are as real as the risks, and each trainee will come away with a rich and heady cocktail of memories made and lessons learned.

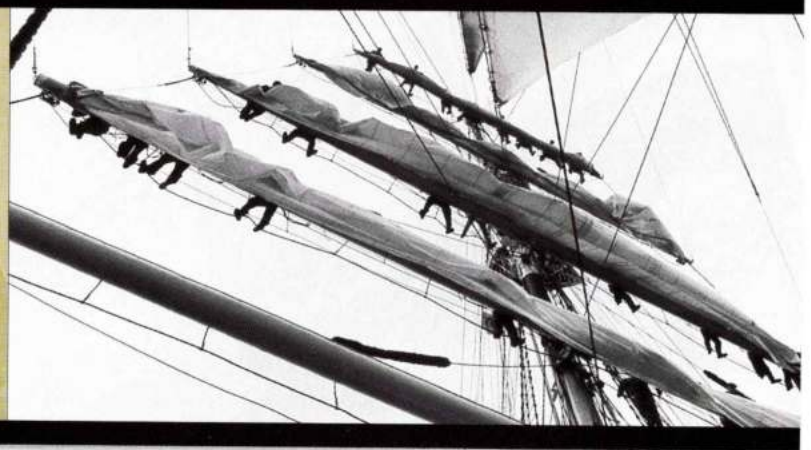
These Ports welcome ship visits whenever convenient during Cruise-In-Company legs:

Morehead City, North Carolina; Annapolis, Maryland; Atlantic City, New Jersey; Point Pleasant Beach, New Jersey; Glen Cove, New York; Port Jefferson, New York; Long Island, New York; Greenport, New York; New Haven, Connecticut; Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts

as there was hardly wind enough for steerageway much less a dash across the line. The sea sprouted sails everywhere but barely did the fleet move. These ships are meant to saddle and harness the elements, but there was no wind to ride.

For two days the sun shone and the seas remained calm—the light wind having little interest in our competition. Slowly our beautiful ship, the *Swan fan Makkum*, earned the lead position. Our young trainee crew of Koreans, Puerto Ricans, Uruguayans, and Americans began to learn the ship, its gear, and each other's names. It was a holiday.

But in the night the wind backed to northeast and ran up to a forbidding Force 7. Twelve-foot waves charged the hull and thumped and pitched the ship. We sailed heeled over to nearly 30 degrees. It is said that there are two stages to seasickness: First, you think you will die; second, you just wish you would. The trainees were solidly in stage one and as



Last summer I joined the similar Cutty Sark Tall Ships' Races at the first festival port in France. We sailed from St. Malo through the night to arrive on a clear, fine day at the start line off the northwest coast. Seventy tall ships awaited the appointed time, maneuvering to close on the line without crossing. Captains madly gathered weather data from every available source, changing tactics with every new forecast. Trainees from 30 countries eagerly learned by working the lines, sails, and rigging. Like insects on a trellis, crews clung aloft, ready to let fall the immense towers of sail.

To the mate's shouts, shipmates below loosed the sails' bunts and clews, took the strain of halyards against the weight of gaff and yard, and sheeted home the filling sails. The black-hulled Russian ship *Kruzensbtern*, alone, spread 36,000 square feet of canvas on her towering 23-story masts.

But the suspense was suspended, the drama a bit derailed,

green as the Irish seas pouring over the rails. Most were completely incapacitated. The main salon looked like a tragedy; bodies lay everywhere. Some were carried to fresh air and, once sprawled on the deck, remained there. No relief was to be found and the sea did not care. Misery loves company and found plenty there.

In the forenoon the huge forestaysail blew out with the boom of a cannon, followed almost immediately by an impressive rending of the outer jib. We lurched forward on the writhing deck to fight them down and bring them in for repairs. Without these sails, we lost position with every hour. At 4 a.m. we were still hand-sewing the heavy sails. Finally, we hauled them back up just as others split. We began repairs anew.

The dawn came, as coarse and foul as before. Everything not lashed down had broken, spilled, or tumbled. The hydraulic steering failed; repairs took four hours in high seas.

Alka, one of the pro crew, slipped on a sea-slick deck, his teeth knocking a nickel-sized divot from the solid teak deck. Incisors incredibly intact, he took two aspirins and retreated below. Hans, the engineer, wondered aloud what could happen next, and, as if on cue, the galley's refrigerator door fell off. The trainees were decidedly stage two now. Standing was work, sitting an effort, and sleeping soundly was unlikely at best.

At last the winds abated, and with calm seas the afflicted rejoined the living. They again believed that being counted among the quick was pretty cool after all. The Koreans demonstrated tai chi, the fan dance, and a particularly loud parlor game; the Puerto Ricans gave salsa dance lessons. At last we made port in Greenock, Scotland. Ships arrived hour upon hour, straggling in from all points, the fleet thoroughly scattered in the wake of the storm. As the festivities began anew, the trainee crew said good-bye in a half-dozen languages. The

funneled vortex turned our ship 40 degrees off course before relinquishing its disquieting grasp.

At sea the days passed as quietly as the beautiful bleak and balded Scottish coast—its hunched mountains purpled by the north winds. We sailed past George Orwell's remote island home—his bleak vision of a distant future now 15 years past. We ferched the Shetland Islands and awaited the onslaught of the festival. In two days' time our last crew would arrive—15 young people from Japan. They would sail with us to Denmark and the finish of the race. The word was that they expected to be worked hard and hoped for an exciting voyage. They were not to be disappointed.

We collected the new crew, and the race was on for Denmark. At 60 degrees latitude north, the darkness does not fall until almost midnight during the summer months. A cloudless sunset favored us that first evening as the sky rolled



OnSail 2000 Ports of Call

Miami, Florida	<i>June 7–10</i>
Hampton Roads, Virginia	<i>June 16–20</i>
Baltimore, Maryland	<i>June 23–29</i>
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	<i>June 23–29</i>
New York Harbor	<i>July 3–9</i>
New London and Groton, Connecticut	<i>July 12–15</i>
Portland, Maine	<i>July 28–31</i>

race, for them, was over. Addresses changed hands, as had new ideas and understandings between strangers who had become shipmates. All were enriched by their common experience on the tall ships.

The second trainee crew joined the following day, many on exchange from other ships in the fleet. Others, first-time sailors, surveyed the masts with heads flung back and mouths hung open, all in various stages of exhilaration or desperation at the prospect of climbing and working 14-stories up. Our ship slipped her lines, took her place in the Parade of Sail, turned southward rounding Mull of Kintyre, then north through the Sound of Jura to the Corryvreckan Whirlpool. Here the sea rushed through the narrowing race; upwelling currents blossomed upon the surface like poultices calming confused, spiked waves. Whirlpools wheeled past us like dervishes sucking foam into the depths. An enormous,

out thick, vibrant hues of sapphire, lavender, and molten rose. Our young crew lined the rail in anticipation of what sailors call "the green flash," and this proved to be the best I had ever witnessed. Though a really good flash is rare and sounds dramatic, it is just a bright, neon-green pop of light as the upper edge-of the sun tucks in beneath the darkening waves. But many times the magic and wonder of the world lie in the small things, relatively speaking—earlier in the day the crew had spotted a humpback whale.

The first days of the last leg were brilliant, with clean winds and calm seas. We made good time across the infamous North Sea. Severe weather was expected, and we were grateful to have time to acclimate our new crew—to show them the ropes. Rob, the Dutch first mate, with his salt-and-pepper Moe (of the Three Stooges) hairstyle, tutored his new watch mates in his buoyant fashion. He was fond of a kind of comic training

logic, reminding his pupils, "Always pull on the rope. You can't do anything else with the rope. You can't push it!" The Japanese listened politely. They were beginners with professional attitudes. They were cheerful and helpful, willing and fun. They swabbed the deck, polished brightwork, and volunteered for any duty. They were never, even when seasick, late for watch.

The third day, storm clouds lit up the radar screen, darkened the horizon, and found our ship during the midnight watch. Whitecaps soon slammed the ship and boarded straight over the bow. Waves bowling down the main deck capsized crew members hauling at the lines then raced aft to break against the roundhouse amidships. At times the entire headrig disappeared under the foaming sea, reminding those who would dare work there of the sailor's sharpest fear: man overboard.

It is difficult to describe the sobering effect of waves large enough to virtually stop a 180-foot steel ship cold, reeling in its

and the ship's absolute confines, beauty and danger as perfect counterparts. Of helping others because it most certainly may be your problem next time. About understanding that the challenge is the goal and meeting it its own reward.

The race ended with the quiet column of elegant ships gliding upriver to Denmark's Aalborg Harbor. Here again was the impressive gathering of the world's sailing giants: the largest, the swiftest, the tallest, the prettiest. The eager onlookers were only the advance of the multitudes that would visit as crew members went hoarse steering guest tours around their ships, endlessly explaining the complexities of their vessels.

It had been a trying month. The small boats, especially, were battered—some taking real damage. Due to rough conditions, crews had been soaked, cold, and exhausted, some missing hot meals for days. Ship after ship had retired or been forced out. The trainees were truly ready for some downtime, but not ready to stop sailing altogether. It had seemed a long time onboard, as the learning curve at sea is vertical. But once in port the time aboard always seems too short.

The crews' final, eclectic street parade ended at the race awards ceremony. There were prizes for the fastest ship and the slowest, the most helpful act of seamanship, and so on. But the trophy goes not necessarily to the winner of the race. The captains and crews of the fleet, by popular vote, award this unique tribute to the one ship best demonstrating outstanding camaraderie, and for her efforts the Polish ship *Pogoria* was presented the coveted trophy.

Tall ships events are likened to the Olympics, except one may participate fully while knowing, initially, almost nothing of the event. But those who do participate learn more than the basics of seamanship and teamwork. They discover the moods of the sea and learn the arcane way and historical importance of these grand, tall ships. These young people find themselves far from the familiar and have the opportunity to plumb themselves for unknown depths of character. And many take the occasion to realize the typical paper-thinness of some cultural, social, and territorial borders that disjoin individuals, clans, and nations. It is an undeniably expansive experience. The distance traversed by many cannot be calculated in nautical miles or by latitude and longitude—for the voyage within is without measure. The vanishing point of well-developed confidence and curiosity is far beyond the scope of horizons. And so, though the prize goes to friendship, it is still a race ... to preserve the past and secure the future. /END/

Todd Jarrell, a writer from Tennessee, suffers from a perpetual case of sea fever. All he asks is a tall ship and a star to steer by.

Cutty Sark Tall Ships' Races

Gdańsk, Poland	July 5–8
Helsinki, Finland	July 14–17
Mariehamn, Finland	July 21–24
Stockholm, Sweden	July 26–29
Flensburg, Germany	August 4–7

For more information, visit www.tallsips.sailtraining.org, www.cutty-sark.com/tallsipraces, and www.opsail2000.org

own wake, masts shuddering, shivering the teak and steel deck beneath the feet. The endless waves swell, lift, then lift again before rolling on like restless rogues come to test the ship's mettle.

A bright clear dawn found the sea still high and the wind in fits. A sharply veering gust jibed the enormous mainsail. It swept ominously across the deck, crashing heavily into the mainmast's steel-cable backstays. The telephone pole-thick gaff checked and snapped like a matchstick, plummeting with the mainsail almost to the deck before fetching up in the rigging, just short of crashing into the wheelhouse full of bleary crew. Lucky to avoid injury, we were out of the race.

Firing up the engine, we motored into the Skagerrak, the narrow sea stretch separating Norway from Denmark, offering assistance to boats having fared even worse in the storm than ourselves. We talked about the paradoxes of sailing: trust and fear, exhilaration and drudgery, the ocean's absolute freedom