

## The Gstaad Yacht Club

Since its foundation in 1998, the GYC has been a centre of attention.

It all began between Christmas and New Year in the snowy pedestrian zone of the bright Christmas village of Gstaad, when the winning boat of the Korean Olympics of Olympia Gold Star, was parked for several hours with full sails on the trailer in front of the Hotel Olden. It became known afterwards that 10 founding members had assembled for dinner with possible new members of the GYC and were welcomed by the 1960 Olympic champion in the Dragon Class, His Majesty King Constantine, the patron of the club. With his vision “Let's create a unique global yacht club away from the waters, instead of another local club by the waters” he obligated the distinguished guests with the high requirement from the start. It is still a truth today: who accepts this vision, embodies it personally as one of the more than 400 members from over 30 countries and thus enjoys an exclusive circle of the Gstaad acquaintances.

Peter Erzberger, one of the founders and current Commodore of the GYC, points out that the vision alone is not enough to explain what has been achieved.



*Picture GYC 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary – 28 February 2018 – GYC Board members- Rear Commodore Manrico Iachia, Managing Director the Olympic classes on the club's balcony Cindy Schönrich & Commodore Peter Erzberger – The clubhouse*

### *The GYC clubhouse in Gstaad – nautical chalet style and great culinary highlights*

Shortly after this memorable occasion thanks to the generous offer from one of the first members, a first target was achieved: the club moved into the exclusive clubrooms above the spa of Le Grand Bellevue Hotel.

Here, the club was able to develop further, to reveal in the unique atmosphere to the members and the guests the harmony between the sea and the mountains and later established a top restaurant under the management of Robert Speth, the guru in the Gstaad gastronomy.

As a host of sport, cultural and social activities, the GYC has a name far beyond Gstaad.

After all, who is a good host in Gstaad, will also be welcomed as a guest to many yacht clubs in the unique world of sailors and boat owners. With many of those yacht and sailing clubs more than friendly relations are established and the formal, mutually assured reciprocity agreements are signed. The GYC so far has realised 30 official agreements around the world. Amongst one of the first ones is the home of our patron – The Yacht Club of Greece. Meanwhile the network has spread over all continents with Yacht Club de Santos (BRA), St. Francis Yacht Club (USA), the Royal Thames Yacht Club (UK), Royal Cape Yacht Club (SA), the Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club (HK) and the Royal Melbourne Yacht Squadron (AUS).



*In sport also on track.*

On the sports side each year several members are taking part in different sailing categories – to name some – Flavio Marazzi and Nathalie Brugger who compete on two different boats in the newly developed foiling class GC32. Furthermore the young sailor Nils Theuninck is racing in the Finn class under the flag of the GYC, and had already big successes on the laser before. The class in which the GYC is currently supporting four sailors, Vice-World Champion and three times French champion Eliot Merceron, who aims to compete in the 2020 Olympics in Japan, Nicolas Rolaz – Optimist World Champion 2014, as well as Swiss National team members Joshua Richner and Gauthier Verhulst. In the RS:X windsurf class, the GYC is represented by the Swiss/Spanish sailor Mateo Sanz Lanz who recently won the silver medal at the World Championship. Results have a great history at the club.



Since 2004 GYC Sports Members represent Switzerland at the Olympic Games. In London 2012, three of the four Swiss teams were from GYC. The last initiative supported Matías Bühler and Nathalie Brugger who won an Olympic Diploma for Switzerland at the Olympic Games in Rio 2016. Besides our Swiss team, other two sport members Billy Besson won a Diploma for France and Will Ryan a silver medal for Australia. Thus the GYC had three teams representing three countries in the last Olympic Games in Brazil.

Besides Swiss, there are many other nations members in the club too who all together generously support the GYC Racing Team with their private donations. One of the reasons might be that out of the GYC membership 18 members participated in sailing Olympic Games representing seven different countries in the past. They can understand how difficult the way to the top is. The next teams are preparing for Tokyo 2020. With a Swiss- Belgian, a Swiss-French and a Swiss-Spanish the athletes' backgrounds are as international as the entire GYC membership. All three have been selected for the Swiss Sailing Team. The GYC is their common home away from home whenever they visit Gstaad.

Although the club has no lake or sea access, on land training and on water education is provided. Children, youth and club teams are introduced to sailing depending on their level and trained further. In addition to the training on Lake Thun or Lac Léman, every year the children can attend a sailing camp which takes place in various places.

And once more: where's a will there's a way. Together with other clubs or class associations, the GYC searches and finds the ways to achieve its goals. Each year in cooperation with the national Optimist class a team is formed from the best Swiss Opti sailors to take part in the International Club Team Race regatta, organised by the Yacht Club de Monaco in the end of January. As the club from the landlocked country the GYC tries to diversify its water activities as much as possible. Under this objective the club participated in the first LITTLECUP organised in Switzerland. In September 2015 the GYC team comprised of Billy Besson and Matthieu Vandame, GYC Sport Members sailed the C Class Catamaran. We felt privileged to have been able to participate in its first large test of an international challenge on home water.



*Picture GYC/ Juerg Kaufmann:  
GYC Racing Team Members Matthieu Vandame  
and Billy Besson Littlecup 2015 Littlecup*

The Club is directed by Cindy Schönrich. Having been for nine years in Gstaad, the 38-year-old German born, comes with the club and sailing world to grips. Trained as a manager in the media -and event business, she is the focal point for all aspects of the GYC and has now international connections to clubs, promoters, yacht and boat owners, agents, partners and sponsors. Every year she visits a few important yacht clubs and as an ambassador for the region and for the GYC, she is a welcomed guest.



This is the way the club's vision is spread and brought to life!

The GYC's sports and social calendar has greatly evolved over the same period and some of the events have become "classics" in a very short time.

Make the unusual into a rule- assures us George Nicholson, a founder and the honorary president of the GYC and supports his opinion with "all the good comes in three" examples. Ski Yachting in winter, Rally and Yachting in summer Gstaad and the Centenary Trophy in autumn in the Mediterranean are three unusual ideas that have become important elements of the GYC.

Every March more than 20 teams from the friends' yacht clubs are invited to the Ski Yachting. During this three-day event winter and summer feelings are brought together. A giant slalom with a special condition brings out team that compete the next day in the match race with America's Cup model boats a sport event with pleasure and friendship.

The summer event became equally popular:

Starting back in 2006 the club organises an annual classic car rally, combining a beautiful car drive and remote-controlled model boat sailing.



*Pictures  
GYC –  
different  
activities in  
summer and  
in winter*

*The Centenary Trophy has a very different original idea.*



Mariquita, at that time in possession of a GYC member and arguably one of the most beautiful large yachts, built in 1911 in the famous William Fife shipyard in Scotland, had become 100 years old. On this occasion, in 2011 the GYC had decided to invite yachts that were one hundred years or older and in their original condition to a special race. The Centenary Trophy, found and brought from England, was also 100 years old and freshly polished waited for the winner. With friends in Saint-Tropez and carried out by the Société Nautique de Saint-Tropez the first Classic Regatta was organized in a Pursuit format. In accordance with the handicap, the slowest boat started first and almost 45 minutes later started the birthday child Mariquita. Each participant and, above all, every guest aboard the 15 of the over 100-year-old yachts knew their ranking at any time during the regatta. In 2018, the Trophy will be held for the eighth time becoming an increasingly popular event, and every year the trophy gets new "young" 100 years old yachts.

*The Centenarian Award*

In 2017 the GYC in collaboration with the Classic Boat Magazine brought an award for the Centenarian of the Year to life. The new award ties in with the centenarian theme and seeks to recognise yachts of this vintage that have achieved something special. The judging process took in a wide variety of centenarian boats, from race yachts to old working boats. The judging panel was made up of Gstaad YC Honorary president George Nicholson, veteran America's Cup sailor and classic specialist Bruno Troublé, Oliver Berking of silversmiths Robbe & Berking, and MD of the Port of Monaco Gianbattista Borea d'Olmo, with Classic Boat editor Rob Peake. Out of the shortlisted boats the jury evaluated the 2017 winner Jolie Brise, which is a 56 ft cutter built in 1913 and the 2018 winner, Folly - a Charles Nicholson design from 1909 that is sailed in authentic period fashion on the Mediterranean classic circuit. The boat is owned by naval architect Germán Frers.



*Pictures: GYC Centenarian of the Year 2017 – Jolie Brise 2018 – Folly*

### *GYC 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary*

With 20 years of age the Gstaad Yacht Club is still a young club but at the same time already well known all over the globe. To celebrate this anniversary the GYC planned several festivities throughout the year 2018.



#### *Editors' notes:*

The Gstaad Yacht Club was founded in 1998 by a group of sailor enthusiasts with the vision to "create a unique global yacht club away from the waters, instead of another local club by the waters". Based in the Swiss mountains and in the beginning, very often acknowledged with surprise, the GYC developed to a club with more than 400 members from over 30 different countries and to a place where members and their guests love to meet.

The GYC supports sailing projects on all levels from juniors to professional sailors and it has become a solid force on the Swiss sailing scene and especially among Olympic sailing and the classic yachts.

#### *Gstaad Yacht Club*

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