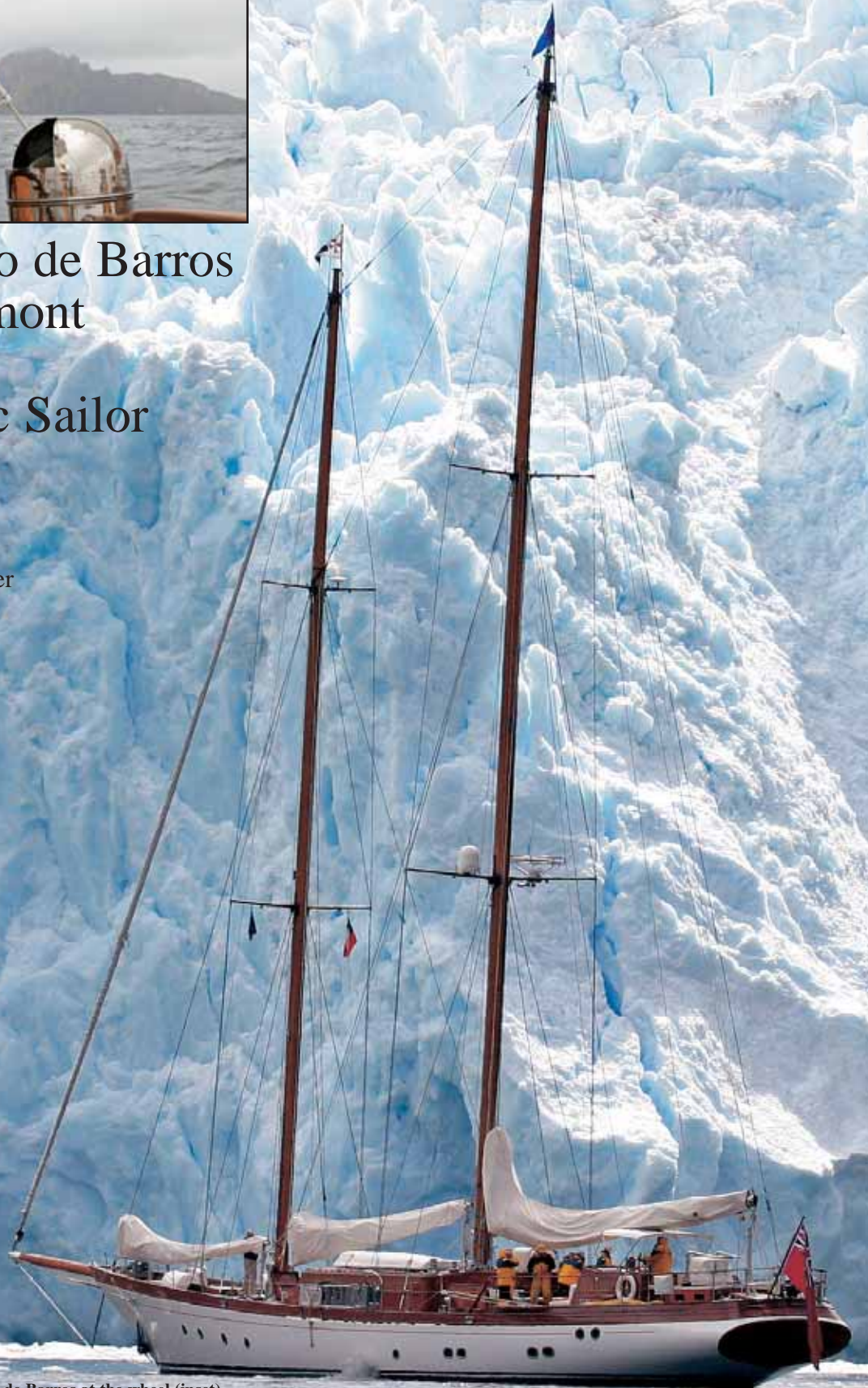




Patrick Monteiro de Barros of Edgemont

An Olympic Sailor

by
Chip Barber



SELJM rounding Cape Horn in 2004. Patrick de Barros at the wheel (inset)
(Daniel Forster photo, courtesy of P. de Barros)

In the summer of 1988, one Olympic athlete was on his way to a special dinner being held by the Queen of Spain for the Spanish and Portuguese sailing teams. Hurrying on foot along the promenade near the Olympic Village in Seoul, the sailor noticed a group of Koreans pointing to something in the dark waters of the bay. All he could see was the head of a young girl, and he noted with concern that she was being pushed out to sea by a strong current. No one in the crowd did anything. The Olympic sailor quickly shed his dress clothes, dove in, and swam to her. When he reached her, she fought him off and tried to pull him under (he later found out that she was trying to commit suicide). He had to knock her out in order to save them both. After a long and exhausting swim against the current, he was able to bring her safely back to the shore, where she was taken to a local hospital. A large crowd had gathered to watch the rescue, and among them was Paul Henderson, the president of the International Sailing Federation, who recognized the Olympian.

After returning to his room to clean up, the Olympian finally arrived at the dinner just as dessert was being served. The Queen, not aware of the rescue, had saved the place to her right for the tardy athlete. After begging her pardon and explaining why he was late, he found that she did not believe him. Later, Juan Antonio Samaranch, head of the International Olympic Committee, arrived and confirmed the story. Samaranch announced to the Queen that for his heroic actions that evening the sailor, then at his third Olympics, would be awarded the prestigious Medal for Fair Play for the 1988 Games.

It was my good fortune to have been introduced to this Olympic hero, Patrick Monteiro de Barros, by a mutual friend many years ago. The late Glen Foster had sailed with Patrick in the 1972 Olympics in Kiel, West Germany. Glen



Dragon racing requires consummate skill and crew coordination. (Photo courtesy of P. de Barros)



Four-time Olympian Patrick de Barros carries the Portuguese flag at the opening ceremonies in Los Angeles in 1984. (Photo courtesy of P. de Barros)

won the Bronze Medal in the Tempest Class, while Patrick sailed his Star Class boat to a fifth place finish that year. When I returned to settle in Albemarle County after 24 years of naval service, Glen was emphatic that I get to know his friend Patrick, who had also recently moved to Albemarle. Patrick and Arlette de Barros spend several months each year at Edgemont, their estate in southern Albemarle County. Edgemont was designed by Thomas Jefferson in 1796 for Col. James Powell Cocke. At Edgemont, de Barros raises award-winning Limousine cattle and is considering importing and raising Lusitanos horses in the coming year.

Patrick is from a well-known Portuguese family with large farming,

mining, and real estate holdings in Iberia as well as plantations in Mozambique. He attended the best schools in Europe and earned economics and business degrees in Paris. During his youth, he developed a keen affinity for sailing. He started sailing at age five and won his first of many national championships in Portugal at the age of 13. His passion for the sport has never let up.

Patrick established himself in the oil business right after school. Upon his father's death, Patrick took over the family businesses at the age of 23. But even as Patrick grew the family business empire, the political situation in Portugal began to fall apart. In 1974, the Portuguese government fell to Marxist military revolutionists intent on ending the Portuguese war in



Africa. The next year, Patrick was forced to flee his native country to avoid arrest. He had to leave behind all of his assets, including the entire family fortune, which was nationalized by the Marxists. He and his new wife, Arlette, found themselves completely broke.

Patrick immigrated to the United States, where he used his international business acumen to quickly earn a senior position as a global oil trader. Over the next twenty years, Patrick engaged in a series of acquisitions of oil refineries and marketing networks in the United States, and participated in the privatization of the Portuguese national oil company, PETROGAL. He invested in cellular and other telecommunications businesses and reestablished the Monteiro de Barros name as one of the most successful and influential in modern Portugal.

The weather at Cape Horn is notorious for its harshness-gales and storms are the norm. (Daniel Forster photos, courtesy of P. de Barros)





The schooner *SELJM*, rounds Cape Horn in 2004. (Daniel Forster photo, courtesy of P. de Barros)

Throughout the ups and downs of his business fortunes, Patrick has always found time for sailing. He represented Portugal in the 1968 Olympics in Mexico and the aforementioned 1972 Kiel (Munich) Olympics, the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles and the 1988 Olympics in Seoul. He was honored to be chosen as Portugal's flag bearer in both the '84 and '88 Games. In addition to Olympic success, he has won national and international championships in Stars, Finns, Moth and Dragon class boats.

For those unfamiliar with Stars, Finns, Moths, and Dragons, it is important to realize that these boats are arguably among the most physically demanding boats to sail well. The 15-foot-long Finn

is a single-person boat that requires tremendous strength to sail, let alone to sail well. Moth crews are among the most acrobatic of all the two-man crewed dinghies. Stars have been Olympic class boats since 1932. The two-man crew must work together as one to make this classic yacht go well. The Dragon is a 29-foot-long sloop with a crew of three. The skipper of a Dragon must have exceptional leadership and crew coordination skills in addition to superb sailing skills in order to excel. Since 1993, Patrick has sailed his Dragon to seven Portuguese National Championship titles, as well as an Iberian Championship. He won the King Juan Carlos Trophy for Dragons twice, and in 2004 he beat 260 other competitors in a

fleet race at the Dragon Class 75th Anniversary Regatta in St. Tropez.

In the mid-1990s de Barros considered sponsoring a Whitbread Round the World Race campaign (Patrick's business- es have sponsored both America's Cup and Volvo Race Campaigns) but instead decided to do a circumnavigation in "higher style." He bought a 112-foot schooner, *SELJM*, and his "Round the World in 80 Months" campaign started. *SELJM* is unique in that she was traditionally and solidly built of Iroko teak by the famous Sangermani yard in Italy in 1980. Her two towering masts are varnished Canadian spruce.

SELJM is a large yacht. At 117 tons, she displaces more than many yachts





Edgemont, Patrick and Arlette de Barros' Albemarle County estate, was designed by Thomas Jefferson in 1796. It is on the National Register of Historic Places.

of the same length. It takes a full-time professional crew of six to sail and maintain her. For racing, Patrick needed a crew of 17. And racing he continued to do. Even while "cruising" around the world, Patrick looked for every opportunity to race. As he started his adventure in *SELJM* in 1996, he won the Chesapeake Schooner Race in a wild finish in 50-knot winds. He also won the Auckland (NZ) Cup twice and won his class in the Millennium Cup in Auckland during the America's Cup in 2003. In April 2006, he won Overall Honors in the highly regarded Antigua Classics Regatta.

During the eleven years de Barros has owned *SELJM*, she has safely traveled over 78,000 miles and visited 52 countries. This is the equivalent of *three* times around the world! There is almost no ocean or sea de Barros has not cruised in *SELJM*. *SELJM* has crossed the Southern Ocean and rounded Cape Horn and has cruised most of the islands in the South Pacific, Mediterranean, and Caribbean. He even made it to both the Sydney and the Athens Olympics in *SELJM*.

I visited with him aboard *SELJM* in Hamilton after this year's Bermuda Race. I feel certain that he will be back to defend his title at the Antigua Classics

Regatta next April. I also know that he will continue to excel in his Dragon against sailors half his age. I do not hesitate to call him a true Corinthian—the highest compliment I can give any sailor.

Charles Barber is a veteran sailor of over 40 years. He was the Director of Sailing and Commodore of the Naval Academy Sailing Squadron and was the coach on board the Naval Academy's 48-foot sloop *Constellation* in 1992 when she won the coveted St. David's Lighthouse Trophy for First-in-Fleet in the Newport to Bermuda Race. Upon leaving the Navy, Chip founded an international yacht management service and provides administrative management and special project management for high-level racers as well as for long-distance sail and powerboat cruisers.

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