



Legendary Sailboats

Beken De Cowes

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- Discover the extraordinary selection from the Beken Marine Photography Archive of the work of four generations of famous photographers

Through an extraordinary selection from the Beken Marine Photography Archive of the work of four generations of famous photographers (the Beken family), this book retraces the fundamental stages of the evolution of the unsurpassable 'Beken style', bringing together some of the most artistic images of sailboats ever shot. These wonderful and legendary pictures, accompanied by detailed texts and plentiful information, will lead the reader through time, to discover the wonderful world of yachting photography.

The Bekens began their love affair with marine photography in 1888, when Alfred Edward (1855–1915) moved from Canterbury (Kent) to the Isle of Wight with his son Frank (1880–1970). He purchased a pharmacy in Birmingham Road in the seaport of Cowes, a town that was already famous for international yacht racing and for the world's oldest regular regatta, the renowned Cowes Week. Alfred and young Frank started shooting photographs to capture sailing yachts at their best, and racing yachts in action, a real challenge at that time as it still is today. These beautiful photographs started being sold in the pharmacy as souvenirs, and in the space of a few years they would have caught the attention of the world of yacht racing and sailing aficionados, earning the Beken family a large number of followers all over the world for the extraordinary quality of their images.

Queen Victoria, King George V, and most recently the Duke of Edinburgh awarded the company a Royal Warrant for excellence. Frank's artistic inheritance was carried on by his son Keith (1914–2007), who succeeded him in the creation of fantastic sailboats photographs. Today, Kenneth Beken (b. 1951, the fourth in the line of family photographers), together with yacht master Peter Mumford, is leading the way in the latest digital photography, and creating wonderful colour images: "Now that digital cameras and printers are as good as the traditional darkroom methods," he says, "the company has gone totally digital." Today the Beken Marine Photography Archive features more than 200,000 different photographs of incalculable value, from historical monochrome masterpieces to contemporary digital images of the highest quality and technical perfection.

