

BUILDING A VISION FOR GRENADA'S SAILING YOUTH

GRENADA STORY BY PHILOMENA BERGIN
PHOTOS BY STEVE BRETT



Don't wait for your boat to come in: build it yourself! That's the variation on the old motto adopted by Rene Froehlich of Sailing School Grenada to realize his vision of improving sailing opportunities for young people on the island.

Since getting involved in sail training on the island in 2013 he has observed that once young sailors grow out of the Optimist and Mosquito sailing dinghies available in Grenada, the options to sail competitively become extremely limited.

Up to now he has been using his own Nautiber cruiser *Dione* to help young people improve their sailing and navigational skills but frankly the boat is not attractive to keen young sailors. It is slow and heavy – a reliable workhorse, not the lean, mean racing machine that will provide a platform for team building and training the next generation of Grenadian competitive sailors.

"*Dione* introduces them to the basics, but I need a competi-

tive yacht to help them take their experience to the next level," Rene explains. "Without this we risk losing their talent and enthusiasm for a sport which is of growing economic importance to the island."

A professional designer with experience on a wide range of projects, Rene decided he had the skills to build a yacht of the right calibre himself. He put this to the test by accepting a commission from the owner of a classic charter yacht to build a ten-foot tender in early 2014. The result was so impressive he is now forging ahead with the new project in his workshop in Westerhall.

Naval architect Nicolas Roelens and boat builders Jeff Fisher and Roger Adams have collaborated with Rene on the one-off design that goes by the working title of RF33.

The overall length of the boat is 35.6ft with a beam of 9ft. It carries around 1000 sq ft of sail area – main, jib and asymmetrical spinnaker combined. Code zero is approximately 774 sq ft.