

**la sfida**



In un'immagine esclusiva, l'AC75, la barca di Luna Rossa Prada Pirelli, fotografata nella base di Cagliari.

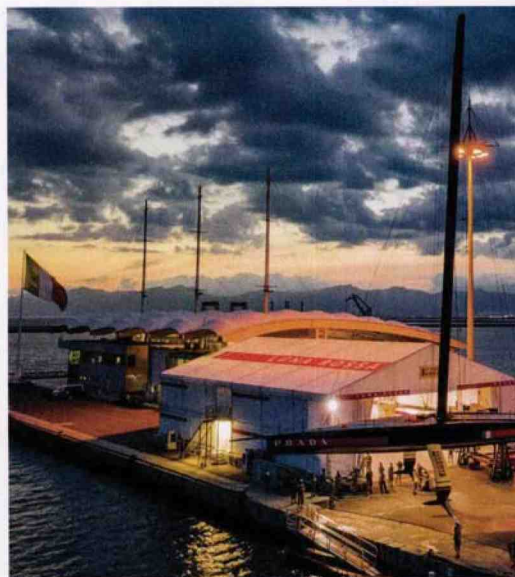


# BUON VENTO CERCASI

UNA COMPETIZIONE CHE PARLA ITALIANO, CON UNO SFIDANTE TRICOLORE (LUNA ROSSA) E UNA CITTÀ (CAGLIARI) CHE SI FARÀ TROVARE PRONTA. PERCHÉ QUANDO IL MONDO SARÀ GUARITO È ANCHE DA EVENTI COSÌ CHE POTREMO RIPARTIRE

di Giovanni N. Ciullo Foto di Carlo Borlenghi

**B**



“BUON VENTO E MARE CALMO”, usano dirsi i marinai. E il loro nume tutelare sa quanto ce ne sarebbe bisogno per tutti, in questo momento. Perché passata la tempesta di questa pandemia, calmatesi le acque di un pianeta in cui lo sport (come le scuole, il turismo e tutte le attività ricreative) è stato giustamente messo in sordina come soltanto durante le Guerre mondiali, proprio da grandi eventi come l’America’s Cup bisognerà ripartire per rivivere tutti nei migliori dei modi. E ripartiremo dall’Italia, da un progetto ambizioso e bellissimo che porta il nome di una squadra tutta tricolore (Luna Rossa Prada Pirelli Team) e da una città del nostro Mediterraneo (Cagliari) che era già pronta alle prove generali. Ovvero a quelle World Series che si sarebbero dovute disputare dal 23 al 26 aprile prossimi e che, ovviamente, sono state ora rimandate. Resta invece l’obiettivo, che è quello di identificare l’equipaggio che arriverà in finale a Auckland, in Nuova Zelanda, nel marzo del 2021: pronto a sfidare il *defender*, ovvero i campioni uscenti di Team New Zealand. E chi sono i 3 *challengers* in gara? Gli italiani di Prada Pirelli, gli statunitensi di American Magic e gli inglesi di Ineos Team UK. La strada, o sarebbe meglio dire le miglia nautiche che dividono la Sardegna e la Nuova Zelanda, sono tante. Come le tappe intermedie: tre World Series di qualificazione (una da

noi, una seconda in Inghilterra e l’ultima a Auckland) e poi la Prada Cup (ex Louis Vuitton Cup), a inizio 2021 sempre nel paese dei *kiwis*, una sorta di semifinale che decreterà appunto lo sfidante dei campioni. E la nostra speranza è che, ovviamente, a quelle notti magiche ci arrivi Luna Rossa. Una storia iniziata un ventennio fa, quella del team italiano. Una sera del 1997, in un ufficio milanese, Patrizio Bertelli e lo yacht designer argentino German Frers discutono della costruzione di una barca da crociera. Improvvisamente Frers chiede: «Perché non facciamo la Coppa America?». Detto, fatto: nel 2000 la barca firmata Prada tenta la prima scalata al successo, arrendendosi solo in finale ai neozelandesi. E ripetendosi con alterne fortune negli anni a venire. Ora, l’ultimo challenge. Al quale il team, che nel frattempo si allarga a un co-titolo sponsor italiano come Pirelli, si presenta con l’AC75, rivoluzionario monoscafo di 75 piedi (23 metri circa) che grazie ai T-foils - le due “ali laterali” - e a un peso di appena 7 tonnellate (la prima Luna Rossa ne pesava 24) riesce letteralmente a “volare sull’acqua” come un aliscafo. Team director e skipper è Max Sirena, nel gruppo un esperto come James Spithill e una serie di marinai della *new generation* di cui sicuramente sentiremo parlare nelle telecronache. Aspettando tutti quel «buon vento e mare calmo». ■

**IN NUMERI**

**100**

i membri del team Luna Rossa Prada Pirelli, di cui 35 esordienti e 19 vincitori di almeno un’edizione passata dell’America’s Cup.

**18.779**

i chilometri che separano la base di Cagliari da quella di Auckland, in Nuova Zelanda, che dovrebbe ospitare le finali nel 2021.

**3**

i *challenger*, ovvero i team che si sfideranno per la finale contro il *defender*: Team New Zealand. Oltre a Luna Rossa, ecco American Magic (Usa) e gli inglesi di Ineos Team UK.





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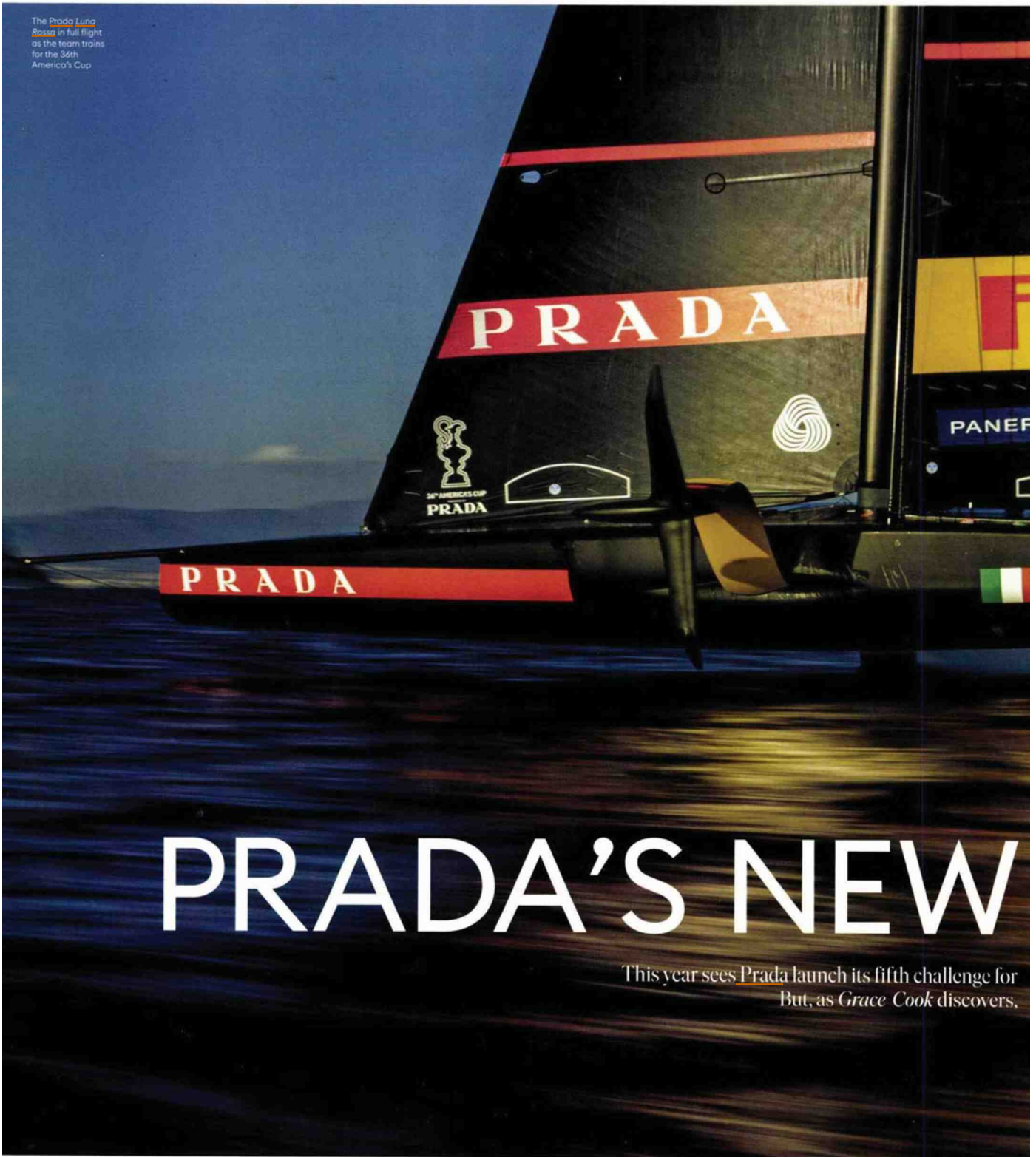
SUPERFICIE :279 %

PERIODICITÀ :Settimanale □ □

How to Spend It (FT)

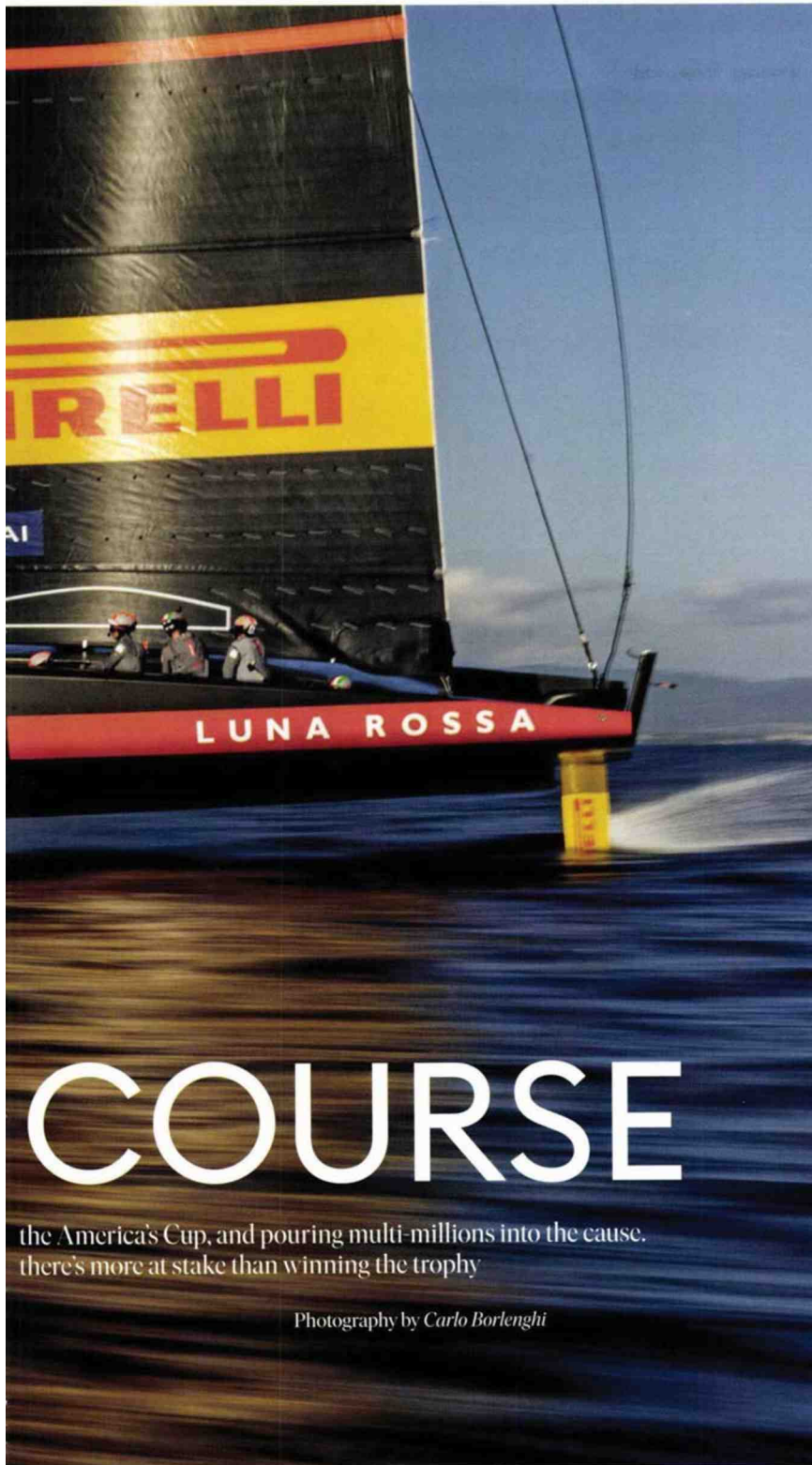
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The Prada Luna Rossa in full flight as the team trains for the 36th America's Cup



# PRADA'S NEW

This year sees Prada launch its fifth challenge for  
But, as *Grace Cook* discovers,



# COURSE

the America's Cup, and pouring multi-millions into the cause, there's more at stake than winning the trophy

Photography by Carlo Borlenghi

christen you *Luna Rossa*!" shouted Miuccia Prada through a microphone, standing on a cherry-picker on the seafront in Cagliari last October. Huddled in the small box along with her husband, Prada chief executive Patrizio Bertelli, and a priest in full vestments – who had just doused the boat with holy water – she proceeded to smash a champagne bottle against the hull of Prada's new €65m America's Cup yacht, which was suspended in the air by a crane. The glass shattered and bubbles oozed down the side of the matte-black vessel – the boat's baptism was complete.

With that, the 300-strong crowd who had gathered to watch went berserk. Cheers erupted, air horns blazed and water cannons exploded as the 75ft yacht was lowered into the water for the very first time. Bertelli – team principal of the Prada Luna Rossa crew – watched with bated breath, lest the yacht capsize. "I haven't been on the boat yet," he said, a look of palpable excitement spreading across his face. "Launching a new one is always exciting, but it's particularly thrilling when it's an unprecedented cutting-edge design like this." The crane gave one final creak as the 6.5-tonne vessel was dropped onto the water, waves now lapping around its upright hull. Prada's sailors on the shore let out a sigh of relief, but the ever-confident Bertelli insisted that he was "never worried" at the prospect. "I never doubted for one second that the boat would float. It's the result of 78,000 hours of work," he said, grinning.

Since then, Luna Rossa's crew of 18 sailors has relentlessly been putting the boat through its paces in preparation for the qualifying events that stand between them and a place in the America's Cup final in March 2021. Four other teams are competing: the holders Emirates Team New Zealand, Ineos Team UK (skipped by Sir Ben Ainslie), NYAC American Magic, and Stars + Stripes Team USA. The two previous cups were fought out in hydrofoiling catamarans that reached speeds no America's Cup boat had recorded before. The new monohull hydrofoilers, or AC75s, for the 2021 Cup promise to go even faster, skimming across the surface of the ocean as if levitating, at speeds exceeding 50 knots (58 miles an hour). So dangerous are they that sailors have to wear helmets and skintight, beetle-like impact jackets, and the team has undergone underwater survival training in case the boat capsizes.

The pressure is on: Prada competed unsuccessfully for the cup in 2000, 2003, 2007 and 2013. For the first time this year, the brand is sponsoring the whole America's Cup – the first Italian brand ever to do so. (The sponsorship fee remains undisclosed.) "It is almost impossible to win by its very nature, which makes it all the more captivating and appealing," Bertelli says of the world's oldest international sporting trophy – for which a new boat is required each time. The winner of the cup dictates the race locations, rules of engagement and the design of the boat for the following series, giving each "defender" a somewhat unfair advantage; that team, in this case Emirates Team New Zealand, also automatically qualifies for the final. The America's Cup is one of the only sporting events not contested on an equal playing field, but that doesn't perturb Bertelli: "Almost impossible to win, but not entirely. And our aim is to win it."

Luna Rossa's watery activities have resulted in a newfound focus within Prada HQ: ocean health and a mission to clean up the seas. The brand is ploughing multi-millions into its cause. It began last year with an overhaul of the fabrics within Prada's supply chain. When Luna Rossa partnered with The Woolmark Company to create sustainable merino sailing kits, the Prada fashion brand debuted its Re-Nylon accessories line crafted from waste fishing nets recovered from the sea. Then, as the sailing team joined forces with One Ocean Foundation (a non-profit dedicated to the protection of the seas), the Prada Group took out a €50m sustainability-focused loan from Crédit Agricole, the first of its kind, which rewards meeting ambitious sustainability targets with lower interest repayments.





And Prada is pushing this message commercially. Last year, the defunct Prada Sports line got a reboot under the name Linea Rossa. Chunky-soled "America's Cup" trainers and sleeveless grey windbreakers with retro Prada branding that look strikingly reminiscent of the team kits are designed to appeal to the demographic that might otherwise be shopping at Nike. Luna Rossa also has its own fragrance collection, which includes a scent called Carbon – an environmentally astute perfume name for our times.

**T**his change of direction is thanks in part to 31-year-old Lorenzo Bertelli, son of Miuccia and Patrizio; he joined the group in September 2017 as head of marketing and communications and swiftly shook things up. "Being a millennial, I immediately realised that sustainability is a priority," says the former racing driver. "Sometimes intersection [between our group activities] happens by chance, sometimes it is indispensable." After years of falling sales, Prada has tasked Bertelli with ushering the 1913-founded family-run brand into the next era by harnessing the interest of younger customers – and sustainability is key.

Re-Nylon was the first project to which the young Bertelli committed. "It's the beginning of a new era for Prada. Nylon was one of the fundamental products that established Prada's modern fashion identity," he says of his mother's refashioning of the synthetic fibre in the 1980s, when she turned a formerly naff textile into a covetable luxury product by putting it on the runway. The collection of nylon backpacks, belt bags and totes introduced in 1984 quickly became the brand's best sellers, and remain so today; Lorenzo says using marine waste nylon "respects the brand's heritage while looking forward to the next chapter".

Lorenzo also orchestrated a five-part documentary series to accompany the Re-Nylon launch that played on Instagram. *What We Carry* was filmed with *National Geographic* and sent five "Prada reporters" – including

20-year-old Sudanese model-of-the-moment Adut Akech – around the globe to investigate the plastic problem. It's estimated that the cost of the collaboration ran into six figures. "It gave seriousness to the project," says Lorenzo. "It's essential to explain what is behind a product. To do it through a story online is the best way to engage customers."

His investment paid off: in the third quarter of 2019, Re-Nylon backpacks were among the most popular accessories on fashion search platform Lyst. It's good marketing married to a commitment – a percentage of sales of each Re-Nylon bag

goes towards ocean-conservation projects. By 2021, all nylon used within Prada will be regenerated.

"You can't ignore the plastic problem when you're out at sea all day seeing it," says 38-year-old sailor Shannon Falcone, who also heads up product design and innovation for the team's uniforms – at 6ft 5in and 102kg, he jokes that he spends 50 per cent of his day at a desk and 50 per cent working out. "The ocean is our playground and our competition ground. And it's where everything ends up."

Falcone's 26-year-old teammate Nick Brezzi agrees. "I go kitesurfing and see beaches full of trash, or junk being brought in on the waves – it's impossible not to acknowledge that it is polluted. Guys like me are more keen to be environmentally friendly in everything we do. It's not natural for my dad's generation, but it is for us."

It troubled Falcone that the team's nylon kits (which release microparticles of plastic when washed) were contributing to the problem. He sought the help of Woolmark to come up with biodegradable, ocean-friendly alternatives, and this year the team will sail wearing merino wool for the first time. Woolmark's traceable supply chain from sheep to sweater – and its work in promoting natural wool as a sustainable alternative to synthetic sports kits – meant the Sydney-based company was a natural partner for Prada. Woolmark is also working with Adidas to send Arctic explorers to the North Pole to investigate the effect of microplastics on the polar ice caps. "Merino is a renewable resource grown on fresh air, water and grass, and it offers a lot less impact compared to the devastation caused by microplastics," says Stuart McCullough, managing director of The Woolmark Company, which developed new technical wools for the Prada kits.

The collection, unveiled last June at Pitti Uomo in Florence, includes matte-grey windproof jackets crafted from merino that has been bonded with a waterproof membrane, and super-fine, ultra-light T-shirts that fit like a second skin and dry quickly; a commercial collection will be released under the Luna Rossa brand this year. "Wool is the original performance textile," says McCullough. "The fibre is breathable, with the ability to wick moisture during physical activity, which makes it ideal for sailing."

Brezzi adds: "When we're soaking wet, we've found wool is the only thing that keeps you warm. Synthetic kits make you freezing, which can be dangerous at sea."

Falcone says he was initially "sceptical" about sailing in wool: "For me, wool was just the itchy jumpers my grandad wore. We're athletes. Our boats go really fast. Aerodynamics, wind motion, waterproofness and weight all come into it." He set about putting the wool to the test, inventing innovative ways to sample uniforms out of season. "We'd put the kit on and go and stand in a walk-in freezer or underneath a cold shower," he explains. "If it fails in the shower, it's not going to work on the boat. Kit really affects our performance."

The level of fitness required for America's Cup sailors is Olympic standard. "Grinders" like Falcone and Brezzi hand-power the boat's hydraulics via pedal mechanisms and sheer upper-body strength. "We have to create constant energy – we're like a diesel engine with a turbo," says Brezzi, with biceps bulging through his woollen top.

**"IT IS ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO WIN - WHICH MAKES IT ALL THE MORE APPEALING"**



Clockwise from above: the Prada Luna Rossa crew in training; Miuccia Prada christens the yacht, Luna Rossa's hydrofiling monohull in action. The crew's merino and neoprene extreme-weather jacket

He says he can deadlift 100kg and bench-press 140. "The guys have to be big," says skipper and team director Max Sirena. "In 2007, the race could take up to three hours. Now, to cover the same distance takes 30-35 minutes because the boats are so much faster." Sirena has won two America's Cups and reached the final a further four times – but never with Prada. "It's like going 140mph on a motorbike. And the power comes from the guys." They train at sea for six hours a day, so their kits have to withstand hours of exercise against the elements – during race season, they're worn for weeks at a time.

Spending life at sea gives the sailors a unique vantage point on the plastic problem; when training, the Luna Rossa team often stages ocean clear-ups. "We're collecting 50 kilos of plastic a time," says Sirena. "The problem is huge." Indeed, a boat belonging to one of the other teams was damaged during the trials after it collided with a large piece of debris in the ocean.

On the seafront base of Luna Rossa HQ, where the gym enjoys a sunset view, single-use plastics are banned – the stipulations of the Crédit Agricole loan demand that Prada implement green practices across its buildings to reduce its overall impact. Even the America's Cup boat has its own credentials – 30 per cent of the carbon fibre used in the build is recycled, with metal hardware made from melted-down spare parts. "Obviously it costs more, but it's a message we want to give," says Sirena. "We are at the point of climate crisis where everyone has to do something. For us, that's the uniforms, our recycling and our work with ocean organisations." The team also goes into local schools to teach children about sustainability.

The work is far from done. "We are not the only hero on this planet," says Sirena, jumping onto the monohull yacht as he and his helmet-clad team head out for a day's sailing, the 26.5m Prada sail billowing in the breeze. "But Prada is a global influencer. By using the power of our brand name, we can speed up the conversation. Because our office is the ocean," he gestures to the turquoise waters surrounding him that will soon become his racing ground, "and we have to protect it." ■ HTSI

Sport

Testo di Gloria Ghiara

## Volere Volare

Fibra di carbonio leggera e resistente per uno scafo "volante" e i segnatempo da regata, lana hi-tech iper performante per vestire il team: la sfida della nuova Luna Rossa si gioca anche sul filo di ricerca e innovazione



○ **NON C'È SFIDA** più in equilibrio tra passato e futuro dell'America's Cup. ○ Il più antico trofeo della storia dello sport che ancora si disputa, da sempre giocato su un doppio livello: sportivo e tecnologico. «Questa Coppa ci spingerà oltre i nostri limiti», dice Max Sirena, Team director & skipper del Luna Rossa Prada Pirelli Team. Che per la sesta volta vede Luna Rossa tra i Challenger in quella «lotta tra velisti di Yacht Club sparsi nel mondo che vogliono disperatamente la stessa cosa: mettere le mani sulla Coppa» (parola di Sir Peter Blake, leggenda della vela) giunta alla 36esima sfida. Dalla goletta America, che nel 1851 vince la regata intorno all'isola di Wight, ai rivoluzionari monoscafi "volanti" AC75 – «La barca che ci aspetta sarà molto più scorbutica e nervosa dei catamarani che abbiamo visto fino ad ora», sottolinea Sirena – della prossima edizione. Con un protagonista assoluto, il carbonio: per una grande resistenza meccanica senza sacrificare la leggerezza. «In termini di peso, la fibra di carbonio offre da 2 a 5 volte più rigidità rispetto ad alluminio e acciaio. Nel caso di componenti specifici, realizzati in fibra di carbonio unidirezionale, la sua rigidità è 5-10 volte superiore rispetto all'acciaio o all'alluminio dello stesso peso», spiega Max Webster, il capo dello shore team Luna Rossa Prada Pirelli, con una grande esperienza nel campo delle costruzioni navali con materiali compositi. «L'AC75 Luna Rossa, costruito dal cantiere Persico Marine, ha impegnato più di 90 persone, di cui 37 designer del team, per quasi due anni e 78.000 ore di lavoro. Per realizzare lo scafo sono stati impiegati 7.000 metri quadrati di fibra di carbonio e 400 metri quadrati di nido d'ape in alluminio. Le due derive mobili in carbonio, gli innovativi *foil arm*, circa 500 kg ognuna, sono progettate per sostenere un carico massimo di 27 tonnellate». Altra innovazione è la *soft wing*, realizzata con 20.000 chilometri di fili in carbonio, precisa Webster, «mentre ne servono 5.000 per tessere ogni fiocco e 12.000 per ogni *code zero*, la vela da andature portanti con vento leggero».

**PROTEGGERSI IN MODO EFFICACE** ma performante è imperativo quando si affrontano condizioni estreme come quelle di una regata di Coppa America, con monoscafi capaci di volare a 100 km orari ed estremamente complessi da gestire. Ed è qui che la lezione del passato guarda al futuro, e altri materiali entrano in gioco nella sfida. Uno, in particolare, tanto antico quanto attuale. «La lana è la fibra naturale più performante per ogni attività sportiva», racconta Fabrizio Servente, Global strategy advisor di The Woolmark Company. «Non dimentichiamo che è stata la fibra di tutti gli sport fino all'avvento delle fibre sintetiche, più economiche e in alcuni casi più avanzate della lana di allora. Oggi l'evoluzione nel breeding all'origine e le tecnologie nei processi della filiera consentono di ottenere finezze e caratteristiche tali da poter utilizzare la lana anche nei capi che richiedono performance straordinarie, come quelli del Team di Luna Rossa, realizzati in lana finissima (di origine Merino australiana), sia in purezza (100 per cento lana) sia in miscchia con altre fibre tecniche per i capi che richiedono particolari performance multitasking». La lana è una fibra naturalmente elastica, isoterma, traspirante e, con particolari trattamenti, è anche molto resistente all'acqua: «È ciò che serve nelle condizioni più esigenti dello sport velico», prosegue Servente. «L'Official Sailing Team Jacket, oltre ad avere l'inconfondibile stile Prada, che lo rende unico, è la somma delle migliori caratteristiche della lana. Altamente performante e confortevole allo stesso tempo. Il tessuto esterno è un blend di finissima lana Merino e nylon tessuti ad altissima densità, che consente di ottenere un'ottima resistenza all'acqua e una traspirabilità eccezionale».

**E POI C'È IL TEMPO**, fulcro di ogni competizione. Il millesimo di secondo vitale nel prendere il vento. Gli orologi Panerai Luna Rossa sono direttamente ispirati alle tecnologie e ai materiali usati nella competizione sportiva più estrema



Team director & skipper **Luna Rossa**  
 Prada Pirelli Team: Max Sirocco  
 Vantaggio: Persico Marine(BG)  
 Lunghezza: 75 Ft (22,86 mt)

Equipaggio: 11 persone  
 Peso: 6,5 t  
 Altezza albero: 87 ft (26,5 mt)  
 Velocità: 25-50 nodi (46-93 km/h)

Piazamenti: Louis Vuitton Cup 2000 1\*  
 America's Cup 2000 2\*  
 Louis Vuitton Cup 2002/3 4\*  
 Louis Vuitton Cup 2007 2\*  
 Louis Vuitton Cup 2013 2\*



Qui sopra. Il Luminor **Luna Rossa** Regatta di Panerai. A sinistra. L'Official Sailing Team Jacket di Prada. In alto. L'uniforme dell'equipaggio e del Team Luna Rossa Prada Pirelli, realizzata in partnership con The Woolmark Company.

in termini di ricerca e innovazione. «La partnership tra Panerai e **Luna Rossa** esprime i valori a cui siamo saldamente legati, gli stessi che vogliamo trasmettere ai nostri appassionati clienti immergendoli nelle emozioni che **Luna Rossa** ci farà vivere: innovazione tecnica, eccellenza italiana, amore per il mare e audacia», dice Jean-Marc Pontroué, Ceo di Panerai. A tutto ciò si ispira il Luminor **Luna Rossa** Regatta, un orologio subacqueo professionale impermeabile fino a 100 metri, con la cassa da 47 mm in carbotech, innovativo materiale a base di fibre di carbonio introdotto da Panerai

nel mondo dell'alta orologeria. «Per le sue doti di leggerezza, resistenza alle sollecitazioni e alla corrosione», continua Pontroué, «è lo stesso usato per la costruzione del monoscafo AC75, la cui sagoma è incisa sul fondello in titanio, con il logo di **Luna Rossa** e il profilo dell'America's Cup. Alla forte personalità del segnatempo contribuisce la texture del quadrante, su cui sono applicate parti di vele di **Luna Rossa**. In più, per accompagnare le imprese sul campo di gara è stato inserito il Regatta countdown, il conto alla rovescia pre-partenza, funzione rivolta al mondo della vela. Buon vento! ●

### VERSO LA 36<sup>a</sup> AMERICA'S CUP

Dopo le World Series, regate preliminari a tappe (la prima a Cagliari in aprile), si entra nel vivo nelle acque di Auckland: dopo la Christmas Race di dicembre, la Prada Cup di gennaio/febbraio 2021 vedrà i Challenger regatate per determinare chi sfiderà il Defender nella 36<sup>a</sup> America's Cup presented by Prada, dal 6 al 21 marzo 2021.

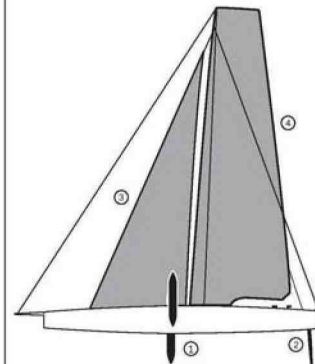
#### Gli sfidanti (Challenger)

-  **American Magic**  
New York Yacht Club
-  **Luna Rossa Prada Pirelli Team**  
Circolo della Vela Sicilia
-  **Ineos Team UK**  
Royal Yacht Squadron Racing
-  **Stars & Stripes Team USA**  
Long Beach Yacht Club

#### Il Defender

-  **Emirates Team New Zealand**  
Royal New Zealand Yacht Squadron

### GLI AC75, MONOSCAFI AVVENIRISTICI



- 1 FOIL
- 2 TIMONE
- 3 FIOCCO
- 4 SOFT WING

Le barche della 36<sup>a</sup> America's Cup sono gli innovativi AC75, monoscafi con foil laterali a T, appendici di cinque metri che consentono allo scafo di sollevarsi sull'acqua. Nuova anche la Soft wing, un sistema con due ranche issate parallelamente, nelle quali sono inseriti i controlli della forma della vela, per un'efficienza pari a un'ala rigida ma con facilità di utilizzo simile a quello di una vela tradizionale.



# FLIEG, LUNA ROSSA! FLIEG!

Auf Sardinien setzt das Prada-Team alles daran, endlich den America's Cup zu gewinnen. *Alexander Stilcken* besuchte Männer, die unter enormem Druck zu sich selbst finden

Training für den Sieg:  
Das Luna-Rossa-Team  
bei Tests vor Sardinien

Der Tag ist kaum angebrochen, da haben Shannon Falcone und seine Mitstreiter bereits 90 Minuten Krafttraining hinter sich. Was heute hier in der sardischen Hafenstadt Cagliari genau passieren wird, ob der Profisegler relativ zeitig oder doch erst spätnachts zu Hause sein wird? Ganz sicher kann sich der 95-Kilo-Hüne da nicht sein, je nach Wind- und Wetterlage wird es entweder ein Tag mit Sport und in der Werkstatt oder mit Arbeiten an der Optimierung des Rennbootes, oder aber es geht doch raus aufs Wasser. Bis das Boot fertig für den Seegang wäre, vergehen mindestens zwei Stunden, dann wird gesegelt, und zurück an Land stünde natürlich noch die ausführliche Nachbesprechung an, das „Debriefing“.

Früher habe man die Daten dafür noch über Nacht auslesen müssen, doch heute ist die Segelwelt in jeder Hinsicht eine rasantere. Falcone fliegt darum nicht nur mit bis zu 90 Stundenkilometer durchs und übers Meer, auch die Technik – all die Sensoren, Satellitendaten, Kameras und Drohnen – ist schneller. Aber ist das schnell genug, um mit dem Team Luna Rossa Prada Pirelli nun endlich den America's Cup zu erkämpfen? Im nunmehr sechsten Anlauf?

Im Hafen von Cagliari hat das von Prada-CEO Patrizio Bertelli angeführte Luna-Rossa-Team seine Zentrale in einem futuristisch anmutenden Gebäude direkt am Hafenbecken. Falcone erzählt bei der Führung über das Gelände von einer typisch italienischen Chaosgeschichte: Ursprünglich wurde es als Schifffahrtsterminal konzipiert und gebaut, nach Vollendung der Bauarbeiten musste man feststellen, dass das Wasser rundherum leider viel zu flach für Tanker & Co. war. Für die Segler von Luna Rossa eine „grande occasione“. Kaum hatte man im Jahr 2017 verkündet, einen weiteren Anlauf zu unternehmen, zog die Mannschaft hier ein. Familien siedelten um, Lebenspläne wurden revidiert, für Profisegler ganz normal. Inzwischen arbeiten mehr als





Wind reicht nicht:  
Die Crew muss das  
Optimum aus  
den Hightech-  
Booten herausholen



100 Leute daran, den Traum 2021 Wirklichkeit werden zu lassen. Der America's Cup begann im Jahr 1851 mit einer Regatta um die Isle of Wight und ist benannt nach der erstmaligen Gewinnerin, der Yacht „America“. Bis 1967 segelte fortan immer nur der Titelverteidiger gegen einen einzelnen Herausforderer, erst ab 1970 fanden sich mehrere Aspiranten, die eine Vorrunde erforderten – die nun als „Prada Cup“ ausgetragen wird. Bis 2007 waren relativ klassische Einrumpf-Segelyachten am Start. Das hat sich in den vergangenen Wettbewerben massiv verändert, angestoßen vom Alinghi-Team rund um den italienisch-schweizerischen Pharma-Mogul Ernesto Bertarelli und fortgeführt vom zweifachen Gewinner und Oracle-Boss Larry Ellison. Der Wettbewerb für Gentlemen zur See wurde zu einer Hightech-Competition, deren Limits sich durch die Egos und meist zehnstelligen Kontostände der Teameigner definierten. Falcone spricht von einer Frage, die fortan immer wieder im Raum stand: „Fördern wir unseren Sport damit, oder ruinieren wir ihn?“ Alles basiert auf dem Gedanken, dass der Titelverteidiger und ein erster „Challenger of Record“ als Herausforderer sich gemeinsam auf die Regularien und Limits für den nächsten Cup einigen. Mit allen anderen Herausforderern wird dann ausgesegelt, wer sich 2021 mit dem Emirates Team New Zealand messen darf, dem aktuellen Champion. Challenger ist in diesem 36. Wettbewerb das Luna-Rossa-Team,

und die erste Regatta wird mit den Bewerbern aus den USA und England Ende April vor Cagliari ausgetragen. Prada-CEO Bertelli ist es sehr ernst mit diesem Projekt, das von einer Art „Best of Italy“-Konsortium gefördert wird: Uhrenpartner ist Panerai, der Käse aus der Kantine ist Parmegiano Reggiano, die coolen Outfits sind Ehrensache. Bertelli selbst ist seit Jahrzehnten passionierter Segler und Förderer des Sports. Der neue America's Cup soll den ganzen Sport nach vorn bringen. So werden teamübergreifend die gleichen Teile verwendet, und obendrein sind die vorgeschriebenen 75-Fuß-Boote „Monohulls“. Denn Einrumpfer sind deutlich preiswerter zu produzieren als die Katamarane der Was-kostet-die-Welt-Ära. Doch auch sie werden foilen, also auf Flügeln über dem Wasser schweben, und das mit einer so rasanten Geschwindigkeit, dass man beim Team Luna Rossa gerade die Motorleistung der Boote noch mal erhöht hat – zuletzt kam der Rest des Unterstützerteams den elf Mann an Bord einfach nicht mehr hinterher. Gilberto Nobili, Operation Manager und dreifacher Cup-Gewinner, stellt fest: „Tatsächlich segelt wird heute deutlich weniger als vor 20 Jahren.“ Vielleicht an zwei bis drei Tagen der Woche sei man auf dem Wasser, mit einem Herzschlag jenseits von 180 pro Minute, doch das meiste geschieht an Land, in den riesigen Zelthallen, in denen Karbonrumpf und Karbonsegel daueroptimiert werden. Und dann ist da noch,

ganz hinten rechts in dieser Hightech-Werkstatt, der vielleicht wichtigste Raum: der mit dem Simulator. Auf einer Art Hebebühne sind drei große Bildschirme montiert, auf denen die unterschiedlichsten Szenarien von drei Seglern durchgespielt werden. Einer steuert das Boot, einer trimmt die Segel, einer koordiniert die Foils. Max Sirena, der Skipper des Bootes, war wie einige andere Luna-Rossa-Segler auch, beim vergangenen Cup noch Teil des neuseeländischen Teams – nachdem die Prada-Mannschaft wegen einer verspäteten Änderung der damaligen Bootsanforderungen aus Protest ausgestiegen war. Das System, mit dem man nun bei Luna Rossa arbeitet, ist genau das, mit dem Emirates New Zealand 2017 gewann. Auch in Zeiten der selbst auferlegten Sparsamkeit sind dreistellige Millionenbudgets bei diesem Wettkampf die Norm, das Designteam ist personell am stärksten besetzt. Horacio Carabelli, Co-Design Engineering Coordinator, ist somit einer der wichtigsten Männer im Team. Er setzt technisch um, was die Segler und der Simulator an Input liefern: „Es ist ein ständiger Kampf, wir verwenden drei Jahre unseres Lebens darauf, einen Monat lang im Wettkampf zu bestehen und hoffentlich zu triumphieren“, sagt er. Das neue Boot, sie nennen es „the new beast“, verkörpere eine revolutionäre Form des Segelns. Aerodynamisch und sicherheitstechnisch so sehr optimiert, dass mancher Athlet im Wettkampf nur

wenig vom Meer sieht, weil er die Zeit geduckt an Deck verbringt. Es ist nur 6,5 Tonnen schwer – früher wogen America's-Cup-Segler 24 Tonnen. Es soll möglichst einfach auf die Foils zu bringen sein. Stabilität bieten und zugleich möglichst wenig durch Haftung abbremsen. Es ist ein großes Wagnis und ein ewiger Test, denn anders als im Motorsport gibt es im Segelsport keine Konstanten. Selbst wenn das Wetter genau wie gestern ist – das Meer und seine Strömungen aber, der Wind und seine Launen seien immer unwägbar, da kann der Computer noch so präzise kalkulieren. Der Ehrgeiz der Italiener vom Team Luna Rossa Prada Pirelli hat etwas Wahnhaftes. Und weil sie das in Cagliari wohl auch wissen, versucht Shannon Falcone den Wettbewerb in einen noch größeren, wichtigeren Kontext zu bringen: der America's Cup als Mittel zum Zweck, um auf einen Sport aufmerksam zu machen, der bislang Nische ist. Segeln verbinde schließlich Umweltbewusstsein, Teamgeist und Kommunikation. Und wenn es den Jugendlichen von heute etwas zu fade sei, in einer Jolle zu schippern, dann müsse man ihnen etwas Neues bieten. So wie das Snowboard einst den Schneesport wiederbelebt habe, könne es die jungen Seefahrer in Ausbildung doch begeistern und locken, auf Foils zu segeln. Hat der Mann gerade wirklich vorgeschlagen, dass auch Kinder mit solchen Geräten übers Wasser schießen sollten? Am Ehrgeiz der Leute in Cagliari wird es nicht scheitern.



## Translation Mr. Icon, 28-29.03.2020

### Fly Luna Rossa! Fly!

In Sardinia the Prada team is doing everything possible to finally win the America's Cup. Alexander Sticken visited the men who find themselves under enormous pressure.

The day has barely come, when Shannon Falcone and his colleagues have already had 90 minutes of strength training. What will happen today in the Sardinian port city of Cagliari, whether the professional sailor will be at home relatively early or late at night? The 95 kilo man cannot be sure, depending on the wind and weather conditions, it will either be a day with sports and in the workshop or working on the optimization of the racing boat, or it will be out on the water. It takes at least 2 hours for the boat to be ready for the sea, then sailing and back on land would of course be followed by a detailed debriefing.

In the past, the data had to be read out overnight, but today the sailing world is faster in every respect. That's why Falcone not only flies up to 90 kilometres per hour through and over the sea, the technology - all the sensors, satellite data, cameras and drones - is faster. But is that fast enough to finally fight for the America's Cup with Team Luna Rossi Prada Pirelli? In the sixth attempt now? In the port of Cagliari, the Luna Rosso team led by Prada CEO Patrizio Bertelli has its headquarters in a futuristic building right on the harbour basin. Falcone tells a typical Italian chaos story during the tour of the site; originally it was designed and built as a shipping terminal, after completion of the construction work they had to find out that the water all around was unfortunately too shallow for tankers & co. A "grande occasione" for the sailors of Luna Rossa. As soon as it was announced in 2017 to make another attempt, the team moved in here. Families relocated, life plans were revised, quite normal for professional sailors. In the meantime, more than 100 people are working to make the dream come true in 2021.

The America's Cup started in 1851 with a regatta around the Isle of Wight and is named after the first-time winner, the yacht "America". From then until 1967, only the defending champion sailed against a single challenger, and only from on 1970 there were several aspirants who required a preliminary round - which is now being held as the "Prada Cup". Until 2007, relatively classic monohull sailing yachts were part of the contest. That has changed massively in previous competitions, initiated by the Alinghi team around the Italian-Swiss pharmaceutical mogul Ernesto Bertarelli and continued by the two-time winner and Oracle boss Larry Ellison. The competition for gentlemen at sea became a high-tech competition, the limits of which were defined by the egos and mostly ten-figure account balances of the team owners. Falcone mentions a question that came up again and again from then on: Are we pushing our sport further, or are we ruining it?" Everything is based on the idea that the defending champion and a first "Challenger of Record" as a challenger relate to the regulars and limits for the next cup. All other challengers will then be sailed out to see who can compete with the Emirates Team New Zealand in 2021, the current champion.

Challenger in this 36th competition is the Luna Rossa team and the first regatta will be held with applicants from the USA and England at the end of April at Cagliari. Prada CEO Bertelli is very serious about this project, which is supported by a kind of "Best of Italy" consortium: watch partner is Panerai, cheese from the canteen is Parmegiano Reggiani, and the cool outfits are a matter of honor. Bertelli himself has been a passionate sailor and supporter of the sport for decades. The new America's Cup should bring the whole sport forward. So all teams use the same components, and on top of that, the prescribed 75-foot boats are "monohulls". Because monohulls are less expensive to produce than the catamarans of the what-costs-the-world era. But they will be foiling, too, which means they will be hovering on wings over the water, and at such a rapid speed that the Luna Rossa team has just increased the engine power of the dinghies. In the end, the rest of the supporting team couldn't follow the eleven men on the Luna Rossa boat anymore.

Gilberto Nobili, Operation Manager and triple cup winner, says: "When it comes to preparing for the cup we actually sail a lot less today than it was 20 years ago." Maybe two to three days a week you are on the water with a heartbeat beyond 180 per minute. But most of it happens on land, in the huge time halls, in which the carbon hull and carbon sail are permanently optimized. And then there is the most important room, the one with the simulator, on the far right in this high-tech workshop. Three large screens are mounted on kind of a lifting platform, on which the most different scenarios are played out by three sailors. One steers the boat, one trims the sails, one coordinates the fouls. Max Sirena, the boat's skipper, was, like some other Luna Rossa sailors, part of the New Zealand team at the last cup - after the Prada team had left in protest for a late change in the boat requirements at the time. The system that Luna Rossa is now working with is the same than with what Emirates New Zealand won in 2017.

Even in times of self-imposed thrift, three-digit million-dollar budgets are the norm in this competition; the design team is staffed the most. Horacio Carabelli, Co-Design Engineering Coordinator, is one of

the most important men in the team. He technically implements what the sailors and the simulator provide in terms of input: „Everything we do here is extremely intense. It is a constant struggle with yourself, because we basically are spending three years of our life for one month of competition,“ he says.

The new boat, they call it "the new beast", embodies a revolutionary form of sailing. Aerodynamically and safety-technically optimized so much that athletes see little of the sea during the competition, because they spend time crouching on deck. The boat weighs only 6.5 tons - America's Cup sailors used to weigh 24 tons. It should be as easy as possible to get on the foils, offer stability and at the same time slow down as little as possible through liability. It is a big risk and an eternal test, because unlike in motorsport, there are no constants in sailing. Even if the weather is exactly like yesterday - but the sea and its currents, the wind and its moods are always unpredictable. No matter how precisely the computer calculates.

The ambition of the Italians from the Luna Rossa Prada Pirelli team has something delusional. And because they probably know that in Cagliari, Shannon Falcone tries to put the competition in an even bigger, more important context: the America's Cup as a means to an end to draw attention to a sport that has so far been a niche. Finally, sailing combines ecological consciousness, team spirit and communication. And if it is a bit too boring for today's youngsters to sail in a dinghy, then they have to offer them something new. Just as snowboarding once revived the sport of snow, young sailors in training could inspire and entice them to sail on foils. It won't fail because of the ambition of the people in Cagliari.