



# Nautical Notes

By Jack Wyatt

## Cat race aftermath

The second biennial TransPacific race for multi-hull yachts is now history. Four doublehull catamarans and one trimaran arrived safely in Honolulu last week after successfully completing the 2,200-mile passage from California.

Although the fleet was small in numbers, this event was considered a significant step forward for future development of oceanracing catamarans. To tell the catamaran story is Hawaii's own Rudy Choy, well known cat designer and builder.

Choy, who was watch captain on Patty Cat II the first-to-finish yacht, was born on Kauai, raised on the Big Island, attended school on Oahu, and now builds catamarans in California. He designed all of the catamarans entered in this race.

"Several points were proven in this event," said 43-year-old Choy. "First, it brought to public focus that Cats are now structurally capable of rugged oceanracing, that is if properly sailed. This disproves several theories that Cats have certain design features which tend to make them unseaworthy.

Secondly, it shows that multihulls can assemble and race as a fleet, thus making a bid to be recognized and included in yachting events formerly open only to single hull boats.

"When the multihulls are invited to compete as a class in the time-honored Transpacific race held on odd years for conventional yachts," said one Glass Slipper crewmember, "we then know that we have been fully accepted in the inner circles of yachting."

Thus far Transpac officials feel catamarans have not come of age and no invitation has been extended.

## Heads catamaran firm

Choy, with partners Warren Seaman and Alfred Kumalae head a catamaran building and designing firm in Newport Beach, "Catamarans by C.S.K." Seaman and Choy started approximately 10 years ago with Kumalae joining the firm later.

Seaman, who was sailing master on the \$75,000 corrected time winner Glass Slipper is credited with the design of the 19 foot Malibu sailing outrigger often seen along Southern California's beaches. Designing and building Ken Murphy's racing cat Aikane in a garage in 1957 gave C.S.K. the big break it needed to assure success.

With Choy as crewmember, and Aikane as an unofficial entry, they beat all conventional yachts to Diamond Head finish in both the 1957 and 1959 transPacific races. They proved without doubt that given wind, cats are faster than single hull craft. Magazine articles written by Choy, telling of Aikane's sailing accomplishments soon brought inquiries and orders from interested yachtsmen around the world.

Before long Choy and Company found themselves the world's foremost ocean racing catamaran authority for design and building.

"Catamarans are an integral part of Hawaii's history and heritage," explained Choy. "Modern day cats originate from the Polynesian doublehull sailing canoes which plied the waters between Tahiti and Hawaii hundreds of years ago. Some canoes were over 110 feet long."

With this ancient multihull theory, Choy and Honolulu Woody Brown designed the tourist cats for Waikiki Beach, and later the fast sailing Manu-Kai 20 class for Waikiki Yacht Club.

## Seek place in sun

"Catamaran sailors, although enthusiastic at times, are not working toward replacing conventional yachts with their multihulls," says Choy, "but are attempting to gain the respect of all yachtsmen and take an active part in all organized yacht racing. We hold the greatest esteem for the tradition of yachting, whose rules we follow.

Multihull sailors oftentimes become emotional when attempting to explain the indescribable thrill of charging down a long ocean swell at speeds in excess of 20 knots, or slicing through a confused sea under spinnaker sail with a black squall fast approaching. They claim it is both frightening and challenging.

Co-sponsoring Outrigger Canoe and Waikiki Yacht Clubs extended an exceptional welcome to the visitors. The picturesque Outrigger Canoe Club setting for the arriving yachts, with music in the background, and the MaiTais in the foreground, and flower leis all over provided Hawaiian atmosphere that will be long remembered. The efforts of Cline Mann, Dan Wallace, Gordon Greenwood, Taffy Sceva, Bob Casey to mention a few are appreciated by all interested yachtsmen.



Jack Wyatt



Rudy Choy