



MAN ON A MISSION

AN EXTREME CHALLENGE DAN LENARD'S VELA-CODE

YOU MIGHT HAVE HEARD THAT DAN LENARD IS ON A MISSION. THE ITALIAN DESIGNER OF THE WORLD'S MOST STYLISH SUPERYACHTS BOLDLY EMBARKED ON A TRANSATLANTIC ADVENTURE FROM CÁDIZ, SPAIN TO MIAMI, USA ON JANUARY 20TH. SOLO. WHY? TO RAISE AWARENESS OF THE DEVASTATION OF PLASTIC POLLUTION AND THE INCREASING NEED FOR OCEAN CONSERVATION ACTION.

Recent years have seen green ideas and conversations in the world of yachting turn to reality, with a growing consensus that the industry needs to do better. Dan Lenard is not the first business leader to visibly demonstrate his desire to take action against environmental issues and reduce the negative ecological impact of superyachting. Indeed, Lenard is also not the first successful entrepreneur to undertake a considerable challenge for charitable fundraising. But with the Vela-Code journey, he is undoubtedly one of the first in the yachting business to dive into such a massive undertaking in the name of our oceans.

As a sailor all his life, Lenard's journey is the ultimate bucket-list entry for any adventurous seaman. Scheduled to take a month to complete, the mission required Lenard to navigate across the Atlantic completely alone and with no use of technological equipment, leaving zero pollutive footprints along the way.

Named Vela-Code, the team behind the adventure explain the purpose at the core of the mission: "Sailing is a 5000-year-old invention that mankind can be proud of. It is one of the ways by which the human race has discovered the earth. Now, any voyage bears witness to how badly polluted the seas and coastlines have become. Sometimes it is not obvious at the super luxury end of the travel spectrum where meticulously cleaned beaches are maintained by an army of service providers. But out of the glare of high-end expectation, the situation is desperate." Vela-Code continues: "The yacht industry can help... From construction through to ownership, this mission is a call to action. We can enjoy the sea or destroy the sea."



CONSERVATION FROM BOW TO MAST

Scia, the 10-metre sailing boat in which the journey was to be undertaken, was the first arduous step in Lenard's mission to do his bit for the planet. Scia needed to represent a 'reset button in sailing technology', getting back to the idea of sailing in its purest form by entirely leaving out modern technological equipment - including engine, electronics, GPS, log, compass, and autopilot. The aim is to inspire shipbuilders and fellow designers to rethink sailing design and to think of new ways to take action against the environmentally damaging aspects of sailing.



Completely repurposed using various parts from five other boats, *Scia* is a passion project that highlights the opportunity for smart recycling. Lenard explains: "With the help and enthusiasm of friends at the Prelog shipyard we have recycled boat parts in different stages of construction. We have coupled the hull and deck of different 10-year-old boats, the mast is of a Bavaria Match 35, the rudder is of another boat... To create it, we used 100 kilos of resin for the various couplings. Then with our work as a designer, we thought about giving it an aesthetically acceptable form without so much as a single design sheet." After finalising the boat - completely sans technological equipment and navigation systems - the journey was to begin.

THE JOURNEY

From the construction of the boat to the commitment of raising awareness for the trip, Dan Lenard put his money where his mouth is with the Vela-Code mission. Raising

awareness involved a dedicated social media campaign, comprised of daily updates on Vela-Code's dedicated Facebook and Instagram pages. Every message along the way - including several video updates from the man himself in the middle of the ocean - invited its audience an opportunity to become part of the Vela-Code mission and understand the oceans better.

Alas, the journey-of-a-lifetime did ultimately come with its ups and downs. The negative results of a lack of engines came into play a few weeks into the journey, with poor sailing conditions forcing an unplanned stop. Already 4,000 miles from home and with winds of just 2 - 5 knots for more than 12 days, Lenard headed to Antigua to recuperate from loss of weight before continuing his journey on 20th February. Posting updates to his Facebook and Instagram pages as he returned to the water, Lenard seemed in good spirits and, at the time of writing, is set to arrive in Miami on 2nd March.

WHY IT MATTERS

It's no secret that in parts of the world, pollution - from engine fumes to plastic bottles - is killing the very thing that the yachting world loves the most. With Vela-Code, Lenard's sentiment is clear: "I want to invite everybody that loves and is passionate about the sea to become a voice of spreading awareness regarding the conservation of our seas and oceans." Awareness sparks conversation, which hopefully results in innovative new ideas being put into play to make sure the crystal clear waters of the Caribbean and the rest of the world are still crystal clear in 20 years.

Other business leaders looking to extend a similar invitation may flinch at the idea of undertaking such a substantial investment of time, money and energy - and understandably so. Vela-Code was a serious undertaking. But spreading awareness and taking action against climate issues do not necessarily have to involve giving up a month

to sail across the world - as incredible as that is. Looking around the yachting industry, small but consequential changes are cropping up everywhere. From many charter yachts' dedication to the elimination of single-use plastics on board to the development of faster, more efficient hull forms. Change in all industries is slow, but change is definitely happening.

It is obvious to say that this is an issue that matters. Whether or not Lenard's Vela-Code mission will dramatically change the industry any time soon is unimportant. What is important is recognising business leaders who are taking a strong stand in ocean conservation and environmental issues. From leading the way with small day-to-day changes to sailing across the world in a recycled yacht, Lenard's is certainly a statement to encourage others to focus on the plight of the planet - before it's too late.