



Kings Pointer Makes Father's Catamaran Dream a Reality

Father-son team build a catamaran.

By Marissa Bholan, AAF Communications Director

William “Willie” Pack ’00 grew up with a love for sailing and adventure in the shadow of his father, Tom Pack. Tom was a Marine Corps helicopter pilot in Vietnam. His passion, however, was racing sailboats—a passion he shared with his son.

In the early 1980s, Tom started to research boat designers and came across John Shuttleworth—a naval architect with a reputation for designing fast, strong, and safe boats. “[My father] went to a boat show and saw a couple pay about a half a million for a really terrible and unsafe boat and said he would never be caught doing that,” says Willie. “So he started researching designs and seeing what made a good boat.”

When Tom told Willie about his idea of building a 32-foot catamaran racer/cruiser, designed by Shuttleworth in their backyard, Willie thought he was crazy. “But we did it anyway,” Willie says.

Willie loved the idea of starting from scratch and working with his father. They both enjoyed sailing catamarans, so it made perfect sense to build one together. The father-son team began their project in 2006—mostly research. In November 2011, the Packs rented a shop in Austin and bought the design plan to start building.

At the time, Willie, fully employed, lived about three hours away in Houston, so his father would work during the week

and together, they worked full weekends. “I would drive my entire family, every weekend, to and from Austin for two and a half years,” Willie says.

Neither son nor father worried about the time. They were determined to build their dreamboat. In March 2014, William was laid off from his job—which may have been a blessing in disguise. He had the boat’s pieces relocated from Austin to Houston. “I assembled all the pieces that we prefabricated and put the whole thing together,” he says.

Tom would come by on Mondays and Tuesdays. Willie worked about 60 hours a week on their boat. He said the physical labor—particularly



sanding in a confined space—was challenging at times.

By December 2014, the boat was successfully launched. In January 2014, the Packs had an independent marine surveyor take a look at the boat for insurance purposes. “I was so nervous, I didn’t look at the surveyor’s report for four or five days,” Willie says.

When he finally opened the report, he said he felt emotional. “[It] was one of the best days of my life,” says Willie.

Comments from the surveyor included, “Hulls and decks appear to have [been] built to a very high standard using good quality materials,” and “Designed by notable marine architect;

Apparently very well constructed with high quality methods and materials and excellent attention to detail.”

Josephine, the catamaran, is made out of foam and fiberglass for speed and weights nearly 5,000 pounds. She sits 16 inches deep into the water to allow the boat to coast through shallow water and park on the beach. Her estimated speed is 14 knots and fuel capacity is 20 gallons.

Although Willie was a deck major at Kings Point, he said his courses in statics and dynamics, engineering, and naval architecture helped him complete this project.

He now works for ShipServ as their director of supplier solutions for the

Americas. “They hired me on December 1st,” says Willie. “It was perfect timing. I put the boat in the water and I was back at work.”

Willie currently resides in the Houston area with his wife Karina, son Zachary, and daughter Maggie. The boat is currently in Seabrook Shipyard, just outside of Houston, where contractors are finishing her up. “We are hoping to take a vacation on the boat in August,” says Willie. “It will be our first family vacation in four years, so we are super excited!”

Willie also plans on racing in the Harvest Moon Regatta in October from Galveston to Port Aransas, which is about a 150-mile race.