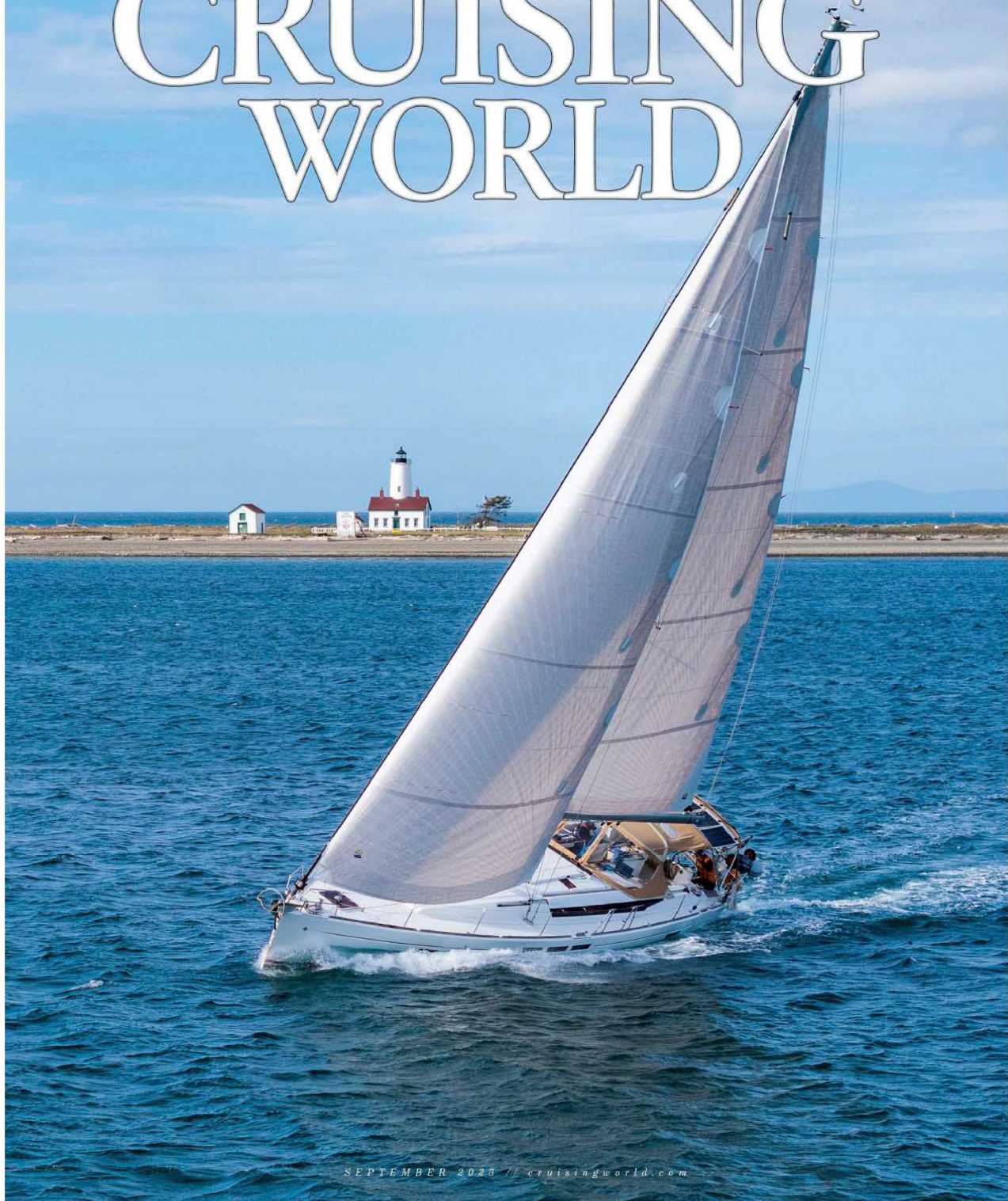


**CRUISING WORLD MAGAZINE - SEPTEMBER 2025**

# CRUISING WORLD





# Grace in Motion

A sailor’s dream rekindled, a boat built to roam, and an Atlantic crossing remind us that the journey matters most.



*Sine Finis* sails steadily in Mediterranean waters, while owner Nico Jonville stands aboard the Pegasus 50 shortly after delivery, ready to embark on new voyages.

COURTESY/NICO JONVILLE







## The sea off Cannes, France

is barely breathing this particular morning, its surface flat and luminous under the weight of the sun. We slip quietly from the dock and into the Gulf of Napoule, where the horizon meets the sky in the sort of hazy blur that makes distance seem irrelevant. A thin breeze meanders through the rigging of *Sine Finis*, just enough to stir the sails but not enough to command them. The boat moves anyway. Not quickly, but surely, as if being pulled forward by some invisible tether.

At the helm, Nico Jonville stands relaxed, one hand lightly on the wheel. He isn't adjusting or trimming or steering with any urgency. He is simply sailing. The kind of sailing that reveals not just what a boat can do, but also what it is.

That quiet clarity is what first strikes me about *Sine Finis*. With so little wind, there should have been hesitation. But instead, we glide. A boat like this doesn't need drama to be impressive—only a sailor who understands.

"There's a precision to the helm," Jonville says. "You feel the rigidity of the boat. It's clean, immediate."

Even in stillness, this boat offers something most performance cruisers don't: calm confidence. And in this light-air passage off the South of France, I can already feel what the boat was made for: movement. Big movement. The kind that crosses oceans and transforms sailors.

This movement, for Jonville, started long before *Sine Finis*. It began in France with his grandfather, aboard boats that shaped his earliest memories.

"I was behind the wheel by the time I was 3," he says, laughing. He grew up between Paris and the coast, with summers spent on the water. Sailing wasn't something he learned; it was something he absorbed.

His grandfather—an old-school mariner who believed in giving youngsters the helm—handed him a level of freedom most sailors don't taste until adulthood. As a teenager, he was already captaining trips with friends aboard a 46-footer, gaining miles and an innate trust in himself and the sea. There were mistakes, of course—he's quick to acknowledge them. "Plenty of stupid things done," he says, smiling. "But that's how you learn. That's how it gets into your bones."

Eventually, life brought him to the United States, where he found a different rhythm in the sailing scene of Southern California. In

*Sine Finis* departs the mainland, leaving behind a brooding sky—a reminder of the challenges that lie ahead on any ocean passage.



COURTESY NICO JONVILLE

2007, he bought his first "real" cruising boat: a 37-footer capable of more-serious travel. "I wanted to go farther," he says. "I wasn't interested in racing or daysailing. I wanted to move."

And move he did. From San Diego, he sailed down the Baja coast, into Central America, through Panama and into the Caribbean. He spent time in the San Blas Islands, fell in love with remote anchorages, and began to sketch out a circumnavigation. "That was the plan," he says. "Around the world."

But then came COVID. Countries closed. Routes vanished.

Plans dissolved. Like many voyaging sailors, Jonville found himself reevaluating not just his passage plans, but also his vessel.

"She'd taken me far," he says of the 37-footer. "But I started seeing the limits—especially in tougher weather. I wanted something safer. Something that wouldn't just survive offshore, but thrive."

He sold the boat in Virginia and began what he jokingly calls "the hunt"—a meticulous, sometimes maddening, two-year search for the right replacement. Not just a boat that looked good on paper, but one that also could carry him through the kind of voyaging he envisioned: shorthanded, long-distance and full of unknowns.

"I had a hundred checkboxes," he says. "Fast. Safe. Solo-capable.

Dry cockpit. Storage space. Good light-air performance. A real sailboat, not a floating apartment. But I still wanted comfort. I didn't want to compromise on what matters at sea."

He found the Pegasus 50 almost by accident. It was in a listing online, with a photo that caught his eye. The lines were modern and purposeful. The configuration looked different. The deeper he researched, the more intrigued he became.

Built in Slovenia, the Pegasus 50 was designed for performance cruising with an epoxy-infused carbon hull, twin rudders, a double-wing keel, and a cockpit that emphasized protection and singlehanded control. It was a monohull with the openness of a





catamaran, but it still promised to sail like a proper offshore boat.

He flew to Europe. When he saw the boat in person for the first time in the marina, he was overwhelmed. “I was like a kid in a toy store,” he says. The sea trial sealed it. In just 12 knots of wind, the boat moved effortlessly at 9. The code zero unfurled, and the boat surged forward with a smoothness that made his decision feel inevitable. “It was everything I’d hoped for. And more.”

That evening, after the sea trial that left him electrified, Jonville and his wife ducked into a small waterside restaurant tucked away in a sleepy Slovenian harbor. Still riding the high of the day—and the certainty that he’d found the right boat—they raised a toast with glasses of local sparkling wine.

The label caught Jonville’s eye: *Sinefinis*. Curious, he asked the waiter what it meant.

“It means ‘without borders,’” came the reply.

Jonville sat back, stunned. His last boat—his faithful 37-footer that had carried him through Central America and into the Caribbean—had been named *Sans Frontières*. The French translation was identical. Here, thousands of miles from that boat and its memories, he’d stumbled onto the same phrase, translated into Latin, etched on the bottle at the table where he and his wife were dreaming of a new chapter. *Sine Finis*. Without borders. Without end.

The boat was delivered to the Mediterranean, and after some time testing and commissioning with the owners of Pegasus Yachts, Jonville set off from Slovenia with two friends, heading west toward Venice, Italy. It was his first true shakedown sail aboard *Sine Finis*, just days after taking delivery. He’d barely had time to get acquainted with the systems—hadn’t even practiced reefing under pressure—when the weather turned.

Off the coast of Italy, sometime after midnight, a squall barreled in fast and hard. The wind spiked to 38 knots. The Adriatic turned serious. “It came on strong and unexpected,” Jonville says. “I barely knew the reefing system yet, and here I was, alone in the dark with sails full and seas rising.”

He sprang into action, reefing down quickly, learning on the fly in real time. Sheets were eased, and he worked through the motion with instinct and muscle memory. But what surprised him most

was how the boat responded—not panicked or overloaded, but sure-footed, balanced.

“She held her own,” Jonville says. “There was no drama in the way she behaved. I adjusted, and she just kept moving.”

Later, in the calm that followed, Jonville sat at the helm watching the glow of the instrument lights dance off the carbon rig. The boat had just passed its first real test—not in a sea trial, not on paper, but out there, in the elements, with one sailor alone. And the bond between them began to cement—not with a handshake or a christening, but with shared weather and trust.

Later, they sailed west through Gibraltar, on to the Canaries and across the Atlantic—*Sine Finis*’ first major passage. This boat was ready. Jonville was too.

“Crossing the Atlantic is the dream,” he says. “But it’s also the test. You learn who you are. You learn who your boat is.”

Crossing an ocean isn’t just a matter of charts and provisions. It’s a psychological departure, a shift in mindset from the immediacy of coastal sailing to the long, slow breath of life offshore. Before casting off from the Canaries, Jonville and his small crew spent days readying *Sine Finis* for the passage. Systems were checked, weather windows weighed, redundancies double-checked. They discussed watch schedules, stowed food in every conceivable locker, and reviewed emergency protocols with the same attention as sail trim.

But as any offshore sailor knows, no matter how prepared you are, there’s always that quiet moment of reckoning when the coast fades behind you and the realization sets in: This is it. You’re out there now.

“For me, there’s a mental shift,” Jonville says. “You go from planning to *being*. There’s nothing left to do but sail, and that’s the beauty of it.”



For just under three weeks, *Sine Finis* rode the trades westward with the grace of a boat made for the passage. The crew settled into their rhythm quickly: two-person watches rotating through the night, shared meals by day, quiet hours at the helm punctuated by bursts of laughter or mutual silence. The boat revealed itself as fast and capable, and also forgiving. It was comfortable in light

COURTESY NICO JONVILLE

air, confident in heavier breeze, and almost eerily quiet in motion.

“Even in rough weather, we could cook, work, sleep,” Jonville says. “We had everything from 3 knots to 35, and she never struggled. That gave us time to actually *enjoy* the crossing.”

And enjoy they did. There were nights when the cockpit felt like a floating observatory—the stars so brilliant, they could trace constellations by instinct. Moonrises over the stern lit the water in molten silver as the boat surfed at 12 knots. One night, dolphins played in the wake, their bodies igniting trails of bioluminescence like underwater fireworks.

There were challenges, of course, but nothing serious: a code



zero tack line change due to chafing, a spinnaker tear in strong gusts, a loose washing-machine-hose repair underway. The crew was sharp and composed, and worked together with an ease born of trust—trust in the boat and in one another.

“You get to know people differently out there,” Jonville says. “When you’re standing watch at 2 a.m., talking about nothing and everything, it sticks.”

On *Sine Finis*, that space for connection was everywhere—between helm and cockpit, galley and salon, on-watch partner and off-watch sleeper. The open flow of the boat’s design meant the crew was never isolated. And the boat’s handling meant no one was ever overwhelmed. The boat made the crossing not only possible, but also pleasurable.

More than anything, the passage offered something rare: clarity. Little internet. No noise. Just wind, water and the company of people who had chosen to be there. They trimmed sails together, told stories over breakfast, shared the quiet work of passagemaking without pretense or pressure.

“She just felt right out there,” Jonville says. “The boat, the crew, the sea—it all came together.”

And for every mile they made good, there was something else gained: confidence and the quiet wonder of seeing the world slowly shift, one longitude at a time.

One of the boat’s standout features proved invaluable offshore: an electric gimbled salon table. “You’re heeled over at 15 or 20 degrees, but you can still work, eat, read, use a laptop while sitting level,” Jonville says. “It’s not a gimmick. It changes the way you live aboard underway.”

Just as important was the cockpit protection. On his previous

boat, sailing in big seas often meant getting soaked, battling weather, and bracing for every wave. On *Sine Finis*, the covered helm created a cocoon of calm. “You’re doing 9, 10, 11 knots, and outside the wind is howling, but you’re dry, you’re warm, you’re focused,” he says. “It’s a completely different experience.”

After landfall in the Caribbean, the boat continued north toward Chesapeake Bay. There was little fanfare aside from complimentary onlookers asking about the boat. Just another passage, another movement forward. That, in many ways, is what *Sine Finis* represents for Jonville—not an arrival, but rather a way of continuing. A vessel not just for going places, but for becoming someone new along the way as well.

“This October, I’ll have *Sine Finis* at the Annapolis boat show. After that, I don’t know where we’ll go next,” Jonville says, standing at the stern as *Sine Finis* edges north along the US East Coast. “The list is long.”

A return to San Diego is all but certain—his adopted hometown, a natural waypoint and homecoming after the Atlantic chapters. And there’s talk of sailing north to the Pacific Northwest, a region that calls to him with its wild coastline and quiet anchorages.

But there’s no timetable. No fixed itinerary. Not anymore.

He’s not chasing latitudes or counting countries. He’s chasing something more elusive: *feelings*. The right breeze. The right harbor. The right morning light filtering through the companionway as the kettle whistles and the boat rocks gently at anchor.

Still, that old idea, the one that started it all, hasn’t entirely disappeared. The dream of a circumnavigation lingers in the background, unhurried but unforgotten.

“It’s still there,” Jonville says. “It might not look like I imagined when I was younger, and that’s OK. We’ll take it one leg at a time. If it happens, it happens.”

In the meantime, *Sine Finis* is already doing what it was built to do: crossing oceans, making landfalls, bringing people together. Each passage unlocks something new for Jonville—on the chart and inside the sailor himself. It’s apparent when he stands at the helm. That quiet reverence. That calm curiosity. The same posture he carried that day in Cannes, when the boat was barely moving but somehow telling us everything we needed to know.

For a sailor raised in the space between tradition and ambition, *Sine Finis* is the right boat at just the right time. ☼



Life underway aboard *Sine Finis*: repairing a chafing reef line on passage; sharing breakfast in the cockpit beneath a rainbow; soaking in moonlit seas on a night watch; and embracing the deep camaraderie that comes with a good crew, a fast boat, and miles well-sailed.