



## MY LIFE IN BOATS



# Matt Brooks

Matt Brooks tells *Grace Trofa* he doesn't mind bi-coastal living – his 53ft *Dorade* makes all the traveling worthwhile



^ **AND THEY'RE OFF**  
*Dorade* leads the fleet out of Newport for the 2018 race to Bermuda

v **HOME WATER**  
Brooks grew up racing sailboats in San Francisco, where he still lives



I learned how to sail as a child, and in graduate school I had a quarter ton boat that I raced in San Francisco, but I was an average sailor. When I met my wife, Pam, we needed an activity we could do together. Friends took us out sailing and we discovered we loved it.

I contacted a broker friend and told him I wanted to buy a classic boat. Once we saw *Dorade* in Newport, there was no more looking around. The history of the boat, the love that went into her and the things she's accomplished are very meaningful to us.

When I came up with this crazy idea to repeat all her earlier races, they said I was nuts. **We did the Bermuda Race, the Transatlantic Race, the Fastnet Race and the Transpac Race to Hawaii.** We had the boat in Australia for 10 months getting ready for the Sydney Hobart Race, and 20,000 people waited for the boat in Hobart.

She is almost 90 years old, mostly original, and still competitive. During the Transatlantic Race, we surfed down 30ft waves doing 20 knots, but when we finished there was not even a loose screw. She sails a bit like a rocking horse because she is so narrow, only 10ft 3in wide, and she'll tell you when she doesn't like what you are doing.

**We live in San Francisco, but Newport, Rhode Island is *Dorade's* home port.** It's a five-hour flight – we spend that much time in traffic in California. Joe Loughborough of LMI does a refit on her every year. We want to keep her in top form and we sail about 60 days a year. We have a two-star burgee from a rear admiral flag to honor my father, John Brooks, who was an admiral; the new technology building at IYRS School of Technology & Trades in Newport also bears his name.

***Serena* is the mother ship;** the crew sleeps on board, she provides utilities, clothes and rosé wine. We were looking for something that was beautiful and elegant, like *Dorade*. *Serena* is a 74ft Feadship-built, Carlo Riva-designed Caravelle. She had just undergone a 43,000-hour refit, taking her right down to the hull. She is the new flagship of the Feadship Heritage Fleet in the United States, and they tell me that she is the most original of the eight existing Riva Caravelles.

We are lucky to have a steady crew. **After each race, we all gather in the cockpit with some rosé and cheese** and just chat. One year in the Bermuda Race we had to return the family trophy – the race committee had mistaken the crew for my children!



> **SISTER ACT**  
Brooks bought the 1964 Feadship *Serena*, below, to accompany *Dorade*



v **FAVORITE THINGS**  
Brooks and wife Pam love cheese and wine in the cockpit



PHOTOGRAPHY: BILLY BLACK; CORY SILKEN; ADOBE STOCK