



WHY I SAIL

For the deputy chairman of fashion brand Loro Piana, yachting is about competition, experimentation, and inspiration.

By Pier Luigi Loro Piana

I was always fascinated by the boating and yachting world. When I was 18 years old, a friend of my parents invited me sailing for the weekend, because he needed someone to help him take his boat from Portofino to Punta Ala, in Tuscany. I was a sporty guy, and although I didn't know anything about sailing, he said, "You could be okay." I fell in love.

Sailing establishes new boundaries

between you and nature. When you stop the engine, you are completely free. The wind becomes your engine. You leave everything on the coast. You leave your problems. You just think about how to sail and where to go, and you try to go faster and faster. I ski, and every year when I put my skis on and do the first three or five meters, it's another world. When I go sailing, it's the same feeling. After that first trip, I signed

up for a 15-day sailing course off the island of Caprera, off Sardinia, and that's when my career as a sailing guy began. Later, I started yachting. I first bought *My Song* in 1988. I've used the name for three boats now. The current *My Song* was launched in 1999. I'm very happy with it. At 84 feet, it's the perfect combination of a fast cruising boat and a good racer.

We began the Loro Piana Superyacht



Pier Luigi Loro Piana at the helm of *My Song* with his crew

Regatta in the early '90s, in Italy, as a way to reach a large community of people with the same values. Racing super-yachts with medium and small boats is dangerous, so we wanted to organize something only for the big boats. In the end, every boat owner loves to compete. The regattas are like live laboratories for Loro Piana. We experiment with natural fibers such as wool, silk, and even cashmere for different uses than what they're traditionally known for. We developed Storm System, a collection of sports fabrics that are waterproof and windproof. All those materials are tested during the race.

The regatta expanded to the Caribbean four years ago, because my club, Yacht Club Costa Smeralda, in Porto Cervo, Sardinia, opened a new site in Virgin Gorda, and they asked if I wanted to support a race in the winter. Virgin Gorda is a small island, a little bit wild, so it's a nice place to get people together to talk about sailing. It's very social, but not in a way that's snobby.

I like the first of the four days. We race all day long, and then we usually have a nice dinner with all the participants. Everybody's happy.

Sailing and the Loro Piana brand have quite a few things in common. We try to translate the beauty of each individual raw material into a product you can enjoy. The search for quality always protected our brand. It's elegant. And I think sailing is elegant. When you see a sailboat passing in the sea, at any time of day, you start watching the boat. It's a perfect combination of nature, technology, and design. Those are the aspects that we try to express in our product.

People think sailing is a silent activity. It's not. On board, there's a lot of noise. But from the outside, you don't hear anything. You just see a boat gently floating on the water. When you make a beautiful product, there is a lot of action, technology, and research that you don't see. ♦

ACCESS

The 2017 Loro Piana Superyacht Regatta will take place March 10–13 in Virgin Gorda and June 6–10 in Porto Cervo, Sardinia. loropianasuperyachtregatta.com

THE RESERVATION IS YOURS... FOR \$2,500

How to do New York's King Cole Bar without the wait

When it comes to a short list of legendary hotel bars, the St. Regis New York's King Cole Bar has held its place for nearly 100 years. The clubby, wood-paneled lounge has the sexiest lighting, the best wasabi peas, and, of course, bragging rights to the first Bloody Mary. There's also the Maxfield Parrish mural, which has a secret (ask the bartender).

The bar has long maintained a walk-in-only policy (and good luck getting a table after 7 P.M.), but for the first time, patrons can reserve table 55. Its \$2,500 minimum tab buys a prime location with up to five seats under the mural and next to the bar for privacy and access. The table has an exclusive menu of rare whiskeys and wines (1994 Château Pétrus, 1986 Château Lafite-Rothschild), plus an osetra caviar service and wagyu beef carpaccio.

Only one booking can be made per night. General manager Hermann Elger says, "Table 55 has quickly become a desirable reservation for A-listers looking for a more private experience." *Reservations must be made at least 48 hours in advance; 2 E. 55th St.; 212-350-7155. -E.S.*

