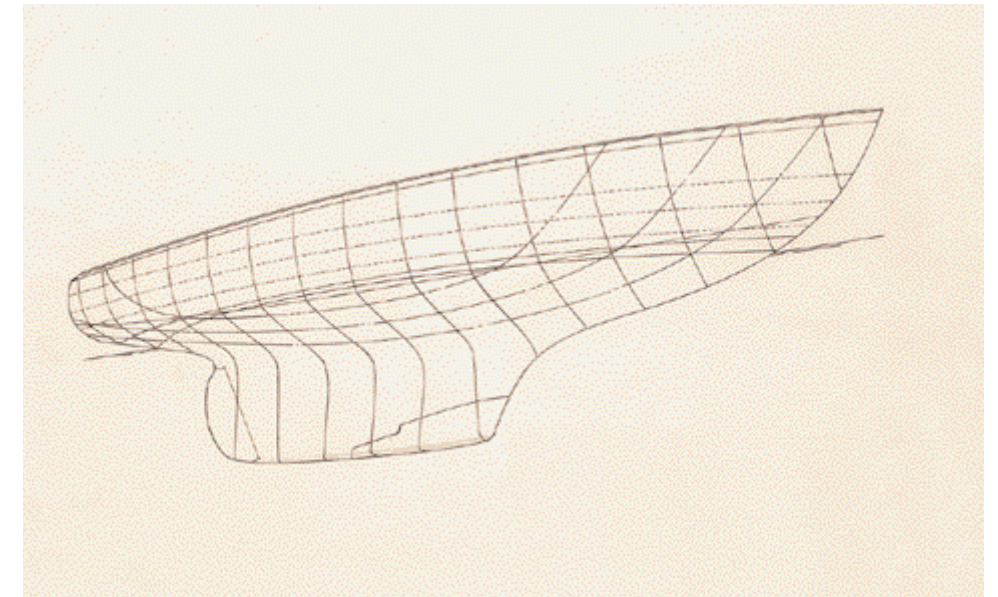




PHOTO: BELEN OF COMES

*'Trucha II', - a sistership to 'Fjord IV'. It was this design that first brought the Frers name international acclaim. Both yachts were 38ft light displacement down-wind flyers, and with their near vertical ends, were in complete contrast to the long-keeled heavy displacement designs of the day. Their design concept was dictated through necessity. Modern light-weight materials were just not available in Argentina after the 2nd World War, so Frers Snr. compromised by drawing a lightweight boat with minimum ballast. 'Trucha II' finished the 1954 Newport/Bermuda Race second overall in class and fleet. Her crew was joined on the podium by those from two other Frers designs - The first time that one designer had three prize-winning yachts in the Bermuda Race.*



'To save time, he bought a plot of land close to where we lived and built the yacht in the middle of a residential area,' recalls Germán, who was just five at the time. 'That is the first memory I have of a boat under construction. It took him two days to drag the finished boat the 15 kilometres to the water and it blocked the streets for hours.'

*Fjord III*, which Germán found for sale in Santa Monica 45 years later while preparing his final design for Raoul Gardini's *Il Moro di Venezia* America's Cup challenge in San Diego, missed the start of her first race by 47 hours, but promisingly, set the fastest elapsed time to Rio. Two years later, she won the race outright.

The big break for Frers came in the 1954 Bermuda Race. The 50-footer, now in the hands of others, won her class while another Frers design, *Trucha II* (a sistership to *Fjord IV*) finished second overall. *Trucha* was another boat built to the Frers budget formula: a 38ft light displacement down-wind flyer drawn with a reverse transom and almost vertical stem. She was in complete contrast to *Fjord III* or any other long-keeled, heavy displacement designs of the day. 'That boat shocked a lot of people,' Germán recalls. 'Her light displacement was a pioneering idea ahead of its time because modern lightweight materials were just not available to us after the war, so my father compromised on the weight of her construction by reducing the ballast. She was very fast reaching and running, but not fast upwind.'

Luckily, the Bermuda Race that year happened to be predominantly down-wind, and of the seven yachts brought up from Argentina, three – all Frers designs – finished in the money.

*Trucha*'s lines certainly offended the eye of Alfred Loomis, a correspondent to the American magazine *Yachting*. He wrote of her: '*Trucha II* is a light-displacement box, 38ft OA. In overall length, only four boats in the entire fleet were shorter, but like an unsuccessful candidate for a beauty prize, *Trucha* was big in all the wrong places and rated 6th from the top of class D. Be that as it may, this Argentine sloop placed second in class and fleet, highlighting a joint design record (no previous designer had ever had three prize-winning yachts in the race) that has not been approached, let alone bettered by any overseas entries.'

After the race, Germán Snr. sailed back to New York aboard *Mustang*, an S&S-designed New York 32, along with Rod Stephens, the joint head of the then

*'Joanne'* a classic Frers design pictured at the start of the 1949 Fastnet Race with Germán Snr. at the tiller. This was his second trip to Europe following the War, and after looking over other yachts like *'Myth of Malham'* owned by John Illingworth, he travelled back to South America full of fresh ideas to forward his own brand of design thinking.