

# LIFE IN **Estonia**

FALL | 2012

## SPECIAL!

### Estonia, A Maritime Country

### Estonian Marinas - A World Of Wonder

### Strong Traditions Of Estonian Shipbuilding

### Estonian Seafarers In The Past And Present

### Jaanus Tamme:

### The Man Behind The Noblessner Marina

### Aili Vint Portrays The Sea

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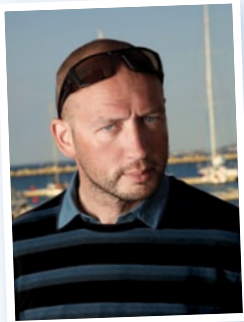
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# Estonia - A Maritime Nation

## LIFE IN Estonia



### COVER

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Photo: Jaanar Nikker

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Estonia has 3,793 km of coastline, long shipbuilding traditions, and hundreds of fishing villages. The fact that we ratified our maritime policy 21 years after we restored our independence does not mean that we have not been a maritime nation for the last two decades. We can speak with pride of the shipbuilding companies BLRT Grupp and Baltic Workboats, our large shipping company Tallink and the rest of our shipping industry. We have good ports in Tallinn, Muuga, Sillamäe and Paldiski.

All this exists not courtesy of our maritime policy but despite the lack of it. I am glad that we have finally put the entire picture together and have mapped our country's needs and approach to maritime issues.

At present, our maritime affairs are fragmented between ministries and occupations. A plan needs to be developed in order to create synergy and seamless co-operation; then we can avoid duplication of effort and make sure that the work that needs to be done to improve maritime policy actually gets done.

Our port and logistics business is currently the most profitable industry and has the most added value. With the establishment of the logistics cluster, there is the potential to find new opportunities among different markets in the East and West. It is important to be a part of the transport corridor and let the world think about us in terms of effectiveness, safety and great quality of services.

It is clear that the state will not provide money for everything, and that is why we need to think about where to invest. I thoroughly support the building of a new ice breaker, because as an independent country we cannot depend upon the availability of our neighbour's icebreakers.

For years there has been talk of bringing our ships under the Estonian flag. There are other equally important steps necessary to kick-start the right schemes for our mariners as our maritime neighbouring nations have managed to do. We must not be afraid of the relatively small costs that are necessary to increase profits.

It is very important that our small harbours be regulated and thoroughly re-built. Harbours are necessary to everyone who travels by sea. They are as much part of our infrastructure as roads, railways and airports. Ports are our seagates and if we want to welcome our guests and move safely ourselves, we must maintain these gates.

There is little point in letting local governments and private operators fight for the European Union's financial aid. There's no need for fishermen and sailors to argue about who will get monetary support and get to build a port for their needs. We should put our heads together and create a unified network of small harbours and make the best use of money from the European Union. All sailors, motorboats and fishermen would benefit from a well-planned port system.

I am glad that the ice has started to melt and everything is starting to move in our ministries and among our partners. Let's map our ports and create classifications that will determine the standards and support schemes to further develop these ports.

I also see great potential in our small vessel building. The small craft building cluster created in Saaremaa has been successful and I believe it has a competitive future. Small craft building is just what we need: creating a qualified labour force that has added value and a good reputation. Estonian small craft building companies are growing from subcontractors into entrepreneurs that have the potential to be the next Estonian business-card. It would be extremely useful if we could train both good builders and engineers.

Naturally, there is a need to improve maritime education and training institutions. We should critically review our curricula and conform them to our future needs.

To sum up, the famous Estonian song states: *The sea was, is and always shall be*, and our task is to make the best use of the sea, so that Estonia will not just be a country with a coastline but a maritime nation.



**Juhan Parts**  
Minister of Economic Affairs and Communications

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Tiit Pruuli who has sailed around the world and participated in many offshore sailing expeditions, contemplates on the importance of the sea for Estonians.

17 **The land by the sea**

Estonia has nearly 3,800 kilometres of coastline, and thousands of islands and islets. Estonians have always been seafarers, but the shining lights of their naval history are the Baltic German noblemen born in the territory of Estonia who in the 19th century served in the navy of the Russian Empire. Krusenstern, Bellingshausen, Kotzebue, Toll, Wrangell - their role can be compared to that of Magalhães, Columbus and Cook in the world's naval history.



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Michael Haagensen interviews Jaanus Tamme – architect, solo ocean racer, entrepreneur and the man behind the Port Noblessner marina complex.

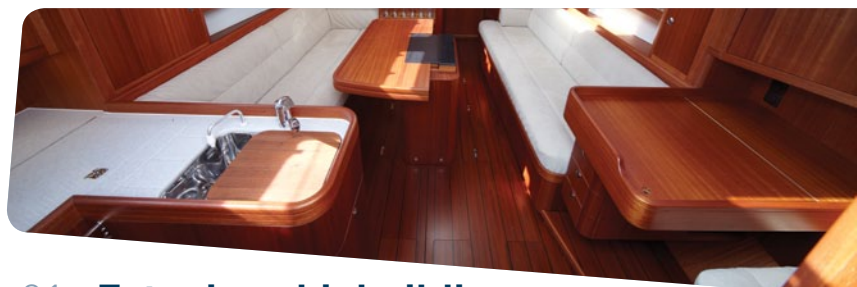
27 **Kuressaare College trains future small craft engineers**

Kuressaare College of the Tallinn University of Technology is the only school in Estonia to teach small craft building, with the aim to give students a metier IV qualification in small craft engineering.



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BLRT Grupp is one of the biggest industrial concerns in the Baltic States. Its priorities are target markets such as sea transport, renewable energy, machine building, offshore oil and gas extraction industries, and fish farming. BLRT Grupp celebrates its 100th anniversary this year. Chairman of the Board, Fjodor Berman, shares with us the secret of their success.



31 **Estonian shipbuilding industry – from Viking boats to coastal patrol cutters**

Estonia has always been known as a shipbuilding state of small and large vessels. Besides the two large shipbuilding factories, the BLRT Grupp and Loksa Shipyard, there are several small craft builders in Estonia whose products are considered to be of high quality. Get acquainted with the small craft produced by Polar Shipyard, Ridas Yachts, Britamarine, Alunaut, Saare Paat, and Baltic Workboats.



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The Head of Tekno Marine, Rauno Kurki-Suonio is a Finn who has lived for twenty years in Estonia. His former vision that the island of Saaremaa could become the centre of small craft building in Estonia has become a reality.

## 40 **Estonian kayak aims to expand in the US market; Europe conquered already**

Somewhat surprisingly, one of the best producers of water crafts – kayaks, canoes, row-boats and relevant equipment in Europe is an Estonian company called Tahe Kayaks. It now plans to expand its presence in the United States and Australia.

## 42 **Estonian company reveals the secrets of the world's seas and oceans**



Rainer Sternfeld has moved on to develop his newly established start-up company Marinexplore in Silicon Valley. His goal is to create a collaborative one-stop service for public marine data of the planet and a marine intelligence software for the offshore enterprise to cut the time needed for data processing fivefold, opening a new page in ocean exploration.

## 45 **Columbus did not discover America ...Chickens confirm**

Where did the Maoris of New Zealand come from? Who really discovered South America? As surprising as it may seem, the Estonian-born scientist Lisa Matisoo is enquiring about the most important questions of human migration from rats and chickens!



## 48 **PORTFOLIO: How to paint the portrait of the sea**

Painter and writer Toomas Vint portrays his wife and colleague Aili Vint who is the most unique marinist in Estonia. Get acquainted with the mesmerising paintings by Aili Vint who literally paints the soul of the sea.

## 60 **Multiple-masted ships in full sail**

In order to create an authentic scale model of a yacht, one has to know the ships, but also the characteristics of wood and glues. In addition, one has to be incredibly patient, as many details are as tiny as grains of sand. This is a job for true sea fans, captains or architects, better yet a combination of the three. Meet the architect Uno Rosme, whose hobby is historical scale models of ships.



## 62 **Estonian sailing shows signs of revival**

Estonians have sailed on the sea and larger inland bodies of water since the beginning of time. During the fifty years that Estonia was part of the Soviet Union, offshore sailing practically died out. Still, the Sailing Regatta of the Moscow Olympic Games was an opportunity to present Tallinn as a strong sailing centre. Now it seems that the worst times are probably behind us.



## 66 **Estonia – an ideal boating destination on the Baltic**

In August 2012, six maritime journalists from Germany visited Estonia in order to learn about the opportunities available in Estonia as a seaside country and to visit small craft building companies. Read the impressions of one of the journalists, Marion Köhnmann.

## 68 **Sailing from Estonia to Europe and back**

Marina owner, car and boat businessman Viktor Siilats has been interested in yachts for 17 years. Even that much that he makes his trips to Europe by motor yacht instead of car. He shares with the readers his views on sea tourism possibilities in Estonia.

## 70 **Estonian marinas – a world of wonder**

There are around 175 marinas in Estonia, but only about a half of them are fully equipped to receive visiting yachts. Learn what maritime tourists can find around small Estonian marinas when they bother to come ashore. The selection is totally subjective and focuses on special marinas with the most exciting history.



## 77 **Practical information for visitors**

## DER ROSENKAVALIER



Vello Pähn, Photo: SuiradO

Concert performance of Richard Strauss' opera on 7 November 2012 at the Estonia Concert Hall

Conductor: **Vello Pähn**  
 Soloists: **Johanni van Oostrum** (Republic of South Africa), **Michaela Selinger** (Austria), **Manfred Hemm** (Austria), **Valentina Farcas** (Romania), **Rauno Elp**, **Heli Veskus Urmas Pöldma**, **Juuli Lill**, **René Soom**, **Priit Volmer**, **Oliver Kuusik**, **Triin Ella**, **Kadri Kipper**, **Janne Ševtšenko**, **Kristel Pärtna**, **Aleksander Arder** and **Andres Köster**. With the Estonian National Opera Chorus and Orchestra.

*If you love somebody, let them go...*

"Der Rosenkavalier" is a comic opera in which a deeper level is exposed through a bitter-sweet love story. It was one of Strauss' favourite operas, and its rich orchestration and flowing melodies provide a treat for all gourmets of music.

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 Symphony no 4 e-minor op. 98



## CINDERELLA

Ballet in two acts by Sergey Prokofiev

Premiere at the Estonian National Opera on 16 November 2012

Choreographer-Stage Director: **Marina Kesler**  
 Conductors: **Vello Pähn** and **Jüri Alperden**

*Love knows no boundaries – that is the magic of life!*

Marina Kesler retells the well-loved classic by Charles Perrault in an enticing way, providing dazzling and colourful entertainment for the whole family. In the world of clowns, fairies, butterflies and gladiators, one may recognise the subtle moments of our everyday life.



Alena Shkatula

## NEW YEAR'S EVE BALL – CARNIVAL OF VENICE

31 December 2012 at the Estonian National Opera

Stage Director: **Arne Mikk**  
 Conductors: **Eri Klas** and **Mihhail Gerts**  
 Ballet Master: **Marina Kesler**

We invite you to enjoy glamorous entertainment at a real Venetian carnival, where in the whirl of colourful costumes and fantastic masks you are bound to forget the dullness of everyday routines and winter's frost! The first part of the evening includes the music production "Carnival of Venice", full of music associated with the City of Water. Memories of Venice are shared by the favourite of all women – Casanova!



The second part of the evening offers you the jazz program "La Jazz", by Villu Veski, Tiit Kalluste and Sofia Rubina.



Youn Sun Nah

Kurt Elling



www.opera.ee

## CHICK COREA TRIO

14 November at 7 pm at the Nokia Concert Hall

On 14 November the legendary American pianist and composer **Chick Corea** begins his European tour in Tallinn. An 18-time Grammy winner, prolific composer and undisputed keyboard virtuoso, Chick Corea has attained living legend status. His 2012 schedule continues Corea's unbroken string of productivity, with three world tours and four new albums.

Chick Corea's newest trio features a stellar rhythm tandem: the bassist **Christian McBride**, one of the most outstanding talents of his generation, and the drummer extraordinaire **Brian Blade**, a long-standing member of the Wayne Shorter Quartet.



Chick Corea, Photo: Pavel Korbut

From 29 November–12 December, **JÕULUJAZZ 2012 (Christmas Jazz)** brings to you a superb concert programme held in the churches, clubs and concert halls in Tallinn and other Estonian towns.

**Youn Sun Nah** is the most famous singer in South Korea who belongs in the best of the world's jazz vocalists. Her repertoire includes classical jazz and world music, as well as chansons and her own dazzling improvisations.

The German vocal group **Slixs** have no difficulties in imitating an entire ensemble. In addition they create sound variations and noises which outshine all instrumental groups. The rich and harmonious sound, humorous modulations and artistic arrangements make Slixs concerts a real a capella experience.

**Tigran Hamasyan**, a Romanian-born pianist and composer who lives in France has received much praise from people like Herbie Hancock and Chick Corea. His masterful improvisations combine with the rich folk tunes of Romania, resulting in a fresh sound characterised by complicated rhythm patterns, loaded dynamics and the interplay between acoustic and electronic expressions.

The final concert of the festival brings together the sounds of one of the leading American vocalists **Kurt Elling** and the Estonian Dream Big Band into a dazzling cooperation project. The Chicago-born singer and composer Kurt Elling has in the last dozen years taken the leading position among the top of the world's best male jazz vocalists. Kurt Elling's voice range is four octaves. With playful ease he is able to perform the most complicated jazz pieces.

Tickets on sale from Piletilevi and Ticketpro retailers.

[www.jazzkaar.ee](http://www.jazzkaar.ee)



## FASHION AND THE COLD WAR

Open at the Kumu Art Museum until 20 January 2013

The exhibition **Fashion and the Cold War** combines politics with fashion and describes the developments and aspirations of Soviet fashion, based on the example of the fashion designers at the Tallinn Fashion House and Siluett magazine. The exhibition strives to reveal the dual role played by Soviet fashion: mediating the West to the East and presenting the East to the West.

Estonia was the most westerly and Western-minded republic of the Soviet Union, but was cut off from the rest of the world by the Iron Curtain. Similarly to culture, the central focus of the clothing culture was being up-to-date with the latest international developments. For instance, the Tallinn Fashion House was established in 1957 in order to mould the appearance of the Soviet people and surpass the West.

[www.kumu.ee](http://www.kumu.ee)



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**PIANO'12**

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Tallinn, Estonia Concert Hall

**Artistic director**  
Lauri Väinmaa

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[concert.ee](http://concert.ee)



Tigran Hamasyan



## The first hiking route going through Estonia is completed

This summer, after ten years of development, the State Forest Management Centre (RMK) opened the first 370-kilometre long hiking route which goes through Estonia.

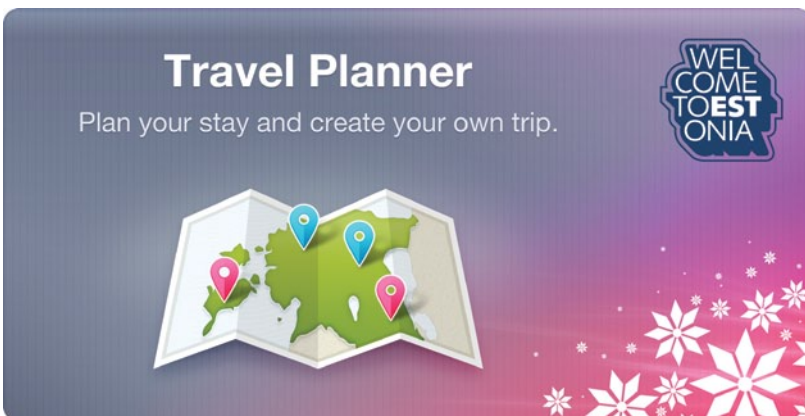
In the words of Aigar Kallas, Chairman of RMK, existing routes were connected and new ones were created during the development of the hiking route.

“The route from Oandu to Ikla starts from the Lahemaa National Park, travels through six counties, two national parks, nine environmental protection areas and three national forest recreation areas and finishes at the Estonian-Latvian border station in Ikla,” said Kallas and added that Estonia has quite a flat landscape and therefore completing the route does not require any special fitness training.

The RMK hiking route is marked by kilometre posts and directing signs, which make it near impossible to get lost. Information boards tell more about the forest economy and the forest heritage, culture and recreation. Specific route maps and legends are available in the 26 RMK Nature and Information Centres, located throughout Estonia. The hiking route includes 33 tenting areas marked with the RMK sign, forest houses and –huts.

You can watch the introductory video at:

[loodusegakoos.ee/matkatee-blogi/vaata-klippi](http://loodusegakoos.ee/matkatee-blogi/vaata-klippi)



## Travel Planner at your service

Enterprise Estonia introduced an innovative solution for tourists on its websites puhkaestis.ee and visitestonia.com. Travel Planner, available in seven languages, helps visitors to compile a custom-made holiday schedule with exact travel routes. Travel Planner provides information about events, opportunities for active holidays, places to eat and other attractions and special offers linked to all of the above.

In addition to the possibility of creating your own account, it is possible to save, change, and share your Travel Planner with friends. Recommendations include photos and videos which you can see on the map, accompanied with exact explanations of how to get there.

“The technology and the idea of the Travel Planner are unique in Estonia and internationally. Most similar applications are ‘bookmark-based’ meaning that visitors need to know exactly what kind of sites or attractions they are looking for, they need to do a lot of homework seeking information and putting their travel agenda together on their own. The Travel Planner offers appropriate solutions itself, based on the interests of the visitor, real opening times, popularity of the destination and so on. The preferences can be determined by the visitor themselves. For example, when you use the Google search engine you already need to know what you are looking for. However, potential visitors to Estonia may not be aware of what the country has to offer and what they could look for in the first place,” explained Tarmo Mutso, Marketing Director of the Tourism Development Centre of Enterprise Estonia.

The Travel Planner is available in Estonian, Finnish, Russian, English, Swedish, German and Latvian. It is therefore geared to the most important foreign markets for Estonia but also for home tourists. Search results are optimised primarily with the foreign tourist in mind.

With the Travel Planner it is hoped to increase the number of foreign tourists to Estonia and also the number of returning visitors by directing visitors more outside of Tallinn. It is also hoped to increase the interest of local people to travel around the country and to provide tourism enterprises with better opportunities to present their products and services.

The Travel Planner was made in cooperation between Enterprise Estonia, Nortal (former Webmedia) and the Technology Competence Centre in Electronics-, Info- and Communication Technologies ELIKO. It was financed by the European Regional Development Fund. ELIKO created the key solution of the application – the algorithm of the Travel Planner, which is based on unique and thorough scientific research and development. This process involved indexing the various factors on the basis of which a person planning a journey can reach a solution suitable for them. In all languages, the Travel Planner uses data from the Enterprise Estonia tourism information system, which includes details about more than 1,600 tourism enterprises and 7,000 sites all over Estonia.

See more:

[www.visitestonia.com/en/travel-planner](http://www.visitestonia.com/en/travel-planner)



## A new berth for cruise ships

The Port of Tallinn plans to establish a new and larger, 420-metre, berth for cruise ships by next fall. The total cost of the project is nearly ten million euros.

According to Sirle Arro, Business Manager of cruise and ferry activities of the Port of Tallinn, the need for the new berth comes from the increased number of cruise tourists.

“We will probably reach half a million cruise tourists and 350 cruise ships per season in the next few years – the number of tourists will also be increased by the implementing of turnaround, the starting and ending of cruise trips in Tallinn,” noted Arro.

“On 14 July, the largest turnaround to date took place in cooperation with the Tallinn Airport; we served thousands of cruise tourists arriving from Spain by air and there was a record number of six cruise ships simultaneously in Tallinn on Sunday,” said Arro. “In addition to the number of tourists increasing, we also need to account for the increasing size of the cruise ships arriving in Tallinn; this requires a larger berth,” remarked Arro.

The new berth will also be wider than the old one; this will provide better access for service transport. This spring a trade village was opened on the cruise berth, where Estonian-produced goods are sold in a 300-square-meter sales pavilion and in 26 sales outlets.

In addition to the sales of handicrafts and Estonian foodstuffs, the trade area of the cruise berth offers an information counter, currency exchange services, a jewellery store and a catering outlet.



The main sightseeing destination of cruise tourists is the Old Town and also the recently completed Seaplane Harbour and Television Tower, but several travel agencies are also organising trips outside the city, for example excursions to Lahemaa National Park, canoe trips on the Keila River and ATV safaris in the Männiku Quarry.

According to the questionnaire of the Port of Tallinn, an average cruise tourist spends 41 euros in Tallinn; this means that the total amount of money that the trade and service enterprises of Tallinn receive from all cruise tourists during a season is approx. 17 million euros. The same questionnaire also indicates that 97% of cruise passengers recommend Tallinn as a destination to their friends and acquaintances. 66% of cruise tourists say that they will definitely or probably return to Tallinn for a longer vacation.



## Estonia exhibits at the International Boat Show in Hamburg

The Northern European boat construction industry will be showcasing itself in Hamburg. At the 53rd International Boat Show from 27 October to 2 November 2012, Finland, Estonia, and Poland will be presenting their new products.

Estonia will be attending the show for the first time with a joint booth for its shipbuilders thanks to the support of Enterprise Estonia. From innovative paddle boats to luxury yachts, a wide spectrum of motor, sailing, and recreational boats will be on display.

The Polar 55, an 18-meter-long luxury yacht built by the Estonian company Polar Shipyard, is being premiered at the show and is perhaps the most spectacular boat featured at the Estonian booth. Yet many other smaller boats are also sure to attract the attention of attendees. The products on display from Estonian manufacturers will impress, not least because they offer excellent value for money. The product quality is comparable to that of Scandinavian manufacturers – but for a considerably lower cost.

A total of 14 Estonian companies will be exhibiting together at the Hamburg Boat Show. The 714 sq. metre exhibition space can be found at Hall A4, Booth C100.

### Additional information:

Riina Leminsky, Enterprise Estonia Hamburg  
e-mail: hamburg@eas.ee



## Estonian Air to launch London City flights

Estonian Air will switch its Tallinn flights from London Gatwick (LGW) to London City Airport (LCY) when it steps up services next year. The Tallinn-based carrier will end its two times-weekly Tallinn-London Gatwick in October and replace it with a new service to London City from March 1. Initially three times-weekly, the service will ramp up to four times-weekly in May, then go to six times-weekly in June.

The new service will be tied to the arrival of Estonian Air's new 112-seater Embraer E-190, which will operate the route.

Speaking at the World Low Cost Airline Congress in London, Estonian Air CEO Tero Taskila said: "London has been an important destination of the Estonian Air's network and we wanted to improve the current schedule with two weekly flights with more frequent one. There are several benefits for the airline. The turnaround time in London City is 25 minutes instead of 45 minutes in London Gatwick. That adds one hour to aircraft utilisation," Taskila said. "I would like to stress that our new flight plan suits considerably better the business travellers by making the connection between the two capitals not only more frequent, but also shorter in duration," he added.

The carrier made the switch because statistics showed the majority of passengers on the Tallinn-London sector terminated their journeys in LCY, which has faster access to the city centre than London-Gatwick. Most of Estonian Air's passengers are business travellers and LCY is a heavily business-oriented airport, located close to the city's Canary Wharf financial district.

Estonian Air will be the only carrier from Scandinavia and the Baltic flying into LCY. Ryanair also currently serves Tallinn from Luton, while Easyjet flies to the city from Stansted.



population and housing census

## PHC 2011:

### The share of Estonian Citizens in the population has increased

According to the preliminary data of the 2011 Population and Housing Census, of the 1,294,236 enumerated permanent residents in Estonia, 1,101,761 are Estonian citizens. Compared to the previous census, the share of Estonian citizens has increased from 80% to 85%.

During the 2011 Population and Housing Census (PHC 2011), 1,101,761 Estonian citizens living permanently in Estonia were enumerated, which is by 6,018 more than in the 2000 Population Census (1,095,743), including 597,652 women and 504,109 men.

85.1% of the enumerated permanent residents defined themselves as Estonian citizens and 8.1% as citizens of a foreign country. 6.5% of the enumerated permanent residents defined themselves as persons with undetermined citizenship. 3,116 persons did not specify their citizenship. Compared to the previous Population and Housing Census, the share of persons with undetermined citizenship has decreased (from 12.4% to 6.5%) and the share of persons with the citizenship of a foreign country has increased (from 6.9% to 8.1%).

Of the citizens of other countries, the number of permanent residents is the largest among the citizens of the Russian Federation (89,913), Ukraine (4,707) and Latvia (1,739).

The 11th population census in Estonia was conducted from 31 December 2011 until 31 March 2012. Previous censuses were carried out in 1881, 1897, 1922, 1934, 1941, 1959, 1970, 1979, 1989 and 2000. The next population census will be conducted in Estonia in 2020/2021.



## The number of hits at Visitestonia.com has doubled in a year

In the first half of 2012, the number of visits to Estonia's central tourism portal visitestonia.com has doubled in comparison to the same period the year before. Within the six months, more than five million pages have been viewed in the portal and there have been nearly 1.4 million visitors to the website. Visitestonia.com is part of Estonia's tourism information system, the creation of which was funded by the European Regional Development Fund.

Visitors are mostly interested in general information about Estonia, Estonian towns, opportunities for nature- and active holidays as well as different tours around the country. People actively seek information on accommodation, health spas and other tourist attractions.

According to Eero Raun, Head of the Tourism Marketing Centre of Enterprise Estonia, these developments are the result of hard work. "As it is vital for online users to find the necessary information as quickly as possible, we have developed the structure of theme pages and search functions. Visitestonia.com and its Estonian language version puhkaeestis.ee are strategically important information channels for Estonia, servicing the tourism-related 8% of Estonia's GDP. Being aware of our responsibility, we are regularly updating this channel and bringing in new possibilities linked to the social media," explained Raun. The amount of data reaching end users has also increased significantly, as the number of companies that administer their own data and add and manage their offers is up by 60% within six months.

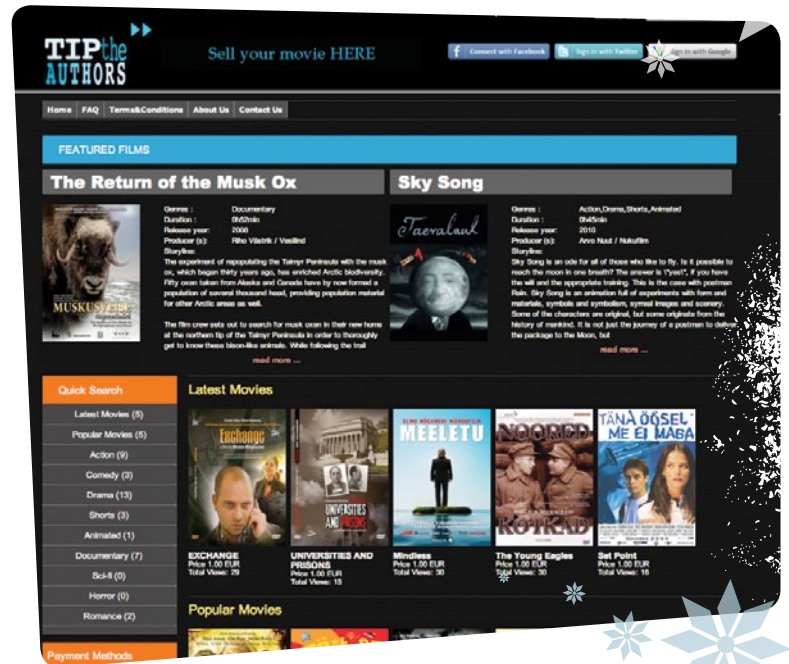
"This expansion in the network of cooperating partners is a great trend for Estonia's tourism economy," added Raun. The number of visits made via smart phones and iPads has increased five times, comprising a tenth of all visits to the site. Due to this trend, the Tourism Development Centre of Enterprise Estonia is planning to develop a mobile phone friendly platform of the visitestonia.com website. Visitestonia.com is the central information portal for local tourism entrepreneurs and everybody who wishes to travel to Estonia. Its Estonian version puhkaeestis.ee is meant to be used by domestic tourists.

### SPECIFIC NUMBER OF VISITS ACCORDING TO COUNTRY, first half year 2011 -> 2012

Estonian domestic tourism portal puhkaeestis.ee (in Estonian and Russian) – 194, 900 -> 439,698

Finland	70,000 -> 220,000
Russia	30,000 -> 125,000
Latvia	47,000 -> 99,000
UK	18,000 -> 50,000
USA	18,000 -> 48,000
Germany	22,000 -> 43,000
Ukraine	5,000 -> 13,000

Foreign tourists already in Estonia have used the **visitestonia.com** website – 121,000 -> 254,000



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IT Garage OÜ, a small international company with headquarters in Tartu, Estonia, is building and managing the www.tiptheauthors.com platform to sell movies online. All movie producers and authors can sign up for free, and without any obligations, to get access to the world market. The company takes care of deals with authors' societies, pays tax and verifies all authors. This means that all movie downloads from this site are completely legal.

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# Estonia – Now A Maritime Country With A Maritime Policy

Text: **Toomas Haidak**,  
Head of the Division of the  
Transport Development  
and Investments Department,  
Ministry of Economic Affairs  
and Communications



In August 2012 Estonia adopted its first maritime policy. That it was in the making for such a long of time might be a bit surprising considering that Estonia has throughout history been a maritime country, with several cities belonging to the Hanseatic League. Nevertheless, now the main development directions for maritime business, marine protection, pleasure boating and coastal culture have been laid out in one policy document.

The driving force behind the policy has been the idea of strengthening the whole of the maritime cluster. Currently ports and logistics companies are the main players in the sector, together with the biggest passenger ship company in the Baltic Sea - Tallink. The ship construction and repair business is also steadily rising. But cargo shipping has been in decline for some time and pleasure boating, while increasing, does not yet compare to our Scandinavian neighbours. Thus the key issue is how to strengthen these sectors in order to benefit the whole cluster, while preserving the delicate balance of the Baltic Sea.

It is important to note that the elaboration of the document was clearly initiated by the people active in the sector – both entrepreneurs and non-profit organisations. After somewhat of a decline in the activity in the sector in the 1990s, the last ten years have witnessed a steady rise in the number of people committing themselves to different fields of maritime and coastal activities. Thus the policy can be seen as a kind of culmination of ideas that have been simmering in people's minds for several years.

Pleasure boating is seen as a part of the development of small harbours, coastal activities and maritime culture, as a part of the maritime tourism sector. There are three major goals in promoting the sector: 1) making Estonia a more attractive destination for boats in the Baltics, 2) increasing the popularity of boating in Estonia, and as a result 3) creating more activity in the coastal areas and increasing people's, especially young people's, interest in the maritime sector. Just like in the rest of Europe, the concern for the relatively small number of new people joining the sector is very real. Of course, the preservation and promotion of maritime and coastal culture is a worthy goal in itself.

There are several directions of activities foreseen in the policy to promote maritime tourism. The centrepiece of this policy is the establishing of a small harbour network along the coast. There are, of course, already several high quality harbours providing services, but they are mainly situated around Tallinn or in the western archipelago. The goal

is to develop a network of harbours along the coast, not more than 30-40 miles apart. This would make Estonia a worthy counterpart to the Swedish and Finnish harbour networks and extend the opportunities for boating in the Baltics. Of course, this goal is meant to be achieved together with local municipalities and entrepreneurs, because the central government does not operate any harbours by itself.

The harbours would be rated according to the services that they provide. So essentially we are talking about a service-level standard that would be easily understood by the boater in the Baltics. It is also not a secret that the Finnish example has been taken as the role model for creating these service standards. The investment support by the government in the infrastructure of the selected harbours will start in 2015, but of course the harbours will in the meantime invest on their own as well.

With the harbours as the centrepiece of development, the key to creating a more attractive boating environment lies in the destinations, activities and events around the harbours. In the maritime policy, the attractions related to maritime and coastal activities are described. These include museums, workshops, historical boats, sailing events etc., but also attractions not directly related to the sea are important. These will be laid out in the national tourism strategy for 2020, which is currently in preparation.

Another field of activity directly related to boating and very relevant to all boaters is, of course, navigation. This includes both safety and information about navigation that can be called upon by boaters. The Estonian Maritime Administration has been hard at work in recent years to improve both navigation safety and electronic data dissemination. A new electronic port register has just recently been developed ([www.sadamaregister.ee](http://www.sadamaregister.ee)) which can be used by itself or its database can be linked to service providers who want to develop services based on it. In addition, the non-profit sector has been very active creating info pages specifically for boaters (<http://marinas.nautilus.ee/> and [http://www.kipper.ee/index.php?option=com\\_wrapper&Itemid=95](http://www.kipper.ee/index.php?option=com_wrapper&Itemid=95)).

The maritime policy is a rather lengthy document full of pages of actions and investments planned for the next years. But, at the end of the day, it's not the specific actions written in the document that matter. More important is that it is a statement by the nation of the will to establish themselves on the sea. To make use of and protect the sea. To be a maritime country.



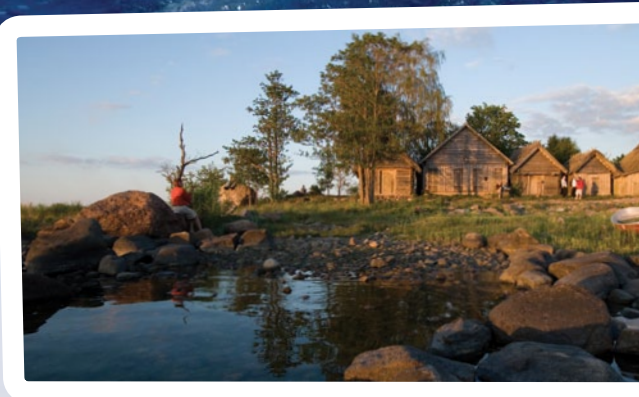
Text: **Tiit Pruuli**,  
sailor on the yacht Lennuk 1999-2001,  
on the yacht Martha 2008,  
and of the catamaran Nordea 2011

Photos: Tiit Pruuli, Priit Rebane,  
Estonian Sports Museum



# From The Coast Out To The Sea

On that summer evening I might have been eight or nine years old. I sat on the large rocks by the sea in the village of Altja, in Lahemaa National Park, and watched how the beams of the Soviet border guard searchlights illuminated the sea. I watched lost in a daydream. The searchlights had been brought there by trucks from the military base in the village of Vergi in late afternoon. One was erected at the Lobi Cape, another at the Vergi harbour and the whole Estonian coastline was dotted with them. Like pebbles in the sand, border guards dotted the whole Estonian coastline.





The sea was not free. They feared that Estonians would leave by sea.

The Soviet power restored the net sheds, the pub and the village swing in the old Altja fishing village, but those attempts did not bring back life to the area. The authentic seashore lifestyle had been destroyed by the same power decades earlier, when they created a border zone by the sea which could only be entered by special permission and erected barbed wire on the beach. In order to sail out to sea, boats had to pass through many official checks. In the evening, a large tractor with a rake worked the sand, dragging a ten-metre wide line so that any attempts to secretly take a boat out to sea would be immediately visible. From ten o'clock in the evening, it was forbidden to go to the beach.

Beyond the sea was freedom.

As I watched those projector beams that evening, I promised myself that I would go out to sea. I would do it TO SPITE them.

The boys and I made a raft a few days later. It was a large and magnificent open-sea raft, and we thought Thor Heyerdahl's Kon-Tiki was probably something of the sort. We sawed planks and branches, sought out old car tires and polystyrene. We pushed the raft onto the sea and managed to stumble around in the water for about ten minutes, before

our grandparents and other panicky villagers arrived, begging and threatening us to return home immediately. Those good people did not fear we would drown; they were afraid of what might happen when the Soviet border guards saw what we had come up with.

Going to sea could have been interpreted as an attempt to escape into freedom.

But Estonians had been linked to the sea for centuries. The will to sail the seas and to see people beyond them could not be tamed by any ruler's orders.

Under the Russian flag, the first circumnavigation of the globe took place from 1803-1806. The expedition was led by the Estonian-born explorer Adam Johann von Krusenstern. Among the sixteen officers on that journey, seven seamen came from Estonia. Of the Baltic Germans who lived in Estonia, those who sailed into the world's maritime history included the circumnavigators Otto von Kotzebue, Friedrich von Lütke and Ferdinand von Wrangel, the discoverer of Antarctica Fabian von Bellingshausen, and the Arctic explorer Eduard von Toll.

Yacht racing and ice yachting have been popular in Estonia at least since the early 20th century. Estonians have been Olympic champions and World champions in those fields. The 1980 Olympic Sailing Regatta, which was held in Tallinn, also provided a good impulse for the development of seaborne hobbies.



In 1997, we started to make preparations for the first Estonian team to sail around the world. We did not have a suitable yacht, enough money or previous experience of sailing around the world. But our desire to go to sea was huge. Just as Krusenstern's circumnavigation became reality thanks to the moral support of Czar Alexander I and Kotzebue's journey thanks to financing by Count Nikolai Rumjantsev, we also soon found supporters for our sea project. The patron of the project was President Lennart Meri, and many companies and entrepreneurs helped finance the project. We named our ship *Lennuk*; the same name was given to the boat of the hero in our national epic Kalevipoeg, and it took him to the end of the world.



The crew of Lennuk. In the middle Tiit Pruuli and Mart Saarso

The captain of our boat, Mart Saarso, has said how in 1980 he was gazing at an old business card of Ahto Valter, one of the oldest members of the Tallinn Yacht Club, who had sailed across the ocean. In the 1930s, the Valter brothers were legendary sailors who crossed the Atlantic Ocean six times on small sailing boats from 1930-38. Their skills and courage were valued in Estonia and in the USA. It is worth mentioning here that back then they had no GPS, radio communication, rescue boats or GORETEX clothing. During the Second World War, Ahto Valter had also sailed around the world with an American team, but due to the Iron Curtain not much was known about that voyage in his homeland until the end of the century.

By then there was nothing especially courageous about sailing around the world. It was done on mono- and multi-hulls, by single old men and young girls, in twenty days or ten years. But for Estonia and Estonians it was still important, as for the first time the Estonian blue-black-white flag left Tallinn in order to sail across all meridians and to return home. It was a voyage which thousands of adventurous Estonians followed via the Internet and television. And there was the mission of introducing Estonia to the world as a maritime nation experiencing a reawakening. We had hundreds of kilos of literature about Estonia with us; we gave hundreds of interviews and made planned and spontaneous presentations.



Captain Mart Saarso, featuring King Neptune, performing the equator-crossing ceremony



Lennuk in Gambia

Altogether, this was not just a sea adventure, but hard work which lasted for a year and a half. But it has to be admitted that there is no other way to travel around the world which is as beautiful and romantic as sailing. The curiosity to see what's beyond the horizon, the doldrums, terrific homesickness, storms, the time to look into oneself, to witness exotic tribal people living their traditional lifestyles – it all creates incredible emotions which nothing can surpass.

Ten years have passed since the yacht *Lennuk* set sail. Estonians have found their way to the sea. The coastal people have once again become sea people. Since our journey, the Estonian mono-hulls *Martha* and *Temptation II*, as well as the catamaran *Nordea*, have sailed around the world.



The crew of *Nordea* on *Nanuya Lailai*, Fiji Islands, which served as a location for the film *The Blue Lagoon*



In Estonia, modern cruisers are built by the companies *Luksusjaht*, *Saare Paat* and *Ridas Yachts*. Broadening economic opportunities have created a boom in motor boats and yachts among Estonians. Like mushrooms after rain, small marinas dot the coastline, receiving thousands of domestic and foreign hobby sailors each summer.

In the Vergi harbour, where I once saw the threatening beam of the Soviet border guard searchlight, there is now a modern yachting harbour. Probably another little boy is sitting near the large rocks in the neighbouring village of Altja and dreaming of white sails.

The sea is free today, but there is still room for dreams.



On the map Estonia looks like a peninsula. Estonia has numerous islands and islets, the country's sea border exceeds the land border and most inhabitants are in some way linked to the sea or to life on the seashore. Our agricultural land is poor, especially on the islands and, therefore, the sea has historically helped to sustain life. It has influenced the development of Estonians, their character, beliefs and mindset, and it holds a firm place in our culture.

Text: Enn Kreem  
Photos: Vello Mäss, Andres Eero,  
Rein Oras, Armas Luige, Maritime  
Museum

# The Land By The Sea

Ancient tales about our forefathers depict them as brave seafarers, who fought hard to protect their freedom and, truth be told, also pillaged ruthlessly. Estonian raiders sailed to Swedish and Danish shores as early as the 11th century. In 1170, the Danish king Valdemar the Great was forced to send out his entire navy to combat Estonian and Curonian raiders. It took the naval troops a few days of serious fighting to beat the relatively small gang. In addition to the Danes, the Swedish eastern coast also suffered severely under attacks from the Eastern Vikings, who also included Estonians and Oeselians, the inhabitants of Saaremaa Island (Ösel). This forced the Swedes to totally reorganise their coastal defence in the last third of the 12th century. It is suggested that in 1187, the Eastern Vikings organised the famous raid on the then Swedish capital and most important trading centre, Sigtuna.

In Norwegian sagas, Saaremaa is called Eysysla or simply Sysla. The ancient name of Hiiumaa is Dagö – “island of the day”, meaning the island located a day's journey away from Gotland. Many historic chronicles refer to the Estonians' busy activity on the Baltic Sea. This is a fact also confirmed by various ancient findings, the most recent one being a ship burial discovered on Saaremaa, in the village of Salme on the Sõrve peninsula. In about 750, this was the site of a battle with many victims. In two boats, the remains of forty-three men were discovered. A thorough investigation of the ship burial is ongoing.

FG Bellingshausen's and M.P. Lazarev's research ships  
Vostok and Mirnoi in Antarctica, 1820



## Baltic German seamen discovering the world

The shining lights of our naval history are the Baltic German noblemen born in the territory of Estonia who in the 19th century served in the navy of the Russian Empire. These educated and cultured men, who spoke several languages, quickly rose to the highest ranks in the navy. Their role in the Russian Empire can be compared to that of Magalhães, Columbus and Cook in the world's naval history.



The beautiful sailing ship now known as the "Krusenstern" was built in 1926 at the Joh. C. Tecklenborg shipyard by order of the Hamburg ship-owner Ferdinand Laeisz, with a steel hull and masts, and was christened the "Padua". Before the Second World War, the ship sailed 15 long journeys between Australia and Chile, the fastest one in 1938-1939, a record breaking trip from Hamburg via Chile to Australia and back to Hamburg in eight months and 23 days, with Captain Richard Wendt at the helm. During the Second World War, Hamburg remained the ship's home port and it was used for nearby journeys as a cargo barge. Luckily, the ship wasn't damaged notably during the war. On 12 January 1946 the ship was transferred to the Soviet navy as part of war reparations, was renamed the "Krusenstern" and her new home port became Riga. The new name was chosen in honour of Adam Johann von Krusenstern (1770–1846), born in Hagudi, Estonia. Krusenstern led the first Russian circumnavigation with the ships "Nadezhda" and "Neva" in 1803–1806.

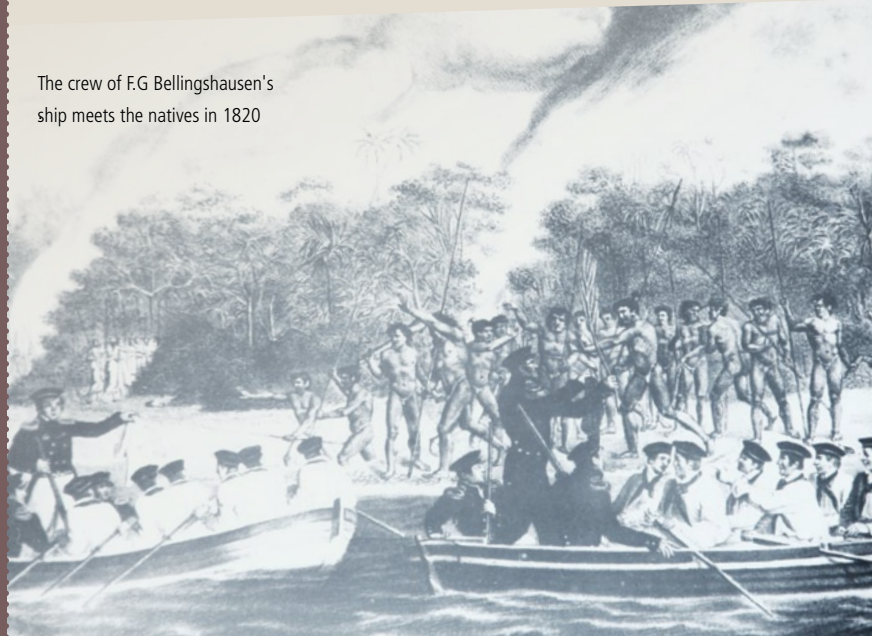


Between 1959–1961 the ship was completely refurbished and turned into a research and training vessel. The next large scale modernisation took place between 1968–1972. In 1981 Tallinn became the "Krusenstern's" new home port and, between long sailing trips, the ship anchored at the Paljassaare port. Ten years later, on 29 May 1991, the ship was handed over to the Kaliningrad (Königsberg) School of Marine Engineers.



The most internationally acclaimed of them was **Adam Johann von Krusenstern**, born in Hagudi, near Tallinn. He graduated from the Naval Cadet Corps in St Petersburg and became an officer. He then continued his education for six years in England, and sailed on the Atlantic, Indian and Pacific Oceans. Upon his return, A.J. von Krusenstern was employed as the leader of the first Russian circumnavigation of the globe, which was carried out from 1803-1806. During the journey, they made many oceanographic surveys, and described many islands and coastal areas, the results of which Krusenstern published in his "Atlas of the Southern Seas". He was the one to have the idea of founding the Russian Geographic Society, and he was selected an Honorary Member of the St Petersburg Academy of Sciences. The highly educated admiral was in charge of the organisation of all Russian geographic expeditions in the first half of the 19th century. These mostly concentrated on the Arctic Circle, but also included the southern hemisphere. Krusenstern spent the last years of his life in Estonia and he is buried in the Tallinn Dome Church. Eight geographical sites, as well as one of the largest sailing ships in the world, are named after him.

The crew of F.G Bellingshausen's ship meets the natives in 1820



# Famous Estonian navigators

This August, the city of Tallinn received a proposal from the NGO Spe Fretus to commission the statues of four famous seafarers in order to erect them by the Admiralty Pool, where a nice yachting harbour already exists. Three of the sculptures would represent the Estonian-born navigation stars of Czarist Russia – Adam Johann von Krusenstern (1770-1846), Fabian Gottlieb von Bellingshausen (1778-1852) and Otto von Kotzebue (1788-1846). Beside them would stand the pride of the first Republic of Estonia – Admiral Johan Pitka (1872-1944?).

Erecting the statues of those distinguished admirals is a great idea worthy of support. It would represent a respectful bow to the men who originated from Estonia and made it to the top, and offer a more decorous look to the city.



**Fabian Gottlieb von Bellingshausen**, born on Saaremaa, was a product of the same naval cadets corps. He joined the first Russian circumnavigation as a cartographer with Krusenstern. Bellingshausen attracted attention for his excellent mathematical skills and as a first-rate navigator. It is therefore not surprising that, when the second circumnavigation was planned a decade later, F.G. von Bellingshausen was asked to lead it, although he was only a second-rank captain. One of the aims of this expedition, organised in the footsteps of James Cook, was to force its way as far south as possible. During the expedition, many islands in the Southern Ocean were mapped and, on 28 January 1820, his sloop-of-war “Vostok” reached the Antarctic coastline, which they examined, although the leader of the expedition considered it to be a frozen sea. Therefore, F.G von Bellingshausen, together with the American N. Palmer, is considered to be one of the discoverers of Antarctica. An island in the southern Atlantic Ocean and a sea that is a part of the Southern Ocean carry his name.



Tombstone of Otto von Kotzebue in Kose churchyard



Memorial stone at the birthplace of F.G. Bellingshausen in Lahetaguse

Two very young noblemen, **Moritz and Otto von Kotzebue**, sons of the world-famous dramatist August von Kotzebue, took part in Krusenstern’s first circumnavigation. Otto later became a famous seafarer and explorer and leader of the third circumnavigation. He worked closely with the scientists at the University of Tartu who prepared the measuring apparatuses and participated in expeditions. The biggest achievement of the expeditions led by Otto von Kotzebue was research on the Northwest Passage and Oceania, where they discovered and mapped about 400 small islands. His name has been given to a sound and a city in the Northwest Arctic Borough of Alaska, as well as a street in Tallinn.



Baron **Ferdinand von Wrangell**, who spent his childhood in Estonia and who is buried in Tartu, circumnavigated the globe twice and an island in the Arctic Ocean carries his name.

The Arctic explorer Baron **Eduard von Toll** was born in Tallinn, and is today most widely associated with his fabled

hunt for the "Sannikov Land", a phantom island in the Arctic Ocean. It was sadly to be a quest that would cost him his life. Fridtjof Nansen named a bay on the north-west coast of the Taymyr peninsula in Toll's honour.

### The sea and trade

While noblemen led the emperor's naval troops and explored and mapped new lands, seafaring became more popular with ordinary folk as well. People built small sailing ships and sailed on the Baltic and North Seas, sometimes also making longer journeys. For example, the barge "Hioma", built on Hiiumaa, the second largest island in Estonia, sailed to Peru to pick up a load of fertilizer, thus being the first known Estonian ship to sail around Cape Horn. The demand for trading by ship increased, in order to transport stones to build city streets, heating- and building wood, fish, meat, grain and textiles meant for export. Concurrently, shipbuilding developed. Estonian ship builders were highly esteemed in neighbouring lands. Trained sailors were needed for longer journeys on larger ships. Therefore, nautical schools were opened in the coastal towns of Heinaste, Käsmu, Paldiski, Kuressaare and Narva.

There are many stories in the Estonian nautical history of boys starting out as deck boys, collecting money, entering maritime schools and becoming captains and then shipowners. Skippers were often also shareholders or eventually became shareholders. Soon it became obvious that it was safer and more profitable for a skipper to operate several ships. Cultural leaders of the time supported the development of shipping as

an important economic opportunity for Estonia. For example, the idea of founding the first shipping society, "Linda", was proposed by the 19th century leading cultural thinker C.R. Jakobson. Many other well-known cultural leaders joined the society.

### Wars and seafaring

World War I was a huge blow to Estonian shipping. Gustav Teng's fate illustrates this well. After many years of being a sailor, Teng graduated from the Nautical College in Riga as an extern. As a captain, he collected enough money to be able to build his own shipbuilding company on Hiiumaa, while continuing to sail himself. About a dozen sailing ships were built by Teng's company and all of them were sunk during the war. In 1921, he built his last sailing ship, "Dione", in which he experienced a storm on the Baltic Sea. After saving his ship, Teng collapsed and died on the captain's bridge. It is some consolation that, of his fifteen children, four sons carried on as ship captains.

At the end of World War I, the War of Independence broke out in Estonia. The founder of the naval forces of the young republic was the merchant mariner Captain Johan Pitka. In 1919, Rear Admiral Pitka was selected the Head of the Estonian Naval Forces. He planned many important naval operations, participating in battles in the Bay of Riga and in the Daugava confluence. During the war, Pitka became a legend of the fight for freedom, organising Estonia's naval defence and fighting for the independence of Estonia until his last breath.

After the founding of the Republic of Estonia in 1918, our seafaring began to develop rapidly. Modern trading ships gradually replaced the wooden sailing ships. In addition to the previous passenger ships which sailed in coastal areas, ship lines to Finland, Sweden and Germany were introduced. The fishing industry also developed fast. Row-boats, motor boats and trailers were built. Their journeys took them even to the Atlantic Ocean. And then history had another sea catastrophe in store for Estonia.

In 1940, the Soviet occupation began in Estonia, followed by Estonia's involvement in World War II a year later. Estonia was annexed to the Soviet Union and the ships carrying Estonian flags in foreign harbours received the order to immediately return to Soviet ports. Many ships in foreign waters did not obey this order. When World War II broke out, there were about eighty Estonian ships just in British ports. Some of them were sold and others operated under new flags. All ships captured in Estonia were either taken to Russia or scuttled. During the German occupation, hundreds of boats and small ships escaped with refugees to Sweden. When the Soviet forces returned, they destroyed the remaining vessels so that no-one would be able to flee.

After independence was restored, there was only one national shipping company remaining in Estonia. Today there are again dozens of them. As Estonian policy does not really promote shipping, many of the ships operate under foreign flags. In spite of this, the biggest ferry company of the Baltic Sea has developed in Estonia: the Tallink Group operates the ships of the Tallink and Silja Lines.

Shipping continues to be popular. There is tough competition to enter the Estonian Maritime Academy. The diplomas received from the Academy are accredited internationally. Seafaring is our fate.

An aerial photograph showing the Port Noblessner marina complex in the foreground, featuring several large industrial buildings and a marina with many boats. In the background, the Seaplane Harbour is visible, along with a residential area and a large green field. The top of the image has a dark blue header with white snowflake patterns.

In the forefront, the Noblessner marina complex and a bit further up the Seaplane Harbour

An interview with Jaanus Tamme - architect, solo ocean racer, entrepreneur and the man behind the Port Noblessner marina complex.

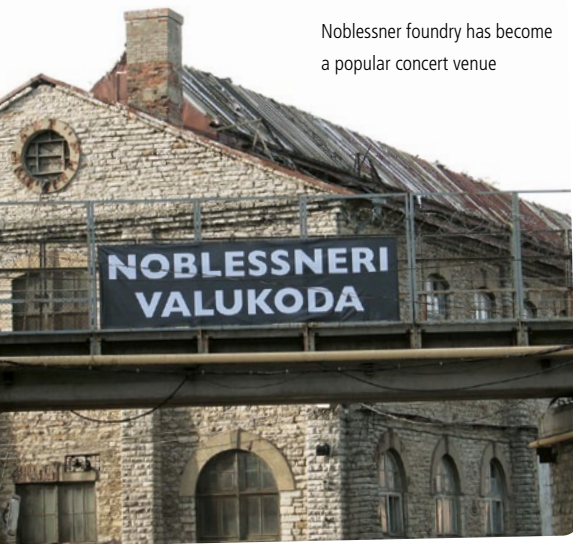


# Dreaming Of Breakwaters And Entering Orbit

**Text:** Michael Haagensen

**Photos:** Port Noblessner, Arne Maasik, Tarvo Hanno Varres, Jaak Lukk, Atko Januson

Noblessner foundry has become a popular concert venue

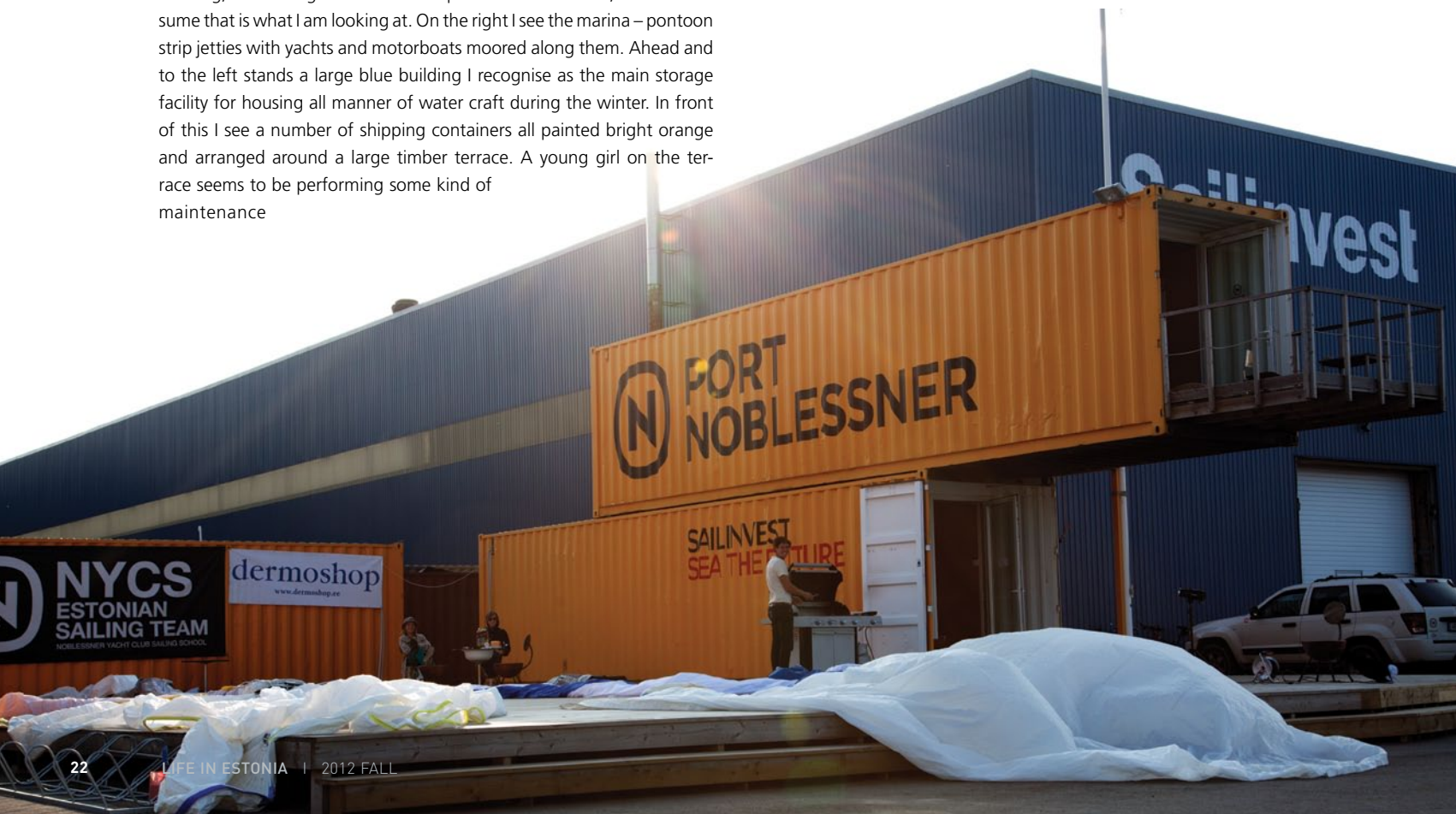


After parking my car at 48 Tööstuse Street, I walk up the steps and through the door into an entranceway with a turn-style and a uniformed security guard. I inform the guard that I am here to meet Jaanus Tamme, and he directs me through the building gesturing somewhere outside. Stepping through to a long driveway curving slowly down the hill towards an invisible Tallinn Bay in the distance, I realise I have a bit of a walk ahead of me and that Jaanus is evidently waiting for me down at the port. So I set off down the hill, realising also that I could have driven and parked my car considerably closer, but the weather is sunny and the walk is not a waste as it takes me past various pre-Soviet industrial buildings, unloved but steeped in history and waiting for a new breath of life.

Slowly, I start to recognise the layout of the buildings from the Noblessner website, which I had glanced at briefly before I left the office. I notice some guys and a van from an events organiser setting up for a concert in the old foundry on the right before turning left past another old stone building, and seeing the marina and port before me. Well, at least I assume that is what I am looking at. On the right I see the marina – pontoon strip jetties with yachts and motorboats moored along them. Ahead and to the left stands a large blue building I recognise as the main storage facility for housing all manner of water craft during the winter. In front of this I see a number of shipping containers all painted bright orange and arranged around a large timber terrace. A young girl on the terrace seems to be performing some kind of maintenance

on a windsurfer. In front of the terrace on the concreted foreshore a teenage girl and boy lark about on a bicycle. The girl (who later turns out to be Jaanus' daughter) informs me that Jaanus is in the office gesturing towards the shipping containers – "Upstairs," she adds. I now realise that two of the containers, stacked one on top of the other so that an overhang is created, have been converted into what looks like living quarters downstairs and an office above with external fire-escape style steps. At the top of the stairs I knock on a glass door and enter to find two men behind desks in a long narrow office space.

Jaanus shakes my hand and on first impression seems a typically taciturn Estonian who is clearly wary of me. We decide to conduct the interview on the terrace next to the girl repairing her windsurfer. By the time we have walked back down the stairs and round onto the terrace, exchanging some brief words about his curious office space – "Yeah, cool, isn't it?" – Jaanus has evidently warmed up a little and seems ready to talk.





### How would you describe Port Noblessner?

**Jaanus Tamme:** Port Noblessner... Well, how can I put it? It's a marina and storage facility, but more than that it is a living thing.

### How do you mean?

**JT:** Well, let's see if I can explain. We have been here for three years now, and when I first started I decided I wanted to build a marina and a sailing school and to bring this complex to life again. So I started three years ago aiming at winter. Many thought I was crazy, but actually, even though sailing is a summer activity, in Estonia the boats spend more time in storage than in the water. So I thought the best way to start this place was to consider winter first.

**It's difficult to imagine today. It's so warm and sunny and it seems the summer side of the marina is already here.**

**JT:** Yes, we placed these containers here like this on purpose to catch the sunshine and create shelter from the wind.

My background is in architecture; that's my training. So it was no problem to work out how these shipping containers could be used to create our temporary base here, and you've seen the office, it's cool. But the construction team who put it together for me thought I was mad putting one container on top of another like that with an overhang; they said it wouldn't work, but it works fine. And this courtyard is sheltered and warm, even now in the early days of autumn.

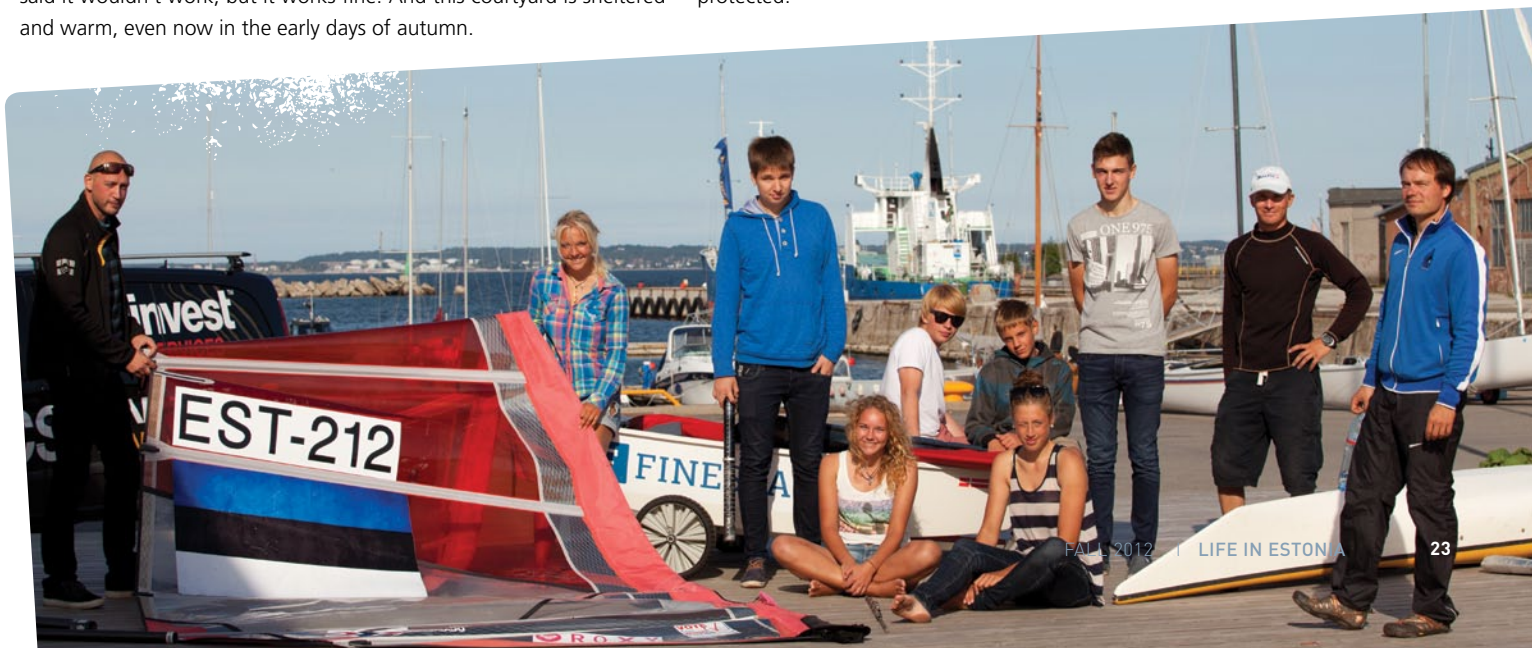
**Yes, I have often wondered why other developments in Tallinn don't consider this. The Rottermanni quarter for instance is very often cold and windy.**

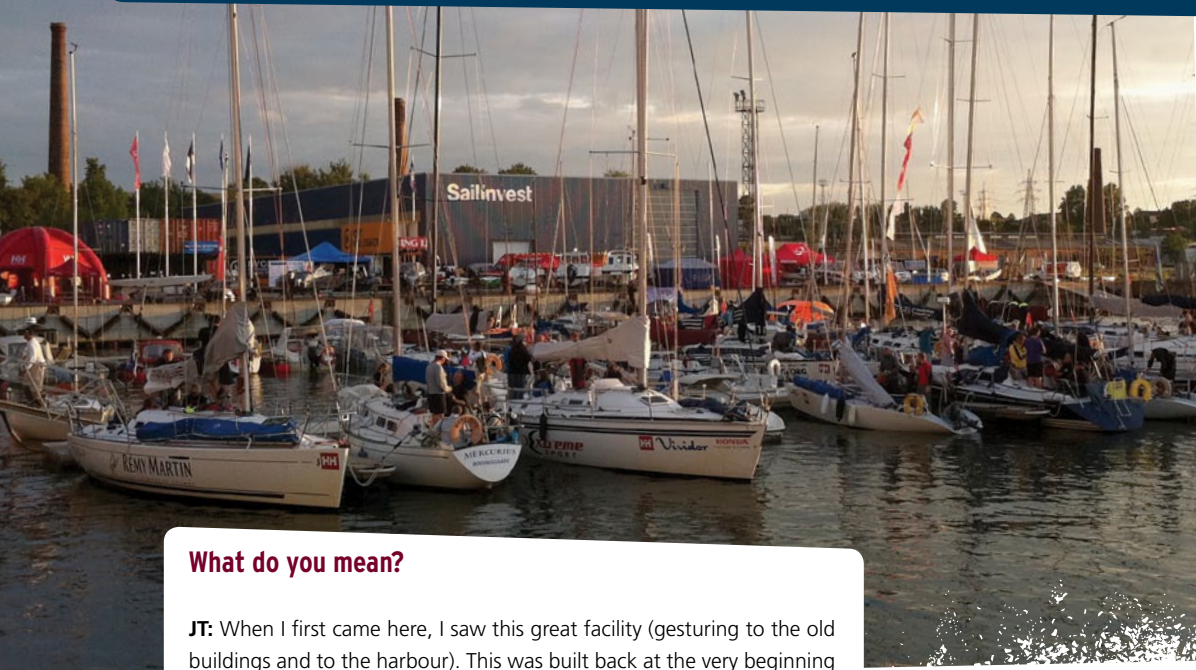
**JT:** Yes, exactly. I have to admit, the Rottermanni quarter is an example of how not to develop the city.

### How so?

**JT:** Well, they just put all those buildings there all at once and expected people to flock there, but they haven't. You have to develop things organically. That's exactly why I set this place up for winter first. I could have built the marina first, but instead I set up everything I needed to store boats for winter – a large indoor facility and the necessary machines for getting the boats out of the water and inside. So that's what I did and at first no one came. Then one week a woman came and wanted to see my set up. I showed her my storage space and the port and the cranes, and we talked. A week later she came back and said she liked my set up and she liked my ideas and she wanted to store her boat here. Next week more people came and by the end of the month the storage was full. So my point is that I'd provided what people needed – what they wanted and that's why they came. So in that way it was already connected to real needs and was already starting to be alive.

Once the storage was full I had some kind of cash flow from that, and I could start thinking about summer. So the next step was to get the sailing school started, but before I could do that the port needed to be protected.





### What do you mean?

**JT:** When I first came here, I saw this great facility (gesturing to the old buildings and to the harbour). This was built back at the very beginning of the 20th century by two guys. Nobel (the cousin of the guy behind the Nobel prizes) and Lessner, and they were asked by the Russian Czar to design a facility for building submarines. So that's what this was – a submarine factory. And it was a really good one.

I'm also in solo ocean racing – that's what I do. And so I have seen a lot of marinas and ports around the world, and when I first saw this complex about 5 years ago, I realised it was good. And after inspecting it very carefully I could see that these two guys really knew what they were doing, and they had made a really top class facility here.

So then I realised I wanted to do something with it. And believe me, back then this place was in bad shape. There was so much rubbish and stuff everywhere. But I knew it was good and so I knew it could work. Others said I was crazy – I have listened to people again and again telling me for the last 3 years that I am crazy and that this will never work as a marina. But it is working just fine, and we are only half way there.

But anyway, the point was that the original construction was done knowing that protection from the sea was the most important thing. So they knew the best place on Tallinn Bay to build the factory and they knew how to build good breakwaters and that was what impressed me. So after the storage was full, the next thing we did was to start renovating the breakwaters – you can see that one out there we extended that by about a third and now it is almost ready, but we still need more.

Once that breakwater was more or less doing its job properly, then we could apply for some EU funds through Enterprise Estonia to install the pontoons for the marina, as you can see there now. And again, now that people can see that we have a more or less protected harbour with a marina, now they are starting to come with their boats. If I had built the marina first they wouldn't have come because the harbour was not properly protected. Now it is protected but it still needs more.

Then, we were ready for the school. Last year I bought 10 Optimists and we set up our school. At first we had one student. My daughter. And I was the only instructor. So one day I took my daughter out on the bay and gave the first lesson. The next day we had 5 students and now we have more than 40 and 3 instructors. And you can see this is a place for them now.



**Indeed, I am impressed! [While we had been talking two or three Optimists had sailed into the harbour and their skippers, young teenagers, were de-rigging them and putting equipment away in the other shipping containers on the other side of the courtyard, which obviously functioned as the temporary clubhouse. About 10 more kids had turned up on the terrace and were either just sitting down with lunch, which they seemed to make themselves in the "clubhouse", or were getting ready to go for a sail. They seemed to be completely proficient with everything they needed to organise their own afternoon of sailing.]**

**JT:** So you see we have created life here. The place has grown and come alive, and that is my whole business philosophy. I am away solo ocean racing for much of the year, and when I am out there on the ocean, that's when I have time to consider the big picture. You see the world differently when it's just you and the boat and the ocean, and that's when I can see clearly what will work and what won't. That's where I get the strength to persevere and stick to the most important ideas, the basis for everything. Any project, whatever it is, has to grow organically with the people. Then it's real and the physical things like renovating the buildings and fancy equipment, then there is a point to these things, and the funds you need to do them or buy them are easier to find.





**So what about the rest of the site? I understand that where we are sitting was a complete mess when you started, and clearly it's not a finished marina but it looks pretty good so far and it's great to see the kids down here enjoying the fresh air. But what about the buildings here?**

**JT:** Those two over there (gesturing to the foundry I had walked past on the way in and another large building to the north that opens onto the marina) will both be renovated first. That one there facing the marina will be renovated this year and the other one is the old foundry, and already there are concerts being held there.

**What about all the other buildings, because there are quite a few all the way back to Tööstuse Street.**

**JT:** Well, it's just a matter of time. They'll come alive too at some stage. The building right next to the driveway has been dubbed the "Creative House" – it's already reserved for design bureaus and creative people. There are other buildings in that area too, and I am sure people will come and find them.



**So do you own the site?**

**JT:** No the owner is BRLT. I rent the site from them. I went to see them back in the beginning and presented my ideas, and they said all right, go and do what you can. And 3 years ago I was alone here with two hands in my pockets and nothing else. I had a forklift and I just started cleaning the place up on my own down here.

**What about other developments along the coast? For example, Kalasadam - they also plan to build a marina the other side of the Maritime Museum. Have you had anything to do with them?**

**JT:** Not really, a little but not much. My big thing is breakwaters. I have been presenting this to the Tallinn City Government all along. You see since the ferry traffic has grown so much, the coastline has been getting a beating. You can't expect to allow all these huge boats in and out of the bay without them having an impact. And it's bad. All along the coast here in the bay you can see how the waves from those boats are damaging things. No developments will work on this coast without proper protection.



**In the case of Kalasadam, I understand some people in Kalamaja are trying to stop the development because they believe it will destroy their beach.**

**JT:** I don't know anything about that, but I think beaches are great. It's a good thing if we can have beaches in the bay and even this close to the city, but without good protection nothing will work. Once you have the protection, it follows that the people will come and then the place comes alive and you can have your beach, your marina, a promenade even...

**Do you think the foreshore will open up all the way to Linnahall and the ferry harbour?**

**JT:** Yes, I think so, but only when the time is right. If things can grow step-by-step, organically, then I can imagine there will be a nice promenade all the way from Linnahall to this marina. But there's no point building it now because no one comes here yet. When the time is right, it'll only take maybe two weeks to throw down some boards and install a nice walkway along the foreshore, so that's not hard at all. But it just has to be the right time, and before that we need protection from the sea.



**So when do you think you'll be finished here? I mean when do you think the buildings will be renovated and the port finished?**

**JT:** It's difficult to say of course, because I can't force people to do anything, but you can see how it's growing. That building there (facing the marina), as I said, will be renovated this year and will become our yacht club. It will have the clubhouse, a café and restaurant and some offices (there's no tenant for the upstairs yet, but something will come along), and this will bring more life, and of course, the foundry is turning into a great venue for concerts. Now we have the beginnings of cash flow for summer, so soon we'll be like... in orbit. You know, it's like the space shuttle. It takes the space shuttle a lot to get up and out of the atmosphere, but once it's up there in orbit, it needs very little energy to keep going. So that's where we need to be, and that's why I started aiming at winter. To get winter sorted, then to get something working for summer and then we have a basis to do everything we want to achieve here... then we'll be in orbit.

We chatted a little longer before I thanked him for his time and walked back to my car. And along the way I looked again and wondered about the potential of the whole area. For years the joke has been that Tallinn has a kilometre of culture with no culture on it. Now walking up to my car I could see how Jaanus' organic approach, which was working despite the sceptics, could easily transform these amazing old buildings into a vibrant cultural hub, when the time is right.



# Kuressaare College trains future small craft engineers

A year ago Kuressaare College of the Tallinn University of Technology (TUT) established the Small Craft Competence Centre (SCC), whose main function is to bring professional engineering know-how in small craft engineering to the island of Saaremaa. Unique in the entire Baltic sea region, the centre's goal is to facilitate the development of an internationally recognised and competitive small craft cluster. If everything goes according to plan, the centre will be fully working by the beginning of 2014. This will most certainly support the small craft building curriculum Kuressaare College kick-started in 2010.

In its full capacity, the competence centre, funded by the European Regional Development Fund, (ERF) through the programme "Developing competent centres", will offer and facilitate model production and model testing of small craft stability, sea-worthiness and resistance, optimisation and improvement of small craft, materials testing for resistance to hydrothermal ageing in a seawater environment, application of non-destructive testing methods in quality control and failure testing, design and pilot-production of electronics, electronic equipment measurements and hosting product development teams and researchers.

The centre is attached to Kuressaare College of TUT, which forms the core of the centre, leading and coordinating its work. Colleges and the local learning, research and development centres represent the regional identity of the university's outreach policy. Geographically, Kuressaare College, founded on the island of Saaremaa in 1999, is the most remote and smallest of the four colleges of the Tallinn University of Technology. Today, it is an integrated part of the Tallinn University of Technology, with its own board, curricula and students. The modern learning environment and new opportunities have brought young people to Saaremaa from all over Estonia. The college has about 200 undergraduate students and a staff of 20. The mission of the college is to train

specialists in the fields most needed on Estonian islands, as well as on the mainland: small craft building, small business management and especially tourism and restaurant management, as well as engineering, including electronics and IT technology.

The newest curriculum in Kuressaare College is small craft building, whose aim is to give students a metier IV qualification in small craft engineering. This rather new curriculum, which was compiled with the help of experts, is one of a kind in the entire Baltic region and is integrated with the curricula in the Kymenlaakso University of Applied Sciences in Finland. After three to four years of studies, the graduates of Kuressaare College receive diplomas from the Tallinn University of Technology.

The college collaborates with many foreign educational establishments. The student exchange programme coordinates with the Kiel University of Applied Sciences in Germany, the Kymenlaakso University of Applied Sciences in Finland, and recently Southampton University in Great Britain. Exchange students come to Estonia to do practical work in local boatyards, but also to get acquainted with local peculiarities. As in the college theory goes hand-in-hand with practice, future specialists receive good knowledge and skills in their work.

The students also receive basic training in sailing. The college has signed an agreement with the Saaremaa Nautical Sports Union, which sees sailing lessons as a part of physical education.

Kuressaare College of the Tallinn University of Technology – wisdom and knowledge on the seas!

Further information at  
[www.ttu.ee/asutused/kuressaare-kolledz](http://www.ttu.ee/asutused/kuressaare-kolledz)

Production facilities at 103 Kopli Street in Tallinn, where BLRT Grupp has been operating for 100 years already



# BLRT Grupp – One Hundred Years On Sea and Land

The leading industrial holding of Estonia, BLRT Grupp, celebrates its 100th anniversary this year. Chairman of the Board, Fjodor Berman, shares with us the secret of their success.

## What kind of a role does BLRT Grupp have in the Estonian economy?

It is difficult for us to define our own role. If we speak in a language of key figures, then I can tell you that last year the turnover rate of the holding hit 347.3 million euros, this year we expect the turnover to grow and reach 365.5 million euros. We export over 80% of our products and services from Estonia to the Scandinavian countries, Germany, and other parts of the world. In 2011, we invested 64.2 million euros, this year the investments will grow to reach around 50 million euros. And, it is well known that our holding is one of the biggest employers in Estonia.

## As a big company, does the holding BLRT Grupp feel more social responsibility upon itself?

We surely feel a big responsibility. In Estonia, we employ about 2,000 specialists, and we try to provide them with exciting work and a decent salary, as well as good working conditions.

We are also keen on supporting the welfare of the Estonian society. We try to engage in different cultural, sport and educational

projects as much as possible by offering financial aid, among other things. For instance, for the last 5 years we have been the main sponsor of Estonian national male tennis team. The results of the team are already impressive – Jürgen Zopp has risen to 80th position in ATP ranking. We have also been supporting the Russian Theatre of Estonia, and Nargen and Birgitta music festivals for several years.

To bring even more attention to the future of Estonia, before our 100th birthday, we established our own fund under Estonian National Culture Foundation. The aim of this fund is to support young talents in acquiring higher education. There is every chance for this idea to succeed - the members of the council of the fund are people who are known in Estonia for their public activity - Raivo Vare, Indrek Neivelt and Anvar Samost, and the persons representing the holding are Mark Berman and Katja Ljubobratets.

## How did the crisis in the world affect BLRT Grupp, if at all?

The crisis in the world definitely has had its effect upon our holding, as we export the majority of our products and services. Therefore, the worse



Among the ships built by BLRT Grupp is the world's largest liquid natural gas-powered ferry, commissioned by the Norwegian transport company Fjord1



Fjodor Berman,  
Chairman of the Board of BLRT Grupp

the situation in external markets, the more we have to work to maintain our position in the market. I can say that we managed to achieve quite good results by our 100th anniversary. The year before that, despite what was going in the economy of Europe and the world, we have increased the turnover of the holding by 15%, made 9.8 million euros profit, and strengthened our positions in our areas of expertise in the market.

Unfortunately, there is a noticeable decline in all areas and markets where our holding is active. For example, the situation in shipping and, consequently, in ship repair and on the small vessel markets is similar to that of the beginning of the crisis in 2008. Shipowners have trouble not only with financing the building of new vessels and modernizing the existing ones, but even with their routine maintenance and repayment of loans. Consequently, this has reflected on our results of the first quarter of this year, which were slightly disappointing to us. But we have set ourselves a goal to make a profit in our anniversary year, as well. The experience our team has accumulated in the course of recent years gives us faith in ourselves. We hope that our continuous investments in equipment, technology and employees will also help to ease the situation. We have been investing, and will continue to do so even in the time of crisis.

**BLRT Grupp has been on top of the Estonian Companies' Competitiveness Ranking, winning the title of the most competitive industrial and energy enterprises of Estonia for 7 years in a row. What has helped to secure such success?**

The key to success has been the team consisting of specialists on every level - among directors as well as production specialists and labour workers. My work experience here in the holding gives me confidence to say that this team only becomes stronger and more professional with time.

Several traditions that our holding has accumulated over a century play an important role in its development. The most important tradition is the readiness for constant evolution through learning more and more difficult technologies and successfully finishing more and more complicated projects.

What also brings success is the policy of investing - which means to invest, to invest, and to invest more into projects that help us secure our leading positions in the markets.

The biggest project undertaken last year was the modernisation of the subsea well service vessel Skandi Aker, which was awarded the title "Ship of the Year" in 2010



The ferries built for Saaremaa Laevakompanii are one of the most modern in the world



## What major ongoing projects do you currently work on? What are your top priority goals in shipbuilding and ship-repair?

The companies of our holding work in eight different countries in ten different areas of expertise. The main areas are shipbuilding, ship-repair, manufacturing hi-tech equipment and large complex steel constructions, processing and sale of metal products, manufacture and sale of gases.

Talking about the largest investment projects of the year, we continue developing our subsidiary Elme Metall in Latvia (Riga). We are on the finish line of completing the first stage of construction of a logistics centre there, and we plan to complete the first stage of constructing a service centre. Simultaneously, the company perfects its infrastructure in Estonia and Finland. Its joint venture Elme Messer Gaas has launched gas separation plants in Ukraine (in Dnepropetrovsk) and Latvia (in Liepaja). The company also plans to launch a similar plant in Estonia (in the municipality of Vaivara) by the end of the year.

Furthermore, we plan to build two dry cargo vessels this year, for holding's own use. In Ukraine, we have established an offshoot transport company of Elme Trans, which operates in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Russia.

Both shipbuilding and ship-repair are, unfortunately, at an all-time low right now. In ship-repair, our top priority is conversion work. More specifically, the specialists of Tallinn Shipyard are currently implementing conversion work on the Estonian tanker Flagman.

In shipbuilding, we still prefer special purpose vessel building projects on a turnkey basis. For example, Western Baltija Shipbuilding in Klaipeda is presently building a modern dredging vessel for the Danish company Rohde Nielsen, and a fishing vessel for another Danish company, Gitte Henning.

In Tallinn, we continue to develop small vessel building, including small vessels built of aluminium. BLRT Marketex continues the construction of fish feeding barges, and has received orders from Norway, Japan, and Russia. In July, we delivered the first offshore wind farm support catamaran, made completely of aluminium, to the British company Sure Wind Marine.

The first offshore wind farm service catamaran built by the Estonian specialists of the BLRT Grupp is fully constructed of aluminium. The catamaran was delivered to the customer in July 2012





# Estonian Shipbuilding

Text: **Jaano Martin Ots**, *Paat* magazine

## Industry – From Viking Boats To Coastal Patrol Cutters

Situated on the eastern coast of the Baltic Sea, Estonia has nearly 3,800 kilometres of coastline, thousands of islands and islets, rivers and larger lakes forming a network of inland water, and small enclosed lakes. With a territory of 45,000 square kilometres and a population of 1.3 million, Estonia is truly a seaside country. In fact, Estonian history may be viewed as the history of seafaring, first in single dugouts and Viking boats, moving on to Hanseatic cogs and, finally, modern sailing and motor boats.

The Soviet period ended the Estonian seafaring traditions by force. A significant number of coastal people escaped overseas to the West. Those who remained had their boats sawn in half and the opportunity to set sail became subject to strict military control. Although some collective farms organised coastal fishing, the sea remained practically a no-go area for local people. Nevertheless, marine education and sailing as sport survived. On internal bodies of water, rowing and motor-boating prospered. Boat construction continued, although not as a private business but through state institutions. Despite its efforts, the Soviet regime failed to totally abolish Estonian maritime continuity: since the restoration of independence, ship building and the culture of seafaring have been rapidly experiencing a revival.



### Small crafts in Estonia

By 2012, over 23,000 small crafts had been registered in Estonia. There are more than a hundred small harbours and berthing places, twenty-five of which have the capacity to receive larger sail-boats and international maritime tourists. Estonia has a strong network of sailing schools. In addition to sailors, Estonian rowers take part in the Olympic Games. Estonian offshore sailors often bring home prizes from European and world title championships, and motorboating, or powerboating, is of a high standard. In the two decades since regaining independence, recreational seafaring and fishing have once again become popular. Sailing, especially offshore sailing, also has long traditions. Every season several long regattas are organised in Estonia. There are Estonian Championship series in both offshore sailing and Olympic sailing.

In Estonia a boating license is required when the sail area of the boat is larger than 25 square metres, its engine power exceeds 25 kW or it is used at night and more than five miles offshore. There is one general certificate for skippers of small boats, which allows them to operate all small crafts which do not exceed 24 metres in length. To get the license, one has to take a course and pass exams, similar to applying for a car license.

All official Estonian waters have been measured with the latest hydrographical technology and charted precisely. Entering Estonian harbours is regulated by the Sailing Directions or Pilot Book which is updated on a regular basis. Accurate and user-friendly sea maps for Estonian coastal waters are also available digitally for traditional navigation appliances, as well as iPads and iPhones. The Estonian coastline is covered by the VHF (*very high frequency – ed.*) radio network, which provides coastal station services and guarantees rescue services in emergencies.



### Estonian shipbuilding

Estonia, with its numerous high-quality harbours, has always been known as a shipbuilding state of small and large vessels. As early as the Czarist era, there was a large shipbuilding factory in Tallinn, and well-known shipbuilding locations can be found in most coastal regions. Today, the two large shipbuilding factories remaining are BLRT Grupp (the Baltic Shipbuilding Yard) in Tallinn and Loksa Shipyard, both competitive companies in the international market. In relation to the number of inhabitants, there are an exceptional number of small craft builders in Estonia. About fifty companies build boats either directly or as subcontractors. The exact number of vessels built in Estonia is unknown. Only the crafts which are used and registered in Estonia are counted, but they make up a tiny part of all the boats built in the country. Most Estonian boat buyers consider the boats built in Estonia to be too expensive; hence, most of them are sold in Scandinavia and other European countries. It is also the case that often the boats made in Estonia are not sold under Estonian brands, but the owners and distributors are either Finnish or Swedish companies.

The quality of Estonian recreational crafts is considered to be high, but conservative Scandinavian or other European customers prefer to buy from a more established brand. There are, of course, some exceptional brands which are well-known outside Estonia, for example Kasse, which produces row-boats, Saare Yacht, which produces cruisers, and Baltic Workboats, which makes fast aluminium work boats.





## Polar Shipyard near Pärnu has no shortage of commissions

The joint Estonian-German company Polar Shipyard produces the cult-status sailing boat Folkboat, and the classic motorboat line Nordic Cruiser. The flagship of the company is the Polar 55, which will be presented at hanseboot, the Hamburg International Boat Show in 2012.

Polar Shipyard started operations in 2009, when the economic crisis disturbed the plans of countless companies. "In those difficult times, there were dramatic changes in the work processes of many companies. We saw an opportunity at the time, purchased equipment which was no longer in use and offered new jobs to workers with years of work experience," explains Vaido Absalon, the executive director of the company.

"Of course we would like nothing more than to see our boats sail in Estonian waters. But, unfortunately, the small size of the market and low solvency set limits. As we get all our materials from other European countries, in order to guarantee high quality, and our products have to meet the high expectations of German and Scandinavian customers, we are not able to produce at a lower cost. Therefore, we do not

even have a sales representation in Estonia," says Absalon, with a hint of regret in his voice.

### The Folkboat - made in Estonia

Polar Shipyard's most famous product is the Folkboat (Folkeboot). Since 1942, over four thousand Folkboats have been made and the model is still popular in Germany, Denmark and Scandinavia. Although the original was made of wood, the Folkboat made in Uulu, near Pärnu, is constructed of fibre-reinforced plastic, which copies the original clinker planking. According to Absalon, the company has the right to produce and sell the Folkboat.



"If we work in cycles of one boat in the mould and the other in finishing, we can produce two boats a month. When we hand over the product to our clients, they can set sail immediately. We can, to an extent, vary the interior furnishing and supplies according to the wishes of our clientele but, as it is a standard boat which is used at large competitions in Germany and Scandinavia, all details correspond to the type and can also be pre-produced.

### The classic Nordic picnic boat

The fast displacement Nordic Cruiser is also produced in Uulu. Absalon explains that they don't own the brand, but the production of the boats takes place in the Polar Shipyard from beginning to end. This 7.3 metre powerboat has a nostalgic look: at the bow there is a cabin with two or three bunks and the cockpit can be covered with a tent. This boat, with its economical diesel engine, wide picnic table, pantry unit and fridge, and rotating wicker chairs, is best-suited to navigating in skerries and archipelagos, due to which 100% of the customers are from abroad.



### Polar 55 - a sailor's dream

Completed in the summer of 2011, Polar 55 was initiated by Wolfgang Rathert a couple of years ago, when he decided to finally order a real masterpiece for himself, both in terms of technology and design. Polar 55 has been designed and constructed on the basis of Rathert's long experience in sailing and there were two main goals during construction: the boat should be comfortable and safe for a sole sailor and, regardless of its size, the yacht should be able to enter small harbours and bays. Consequently, Polar 55 is equipped with very complex technology, all sails can be moved by hydraulics and the keel can be raised to decrease the draft by more than a metre.

See more at: [www.polar-shipyard.com](http://www.polar-shipyard.com)



RIB 36 is the main product of the Ridas motorboat division



## Ridas - powerful but easily manageable offshore yachts and fast RIB boats

Based near Tallinn, the sail-boat producer Ridas Yachts was founded by a boat enthusiast as a small company in 1993. Today, the company employs twenty-five full-time staff and has an awe-inspiring list of recreational craft brands produced at the factory: STERN, Sentijn, X-Treme 25 and Clarc 33. Ridas Yachts is a subcontractor for a well-known European sail-boat producer. Ridas Yachts also undertakes one-off projects, for example the restoration of historical boats or the construction of special purpose vessels. The company has its own brand, Ridas, which includes offshore yachts and motorboats.

The sailing boats Ridas 26, Ridas 31, Ridas 33, Ridas 35 and Ridas 46 are produced under Ridas' own brand. The factory has set a goal of producing fast, but strong boats for demanding customers: Ridas boats are well-suited as family boats or for racing. The customer who buys a Ridas boat mainly places importance on speed but is not willing to compromise on comfort. In order for a yacht to be fast, it needs to be light. But this cannot come at the expense of strength, resilience or safety. Ridas yachts are designed by the boat architect Dieter Blank and, according to the factory, high performance has been of primary importance in the production from the word go. They use only the best materials and, with the aid of special computer programmes, ensure that the yacht construction or finishing has no extra ballast. Decreasing the weight makes it

possible to also decrease the weight of the keel and the rigging and thereby to increase the speed of the yacht.



The main product of the **Ridas motorboat** division is the speedy and very safe RIB 36, which in Norway is used to service offshore oil platforms. The idea for RIB 36 originally came from the Swedish boating enthusiast Mats Lindgren, who developed a boat model which also offers comfortable and fast operation in very difficult environments. It is a unique boat. Every boat is designed for a specific speed: RIB 36 has a top speed of 55 knots. This is made possible by its special hull shape. In the

front, the bottom profile is a very deep V, and the stern rides only on the ski, which results in an excellent base for a boat of this size on rough seas. For example, operating on waves enables the boat to go three knots faster than on a calm sea. Another special feature of the boat is its asymmetrical hull. Instead of the usual walk-around cabin, the cabin is located on one side of the boat, so that one can walk from the stern to the bow only on the left side. The steering board has more weight because of the cabin and it requires larger floatability; therefore, the right board of the hull has more space. Although designed as a work boat, RIB 36 has all the amenities: sleeping spaces, a small kitchen and a WC. The design is deliberate, and the general look sporty. Twenty RIB 36 boats have been made, and most of them are operating in Norway. There is also a charter version of the boat which takes twelve passengers; there are saddle-like seats for skippers behind a separate console. The cost of the boat with basic equipment is 157,000 euros, which is twice as cheap as similar boats produced elsewhere.

For further information see:  
[www.ridasyacht.com](http://www.ridasyacht.com)



## Saare Paat - from subcontractor to valued sail-boat producer

Saare Paat started twenty-one years ago as a wooden boat producer. But the initial enthusiasm of clients faded and the market for nostalgic wooden rowing and fishing boats disappeared. Saare Paat began to cooperate with the Finnish company Finn Gulf and the majority of products sold under this brand have been produced on the island of Saaremaa. After Finn Gulf experienced problems, Saare Paat had to quickly reorganise its activities and the new direction has proved successful.



In cooperation with the acclaimed Finnish yacht designer Karl-Johan Stråhlmann, the company has developed the models Saare 34, Saare 38 and Saare 41, which are highly valued luxurious cruisers. Each Saare is tailored to the wishes of her future owner; no two yachts are built exactly the same and the interior design and equipment of the boat may differ to a great extent.

In addition, Saare Paat owns and produces under the brand Stormer. The motorboat Stormer 7 WA is made of fibreglass composite material; it is meant for coastal sailing and is mainly marketed in Scandinavia and other parts of Europe.

For further information see:  
[www.saareyachts.com](http://www.saareyachts.com)



## Britamarine: the classic day-cruiser



The classic mahogany speedboat – this is a boat where an afternoon cruise can be enjoyed by a royal family member. Britamarine sport boats are not meant for crossing oceans or sea journeys lasting for days; they are stylish and fast vessels, but are not meant for boating at night. It would in principle be possible, as the boats are equipped with the required lights and navigation equipment. However, there are hotels in harbours for sleeping and restaurants for eating, so do not look for spacious cabins or a galley on these boats. A Britamarine boat would be suitable for the world's most luxurious motor yachts as a landing boat to take passengers to town for opera or dining. It is equally suited for movies in which the famous secret agent 007 races along canals and rivers.

Based in Tallinn, the Britamarine company has consciously chosen a very narrow niche in the market and produces boats for well-off and style-conscious customers, for whom it is probably not the first or the only boat. Fishermen and marine tourists keep clear of such boats, although they are interested in seeing the engine or the shine of the mahogany. At boat fairs and exhibitions, Britamarine boats



are always the centre of attention. The classic cutters, made of carefully selected wood, are equipped with the latest electronic and navigation devices. The modern interior, with its historic look, requires very skilful design work

in order to keep the new technology and the old style compatible. Britamarine has carefully considered the style and functionality of its boat models. What use would the historical look be if one could only keep it in museum condition or use it with extreme care? Those boats are meant to take speeds of 45 knots and more with playful ease and they retain good manageability at high speeds. The engine selection includes outboard or inboard engines, according to the special requirements of the customer.



Britamarine boats make a white captain's hat look like a necessary accessory.

See more at:  
[www.britamarine.com](http://www.britamarine.com)



The Vector-boats are mainly meant for private commuters, patrolling and surveillance



# Alunaut – practical aluminium work boats

Alunaut, a small craft producer on Saaremaa, specialises in the production of durable and robust aluminium boats in small series. Their other speciality is custom built projects – for example, a 60-foot unique aluminium boat was built for world cruising expedition. This year the company finished building its new and modern facility on Saaremaa and is now actively training new specialists.

Although the factory is developing some models of its own, the main work is done as sub-contracting for Swedish companies. The choice of models is practical: transport and work boats meant for coastal work and commuter services. Well-known brands are the Fred 25, Vector 23, Vector 28 and Aevotec 540.

The Fred 25 was originally designed for people in wheelchairs as a fishing and recreational transport boat. Its special feature is an electric remote-controlled bow ramp which enables wheelchairs to roll on board and to be fixed securely at the skipper's position. When needed, the Fred 25 can be equipped with an electrical lifting chair, which helps a person with movement difficulties to go swimming. In addition, the boat has an electrical bow thruster and electrical capstan in the stern, all remotely controlled. But the carefully considered solutions,

safety and practicality have turned the Fred 25 into a valued boat with inhabitants of the Swedish archipelago. The boat, with its comfortable bow ramp, is often used in transporting equipment and materials to small islands, or even in transporting animals.



The series of Vector-boats is mainly meant for fast private commuters as well as patrolling and surveillance. These high speed, light and safe aluminium boats are a popular choice with the coast guards of many countries; they are used by customs officials and police officers, and for environmental surveillance. One of the main requirements of this boat type is a comfortable cabin, as people who have to work on the sea need a normal working environment and proper protection from weather elements.

See more at: [www.alunaut.ee](http://www.alunaut.ee)



Fred 25 was originally designed for people in wheelchairs as a fishing and recreational transport boat



Journeyman



Ahto 29

## Baltic Workboats – work boats for demanding customers produced in the Nasva harbour

Baltic Workboats, located in the Nasva harbour, has experienced strong growth during the economic crisis: the company employs over 100 staff, and new production facilities were opened in 2010 and 2011. The company ranks high among the most successful enterprises on Saaremaa, and it continues to grow. The factory is located on two hectares of land, and berths and a wet dock for launching have been renovated. The factory boasts a travel lift which can lift up to 150 tons: with this kind of equipment, taking a 10-metre wide boat onto the water is fast and simple.

The main contractors of Baltic Workboats are national institutions, not from Estonia but from other countries. Recently boats have been received by Swedish, Irish, Bulgarian, Lithuanian, Polish, Croatian, Azerbaijan and German officials. The Nasva ship builders do not release much information when it comes to their clients or works commissioned. They just explain

that often they are strategically important vessels, for example those used for fishing protection, by police or border guards, and therefore the contracts include a strict confidentiality clause. This is totally understandable, as officials who regularly have to come into contact with various kinds of offenders prefer to keep technical details to themselves.

The key to the success of Baltic Workboats is its innovative and flexible approach: with just ten years of history, the company is not held back by old technologies or an out-of-date production base. Aluminium has always been of interest to maritime industries, but making full use of the advantages of this material has only recently been made possible thanks to new welding technologies. Baltic Workboats has from the start produced boats out of aluminium and is a globally acclaimed company in this market niche.

Contemporary work boats differ significantly from their predecessors. Public officials take for granted that a boat will be quiet, comfortable and equipped with the latest technology. With rising fuel prices, governments expect working boats to have low fuel costs, but to be faster than those of commercial enterprises or criminals who they have to control. This is precisely the kind of boat produced by Baltic Workboats. Although the work and patrol boats produced in Nasva may be externally robust—which is probably intended—the interior offers top technology and comfort. If the high and mighty of this world knew what luxury is hidden in the externally ascetic coast guard or environmental protection boats, they would give up their iron motor yachts and order an aluminium work boat instead.



See also: [www.balticworkboats.ee](http://www.balticworkboats.ee)



Seiskari, produced by Tekno Marine, is meant for sailing in comfort

# Traditional Finnish Boats Made In Saaremaa

Text: **Jaano Martin Ots**, *Paat* magazine

Rauno Kurki-Suonio is a life-long sailor, boat builder and boat engine and car mechanic with golden hands, as well as being Finnish. He has lived for twenty years in Estonia and considers himself to be from Saaremaa. His former vision that Saaremaa could become the centre of small craft building in Estonia has become a reality. Taking their example from Tekno Marine, many other Scandinavian boat producers have opened their factories on Saaremaa, making the island one of the leading areas in the world in terms of boats produced per capita.

Tekno Marine is also active in Finland. In addition to boat production, which has been moved to Estonia, the company has divisions of maintenance and boat engine sales and installation, which focus on the Finnish market. "Of course our technicians go to our customers to carry out repairs or engine service even if the customer is based in the middle of Finland. In every case, we make the decision whether it would make more sense to carry out the work in the home harbour of the boat or to transport it to our Saaremaa factory. With larger projects, it often makes more sense to bring the vessel to the factory, where we have all the tools, spare parts and equipment at hand. Otherwise, it may turn out that more money and fuel is spent on commuting and it would have been financially more reasonable to bring the boat to the factory from the start," explains Rauno Kurki-Suonio. The Head of Tekno Marine emphasises that the transfer to modern energy-saving engines is a big unused resource. Even older small boats can have a new life if you exchange the heart, meaning the engine, for a modern one. This is where Tekno Marine's strength lies. The company also offers boat engine maintenance and first repair training to customers.

Seiskari, produced in the Saaremaa factory of Tekno Marine, is a Finnish boat with a long history. It is meant for sailing in comfort and overnighting even in bad weather conditions. Seiskari has a semiplaning hull not meant for racing; its main advantages are comfort, safety and low fuel costs even in bad weather. All Seiskari models originate in Finland and have been designed with the wishes of Finnish clients in mind. Rauno Kurki-Suonio confirms that the quality provided by Saaremaa boat builders meets the expectations of Scandinavian customers. "We make no exceptions: our specialists are well-trained and highly motivated to perform a proper job. The high quality and careful finishing work of Seiskari boats has also been noted by the reporters and editors of German boating magazines who have visited Saaremaa," Kurki-Suonio confirms the continuing good reputation of Seiskari boats.



Further information: [www.tekno-marine.fi](http://www.tekno-marine.fi)



# Estonian Kayak

Text: Toivo Tänavsuu

## Aims to expand in the US Market; Europe Conquered Already



**Somewhat surprisingly, one of the best kayak producers in Europe is an Estonian company called Tahe Kayaks. It now plans to expand its presence in the United States and Australia.**

There are several companies in Estonia creating world-class products, but the wider public knows little about them. Tahe Kayaks, headed by brothers Janek and Marek Pohla, is a well-known producer of water crafts – kayaks, canoes, row-boats and relevant equipment – in Europe. The company also enjoys a good reputation with real devotees in the USA and Australia. Its products are often praised in trade magazines in Scandinavia, western Europe and elsewhere.





The world of kayaks is just as diverse as that of bicycles, which makes working with customers very interesting for the producer. For example, a British customer prefers a kayak with a skeg and wants nothing to do with a kayak with a rudder system. Australian paddlers, on the other hand, definitely want the rudder to be there. Kayaks made for the American market are wider and have bigger cockpits, which makes the exit and entry easier. Americans also love their comforts: therefore, standard equipment for a kayak needs to include a cup-holder and a holder for a fishing rod. In Scandinavia, slim and sporty kayaks equipped with both a skeg and rudder system sell better. Different clients also have different wishes in respect to colour combinations, the shape of the hull and price.

The portfolio of Tahe Kayaks includes several brands: Tahe Marine, Fit, Zegul and Trapper – from classic brands to more sustainable eco brands (created from renewable materials). The entire production is exported to Scandinavia, Germany, the United Kingdom, France, Japan, Australia, New Zealand and North America. In total the company sells in 35 markets, but not directly to end-users.

The entire product development takes place in Viimsi, Estonia. This is also where they produce kayaks made of glass and carbon fibre, as well as other composite materials. Kayaks made of polyethylene are produced in Tartu.

Several years ago many European and North American competitors of Tahe Kayaks took their production to China. According to Janek Pohla, this was not a successful move and many companies have moved out of China.

“In Estonia, we continue to be able to provide the best quality of materials and technologies in comparison with competitors. We are also able to produce more effectively and we are prepared for the fact that wages will grow in the future. We have continuously invested in our brands and product development and this is certainly one of the reasons for our success today,” says Pohla.

Tahe Kayak’s strategic goal is to become the leading kayak producer in the world (and the European market leader within three years). The two leaders in this field today are the US producers Johnson & Johnson Outdoor and Confluence Watersports. Tahe Kayaks is

currently producing a tenth of what both of the US producers do separately, and hence there is room for growth.

Janek Pohla confirms that the company has increased turnover in all target markets in Europe this year. It has also increased the awareness and sales network of its brands Tahe Marine, Zegul and Trapper. “Although we have sold to the North American market for five or six years already, we have been very modest considering our true potential. This year we are taking a more aggressive approach in the North American market. In August, we took part in the Outdoor Retailer fair in Salt Lake City for the first time. We have signed a strategic partnership with a Canadian producer, which involves sales and production,” reveals Pohla.

So why not buy yourself a kayak, even if you’ve never had anything to do with one before! As the Pohla brothers confirm: it is fun; it is a lifestyle!

Text: Toivo Tänavsuu

# Estonian company reveals the secrets of the world's seas and oceans

**Rainer Sternfeld, the entrepreneur-engineer who co-designed the Estonian Freedom Monument and the nationwide charging network for electric cars, has moved on to develop his newly established start-up company Marinexplore in Silicon Valley. His goal is to create a collaborative one-stop service for public marine data of the planet and a marine intelligence software for the offshore enterprise to cut the time needed for data processing fivefold, in order to change how marine data is accessed, shared and visualised, opening a new page in ocean exploration.**



Let's say you are an entrepreneur who wants to establish a new offshore oil rig. You need to commission a very thorough environmental study, which is very important. We can imagine several monitoring vessels sailing up and down for weeks surveying the site. How they take a huge number of samples and do tests. How the data finally reaches a lab where scientists in white robes perform another "hundred miracles" on them. Finally, you will receive the "latest" environmental evaluation of the site. Besides the fact that this is very costly, you also spend most of your time waiting for... well, results. Similar stories are to be found in studying marine mammal behaviour, planning a wind-power farm, spatial planning of coastal areas, and more.

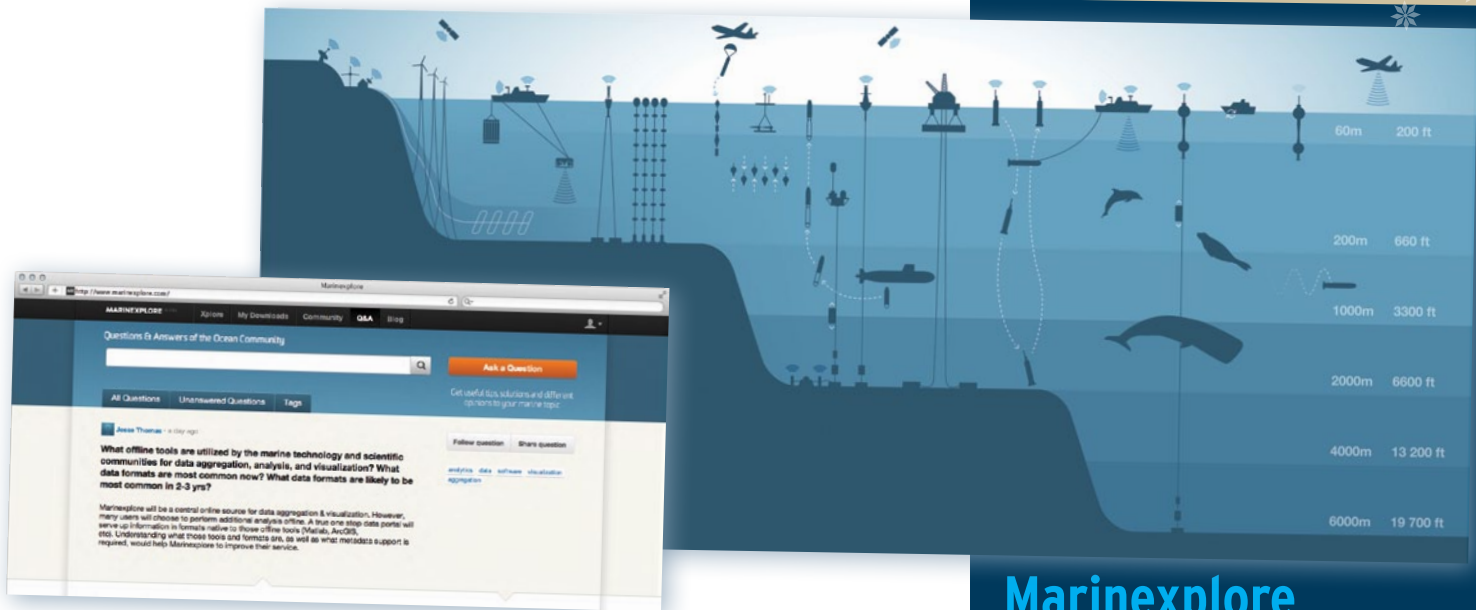
Hang on a minute... Rainer Sternfeld believes that in the future such processes will be much simpler. In order to make this vision a reality,

the energetic engineer founded Marinexplore, which promises to thoroughly change our understanding of the world's seas and oceans, a data management and communications market worth \$4 billion.

The idea of "revolutionising" the mapping of global bodies of water first came to Sternfeld while he was still working on a previous project. He was a part of the team Flydog, which was commissioned by the Marine Systems Institute of the Tallinn University of Technology to develop an innovative monitoring buoy which would measure the profile of the water column, and the salinity, temperature and depth of the water in the Gulf of Finland. The buoy was completed in 2009 (in the same year the Estonian Freedom Monument co-designed by Sternfeld was dedicated in Tallinn) and it is still being used. However, Sternfeld noted that

although the buoy was selecting data properly, it took too long to process and analyse the data, as too many different cycles were involved. With the support of the grant-making foundation Enterprise Estonia, his team conducted a study of whether a standard operational system for buoys could be developed.

"That's when I realised that much more was at stake than just a simple buoy OS (operating system)," recalls Sternfeld. "I asked myself; 'what if I could gather public data from all over the world produced by different governments, programmes, satellites or other devices, and bring it all together into one simple environment – based on a spatio-temporal data warehouse?' I realised that it would be possible to make it accessible to everyone for free, because public data is already paid for by taxpayers."



The idea of Marinexplore started to grow in the summer of 2011, at the same time that Sternfeld was still working at ABB Baltic States as Business Development Manager, leading the ABB team's preparations for the tender of the development of the nationwide fast-charging network of electric cars. In January 2012, he left the corporation in order to dedicate himself to entrepreneurship which would combine IT with big data of the oceans. He brought together a talented team, which in the beginning included André Karpištšenko, who founded the Skype Data Research Team, Kalle Kägi, Rainer's business partner from the days at Flydog, and Raido Pikkar, the incubation manager at the science park Tehnopol. The first investors to attach themselves to the project were Ivar Siimar and Marek Kiisa.

"Our first big challenge was to figure out what problem we wanted to solve first," says Sternfeld. "This space is out of focus, and overlooked by most big data companies, which is why it's antiquated. People do not live in water and, therefore, oceans do not seem that significant. As a contrast, the whole Internet is full of folks who do everything but maritime affairs, creating new muffin-apps and dealing with social-mobile issues."

### But what is Marinexplore and who needs it?

Sternfeld calls it a one-stop tool meant for the ocean community, currently tested by over 1,600 alpha users, with the aim to become the biggest online "footprint" of environmental data on the world's seas. The data is completely public, an open platform where anyone

can access more than a billion measurements from 24,000 measurement devices all over the world via their own computer screen. For example, they can access the more than a thousand buoys used by the United States National Weather Service (NWS) to measure the direction and speed of wind, as well as the temperature of the water surface, and the height and frequency of waves.

Thus, in a few moments it is possible to have an overview of wind gusts and temperatures in the Bering Strait on the coast of St Lawrence Island. Or to check what's happening around the Falkland Islands. Or to study in depth the wind gusts of the Atlantic Ocean.

Marinexplore has plenty of room for development. For example, currently we know nothing about what's happening in the deep waters of the oceans as there is no data available. Sternfeld promises that by the end of the year the volume of data will multiply, when they bring in more information sources and leave the current measuring results further and further behind.

Whereas one can get an overview of the weather in the various locations of the Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Oceans, things get more complicated when it comes to the seas. We may get a vague idea about the Sea of Japan, but no clue when it comes to the Baltic Sea, with the exception of one miserable monitoring station on the southern coast of Finland. On the other hand, the Gulf of Mexico is full of various measuring equipment.

One can initiate a search on the basis of location, parameters, data sources, type of measuring appliance, time of measuring, etc. – therefore the options are endless!

## Marinexplore uses information collected by "ocean robots"

Marinexplore makes use of the data collected by the Wave Gliders of one of the more innovative start-up companies in the US – Liquid Robotics. Those four unmanned robots, resembling modern surfboards, were dropped into the water off the west coast of the USA. On the route also known as PacX mission (Pacific Crossing), they propel across the Pacific Ocean using only wave power, while sensors are fed by solar panels on the top. They have set the Guinness record for the longest unmanned ocean voyage.

The "boards" first set course for Hawaii and from there two moved on towards Japan and the other two towards Australia. On this test-voyage, the wave gliders are collecting data on the salinity of water, water temperature, weather, fluorescence and dissolved oxygen. The cooperation partners of Liquid Robotics are Google and Richard Branson's Virgin Oceanic.

The company has made the data collected during the PacX mission available to the public and Marinexplore is also using them. In September, Rainer Sternfeld interviewed Graham Hine, the Product Manager of Liquid Robotics and the interview was published on Marinexplore's blog. Liquid Robotics has already received a couple of hundred orders for the Wave Glider.



Surprisingly enough, in today's information age, a whopping 90 per cent of the oceans and seas have not been explored. This means that we know next to nothing about them. "The human race has no idea what's happening in the oceans. We know more about the Moon than the oceans, but water is the most critical component for life to exist," says Sternfeld.

On the other hand, a massive amount (estimated to be over 5 petabytes) of public data on oceans which has been collected is gathering dust on a shelf somewhere. For example, if an entrepreneur needs to access such data, s/he will have to communicate with academic circles and various public bodies. This is really time-consuming, and Marinexplore does it for you.

In terms of software development, the company's focus is on organising and visualising data from the growing number of mobile measurement devices. Thousands of those are roaming here and there on their own and transferring data over satellite links or mobile networks.

Consequently, in the long term the time needed to analyse data on the seas and oceans should be significantly decreased: Marinexplore's target is to see a fivefold decrease. Time, as we all know, is money.

"Imagine a warehouse which is well organised, both visually and systematically. All of the different products are placed on shelves in an interconnected and understandable way, bearing proper time stamps. Marinexplore will be like that – it will enable someone to easily make very specific data enquiries and to start analysing the data immediately," explains Sternfeld.

But who will profit? Firstly, everyone who

works in the field of the environmental protection of bodies of water, by providing answers to such questions as what currents are like, where and how plankton are moving, where pollution risks are, and so on. Secondly, maritime companies will be beneficiaries. Sternfeld explains that the longer it takes to analyse data, the larger the risks and costs involved for companies active on the seas.

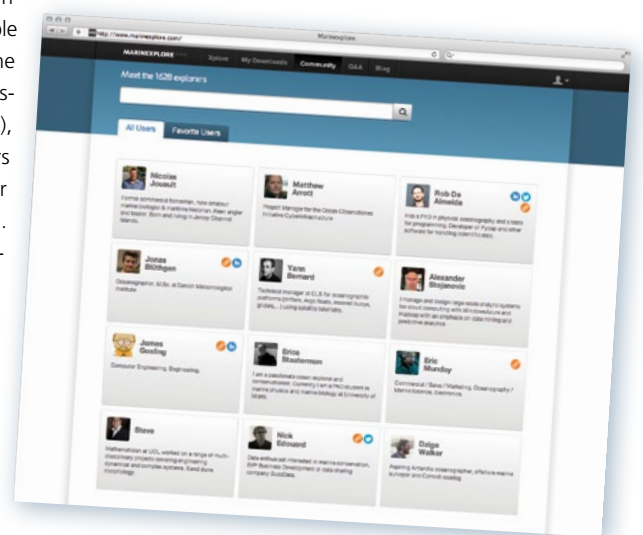
As the database of Marinexplore grows and more and more data sources appear, the whole operation will become increasingly complex for the company. This means that Marinexplore would not just be the aggregator of various databases, it would also become a place to securely handle private data on their own personal accounts. For example, fishing companies could view their confidential data against the background of all other open access data without risking business competitors seeing their business secrets.

The company plans to create cash-flow with the sale of different "professional tools" and data channels. By the sale of data channels, Marinexplore means the principle that money will be paid not for the data but for the volume of data using their application interfaces (APIs), in the same way as mobile operators charge us not for visiting particular websites, but for the volume of data. Who knows what kinds of applications or services which today seem like science fiction could be invented. At the same time, it does not have to be Marinexplore who creates tools. With APIs, developers can create whatever comes to mind in their specific niches.

Professional tools could include services for companies working with wind and wave energy, owners of oil platforms, insurance companies and other companies in the maritime industry. Companies and institutions will also be able to create their own applications which make use of the Marinexplore database.

One of Marinexplore's current missions is building an active community around the data and tools. It will be an environment where experts can give feedback about the data, interact, exchange ideas and find answers to relevant questions, where specialists help formulate the right inquiries and where exciting discussions on the mysteries of the oceans take place.

It would be wrong to assume that Marinexplore will only be meant for the "freaks" in various fields, for scientists and specialists. Ideally anyone will be able to find an interesting piece of information on the salinity and temperature of the water of their local beach, or on the rubbish and chemicals concealed in the water. Until then, Marinexplore will be a visual surfboard for exploring the spacious global sea. Enjoy!





Where did the Maoris of New Zealand come from? Who really discovered South America? As surprising as it may seem, the Estonian-born scientist **Lisa Matisoo** is enquiring about the most important questions of human migration from rats and chickens!

# Columbus Did Not Discover America ...Chickens Confirm

Text and photos: **Mihkel Kärmas**

Oceania is one of the last regions in the world to be reached by humans. For example, the predecessors of the Maori arrived in New Zealand only 700 years ago. But where did those people come from and where are their roots? Answers to those questions were earlier provided only by legends and folklore, until the bio-anthropologist Lisa Matisoo-Smith, whose methods are as original as her personal background, solved the puzzle.

"I always say to my students that I'm a good example of how complicated human history is. I'm living in New Zealand and I'm speaking English not Maori, the traditional language of New Zealand. You look at me physically, and my characteristics are typically non-Pacific, but I was born in Hawaii. My name, Matisoo, is Estonian, but my DNA shows connections back to northern Asian ancestry," begins Professor Matisoo from the University of Otago. "The language of love is universal and people move."

The 48-year-old Matisoo is a living example of how far and by what twisted paths human destiny can take us. Her father fled Estonia as a 13-year-old to get away from the Second World War. Andres Matisoo, who married an American woman, served his whole life as an officer in the US Navy. This is the reason why his family moved around often. Their second child, Elizabeth Anne, or Lisa for short, was born in Hawaii, where she also spent the first years of her life and coincidentally attended the same school as the current US president, Barack Obama.

When she was a teenager, Lisa's family moved across the Pacific Ocean to Japan. Lisa went back to the US to attend university and chose anthropology as her major. After graduation, the young anthropologist was working in France when she met a New Zealander, whom she married. For the last twenty years, Lisa Matisoo-Smith has lived in New Zealand, which is actually the furthest point on earth from her father's homeland, Estonia.



### Quarter of the planet as her playground

“My main area of research is understanding the settlement of the Pacific area and understanding the process of settlement. The Pacific is fascinating in terms of understanding human evolution and human adaptation because we have some of the earliest out-of-Africa migration – people arriving and moving into Australia about 50,000 years ago – and then the last major human migration, which was the settlement of Polynesia and New Zealand only 700 years ago,” says Matisoo.

Professor Matisoo’s “playground” makes up about a quarter of the whole planet – from Papua New-Guinea to New Zealand and from Japan to Chile. Most of this area is empty water, dotted with a large number of tiny islands. These are some of the most isolated societies in the world, some of which are in danger of perishing due to the rising of the world sea level.

Whereas in earlier days anthropologists used to draw conclusions on the basis of archaeological findings and linguistic research, in her research Matisoo looks at molecular and DNA research in studying the migration and intermingling of human beings. In this way, scientists were able to reconstruct the “evolutionary tree” in the early 1990s, which back then ended disputes about where *homo sapiens* came from.

By following mitochondrial DNA (the mother line), scientists were able to trace our foremother, who lived in Africa about 200,000 years ago and was named “the African Eve”. About 50,000 years ago, human beings from Africa reached Melanesia and 40,000 years ago Australia, but then the assault on Polynesia came to a halt. For a very long time. The last corners of Polynesia were settled only when Europe was already experiencing the Middle Ages.

On the one hand, this is understandable, as the distances that needed to be crossed by historic seafarers were huge. “When you think about the distances that Pacific voyagers covered and their ability to navigate just from the stars, sun and natural signs of the environment, it’s a pretty amazing feat,” says Matisoo. On the other hand, it is surprising that even recently it was disputed how exactly this large human migration took place. This is where Matisoo entered the game.

### “Rat Lady”

“We used a novel method of looking at the DNA of one of the animals that the Maori took with them in their colonizing canoes, the Pacific rat (*rattus excellens*). It is a very different rat from the European rat; it was a bit of a travelling companion and also a food item. They actually ate rat. I’ve tried it and it tastes like chicken,” says Matisoo, with a laugh. “We looked at the mitochondrial DNA of these rats and we were able to trace the New Zealand rat back to both Tahiti and the Cook Islands, which interestingly both were mentioned in oral traditions as being the starting points for the canoes that came to New Zealand.”

Matisoo had to look for answers in animal DNA, as when she first commenced her research the people of Oceania were very suspicious about giving saliva and blood samples. Richard Villemis, President of the Estonian Academy of Sciences, who heads the genetics laboratory in Tartu, confirms that the solution of his colleague Matisoo was noteworthy as it was so original. “It has several advantages. For example, if you take old human bones it is very difficult to extract DNA and contamination is even a bigger problem: DNA found on bones could have got there during excavations or through careless handling in a lab. But with animals, it is not possible to mix up the DNA,” says Villemis.



Lisa Matisoo-Smith in Tallinn, Estonia

In the last years, Matisoo has caught and dissected thousands of rats and has on some islands acquired the name "Rat Lady". "People think it's pretty strange that I arrive and ask if I can trap rats in their gardens, but once we start talking to them and explaining what it is that we're doing and why we're doing it then they understand," explains Matisoo.

### Sensational chicken bones

A couple of years ago Matisoo and her colleagues created a real international sensation when they arrived at the conclusion that Polynesians crossed the Pacific Ocean in their boats and reached South America about a hundred years before Columbus.

Theories about contacts between Americans and Polynesians existing before the time of Columbus are nothing new. Perhaps the most well-known theory in Europe is that of the acclaimed Norwegian anthropologist and adventurer Thor Heyerdahl, who said that South Americans used rafts to sail to Polynesia. In order to prove this, Heyerdahl risked his own life and that of his five companions in 1947 when he sailed from Peru over the Pacific Ocean on a raft made of balsa wood.

Matisoo has more news for the fans of the Norwegian. During archaeological excavations, Chilean researchers found chicken bones pre-dating Columbus. As it was believed that it was Europeans who brought chickens to the American continent, the question asked was: where did the bones originate? "The DNA was identical to the DNA that we were finding in sites in the Pacific. We also had the bones directly dated and the radiocarbon dates came back clearly pre-Columbian, roughly 1300," says Matisoo.

Whereas it was thought earlier that Polynesians on their travels only reached Easter Island, Matisoo says there is no reason why they should have stopped there. The distance from there to the Chilean coast is 2,200 miles, which was a reachable distance. It is on those boats that chickens reached the New World. Upon their return, the Polynesians took potatoes with them, which on both sides of the Pacific Ocean are known as *kumara*.

The claim by Matisoo and her colleagues, and the fact that it was based on chicken bones, led to headlines all over the world, especially in the USA. "As an anthropologist, it seems quite evident that Columbus didn't discover America. There were many people already there and there were probably other Europeans who had contact with the Americas before Columbus did. But that's the Western and Americanised view of history," says Matisoo, with a sigh.

In order to silence the sceptics, Matisoo and her research group have continued to investigate. Coincidentally, human remains have been discovered on Isla Mocha, an island situated 30 kilometres from the Chilean coast. Those remains physically resemble Polynesians. Currently the DNA analysis of the skeletal remains is being carried out.

### Project Genographic

After her father's escape from his homeland, Lisa Matisoo was the first in her family to contact Estonia and has since then made regular visits. It was in Estonia that one of the landmark events in her career took place

in 2008. With financing from the magazine National Geographic, the computer giant IBM and other foundations, the project Genographic was born. The project has the unprecedented goal of mapping human migration and the further history of the entire planet. Matisoo was made responsible for the area of the Pacific and the first meeting of the consortium took place in Tallinn with her participation.

Most of us may ask "it is interesting to study prehistory, but what's the use for us today?" Both Matisoo and her Estonian colleague Richard Villems confirm that one result is improved medicines. "We're trying to understand our collective human history, as well as specific questions about population origins. It also helps us to start to understand, for example, why certain populations have much higher frequencies of certain diseases. We find, for example, very high frequencies of diabetes and obesity in certain Pacific island populations and not in others. So by understanding the history it helps us also understand and explain the differences that we see in the frequencies of those diseases."



# How To Paint The Portrait Of The Sea

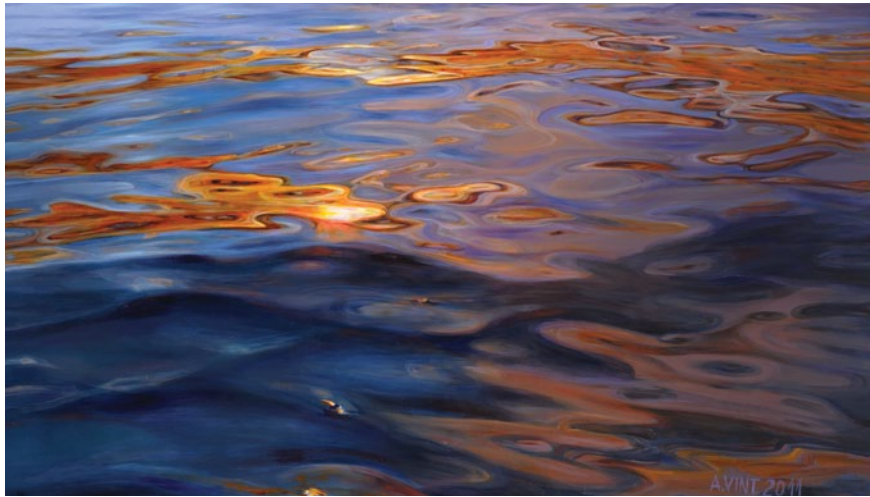


When I was asked to write about Aili Vint, I hesitated, fearing I would not be able to do justice to the woman who for years has been both my wife and colleague. I then recalled a poem by Jacques Prévert called "How to paint the portrait of a bird" ("Pour faire le portrait d'un oiseau"). As I read it again, I realised that the surreal way the bird is portrayed resembles the mystery of how Aili paints portraits of the sea. She herself describes it fittingly in the "Book of the Sea", published last year. Therefore, dear reader, I would like to be the messenger conveying Aili Vint's thoughts on the moods of the sea and on capturing them.

Text: Toomas Vint, painter and writer  
Photos: Stanislav Stepaško

"It is amazing how much my childhood still influences my work. When asked how long it took to paint one or another painting, I always want to respond: 'a long, long time – I've been painting it since my childhood'". With these thoughts Aili Vint opens her "Book of the Sea". However, I do not wish to dwell on Aili's childhood, but rather tell the story about how she became an artist.





Sunset Flash (2011) | oil on canvas, 110 x 190cm | artist's collection

Aili Vint (1941) was born in the small town of Rakvere. Despite growing up in an environment far removed from the arts, she yearned to study art and, at the age of 21, she commenced her studies in the Estonian State Art Institute. In her second year, she joined the avant-garde arts group ANK'64, which refused to obey demands from outside the artistic circles and wanted to be free in its creative efforts. Soon the group started to exhibit works in "underground" exhibitions and Aili presented both abstract and op-art-like work at those events. After her graduation, she attracted attention with her colourful figurative gouache paintings. In the early 1970s, Aili Vint suddenly began painting realistic nature paintings, which amazed the arts circles with their

special sensitivity, attracted continuous interest from art critics and were loved by the general public. Her main motif became the sea, where Aili mostly paid attention to reflexes, the interplay between light and shadow and the lightness and darkness of forms. She was not interested in the specific motifs within the painting, but rather in the inner tensions of the sea – she literally painted the soul of the sea. In one interview Aili said: "With the sea, I can only capture moments, encapsulate interesting moods and convey them. I want to paint nuances, which I also at first consider to be uncapturable." And more: "I recall how I walked on the beach and studied how I could depict transparent water. How could I paint the footsteps of the sea left on the sandy bottom with

a specific rhythm? I was forced to admit with sadness that it was impossible. Exactly this kind of transparent sea bottom with sandy wave patterns is something I just recently managed to capture on canvas and I was happy to admit that nothing is impossible."

Aili Vint believes that the majestic nature of the sea creates balance and has a calming effect on people. The sea touches all of our senses simultaneously. As the sea in its movement is always new and unexpected—with its 1001 faces—the infinite water forces one to gaze at it, which in turn teaches the viewer to see well.

In the story of art, there are practically no female marine painters. It seems to be a male territory. Aili Vint's works offer a powerful counterforce to the masculine stereotype of the mariner. Whereas mariners normally work for years on particular sea motifs, each painting created by Aili reveals a different condition of the sea. Her sea paintings are more like images of the sea in general than specific views.

But let's have Aili Vint talk to us through her "Book of the Sea": "The sea has a crazy number of moods – it can be playful, then inhumanly cruel. Everything seems to be natural with the sea and therefore one can even forgive its hard-heartedness. The sea does not care about who it takes and who it leaves alive, who it carries or who it sinks. The sea simply is! But always, even after the biggest storm, it calms down. It is once again gentle and soothing.



The Sea Was Once Red (2007) | oil on canvas, 92 x 115cm | private collection



The sea has been my best teacher - it gave me one more sense as a gift – the sense of beauty. The sea taught me about form and even in which direction to move my paintbrush on the canvas. The sun taught me which colours to choose and how to combine them. And, most importantly, the colours of the sea from my childhood never fade – they just become brighter.



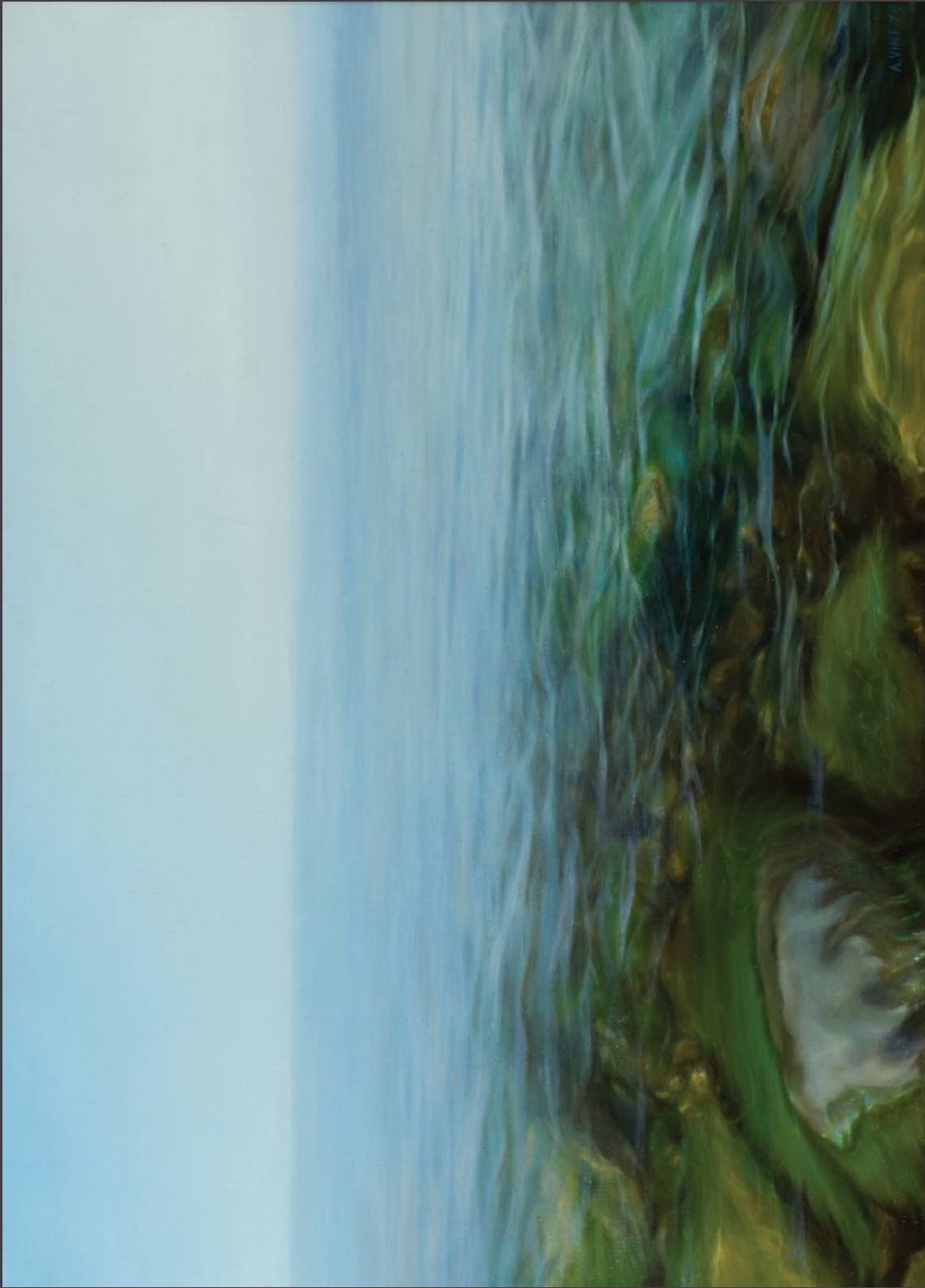
Pale Sea (1975) | oil on canvas, 92 x 115cm | KUMU Art Museum

Painting the sea is meditation with colour and form. The meditation starts when I discover the motif and it continues as I research its fine details, until I start to see all the little things which are attractive in the mood of the sea which I have found. Before starting to paint, I need to concentrate for a long time, to call my scattered frame of mind to order: 'Do not distract me, I'm painting!' Every day before I take the paintbrush in my hand, I need to calm down the ancient, nameless and disruptive anxiety inside. I have to empty my head of all thoughts and the worry about whether I will manage to capture the mood of the sea which I have chosen. Only after a while, when I am calm, can I begin. Painting moves along when you leave everything else aside, as in a real meditative daze. You have to live every day from morning to night with your painting in process. Very close to each other. As with a newborn who cannot be left alone for a moment. This lasts until the picture is complete and starts to live its own life.

I don't paint in the summer. I take long walks by the seaside, like a hunter in the forest who is tracking the path of an animal or lurking in a tree. I try to capture the moment when something stirs

simultaneously on the sea and in my soul. Thereafter I am like a cat circling its prey – I wonder about and admire what I see with all my six senses. In the end I suck up the mood of the sea like a sponge. When the moment which moved me is gone, I forget it to make space for the next one.

In autumn, I sit in my workshop and wait. I wait patiently until what has been recorded in me starts to shift in my memory. It is like receiving a phone call: 'Do you remember me? Of course I do!' The motif I found in the summer has now travelled through me and matured. Now I trust it and I can start to paint. The initial painting is born freely under my brush and it always looks very promising. I continue to paint with ceaseless excitement. Suddenly, when the sea is just starting to look like the sea, I find myself totally confused –the painting starts to protest! I keep offering it different colour tones – no, it is still moody, dissatisfied. Using my mind, I have run out of ways to make my painting better. Nonetheless, I force myself to keep working and spoil the mood completely. Then I find some other activity to distract me until it comes to the point where I'm ready to take a sponge with some turpentine and wipe everything out. This sense of personal powerlessness and the unbearable tension which twists my soul can last for weeks, sometimes months. Until one fine day I feel that now the moment is right and now it will turn out well and with admirable ease – like there is someone else inside me who wakes up and carries out unbelievable things. It is like the sea itself painting the sea. >> page 59



Stony Sea (1974) | oil on canvas, 115 x 135cm | Kumu Art Museum



Stone in Coastal Water (2002) | oil on canvas, 150 x 175cm | private collection



The Sea Ends Here (dedicated to Alessandro Baricco, 2007) | oil on canvas, 150 x 190cm | artist's collection



The Tide is on the Ebb (1983) | oil on canvas, 120 x 150 cm | private collection



On the Island of Titarsaar (1986) | oil on canvas, 115 x 145cm | Moscow, Tretyakov Gallery



After the Rain (1982) | oil on canvas, 100 x 115cm | artist's collection





Glints on Coastal Waters (2009) | | part of a triptych, oil on canvas, 81 x 312cm | artist's collection



Glimmering Water (2000) | oil on canvas, 92 x 115cm | private collection



Aili Vint and Toomas Vint | Aili watching Her Dream (2011) | oil on canvas, 119 x 190cm | artist's collection

On windless days, the sea becomes a giant mirror where the sky can admire itself. When I start painting, I always paint the sky first, then turn the canvas upside down and paint the same sky except darker. Then I let the painted surface dry. When the sea is 'dry', it needs to be 'moistened' - I bring tension onto the water with exact horizontal paint strokes. I have always enjoyed painting the calm sea, as the mirror-like surface is the most difficult, yet very interesting, to paint. To get the sea to lie down on the canvas, you have to really 'wrestle' with it for a while, meaning that you need to be a virtuoso and possess mathematical exactness. At the same time, you need the skill to lie boldly with colour and form and to make up details. You need to paint the layers of water dozens of times, moving further and further from the seashore until you reach the horizon. And one fine day, the sea is lying down!

With the last layer of paint you need to wipe off the 'smell of sweat' from the canvas, so that the sea looks refreshing and airy, yet feels solid like a mirror.

Sometimes I feel like the sea has completely sucked me into itself. It rules my thoughts and my feelings and very often I even paint the sea in my sleep or have strange dreams about the sea. I recall a very clear and brightly coloured dream where I am sitting on a low hill and admiring the green meadow in front of me. Suddenly I hear the lapping of the sea grow louder and louder and see a giant single wave the size of the whole meadow rush towards me. The wave is so transparent that I can see how the little bits of grass bend down against the land under it and how they tremble in confusion after it passes. As the wave reaches me,

I continue to sit calmly, I just raise my elbows and let the wave roll through underneath. When I look behind me, I see that I am in front of a huge body of water where the wave has ended up. But I am totally dry. What amazes me most about this dream is the question of how I could remain dry inside this huge flow of water. That a giant wave rolling over a green meadow felt totally natural to me ..."

Last year we got the idea to paint Aili's dream. The joint painting by Aili and Toomas Vint was a stimulating experience for both of us. Last spring the painting "Aili looking at her own dream" was exhibited in the Tallinn Arts Hall. "You could create some more joint works", said many arts lovers on that occasion.

Why does the sea have a hold on so many people? Probably because the sea awakens all our senses: you see the colours, smell the scent, hear the gentle lapping of the waves. You taste the salty tang of the water droplets, feel the gentle or harsh hand of the sea.

During a stark and mysterious sunset we simultaneously feel beauty and a sense of loss. It is an elevating moment – just like creation, where the creator shines like a fleck of dust in the sun ...

On the back cover of her "Book of the Sea", Aili lets the sea be portrayed by the poet Federico Garcia Lorca in "The Seawater Ballad": "The sea/ Smiles from far off/ Teeth of foam/ Lips of sky".

Knotted-up Sea (2000) | acryl, 42x150 cm  
artist's collection



Text and photos:  
Anneliis Aunapuu

A Roman merchant ship from  
the Port of Ostia In full sail

# Multiple-masted Ships In Full Sail

Scale models are always real crowd-pullers. These three-dimensional representations are major attractions in museums, as they are the meeting places of history and games, fairy-tales and reality, regardless of whether we are talking about models of houses or vehicles.

Models of ships in full sail provide a sense of adventure. The incredible popularity of the film "Pirates of the Caribbean" and the character played by Johnny Depp prove that audiences thirst for adventure, although most people these days grow up among concrete buildings far away from the sea. However, in the past, people had to spend a considerable amount of time on board – sometimes it was a home for several years. And the safety of a ship has always depended on its architecture and the quality of the woodwork.

In order to create an authentic scale model of a yacht, one has to be knowledgeable about scale, for example in the sails and rigging systems, and the characteristics of wood and glues. In addition, one has to be incredibly patient, as many details are as tiny as grains of sand. This is a job for true sea fans, captains or architects, better yet a combination of the three. Meet the architect Uno Rosme, whose hobby is historical scale models of ships.

**Your childhood home was far away from the sea. How did you end up on the Pirita pier?**

**Uno Rosme:** At the University of Technology, I

studied with Maris Butte. She was the one who took me to the sea. Maris was an accomplished sailor – it was part of her family life. Before the war, her family had owned a yacht. A painting on the wall at her home bore witness to this fact; it depicted their yacht on a stormy sea. Her father, Paul Butte, a former chief engineer at the construction factory "Metallist", and my future father-in-law, told hundreds of stories about voyages on the Baltic Sea in those days.

Maris and I both became active sailors. I spent thirty-five years participating in competitions and regattas. We were not allowed to cross the Gulf of Finland but we did visit Kaliningrad (Königsberg), Riga and Klaipeda, and sailed along the Neva to the Solovets Islands.

**In hindsight, it seems strange that the Soviet regime was unable to completely do away with sailing.**

**UR:** People sailed as members of sports clubs. Actually, the situation was quite the reverse: after all we got the Olympic Regatta of 1980! Preparations started in 1976. As Paul Butte was a measurer of international-class yachts and a member of the Maritime Classification Society of the Lloyd's Register Group (there were

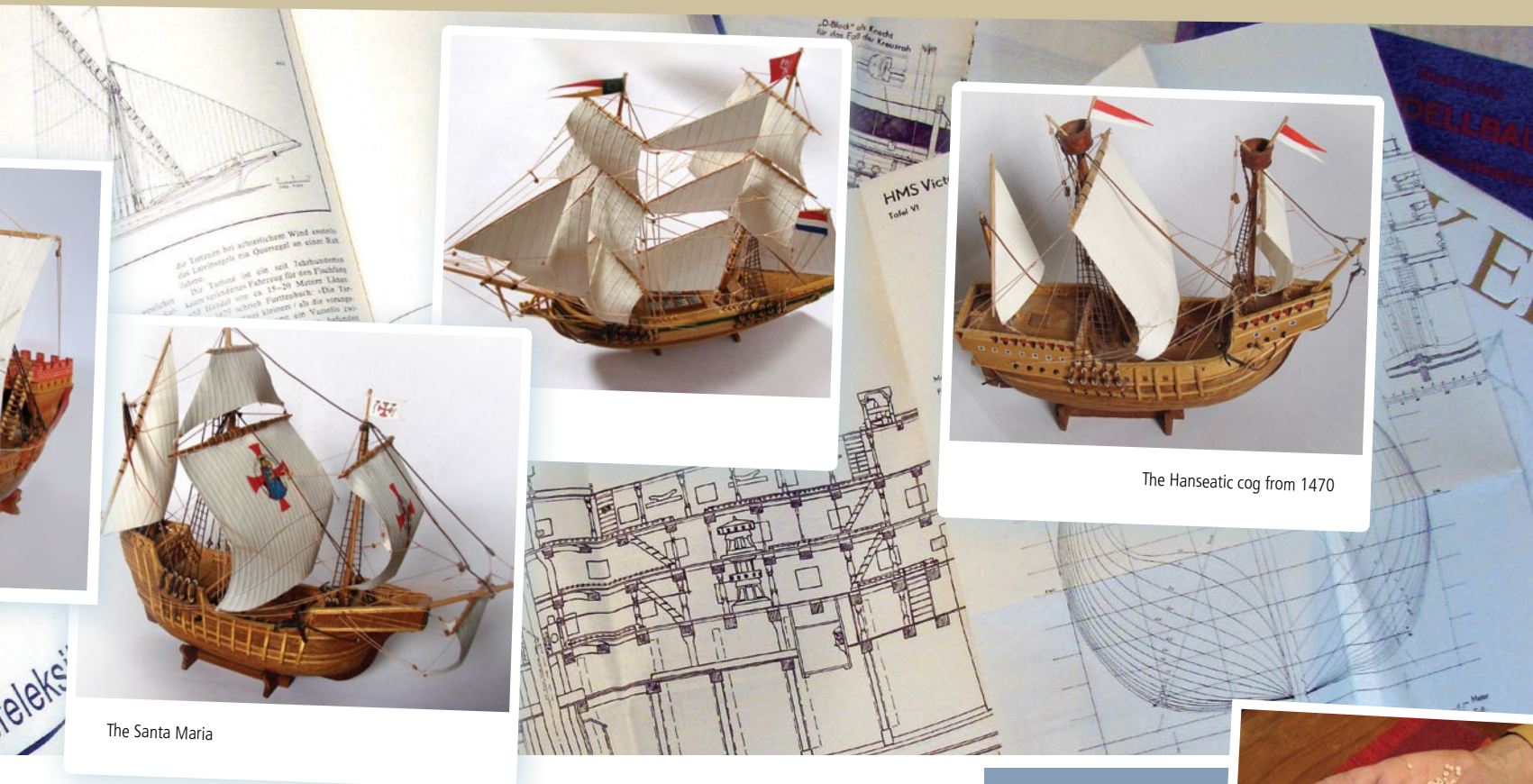


The Hanseatic cog from  
around 1300

only three men of this calibre in the entire Soviet Union, people who released certificates for yachts), they first came to visit our family to find out whether Tallinn would at all be a suitable city to host the Olympic Regatta. Then I as a sailor received the order to put together the design programme of the harbour area in Pirita.

Later, as an architect and a yacht captain, I had to create the rough draft of the Olympic Harbour within a period of two months. Fortunately, I was comfortable with the topic. From the higher echelons, the message was always that the construction was too large. But Daisy Matve and I as the architects, we continued to enlarge the harbour area in order to be able to receive all the competing yachts. The fact that today things are again tight in Pirita proves that we were right...

**It seems that yacht captains are united in their passion for woodworking. Paul Butte used to work at the Tallinn Experimental Shipyard of Sport Vessels - he designed, built and measured yachts. Later, he continued doing carpentry at home, making things for his grandkids, including a Star class yacht model.**



The Hanseatic cog from 1470

The Santa Maria

**Now that you have an active and long architecture career behind you, you make great ship models for your grandkids. Where do you get the designs from?**

**UR:** It seems to be that everyone wants their own boat. At first, I was lucky to find the designs of a Hanseatic cog in the National Library and I made my first modest model based on them. Gradually, I started to make larger ones.

Throughout the years, I have found books on historical boats published by the Rostock-based publishing house Hinstorff – they all come with designs. One has to adjust them and make a “theoretical sketch”, meaning I have to sketch the hull and the rig in the right measurements, in order to be able to work on the arcs and sides.

**Which is your largest ship model?**

**UR:** The largest one is also my favourite one – the military boat Wappen von Hamburg, dating back to 1669.

**What is the smallest detail you have had to work on?**

**UR:** The smallest ones are three-millimetre

discs made of lilac wood and all of them are pierced by three holes. There are many tools I use – from a circular saw to a tooth drill. For models, I have used a variety of wood, from apple to birch to pine.

**How many of those unique models have you made? It seems that your family’s collection already looks like the Invincible Armada.**

**UR:** There are sixteen altogether. Among them, there are Hanseatic cogs, ships from Rome and Phoenicia, Columbus’s Santa Maria and a ship to catch Caribbean pirates, but my favourite ones are the multiple-masted medieval boats, which have a really practical design but are also beautiful. Special attention was given to the decoration of the transom window, behind which are the captain’s quarters, and also to the area around the stem.

**What does the future hold?**

**UR:** I am in the process of working on a boat. My son got me the designs of the clipper ship Cutty Sark and that is really tempting. The main charm of this boat is the luxurious sails. Actually, I would like to make a Chinese junk with a ribbed sail, but I haven’t found appropriate designs yet.

**CV**

**Uno Rosme**

Born 1928

In 1954 graduated from the Architecture Department of the Construction Faculty of the Tallinn University of Technology

From 1954–1989 worked as an architect, designing industrial building complexes in Eesti Tööstusprojekt



Living on the seashore, Estonians have sailed on the sea and larger inland bodies of water since the beginning of time. It has not always been about fun or competition. An indication that sailing has also been a social activity is provided by the fact that, according to researchers of Estonian sailing history, the Uljaste Sailors Order was active for a few years beginning in 1820.

Text: Jaan Jürine  
 Photos: onEdition,  
 Estonian Sports Museum

At the 2012 Olympic Games in London, Deniss Karpak was the best Estonian, coming 11th in the Finn class



# Estonian Sailing

## Shows Signs Of A Revival



## Small Nation Big In Sailing



Text: Jaano Martin Ots  
 Photos: Erik Riikoja

Although during Soviet times offshore sailing was practically prohibited in Estonia, various sailing schools and yachting clubs were active in coastal waters. Therefore, the tradition of sailing continued to be strong. Today there are various strong yacht clubs and sailing schools in Estonia, active in seven towns: Tallinn, Pärnu, Tartu, Haapsalu, Kuressaare, Kärdla and Toila. Estonian sailors have participated in the Olympic Games, bringing home four medals in total.

These days the sailing calendar is so busy that the boats and yachts participating in competitions have no time left over for pleasure cruises. Throughout the whole navigation season, there are competition series almost every weekend in which offshore yachts and

Olympic class boats participate. Competitions for offshore yachts are organised in both the ORC and LYS classes; in addition, there are local competition series for offshore sail-boats that take place in Tallinn and Pärnu.

Throughout history, several world-class races have been organised in Estonian waters, from the Olympic Regatta of 1980 to the European and World Championships in various classes. Many quite complicated offshore sailing regattas are held in Estonia annually, for example the Helsinki-Tallinn Regatta and Watergate, which is a non-stop regatta covering a distance of more than 200 sea miles. The Watergate Regatta starts in Pärnu, travels through harbours in Latvia and on Saaremaa and, without a stop, finishes once again in Pärnu.

During the fifty years that Estonia was part of the Soviet Union, open-sea sailing practically died out. The Stalinist regime went to great lengths to limit any contact with the outside world: although Estonians lived by the sea, most sea vessels were either destroyed or confiscated. Only fishermen could keep a limited number of boats. Even decades later, border guards chased every little boy who happened to do something “suspicious” by the seashore.



Jüri Šaraškin started to build the DN ice yachts in 1970-80ies and became very successful

“It is a matter of how you look at it,” explains Jüri Šaraškin, who is an experienced yachtsman, has been sailing for decades, has built ice yachts and still works as an active measurer and equipment inspector in Estonia and abroad. “For sailors, the sea has always been something which unites countries and nations, while for the Soviet powers it was a separating element. Tallinn used to be a base for the Soviet Navy Baltic Fleet. There was a mine barrier in Tallinn Bay, and the gate was only opened during the daytime. A special sea license from the KGB was needed before boarding a sail-boat. This license was then shown to the border guard before going out to sea. This applied to sports activity on the bay, but things were much more complex when it came to open-sea sailing.” recalls Šaraškin.



Nikolai Poljakov (SR 27) won silver at the Tallinn Olympic Regatta in the Soling class

Throughout history, Estonian life has been influenced by movement under sails, “starting with Peter the Great, who in the interest of building his fleet, gave the order to cut down many oak trees in Estonia. There were critical events later on as well. The Sailing Regatta of the Moscow Olympic Games took place in Tallinn. I seriously doubt whether the location could be a sailing base today without the dredging work which was carried out, and which would be unbelievably expensive today. The water there in the confluence is very shallow...” comments Šaraškin.



The opening ceremony of the 1980 Tallinn Olympic Regatta with the Moscow Olympics dancing mascot Misha the Bear

## The Moonsund Regatta – an offshore sailing championship with a long tradition

The regatta with the longest tradition is known as the Muhu Väina Regatta (the Moonsund Regatta), which in 2012 took place for the 55<sup>th</sup> time. Traditionally, this regatta lasts for a week and the distance is up to 220 sea miles. In addition, there is one night course with the distance lengthened by circles made in the vicinity of the ports where people overnight. The long offshore regatta, which was first organised in 1958, still attracts many participants. In 2012, 114 yachts and over 700 yachtsmen started the race. The participating yachts are divided into two divisions – sport boats (ORC) and “hobby boats” (LYS). Although the Moonsund Regatta is prestigious as an independent event with open participation and the prizes are highly valued, the regatta is also a part of the Estonian Offshore Championship series.

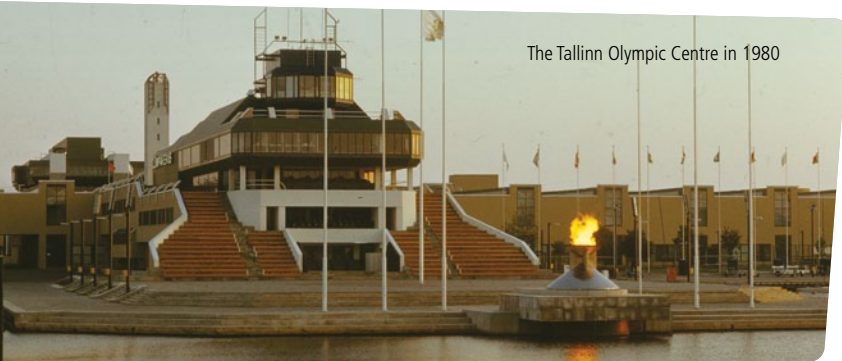
See more at [www.mudivain.ee](http://www.mudivain.ee)





One of the organisers of the Tallinn Olympic Regatta, Oleg Sapožnin, acknowledges that the sports side of things at the regatta really suffered due to the boycott of the Western states. But the Olympic Games gave us more.

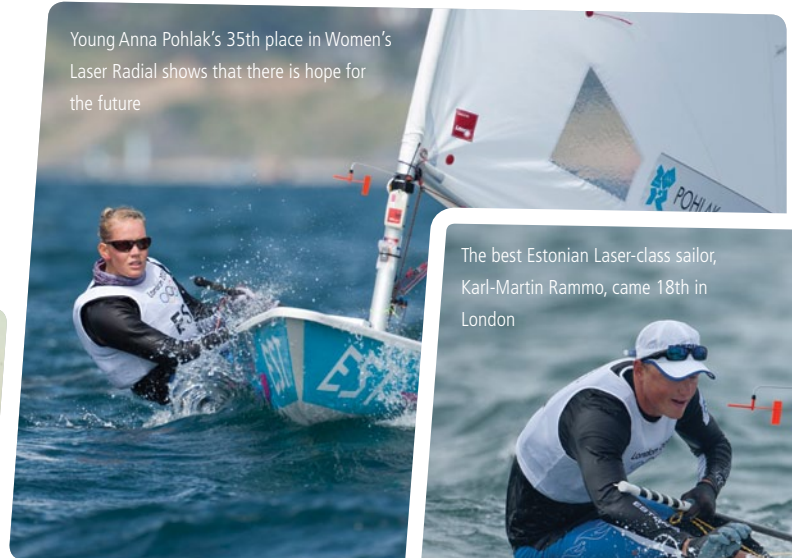
“The Olympic Centre, with the marina, the Pirita road, the TV Tower, the Pirita bridge, the airport, the City Concert Hall, the Olümpia Hotel, cleaning appliances, and an experimental factory of sports boats – without the Olympic Games most of these would not exist,” says Sapožnin.



The Tallinn Olympic Centre in 1980

Sapožnin recalls a funny episode: “The Olympic centre, together with the swimming hall, was completed. When high-ranking visitors to Tallinn, headed by the leaders of the International Sailing Union, wanted to swim there, it took several efforts to convince the KGB that it was not dangerous. Even on the closed Pirita road, the KGB would not allow cars with special license plates to drive faster than 60 km per hour.”

Šaraškin explains that the Olympic Regatta was an opportunity to present Tallinn as a strong sailing centre. “Many well-known sailing professionals visited the regatta and they were impressed with the organisation here,” he says. Connections were established. The last day of the regatta brought to Tallinn the former President of the IOC, Lord Michael Killanin, and his successor, Juan Antonio Samaranch. The main heir of Krupp, the German businessman Berthold Beitz, was also in Tallinn, although West Germany was boycotting the games. When German journalists asked him about it, Beitz replied arrogantly that he selected the places to visit himself.



Young Anna Pohlak's 35th place in Women's Laser Radial shows that there is hope for the future



The best Estonian Laser-class sailor, Karl-Martin Rammo, came 18th in London

### Getting going!

Understandably, before and during the first independence period, it was mostly local Germans and Russians who competed in sailing. Georg Faehlmann, William von Wiren, Nikolai Vekšin and Bernhard Vogdt won the Olympic bronze medal in Amsterdam in 1928 in the six-metre class. In 1960, Aleksander Tšutšelov won silver at the Napoli Olympic Regatta in the Finn class. In 1980, Nikolai Poljakov won silver at the Tallinn Olympic Regatta in the Soling class. In 1988, the twin brothers Tõnu and Toomas Tõniste won silver in Seoul in the 470 class and four years later, representing the Republic of Estonia, they won the bronze medal in Barcelona.

The list of Estonian Olympic medals may look small, but Estonian sailors have become world and European record owners at other competitions as well, and have even been leaders of a sort. For example, ice-yachting in the DN class spread explosively in Estonia from 1970-1980. A group of enthusiasts, including Jüri Šaraškin, built ice yachts and became very successful. For a while the highest rank of ice-yachting was filled with Estonians.



### Nordic Youth Championships in sailing

The Nordic Youth Championships is a traditional regatta which has been organised by the Nordic Sailing Union for decades. This year, it was organised by the Pärnu Yacht Club from 25-29 July 2012, and it was the largest regatta in Estonia to date in terms of participant numbers. In addition to the members

of the Pärnu Yacht Club, the administration work was shared by internationally experienced judges from Tallinn and Saaremaa; the international jury members came from Denmark, Belgium and Finland.

Participating classes – Optimist, Zoom8, Laser Radial, Europe

### COMPETITION IN FIGURES

- 273 sportsmen
- 71 cutters with trainers and parents
- 16 boats of championship officials
- 850 new visitors to Pärnu (together with trainers and parents)
- 55 championship officials
- 30 volunteers

The Estonian team came 3rd in the Optimist class Team Race

- Mihkel Väli:** winner in the boat class Laser Radial
- Keith Luur:** in the boat class Optimist boys' ranking: 16<sup>th</sup> place
- Kristina Erisalu:** in the boat class Optimist girls' ranking: 46<sup>th</sup> place





Twin brothers Tõnu and Toomas Tõniste after winning silver in Seoul, 1988



According to Šaraškin, one reason why recent years have not been as successful is that equipment and materials have become more expensive. People who go in for this sport and finance themselves cannot cover all their costs.

Money problems are common both at sea and on ice. Rein Ottoson, one of the most successful trainers in Estonia, who runs his own sailing school, believes that the worst times are probably behind us. "Those parents who are able to buy their child an Optimist-class yacht also get a rubber boat with an engine to accompany their child. These days parents have to cover the full costs of their children's sailing hobby. During Soviet times, sailing was paid for by the state," comments Ottoson, who is both a manager and trainer. Of his trainees, the best Estonian Laser-class sailor, Karl-Martin Rammo, participated in the London Olympic Regatta, and after the Olympics Rammo rose to 20th place in the world rankings. The young man claims in his blog that the Olympic Regatta motivated him to prepare for the games in Rio de Janeiro.

## Back from London - holding the shield or on it?

Our large neighbour, Russia, did not come to London with a team much bigger than Estonia's, says the double Olympic medal winner Tõnu Tõniste. He also finds it praiseworthy that our sportsmen and -women did well in all three classes. Deniss Karpak's 11th place in the Finn was impressive, especially as Karpak first got on a Finn three years ago. Rammo's sailing on the Laser was stable and he came in 18th. 19-year-old Anna Pohlak's 35th place in Women's Laser Radial shows that there is hope for the future. Estonians also competed in windsurfing - Ingrid Puusta (15th place) and Johannes Ahun (30<sup>th</sup>) - but in four years at the Rio Olympic Regatta, windsurfing will be replaced by kite as a new field. "Sailors from other countries praised us. It was nice to hear. The whole situation with sailing is positive. It is good to see that groups are leasing open-sea yachts, which are too expensive to buy on one's own," says Tõniste.



Estonians also competed in windsurfing - Ingrid Puusta (15th place) and Johannes Ahun (30th place)



To sum up, about 4,000 people in Estonia have sailing as their hobby, and there are 11 clubs and class unions and six sailing societies. That seems small by European standards, but things are picking up. Sailing as a hobby cannot grow faster than the general quality of life. As the quality of Estonian life develops, sailing will also become more popular.

## The Estonian boat St.Iv won the most prestigious award of the Tall Ships Races 2012

Competing under the aegis of the Estonian Youth Sailing Society, the sail-boat St.Iv participated in the world famous Tall Ships Races 2012 offshore regatta and won second place in all competition stages and in the overall results of its competition series. On 25 August in Dublin, Ireland the Estonian team was awarded the most prestigious prize of the offshore regatta: the Friendship Trophy.

The Friendship Trophy is awarded to acknowledge the team and the captain who, in the opinion of the entire group of captains and teams participating in the Tall Ships Races, have done their best for understanding and creating friendship, during the offshore regatta, between the representatives of the many countries and nationalities.



Pärnu Marina



# Estonia – An Ideal Boating Destination on the Baltic

In August 2012, six maritime journalists from Germany visited Estonia in order to learn about the opportunities available in Estonia as a seaside country and to visit small craft building companies. Below the impressions of one of the journalists, **Marion Köhnemann**.



Located south of Finland and west of Russia on the Baltic coast, Estonia is slightly larger than Switzerland and just over half the size of Scotland, comprising some 45,000 km<sup>2</sup>.

With its 1.3 million inhabitants, Estonia is one of the world's smallest countries in terms of population, and has a population density of just 30 inhabitants per square kilometre.

Estonia is a country of contrasts, boasting a rich history and diverse culture. Despite the strong influence exerted by the Soviet Union, Estonians identify themselves more readily with Scandinavia. The bond with Scandinavia is clearly visible when one travels through the country and along its coasts. Were it not for the many abandoned factories and military installations from the years of Soviet occupation, one would think one was in Sweden. This association is certainly strengthened by the occasional moose that crosses one's path.





Estonia is a land shaped by the sea. Innumerable bays and sounds can be found along the country's nearly 4,000 km of coastline (by way of comparison, Germany has just 2,400 km of coast). The Estonians have always been a people that live with and from the sea. Between the 13th and 16th centuries the present-day capital Tallinn was part of the German Hanseatic League, a commercial and defensive confederation of towns along the coasts of Northern Europe, leading to a bond with Germany that can be felt to this day. German was the language of the Hanseatic League and was widely spoken in Tallinn. Today, the meticulously restored old city centre of Tallinn, which features imposing medieval walls and a picturesque warren of streets, offers a unique tourist experience. The Seaplane Harbour maritime museum, which opened its doors in May 2012, is another popular attraction among tourists. Featuring hundreds of exhibits, including ships, sea planes, and submarines, the museum is a special experience for children and adults alike.

of marinas appropriate for sailing yachts, yet here and there 50 or 60 sea miles separate marinas. The Estonian government has resolved that every ferry port must also contain a marina. This goal has been reached in many areas. Particularly in the southern parts of the country, the "island paradise" of Estonia offers sailors an enchanting marine environment just waiting to be discovered. In the city of Pärnu, which features a gorgeous beach, the Pärnu Yacht Club maintains a large marina with approximately 30 visitor moorings



Pärnu Yacht Club



Pirita Marina in Tallinn

In 1980 the Olympic sailing competition was held in Tallinn. Monumental concrete buildings still mark the site of the Olympic village, constructed for the Olympic Games held that year in Moscow. Today, the docks are used by the city's steadily growing water sport community. The tradition-steeped Kalev Yacht Club is located directly adjacent to the docks. Founded in 1947, the club has organized numerous international regattas over the years, and can boast many competitive successes. During the Soviet period, sailing was only permitted for competitive purposes and with a special permit. "Recreational sailing is a foreign concept for many Estonians," Jaano Martin Ots, the editor-in-chief of the sailing magazine *Paat*, explains. "Of the 650 yachts on the Estonian coast, some 400 are purely regatta yachts."

The Soviet occupation severely slowed the development of Estonian water sports. The country now has a comprehensive network

and an extremely handsome clubhouse. From here, one can sail in two days through the Gulf of Riga to Saaremaa, the largest Estonian island. Saaremaa is an island of windmills and juniper bushes – and it hosts a vibrant boat building industry. The island is responsible for 75 per cent of the revenues generated by the Estonian boat and yacht construction industry. Kuressaare, the island's main city, is home to a new marina and excellent infrastructure. Kuressaare Castle proudly commands the heights of this small and historical city, which is distinguished by its mild air and numerous spa hotels. From Saaremaa one can easily reach the highly scenic islands of Muhu, Kärdla, and Haapsalu, which are located to the north.

Water sports are quickly enjoying increased popularity in Estonia. Perhaps this is why boating vacationers are so well received, despite the quiet and reserved nature sometimes ascribed to the country's inhabitants.



The sailing barge Jõmmu is the copy of the once numerous cargo sailboats – Emajõgi-Peipus barges that were sailing during 600 years in inland waters of Estonia

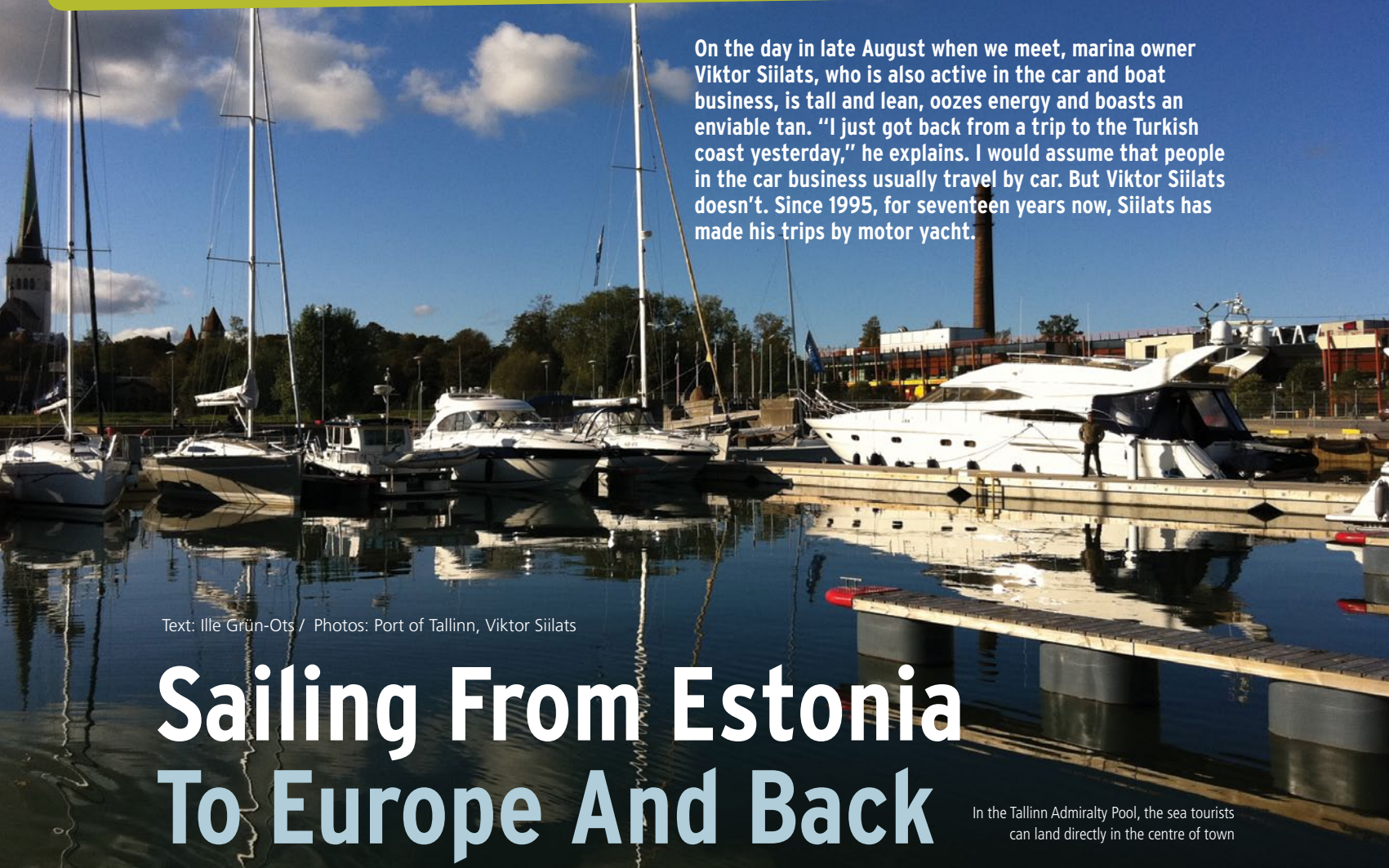
## Rebirth of the wooden boat

Estonian maritime history is closely bound up with that of the Baltic Sea. It is not only the story of seafaring, but also a tradition of ship-building on the coastline of our islands and in the harbours of big cities.

It is said that all the war ships of czarist Russia were built in Tallinn, at the Admiralty Pool. Later, eight submarines were built at the Noblessner Foundry!

Although most ships built back then have been swallowed by the sea or time, ship models help us to remember, when history has been kind enough to have preserved the original sketches. As you concentrate on a lovingly created ship model, you may actually see the proud and delightful image offered by a multi-masted ship, with all its silk flags fluttering in the wind, hear the seagulls squawking and taste the salty flavour of the sea...

However, some people are not satisfied with the models and they have once again started to build wooden boats. Enthusiasts have constructed full-scale dugout canoes, barges and Viking boats (see [www.lodi.ee](http://www.lodi.ee)). Currently the building of a schooner is in process on the island of Hiiumaa. This type of vessel was used in the old days to transport logs to the Tallinn market. It is good that traditional skills are still alive!



On the day in late August when we meet, marina owner Viktor Siilats, who is also active in the car and boat business, is tall and lean, oozes energy and boasts an enviable tan. "I just got back from a trip to the Turkish coast yesterday," he explains. I would assume that people in the car business usually travel by car. But Viktor Siilats doesn't. Since 1995, for seventeen years now, Siilats has made his trips by motor yacht.

Text: Ille Grün-Ots / Photos: Port of Tallinn, Viktor Siilats

# Sailing From Estonia To Europe And Back

In the Tallinn Admiralty Pool, the sea tourists can land directly in the centre of town



**You studied chemistry and then journalism at the University of Tartu. How did you become involved in the car and, later, boat business?**

For several years, I led the life of a researcher and then worked in video, television and other media. Cars came into my life somewhat by chance in 1991, when I applied for a job as a Volvo sales representative in Estonia.

Boats and ships became part of the package in 1995, when I visited a maritime fair. I got

hooked on those beautiful things and I got the feeling I could manage to sail them and then I thought I'd give it a try and sell them, too. Once you dip a toe into the water... Boats are also my business in the company *AS Balti Merekaatrid*, where I am Chairman of the Council.

**You are now a seasoned sailor. What kind of boat do you use now?**

I own a motor yacht. But when I first got started, nearly seventeen years ago, I had no idea about motor boats or sailing; it was a totally blank page for me. I went to sea with basically no skills whatsoever. Of course, I took the course to get my boating licence and passed all the necessary exams. My first motor boat was Jenny 1, and today it is Jenny 7. I have also used all the models in between, so this is now my seventh boat.

**Boats, especially yachts, are rather expensive. Do Estonians buy them at all?**

Yes, but unfortunately they are not cheap.

A proper boat will cost you more than a car. Prices start from a couple of thousand euros but can reach ten million euros or more. We have sold a motor boat for two million euros and the buyer was an Estonian.

It is not very common practice for a group of friends to purchase a boat together. At first it may seem that it makes a lot of financial sense, but in the end everyone wants to use the boat at the same time and, with the Estonian weather being the way it is, nobody wants to be out in a boat in rainy weather even if that is their allocated time-slot. Yachtsmen are more likely to share their yacht, as it often requires a bigger team anyway.

**It is very easy to rent a car in Estonia, with dozens of companies to choose from. What is the situation with boats?**

As a rule, a yacht can be rented together with the captain, but not a motor boat. However, elsewhere in the world it is common practice. The season is very short in Estonia and it would mean very high rental prices.

### **Yachting and boating are types of tourism. How would you rate the level of Estonian sea tourism?**

It is very poor. The main reason is that in 1995, when there was an opportunity for sea tourism to experience explosive development, when everyone was excited about it, several official boards and organisations started to put on the brakes. They imagined that if they established all sorts of regulations and criteria for equipment, money would start to flow from boat owners to them. In other words, they started to “tax” sea tourism before it even got on its feet. A lot of work was needed to cancel those pointless regulations and limitations and today they are mostly in the past or have become more sensible, without security at sea having suffered in any way.

### **When you own a small boat, you have to be able to anchor it somewhere and keep it somewhere. What is the situation with Estonian harbours?**

The development of our port infrastructure has been very slow. Fortunately, recently some new opportunities to dock have been created with the help of European Union funds. Some of those projects have been successful, and others not. Among the success stories is definitely the Admiralty Pool, situated at the Passenger Port of Tallinn, which has been transformed from a turning around area for ferries into the Old City Marina. It is a really positive development that seaborne travellers can land directly in the centre of town! The Old City Marina has quality quays and safe tying-up possibilities, one can relax, wash up and get rid of the garbage there. The area is secure. Everything else that is necessary can be ordered through the harbour master.

### **For local people, the words “yachting marina” are synonymous with Pirita...**

Pirita is definitely a marina to reckon with. Unfortunately, progress there is slow because of the detail plans of the area. The harbour area itself is really large, there is already a hotel and port owners would like to develop the area as a complex. Due to differences of opinion with local politicians and residents, the development of the detail plan of the area has lasted for years. However, Pirita Marina will remain one of the largest yacht harbours in the country. And there is the possibility of building additional berths if the current area becomes too small.

The problem of all our ports is that they are too small. Whereas with large ports where many ships arrive it is possible to make ends meet with berthing fees, it's not possible at smaller ports with fewer berths. The ports are kept in business mostly through the enthusiasm of the people working there.

### **There are many boats sailing under flags of other countries landing in our ports. According to your experience, would you say that Estonia is a popular destination for seaborne tourists?**

People mainly come here from Finland and Sweden: the northern coast is popular with the former and the western coast with the latter. But there are also many Dutch and German people coming here.

Sea tourism can be divided into two parts: boats under Estonian flags which mainly circle around in our coastal waters (of course they also travel further as they gain more experience) and foreign sea tourists. Unfortunately, the global economic downturn means that fewer and fewer foreigners arrive here. Our bad weather also plays a role. Most ports noted that this summer there were almost half the number of foreign tourists in comparison to the average summer. One might assume that during an economic depression, when people have more time on their hands, they would value it and travel around more.

However, Estonia remains an attractive destination for sea tourists. It is a tradition in seafaring to visit countries and ports where one hasn't been before – it is a challenge. As soon as a new port is put on the map, one thinks “I have to go there!” It may be a one-off visit, or you may like the place and return many times. Whether the port is to one's liking really depends on the harbour master and the services on offer, as well as on the environment and people.

With domestic tourism, I am slightly disturbed by the negative aura surrounding the small boat business. It is perhaps social jealousy, when you have nothing else bad to say about someone, you can always say “Oh but he owns a motor boat!” Such an attitude means that many boat owners prefer to travel to the Mediterranean where, let's be honest, the climate is better, the food is better, the service is better and the social life is better. And it is quite difficult to attract those people back who have already sailed off to other parts of Europe.

- The Tallinn Yacht Club was founded in 1910. Members included owners of sailing- and motor yachts. The club was re-founded on 29 December 1988. Since 2001, the club has been based at the Lohusalu harbour, which has all the necessary conditions for sailing and other water sports. In 2010, the Tallinn Yacht Club expanded to the Vanasadama Yacht Harbour, and in 2011 the Grand Holm Marina in Haapsalu received the status of the flagship harbour of the Tallinn Yacht Club.

- The Kalev Tallinn Yacht Club was founded in February 1948.

- On 2 April 1988, The Union of Estonian Yacht Clubs was re-founded. The original organisation was established in 1928.

At the same time, there is a new generation of small boat owners, and for the first five years it is definitely exciting for them to discover Estonian harbours and islets.

### **Last December you presented your travel book “On a boat to Europe”...**

My first journey to Europe on a boat was in 1999. Of course, I had already crossed the Baltic Sea and visited Sweden and Finland, but visiting neighbours is quite different from the long journey to the Mediterranean. Since then I have travelled internationally by boat four times, on rivers, lakes and channels, as well as the open sea and the ocean. In my travel stories, I have tried to link my personal experiences with the traditions and legislation of specific countries, so that readers can imagine, or even find useful tips for, their own sea journeys. The book does not cover all European Union countries, as I still have not visited Ireland, Iceland, Poland or Lithuania by boat. However, you will find many visits to European Union candidate countries and for a change also funny boat trips outside Europe to Morocco, the USA and the Bahamas.

### **During the first Republic of Estonia, there were a considerable number of yachting and boating clubs. Is this tradition widespread today?**

People are quite actively restoring yachting clubs. Active clubs are the Tallinn Yacht Club, which is over 100 years old, the Kalev Yacht Club, Pärnu Yacht Club etc. Such organisations help to infect the next generations with the sailing bug and they are possibly the places where our domestic tourism will find new momentum.



Text: Tõnis Leht

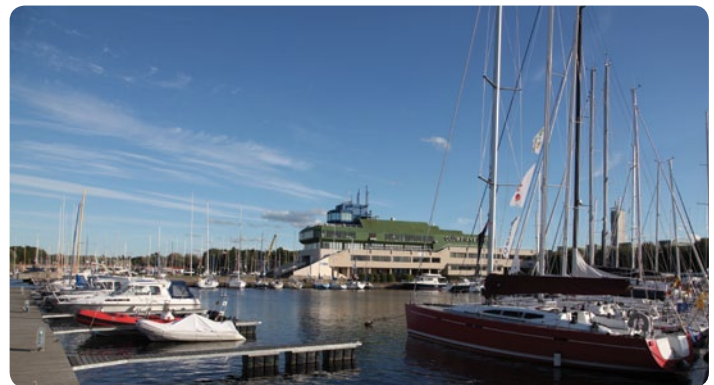
Photos: Kaido Haagen, Atko Januson, EAS

# Estonian Marinas - A World Of Wonder...

Let me be frank from the start – I have always been a landlubber. My suitability to speak on the intricate details of seafaring equals that of a fox running a chicken farm. I hope that true sailors forgive me for not dwelling on sailing or harbours. Instead I will write about what maritime tourists can find around small Estonian marinas when they bother to come ashore. I was inspired to write this piece by having worked on a television series about small Estonian and Finnish marinas and the subsequent passion to visit all the inhabited islands and islets in Estonia.

Of course, there are more harbours worth a visit than the ones I will focus on. I chose special ones with the most exciting history. Instead of larger places, I will concentrate on small Estonian islands which demonstrate the diversity of the country.

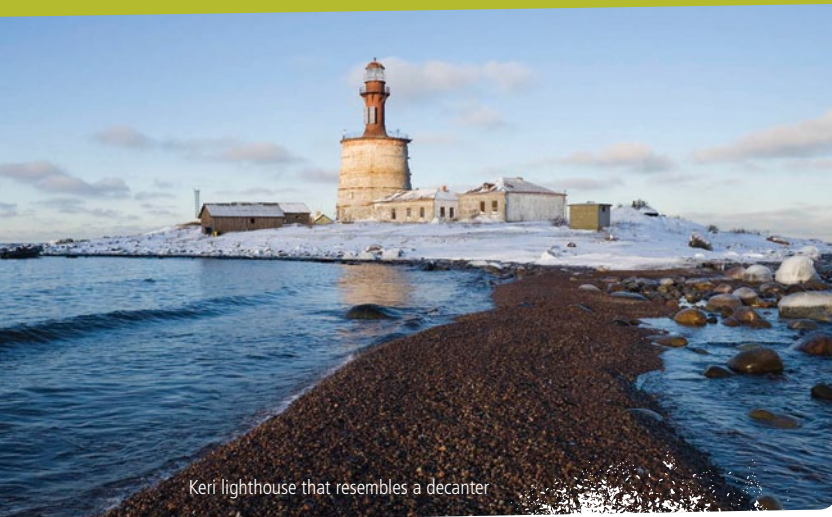
Based on the experience of making the TV series, I can allow myself one generalisation. In terms of the number and infrastructure of small ports, Estonia still lags behind Finland and other Nordic countries. Half a century as a border zone of the Soviet Union halted the development of our seafaring culture and harbours. But that just makes the visits to our coastline more adventurous and authentic for travellers who are accustomed to Finnish or Swedish comforts.



## Tallinn and the Pirita Marina



All roads in Estonia lead to Tallinn. This also applies to waterways. If you arrive in Tallinn on a yacht or motor boat, it is recommended that you head for the Pirita Marina, the largest of the kind in Estonia. In Pirita, there are berths for several hundred vessels. Equipped with all the comforts, this harbour is a great place to get an introduction to the distinguished history of Tallinn. The harbour itself boasts a long history: there has been a harbour in the Pirita river confluence since pre-historic times. The historical highlight, however, was probably in 1980, when the Yachting Regatta of the Moscow Olympic Games took place here. Thanks to Pirita, Tallinn has the status of an Olympic town.



Kerf lighthouse that resembles a decanter

## Aegna

After you have explored Tallinn, take a look at the two very different islands here in the Bay of Tallinn: Naissaar and Aegna. Aegna is an enjoyable resort at the tip of the Viimsi Peninsula, just fourteen kilometres from the Tallinn city centre. Administratively, Aegna is part of the city of Tallinn, although there is only one resident living there throughout the year. But as is suitable for a city, every street has a name and every house has a number. Today Aegna is a popular day-trip destination: people go there to have a picnic, sunbathe on the sandy beach or just enjoy the natural environment. You can arrive on your own boat, or by either the motor-boat Juku or Monica, which make regular journeys in the summer season.



Aegna light beacon

Although in the last fifty years Aegna has become a popular summer resort for locals, it was an important military support location in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. On the eve of World War I, Czarist Russia started to build a naval fortress to protect the Gulf of Finland and St Petersburg. Peter the Great's naval fortress consisted of powerful coastal defence batteries on the Estonian and Finnish coastlines. Aegna was a part of this system. Massive concrete fortifications, two cannon towers and a railway were built to service it. Between the two world wars, the Republic of Estonia adjusted the battery for its own purposes. In cooperation with Finland, the cannons of Aegna were meant to be used to close off the Gulf of Finland. This was supposed to keep the Soviet Union away from the Baltic Sea. In 1941, the Soviets—retreating from the German army—demolished the Aegna battery, including the ammunition storages and several residences. People from the neighbouring small island of Kräsuli recall Aegna being totally ablaze. Remains of the magnificent cannon batteries can still be seen on Aegna.

## Naissaar

Next it is time to move on to Naissaar, a naturally beautiful island which boasts even more of a colourful military history. In Estonian terms, Naissaar, with its area of 18.6 square kilometres, is the sixth largest in the country. The name in translation means “the island of women”. There are different versions, one more incredible than the next, about the origins of this name. I particularly like the legend which claims that Naissaar was the island of the Amazons. There may be mention of the island in the 11<sup>th</sup>-century Chronicles of Adam from Bremen, who talked about a country called *Terra Feminarum*. Like many other Estonian islands, Naissaar had a Swedish population, who called the island *Nargö*, but due to its vicinity to Tallinn there were also Estonians and representatives of other nations residing here.

The voyage to Naissaar usually begins at the Suursadama harbour. Passengers with their own boats need to take care as the harbour is not in the best condition and the shipping route needs to be deepened. You can tour the island by bike, on foot, or even in the back of a lorry. Should the latter not be exotic enough, you can enjoy a train ride for a couple of kilometres on an old train left behind by the Soviet military. Petka, the driver, is at least as interesting as his unique retro engine.

Naissaar was also part of Peter the Great's coastal defence battery. However, unlike on Aegna, there is a massive cannon tower (number 10B) which remains completely intact. Battery 10B is an authentic example of the quality of concrete constructions built in the Russian Empire. Whereas concrete buildings erected in Soviet times have rapidly deteriorated, the Czarist concrete tower stands in its full glory and has not even lost any of its plastering. The military delights of Naissaar include more than just the cannon battery, as Naissaar was also a closed military island during the Soviet era. This is where they produced tons of sea mines, the shells of which can still be viewed on the mine storage platforms.

However, Naissaar is not only a destination for military or nature enthusiasts. The island has become a beloved location for concerts and theatre performances. The world-renowned conductor Tõnu Kaljuste has founded a small theatre, called the Nargen Opera, in his own backyard, in an old hay shed. Last summer a special performance about the tumultuous history of Naissaar was staged. Naissaar is the only small Estonian island which has tried to become independent: during the Revolution of 1917, Bolshevik sailors of the garrison on the island declared the Soviet Republic of Nargen Soldiers and Fortress Builders. This entity did not have a long life: after the Republic of Estonia was declared, the “state” on Naissaar ceased to exist.

Soviet army remnants on Naissaar





Prangli - Kelnase marina

## Prangli

Prangli is really an undiscovered pearl among Estonian islands. It seems to have been dropped into the sea just east of Tallinn, eight kilometres from the tip of the Viimsi Peninsula. Yet only a few people know what really goes on here. Prangli is especially attractive as it is the only island on our northern coast which, despite all the historical shifts, has retained an ethnically Estonian population with roots dating back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century. This is rare for Estonia, as on many Estonian islets the established communities were not ethnic Estonians but Estonian Swedes, also known as coastal Swedes. The war and the Soviet era purged most of those islands of their population.

Prangli is reachable via the Kelnase harbour, which is in good condition, and yachts are a common sight. There is a regular connection between Kelnase and the Leppneeme harbour on Viimsi Peninsula. There are several good reasons to visit Prangli. It is an island where children learn to ride a motorbike before they learn to walk, and very peculiar vehicles can be spotted all over the island. The world-famous mental arithmetic game “prangling” originated at the Prangli school. Natural gas is a resource on Prangli. The young people here hang out in an open-air pub called “Black Hatch”. There is also a pleasant wooden church and an endless number of sandy beaches.

The memorial to the steamer “Eestirand” is also situated on Prangli. In 1941, this ship was on its way from Tallinn to Leningrad with about 3,000 Estonian men on board who had been mobilised into the Red Army. The ship was hit by a German bomb, but the captain managed to navigate it into the shallow waters near Prangli, saving the lives of more than 2,700 men. Consequently they also got out of forced army service.

Prangli is not all alone in the sea. Next to it is Väike-Prangli (Aksi) Island and, some kilometres northward, the tiny unpopulated Keri Island, with its mystical and strangely-shaped lighthouse and probably the loneliest sauna in the entire country.

## Viinistu and Mohni

When you travel east from Tallinn, pay a visit to the former capital of illegal liquor trafficking – Viinistu. This fishing village with a vibrant history is located on the peninsula of Pärисpea, ten kilometres from Loksa.

The golden age of Viinistu was in the 1920s and 30s, when the Dry Law was in effect in Finland. The general alcohol ban definitely did not reduce the Finns’ desire to drink. In desperate times, one should ask one’s neighbours for help. This law created affluence for many Viinistu fishermen’s households, as they swapped their fishing nets for illegal liquor trafficking. It paid well and, in addition to nice houses and boats, the liquor kings contributed generously to the wealth of the village. Liquor money was used to build the school and the local clubhouse. However, this illegal business was not risk-free. For example, Õie, a lady who has her roots in Viinistu, said that both of her parents had to do time for liquor trafficking.



Mohni

Viinistu and other Estonian villages on the northern coast already had close links to the Finnish southern coast before the triumph of illegal liquor trafficking. Friendly relations between the folks of Viinistu and Finns had existed for centuries. In addition to trading in grain and fish, family relations were established. In 1906, twelve families from Viinistu sailed over the Gulf of Finland and established the Estonian village of Kabböle. It therefore comes as no surprise that it was Kabböle which became the centre of liquor trafficking on the Finnish coast.

The heart of Viinistu today is a small harbour, surrounded by a very active cultural scene. The old cold storage plant is home to an exciting art museum exhibiting Estonian art. The summer theatre is based at the old boiler plant and a hotel and restaurant can be found at the harbour.

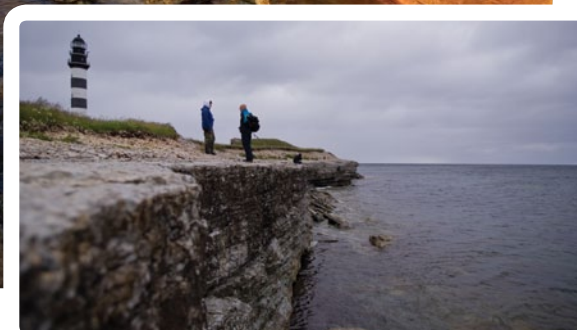


Viinistu coast





Pakri Cliff



Five kilometres from Viinistu lies a real pearl of the sea – Mohni Island. On a windy day Mohni is not an easy place to land, as there is no proper wharf or pier. But once you are here Mohni's beauty is guaranteed to take your breath away. A mere 2.3 kilometres in length and 250 metres wide, there is a lot on offer here. The main landmark is the old lighthouse and for an island this small the nature is incredibly diverse. Mohni is also a favourite with divers, as next to the island the wreck of the steamer "Rasma" is easily accessible on the bottom of the sea.

Mohni's history is marked by its four-hundred-year-old linden tree. Legend has it that, before the Great Northern War, Mohni was inhabited by monks whose base was in Sweden. During the tumultuous times of the war, contact with the mother church was broken off and the monks were left to fate. In order to survive, they started to capture passing ships and gradually Mohni acquired the reputation of being a pirate island. After the Great Northern War, the Empire decided that the only way to get rid of the Mohni pirates was to burn down the ancient forest covering the island. Only one linden tree survived, offering a place to sit and ponder.



Mohni island

## The Pakri Islands

When you leave Mohni and travel another fifty kilometres west of Tallinn, you will reach the Pakri Islands. Everything seems easy and logical at first – there is Suur-Pakri, meaning Great Pakri, and Väike-Pakri or Small Pakri. Väike-Pakri is situated a couple of kilometres west of the peninsula of Pakri and the town of Paldiski, and a narrow straight divides it from Suur-Pakri. Of course the largest of the two is ... Small Pakri. The reason for this confusion dates back to the coastal Swedish communities who lived on the northern and western coast of Estonia. The population was always bigger on Suur-Pakri. Today however it is the other way around: it takes the fingers of two hand to count the inhabitants of Väike-Pakri and practically nobody lives on Suur-Pakri. The islands are reachable only on vessels with a shallow draft, as neither of them has a proper harbour and at Suur-Pakri there are no landing structures at all.

It is possible to witness three distinct eras and cultural layers on the Pakri Islands. Väike-Pakri was slightly influenced by the Soviet era, which brought some inhabitants, new buildings and a few cattle to the island. The influences of the Soviet military period are much more visible on Suur-Pakri. In those times, the Pakri Islands and the whole Pakri Peninsula, together with the town of Paldiski, were a closed military zone. There was a training centre for nuclear submarines in Paldiski, with two nuclear reactors for learning purposes, and there was a Soviet airbase target area on Suur-Pakri. Even Soviet long-distance bombers, which started in the Far-East, used to fly here with their bomb loads. Suur-Pakri is still full of bomb shells, remains of targets and bomb craters. There are especially many of those in the northern part of the island. Väike-Pakri still has a light-beam tower which was used to direct bombers, enabling them to judge their precision. According to local legend, the Soviet Air Force was not always very precise, so many a soldier on Pakri was killed by friendly fire. Even after the restoration of the Republic of Estonia, the Pakri Islands remained in the hands of the Russian army for a couple of years, and the last bombs were brought here in 1992. Also, after the islands were returned to Estonia in 1994, access to Suur-Pakri remained limited for some time, as due to the dozens of years of bombing the island was full of dangerous explosives. Today, owing to the hard work of mine specialists, the island is open and safe, but it is not recommended to go searching and digging under the bushes of the target area, because explosives are still found there regularly.

Away from the bomb shells of the target area, void of human inhabitants, Suur-Pakri Island has an entirely different atmosphere, which is especially felt among the ruins of Suurküla, in the middle of the island. In 1940, the entire coastal Swedish community was forced to leave the island in order to make room for Red Army bases. The evacuation to Sweden swept away a whole community whose roots dated back to the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The departure was hasty and people left most of their belongings. Once I happened to be on the island with some descendants of coastal Swedes and one of them, who had left Pakri as a child, found an iron bedstead which used to belong to his neighbour's son, still intact in the ruins of the house.



The Island of Suur-Pakri



Kõpu lighthouse

## Hiiumaa

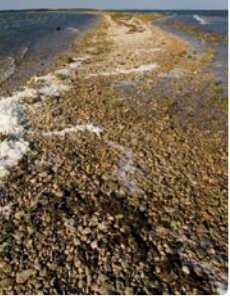
We have now reached the western coast of Estonia, which is home to the two biggest islands of the country, Saaremaa and Hiiumaa. Although Hiiumaa, with its 989 square kilometres, is the size of Hong Kong, the population is only 8,000. Therefore, the feel is that of a small place where everyone knows everyone.

Hiiumaa and its inhabitants are legendary among Estonians for various reasons. People from the mainland can never be sure whether locals mean what they say or whether they are just taking the mickey out of you. Home-brewed Hiiu ale is just as wicked as the malt brew of Saaremaa and on the whole who gets the better of the other is a daily issue between the two islands. After all, good neighbours worldwide sometimes compete or argue with each other.

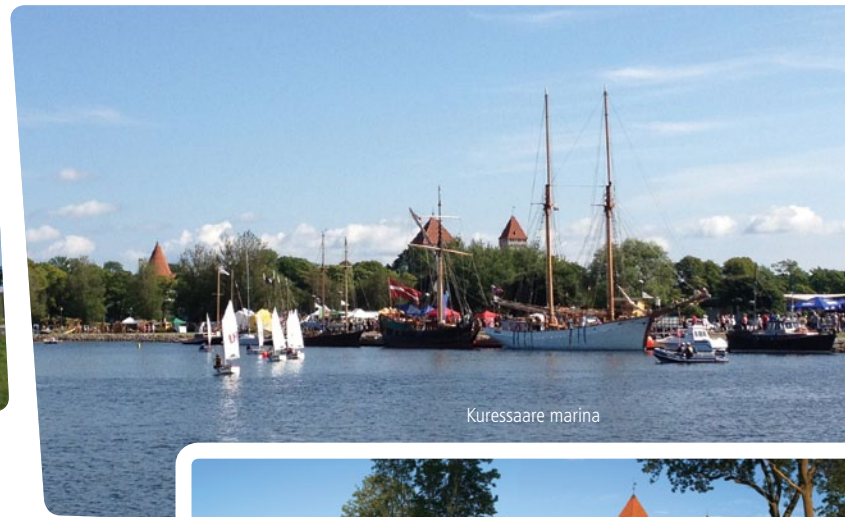
There are various marinas around Hiiumaa, including Kärkla, Heltermaa, Orjaku, Sõru, Roograhu and Kalana. Many of them still need development work so it is worth doing your homework before choosing your destination.

When you have anchored safely, there is much to see on Hiiumaa. The capital Kärkla is small and pleasant and one of its seasonal highlights in summer is the day of cafes. On this day, local residents open their backyards, city squares and other spaces to one-day cafes, where all visitors can enjoy home-made cakes and pastries and coffee. Hiiumaa is also famous for its dignified lighthouses at Ristna, Tahkuna and, especially, Kõpu. The imposing stone lighthouse at Kõpu was built in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and it is one of the oldest continuously operating lighthouses in the world.

The tip of the Sõrve peninsula



Sõru marina



Kuressaare marina



Kuressaare Castle

## Kuressaare

Saaremaa, the largest Estonian island, lies south of Hiiumaa. There are over 30,000 inhabitants and many harbours. As shelves of books have been written about Saaremaa, we will focus on the capital, Kuressaare, and the exciting islets nearby.

Positioned on the southern coast of the island, Kuressaare has two harbours: the Kuressaare yachting harbour next to the city centre and Roomassaare harbour, five kilometres south of the centre. Roomassaare is mostly a cargo port, but there is also a yacht harbour here and passenger ferries to Abruca and Ruhnu islands.



Kaali meteorite crater

Historically, Kuressaare is better known by the German name Arensburg. The best-known landmark in town is the magnificent Episcopal castle, built in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, which used to be the residence of the local governor of the federal state, the Bishop of Saare-Lääne County. The Old Town, with houses built between the 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, has a very pleasant atmosphere. Kuressaare has been a beloved resort since the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when local healing mud was discovered there. The city retains its fame as a resort as, in addition to the sandy beach, there are plenty of health spas, hotels and restaurants.

Although Kuressaare is pretty and interesting, there are also other exciting places on Saaremaa, such as the Kaali meteorite crater, the Panga cliff and Sõrve säär.

Panga Cliff





Bird's-eye view of Kuressaare



## Abruca

Should Saaremaa be too large for you, set course south from Roomassaare, to the small and cute Abruca Island. It is not a long journey, just four kilometres of salty water and you will reach the Abruca harbour, which is in great condition.

For a small island, the nature on Abruca offers great variety. There are large coastal meadows, juniper bushes and a large part of the island is covered with a broad-leaf forest, which is very rare in Estonia and more common in central Europe. All these natural combinations can be enjoyed either by bike or on foot. In summer, one should definitely pay a visit to the island of Vahase on the western side of Abruca. The most enjoyable way to get there is on foot – through the Abruca forest, crossing the giant coastal meadow and splashing through the two hundred metres of shallow water between the two islands. After finding your way through the reeds and mud, you have to walk a bit in knee-deep water before you reach Vahase. There you can climb on top of the clintstone and circle the island easily.

There are other tiny islands surrounding Abruca. On the eastern side there is Kasselaid, and on the southern tip is the favourite of all crossword fans – Linnusitamaa. The literal translation into English is “bird shit land”. There are indeed many birds in this area and both Kasselaid and Linnusitamaa are bird protection reserves with limited access.

Permanent habitation on Abruca dates back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Before that, Abruca was where they kept the horses of manor lords and, in order not to ruin the pastures, it was prohibited to build farms there. The maximum number of inhabitants on Abruca has been 150, and currently there are about fifteen permanent inhabitants. Abruca ranks high in literary terms: there are more writers per square kilometre here than in any other part of Estonia. Four famous writers either come from or live on Abruca in the summer, and Abruca and Vahase figure prominently in their books. Therefore, the local saying “if you meet someone on Abruca, it is bound to be a fisherman, a writer or a sheep” rings true.



The coast of Vilsandi

## Vilsandi

Abruca is not the only island cuddling next to Saaremaa. The romantic Vilsandi is situated on the western side of Saaremaa. It is also the westernmost inhabited part of Estonia. Vilsandi is actually the biggest island in a group of about 160 islets. You can reach it by boat via the Papissaare harbour, which is about eight kilometres away. The other option is to cross the islets and the sea on a tractor, which I can recommend as it is an experience in itself. The tractor route and the boat route cross in the Käkisilma channel, where the depth is about a metre. Hence Vilsandi can be reached only on boats with shallow drafts. Occasionally, some braver types decide to walk to the island but then you have to be prepared for a journey lasting several hours and water reaching your waist.

The nature on Vilsandi offers real competition to Abruca. It includes sheep grazing on coastal meadows, pine forests and small bogs. It is recommended to walk to the islet of Vesiloo on the northern coast. This means walking through twenty metres of sea, but the water is not deep and one is recompensed by breathtaking views of the sea and the Vilsandi lighthouse. Vilsandi is also a cradle of Estonian nature protection, as the first bird protection area for birds, on the Vaika Islands, was established here. Today it has grown into the Vilsandi National Park, where nearly 250 different bird species have been counted.

When hiking on Vilsandi, pay a visit to the oldest lighthouse on Saaremaa, four post mills and the freshly renovated boat shed of the sea rescue station. For bathing, there is the sandy beach Aaperseauk, a racier name than the above-mentioned Linnusitamaa. Take a bath and then ask locals what the name means. Permanent habitation on the island dates back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century and, in the 1930s, 170 people lived here. Today the number of residents staying all year round can be counted on the fingers of one hand, but in summer there are many visitors.



Vilsandi lighthouse



The old wooden church of Ruhnu

which is only a hundred years old. The old church simply became too small for the inhabitants of the island. The descendants of the Ruhnu Swedes still have links to the island, as most of the land here belongs to them.

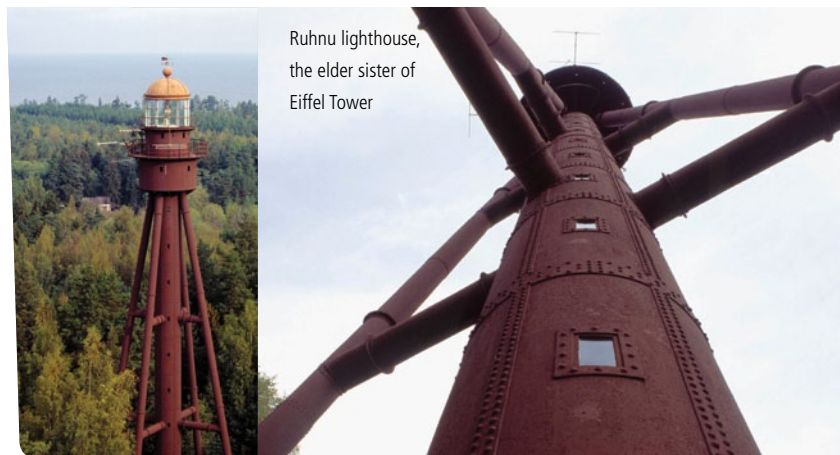
There are other dignified landmarks on Ruhnu. On the highest hill of the island lies a metal lighthouse which was made in Le Havre, France and erected on Ruhnu in 1877. Local people believe the architect of the tower was none other than Gustave Eiffel and, although there is no evidence of this, a certain similarity to the Eiffel Tower is obvious.



## Ruhnu

Ruhnu is the most isolated island in Estonia. Located in the middle of the Livonian Gulf, it is situated closer to Latvia than to any other part of Estonia and might have ended up as a part of Latvia. However, the Swedes who had inhabited Ruhnu for centuries decided in 1921 that they would like to join the Republic of Estonia, although representatives of both countries came to convince the three hundred Ruhnu inhabitants of the advantages of joining them. The population on Ruhnu was most probably convinced to join Estonia because of the opportunity to establish links with other coastal Swedes of the country. For this reason, Latvia does not have a single island in the sea.

The fate of the Ruhnu Swedes during World War II was similar to that of many other inhabitants on small Estonian islands. In 1944, almost all the people on Ruhnu left collectively for Sweden. Only two families remained. Ruhnu was then inhabited by Estonian migrants who mostly came from the neighbouring Kihnu Island. Unfortunately, the local culture of Ruhnu Swedes disappeared and, during the times of collective farming, most of the traditional Ruhnu farm architecture also perished. Luckily, the heritage of the Ruhnu Swedes did not disappear totally: the old wooden Ruhnu church still stands and it is the oldest known wooden building in Estonia. Construction on the church began in 1643 and the small building has been well-preserved in its original form. The church takes you back centuries, creating the feeling that at any moment the seal hunters of Ruhnu will enter and take their seats on the faded wooden benches. Next to the old wooden church is the new stone church,



Ruhnu lighthouse, the elder sister of Eiffel Tower

Ruhnu today has a large and proper harbour with all the necessary conveniences. Less than a hundred inhabitants live on the island all year round, but in summer this number can double or triple. Visiting Ruhnu has become much easier than it used to be. There are regular passenger ferries from the Roomassaare harbour on Saaremaa and from Pärnu. In summer many Latvian tourists arrive who, hopefully, just enjoy their holidays here without planning a takeover of the island. A real treat for sunbathers is the sandy beach of Limo, which is several kilometres long. It is highly recommended that you visit the island during the traditional Kihnu-Ruhnu Games. At this event the communities of the two islands compete in different sports and games, including sack-hopping, tug-of-war and a balance beam fight. Last summer the Olympic Games in London were totally overshadowed by the local event.



Pärnu marina

## Pärnu and Haapsalu

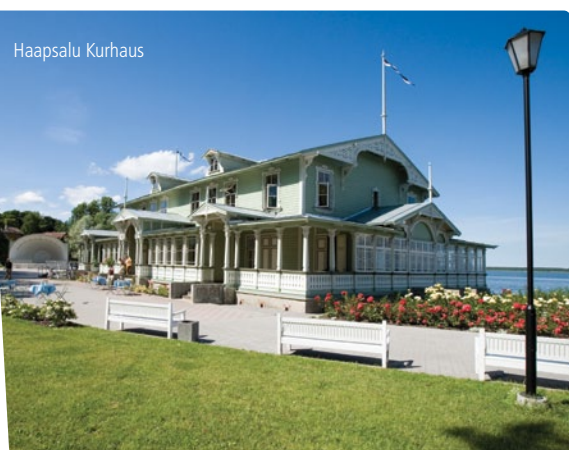
When you are ready to return to the mainland from Ruhnu, the nearest opportunity is to sail to Pärnu. It is an old Hanseatic town, the third largest town in Estonia and, without a doubt, the most popular summer resort in the country. No wonder then that Pärnu is called the Estonian summer capital.

A good yachting harbour with 90 berths will greet you if you arrive on a pleasure boat. The harbour is administered by the Pärnu Yachting Club, which has a long tradition dating back to 1906. In cooperation with the Tallinn ESS Yacht Club, the Pärnu Yachting Club organises a traditional regatta on the Muhu strait. The Moonsund Regatta is the largest and oldest yachting regatta in Estonia and has taken place on fifty-five occasions.



Haapsalu

Haapsalu Kurhaus



Pärnu has everything worthy of a summer capital: endless sandy beach, countless restaurants, several health spas, water sports and fishing opportunities, a theatre and concert house, and various festivals. The popularity of Pärnu is proven by the fact that on hot summer days there may be over 30,000 people on the beach. The population of the town itself is 43,000.

If you are already familiar with Pärnu or looking for a more peaceful holiday location, set sail hundred kilometres north of Pärnu – to Haapsalu. With beautiful historical architecture and a large Episcopal castle, Haapsalu is also a “capital” – the mud capital of Estonia. Haapsalu was the first place in Estonia where healing mud was used and one can still get healthily muddy in Haapsalu.

This is where our zigzagging tour of small Estonian harbours comes to an end. Of course, it is not compulsory to follow the entire itinerary – it is worth visiting only two or three locations. Should you be adventurous enough to do the whole package, please give me a call and you will win a prize.

For more specific information about Estonian marinas see at:  
[www.marinas.nautilus.ee](http://www.marinas.nautilus.ee)

# Practical information for visitors



For more travel details, please consult the sources below: [www.visitestonia.com](http://www.visitestonia.com) (Estonian Tourist Board), [www.riik.ee/en](http://www.riik.ee/en). Tourist information centres are located in all larger towns.

The Tallinn Tourist Information Centre in the Old Town is located at 4 Kullassepa Street - no more than 10 steps from the Town Hall Square (ph.: + 372 645 7777, e-mail: [turismiinfo@tallinnlv.ee](mailto:turismiinfo@tallinnlv.ee)). The Tallinn Tourist Information Centre in Viru Keskus (ph: + 372 610 1557, 610 1558), open every day 9 am - 9 pm, is located in the centre of the city. A wide selection of maps, brochures and publications in several languages (largest selection in English) can be found at local bookstores and tourist information centres.

## Visa

As of 21 December 2007, Estonia is a part of the Schengen visa area.

Nationals of EU and EEA member states are free to enter Estonia. The required travel document for entry is a national ID card or passport. Nationals of the following countries do not need visa to enter Estonia, and can stay for up to 90 days in any 6-month period: Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Croatia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Holy See, Honduras, Hong Kong, Israel, Japan, Macao, Malaysia, Mexico, Monaco, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay,

San Marino, Singapore, South Korea, USA, Uruguay, Venezuela. The required travel document for entry is a valid passport.

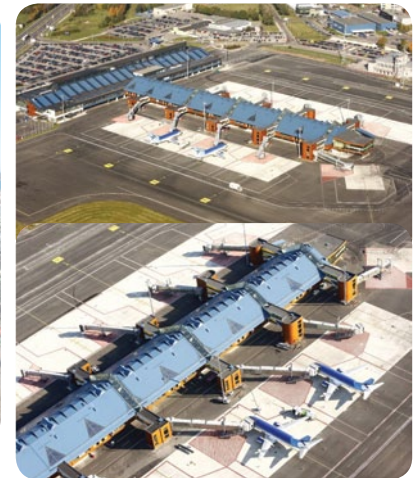
Citizens of countries not mentioned above require a visa to enter Estonia. Visitors arriving in Estonia with visa must have national passports valid at least 3 months after their planned departure from Estonia.

Children aged 7 to 15 years must have their own passport when travelling to Estonia or, if they are registered in their parent's passport, must have their photo next to the name. Children under 7 years need not have a photo if they are registered in their parents' passports. Persons above 15 years must have a separate travel document with photo.

For detailed information on visa requirements and entry rules, please consult the Ministry of Foreign Affairs website at [www.vm.ee/eng](http://www.vm.ee/eng).

**By ship:** With over 6 million passengers annually, the Port of Tallinn is undoubtedly Estonia's main gateway. Large passenger ferries arrive from and depart for Helsinki and Stockholm regularly. The 85-km Tallinn-Helsinki line is served by ferries that make the journey in 2 hours; hydrofoils and catamarans make the trip on 1.5 hours and operate between April to November-December, depending on weather conditions. Travellers should note that different ferry lines depart from different terminals and harbours. The City Port with its four terminals is a 10-15 minute walk from Tallinn Old Town; the Paldiski-Kapellskär line uses the Port of Paldiski, about 50 km from Tallinn.

**By car:** Border checkpoints greet travellers entering or departing the country by way of the Estonian-Latvian border points at Ikla (the Tallinn-Riga highway) and Valga, as well as on the Estonian-Russian border at Narva (the Tallinn-St. Petersburg highway), Luhamaa, Koidula and Murati. On the Estonian-Russian border, all traffic is subject to border formalities both when entering and leaving Estonia.



## Arrival

**By plane:** Recently renovated, the Tallinn Lennart Meri Airport, just 3 km from the city centre, is welcoming, modern and user-friendly. Among other amenities, travellers have access to a free WiFi area in the transit zone. The airport's 24-hour customer service telephone is +372 6058 888.

Tartu Airport is situated at Ülenurme, near Tartu. Flights from Tartu to Helsinki depart six times a week.

Regional airports are located in Kuressaare (Saaremaa), Kärdla (Hiiumaa), and Pärnu; these provide no regular international connections.

**By bus:** Not only is travel by bus the fastest and most convenient mode of international public transportation in the Baltic states, it also offers excellent value for your money. Regular connections service all major cities in the Baltic countries and St. Petersburg. Eurolines Lux Express and Hansabuss offer comfortable Riga Airport transfers from Tallinn, Pärnu, Klaipeda, Vilnius, Panevezys, and Šiauliai. Prices start from €20.00. A useful tip: Regular passenger buses have priority at the border checkpoints, so travel is smooth.

**By train:** There is only one international overnight train to Moscow.

## Customs

We suggest travellers consult with the Estonian Customs Board help desk (ph.: +372 880 0814 or [www.customs.ee](http://www.customs.ee)) for details. The limit on import of alcoholic beverages from outside the EU is one litre for beverages over 22% alcohol content, and two litres for beverages up to 22%, and four litres for wine. Import of tobacco and tobacco products from non-EU countries is limited to 40 cigarettes or 100 cigarillos or 50 cigars or 50 g of tobacco products. Counterfeit goods, including pirated CDs, video and audio tapes, are prohibited by law. A special export permit is required for specimens of plants and animals of endangered species, protected species and hunting trophies (please contact the Nature Conservation Department, Ministry of the Environment for details). Articles of cultural value produced in Estonia more than 50 years ago also require special permits (please contact the National Heritage Board).

minutes, to Pärnu every hour. On weekdays, seats to these destinations are almost always available even immediately before departure (watch out for special events). For weekend travel or trips to more remote locations with fewer connections, it is advisable to buy tickets in advance. The Tallinn Bus Terminal is located at Lastekodu 46. The timetable is also available online at [www.bussireisid.ee](http://www.bussireisid.ee) and ticket information is available at telephone +372 6800 900.

## Travelling by car

Travellers hoping to see more of the country and the rural areas it would be best advised to travel by car. The roads are quite good and traffic is light. Crossing Estonia from north to south or west to east by car takes approximately three to four hours. All major car rental agencies have offices in Tallinn. It is also possible to rent the car in Estonia and drop it off at a rental agency in Latvia or Lithuania, or vice versa. The speed limit in rural areas is 90 km/h and in cities 50 km/h. In some areas the highway speed limit is increased during the summer months. Headlights and seatbelts (front and back) must be on at all times. Driving under the influence of alcohol or other intoxicating substances is punishable by law.

arrive. All taxi drivers must give you a receipt (in Estonian, ask for "Kviitung, palun"). Locals usually give the exact fare and no tip. As in most major cities, some dishonest drivers attempt to overcharge unsuspecting passengers. If in doubt, note the taxi company and license plate number.

**Public transportation:** Tallinn has a public transport network of buses, trams and trolley-buses. Other Estonian towns have buses. Schedules are posted at bus stops. Tickets are available at newsstands (the yellow and blue "R-kiosks") and from the driver. Check the prices and timetable for Tallinn bus lines for any bus stop at [www.tallinn.ee/eng](http://www.tallinn.ee/eng).



## Getting Around Estonia

### Inter-city public transportation

Public buses are the easiest, cheapest and most convenient solution for visiting Tartu, Pärnu or any other of the larger towns. Buses from Tallinn to Tartu depart every 15-30

## Local transport

**Taxis:** Taxis must clearly display their fares, driver's taxi service licenses, and a meter. The initial charge for entering a cab ranges from 2 to 3.5 euros. Different taxi companies have different rates, but the average charge per kilometre is 0.5 euros. There is no additional charge for ordering the taxi by phone, and it usually takes the cab just five to ten minutes to

## Accommodations

All major hotels in Tallinn have been newly built or completely renovated in recent years. Despite annual additions to the number of hotels and rooms, it can nonetheless be difficult to find a hotel room on short notice (particularly over the week-end). For the best selection, we urge visitors to Tallinn and the rest of Estonia to book hotel rooms in advance. For more details, see the Estonian Tourist Board website at [www.visitestonia.ee](http://www.visitestonia.ee).

## Money

On 1 Jan 2011, Estonia adopted euro as its currency thus replacing the Estonian kroon which had been the only valid currency in Estonia since 1992.

Most larger hotels, stores and restaurants accept Visa, MasterCard, Eurocard, Diner's Club and American Express. However, it is advisable to carry some cash with you.

Traveller's checks can be exchanged in most banks but are less likely to be accepted in shops. Eurocheque is the most widely accepted traveller's check, but American Express and Thomas Cook are also accepted. Banks are plentiful and easy to find in Tallinn. Most are open from 9:00 to 18:00 on weekdays, while some offices are also open on Saturday mornings. All banks offer currency exchange services. Exchange offices can also be found in larger hotels, the airport, harbour, railroad station and major shopping centres. ATMs are conveniently located around town; instructions are in English, Russian and Estonian.

libraries and post offices. There are over 100 wireless free Internet zones around the country, many of them in rather unexpected places - beaches, Old Town squares, stadiums, and concert halls.

## Emergencies

112 is the emergency number for ambulance, police and fire department. The police can also be reached directly at 110. Emergency numbers can be dialled free of charge. Select pharmacies are open 24-hours-a-day in many major towns. The one in Tallinn is located at 10 Pärnu Road (opposite the Estonian Drama Theatre); the one in Tartu is located in the Town Hall building (Town Hall Square).



## Telephones and Internet

The country code of Estonia is 372. Dial 00 for outbound international calls.

The GSM mobile phone system is available; please check compatibility with your operator. Public Internet access points have been set up all over Estonia. They are located in local

## National Holidays

Estonians celebrate January 1 as New Year's Day, a rather slow and quiet day as people recover from the festivities. Shops open late and banks are closed. February 24, Independence Day, is celebrated with a parade of the Estonian Defence Forces at Vabaduse väljak (Freedom Square). May 1 is a bank holiday, similar to Good Friday and May Day. June 23 is the biggest holiday of the year as Estonians celebrate Midsummer Eve and the Victory Day in commemoration of the 1919 Battle of Võnnu, and June 24 is St. John's Day (Midsummer). August 20 is the Day of Restoration of Independence (1991). December 24 (Christmas Eve), December 25 (Christmas Day) and December 26 (Boxing Day) are usually spent at home with families.

## Food

Traditional Estonian cuisine consists of simple peasant food, such as cottage cheese, potatoes and bread, all of which are still important components of the local diet. The Estonian dark bread is the main staple missed by Estonians abroad. Typical Estonian dishes do not feature prominently on restaurant menus, and traditional home cooking is more likely to appear at small eateries in remote areas. Still, a few establishments have made Estonian specialities their niche; to sample Estonian cuisine, try the Vanaema juures, Kaerajaan and Kolu Tavern (Open Air Museum) in Tallinn, and the highly recommended Muhi Kalakohvik and Lümända söögimaja on the Island of Saaremaa.

The list of the top 50 Estonian restaurants can be found at [www.flavoursofestonia.com](http://www.flavoursofestonia.com)







19th-century *kristallkummel* (caraway liqueur) has made its long-awaited comeback.

Estonian wines, made from currants or other local berries, are rather sweet. Wine lovers

Even the most sceptical museum-goer is bound to find something intriguing in Estonia's large selection of museums, which feature everything from history, art, photography to toys, chocolate, musical instruments, even wax fig-



## Drinks

The main drinks in Estonia are beer, wine and vodka. While many young city residents opt for beer or wine, the older generation and rural folk tend to prefer vodka. In the 1930s Estonian vodka made it into the Guinness Book of Records as the strongest vodka in the world (96°). Local brands of beer enjoy a very strong market position in Estonia. The two main breweries are Saku and A. Le Coq. Saku is Tallinn-based, and its corporate colour is navy blue while A. Le Coq is brewed in Tartu and its colour is red. There are also many smaller breweries. A full list of Estonian beers is posted at [www.BeerGuide.ee](http://www.BeerGuide.ee)



usually prefer imported wine, of which there is an ever-increasing selection at stores and vinoteks. A very popular and refreshing non-alcoholic drink is *kali*, made of bread, malt, rye or oats flour and yeast; it has a characteristically dark brown colour. It was with this drink that the Estonians forced the Coca-Cola company into submission, or at least into a business deal. *Kali* was enjoying phenomenal sales, while Coke was not selling up to expectations. It was then that Coca-Cola decided to broaden its horizons by buying one of the local *kali* trademarks in order to make a profit on the stubborn Estonians.



Spirits also include some traditional liqueurs. The famous Vana Tallinn (Old Tallinn) has a 45° alcohol content, and is coincidentally made from 45 ingredients - the recipe is known only to a handful of people. Indeed, the legendary

## Entertainment

The entertainment scene in Estonia is vibrant year-round, providing visitors and locals alike with a long list to choose from. Concerts, festivals theatre, street raves, DJ competitions – Estonia has it all. It is not by chance that both Tallinn and Tartu have their own opera and ballet theatre. Tickets are an excellent value for the money; concert tickets cost around 10 euros, and best seats at the opera are yours for about 25 euros. For more information on the concert schedule see [www.concert.ee](http://www.concert.ee); the programme for the national opera is posted at [www.opera.ee](http://www.opera.ee). Tickets can be bought at the box offices or via ticket agencies located in all larger supermarkets, or via Internet ([www.piletilevi.ee](http://www.piletilevi.ee))

ures and many other topics. Most museums are closed on Tuesdays and many on Mondays as well. It is advisable to have cash on hand as many museums do not accept credit cards. Tallinn is also bustling well into the night with booming and blooming club scene. Clubs are usually open and packed with energised vibes from Thursday to Sunday, with Friday and Saturday drawing the liveliest of crowds. In addition to local and resident DJs, clubs frequently present guest performers from London, the US and other club hubs. For those looking for a more mellow night on the town, Tallinn's street are brimming with pubs, vinoteks and bar-restaurants, many of which offer live music even on weekdays. Rather take in a movie? Films in cinemas are shown in the original language with subtitles.



## Shops

Souvenir shops in Tallinn and most other tourist locations are open seven days a week, 10:00-18:00 or 19:00. Big supermarkets and hypermarkets are open seven days a week from 9:00-21:00 or 10:00-22:00. Department stores close a few hours earlier on Sundays or, in smaller towns, may be closed on Sundays. Smaller food shops may have shorter opening hours. Some 24-hour shops can be found as well. Other shops usually open at 9:00 or 10:00 and close at 18:00 or 19:00; they often close early on Saturdays and are closed on Sundays. The majority of shops accept credit cards, with the exception of smaller stores and stores in rural areas.



## Souvenirs

Souvenir and shopping preferences vary hugely but there are certain souvenir gifts that have gladdened many a heart. Estonian handicraft comes in many forms. There are woollen

sweaters and mittens with local ethnic patterns, linen sheets and tablecloths, crocheted shawls and veils, colourful woven rugs, hand-made jewellery and glassware, baskets, and an array of wooden spoons and butterknives made from juniper. Fine and applied art for show and purchase is on display at art galleries around the country, featuring graphics, glass, ceramics, hand-painted silk scarves and leatherwork. Various herbal teas from wild plants are available at pharmacies. Local honey – pure or flavoured, e.g. ginger, is another delicious treat. In rural areas, you may find hand-milled flour. And those who keep coming back swear by the Estonian black rye bread. To bring home local spirits, popular choices include Vana Tallinn or *kristalkümmel* liqueur or local beer. And there is no place better than Estonia to buy Estonian music.

## Crime

Although common sense is advisable in all destinations, Estonia gives no particular reason to be excessively worried. Do not walk the unlit and abandoned areas alone at night. Do not leave bags or items of value in the car, as not to tempt car thieves or robbers. Pickpockets may operate at crowded tourist destinations in Tallinn, so make sure your wallet and documents are stored safely.

## Language

Estonian is not widely spoken in the world, so Estonians do not expect short-term visitors to master the local language. Still, local people are thrilled and pleased to hear a foreigner say “Tere!” (Hi!) or “Aitäh” (Thank you) in Estonian. Knowledge of foreign languages is naturally a must for hotel staff and numerous other professions in the service sector. Many people are fluent in English, particularly the younger urban generation, and a great number of people also speak Finnish, due to Finnish TV, Finland’s close proximity to Estonia and the great number of Finnish tourists. German is less widely spoken in Estonia, although previous generations have often studied German, not English, at school. Russian-language use has dropped to a point where older people no longer speak the language well and the younger generation have already chosen other languages to learn at school. Studying French has become more popular over the last few years but the number of people who speak French is still quite small.

An English-Estonian dictionary is available online at [www.ibs.ee/dict](http://www.ibs.ee/dict).

## Estonians

Estonians are typical Nordic people – they are reserved, not too talkative and speak rather monotonously, with very little intonation. All this may give one the impression of coldness bordering on rudeness. But rest assured, this is not the case, and the speaker may actually be extremely well-meaning, even excited. There are several well-known Estonian sayings, such as “Think first, then speak”, “Weigh everything carefully nine times before making a move”, and “Talking is silver, silence is gold”. It is, therefore, no wonder that the people are not very good at small talk, do not waste too much time on grand introductions, and usually come straight to the point. This is why Estonians’ English may sometimes sound shockingly direct. There is, however, often a subtle irony involved in Estonians’ utterances - delivered with a serious face and just the slightest twinkle of the eye.



Estonians are relatively individualistic. There is a saying that five Estonians mean six parties. Even though people agree on the final objective, they insist on reaching it in their own ways. Estonians also value their privacy. In the old days, it was said that the neighbour’s house was close enough if you could see the smoke from the chimney. Modern, tight-packed urbanites flock to remote countryside on the weekends to enjoy more space and privacy.

Even though guests at birthday parties and concerts are rather quiet and subdued in the onset, they warm up eventually and turn into a direct opposite of their day-character, as you are likely to see in Tallinn’s clubs.





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