



Peter Jacops, left, with Rob Holden, right from World Sailing.



The SV14s in action at the Top of the Gulf Regatta.

How the SV14S came to Thailand

Mal Canning, Scott Finsten, Bob Garner, Peter Jacops, and Tim Vanhurck formed Disabled Sailing Thailand in 2015 after hearing the Paralympics had canceled sailing as a sporting event. There had never been an association promoting disabled sailing in Thailand, although there were in many other Southeast Asian nations.

But where would they get their boats?

There was nothing available in Thailand at the time, not even second-hand, and importing them was just too expensive.

Peter, a yacht surveyor and CE inspector by trade, had a boatbuilding school for hearing disabled children in South Africa, so had some experience in the field, but he needed someone to design the boat.

Not having much luck, he decided to reach out to his circle of friends by putting a notice on Facebook asking for pro-bono help designing a disabled sailing boat for Thailand.

Within minutes of the posting, Alex Simonis, a partner in the naval architectural and yacht design studio Simonis Voogd contacted Peter and said his company wanted to take up the challenge.

Peter was adamant that though the boats needed to be affordable, yet they also had to be modern, competitive and sleek. "The problem with most

disabled sailing boats is they really look like disabled sailing boats," he says.

The group soon met with Russell Vollmer at the Royal Cape Yacht Club, Vollmer a parasailer with two Cape Town to Rio crossings under his belt, quickly signed on as an advisor.

The first boat was made out of marine ply and it went on display half-finished at the 2016 Ocean Marina Pattaya Boat Show. Royal Phuket Marina's Gulu Lalvani saw the boat and he agreed to pay to finish it. Ray Ringuet from Austhai Marine then built another boat using the same material giving it to HRH Princess Sirindhorn who on her turn donated it to Disabled Sailing Thailand.

Maarten Voogd of Simonis-Voogd had been visiting Fareast Yachts regularly when he mentioned the project to Demolar Du, the CEO of Fareast Yachts. She was immediately interested and wanted to become involved. She committed to building the first 1,000 SV14s at a subsidized price for disabled sailors, with the standard model costing only cost US\$3000 USD.

As with all models from Fareast Yachts, the S/V14 is a fully vacuum-infused construction in GRP/Foam Core. The rudders and lifting keel fin are made with carbon and the cast iron bulb is encapsulated in glass. The weight is the same as the



original wooden version to allow both models to be used in regattas.

By making these dinghies available at a cost below the raw material cost for the wooden version, the aim is to kick start the class by introducing as many people with disabilities as possible to sailing, with the ultimate goal of seeing participation grow to a number that sailing can take its rightful place once again in the Paralympics.

FarEast Yachts also agreed to keep this price fixed until the end of 2019 after which the price correction will be no more than the material cost, and capped at the official inflation rate as published for the People's Republic of China.

FarEast Yachts is best known as the largest Optimist builder in the world and more recently for their success in the sportsboat market producing a range of boats from 19 to 37ft, with their 28R being an official WorldSailing approved class.

Ocean Marina bought eight S/V 14 dinghies and they arrived in one container just before the Top of the Gulf Regatta, where they participated in the inaugural Thailand S/V 14 Para Sailing Championship sailed over four days during the regatta.

Peter was keen to see how stable and safe they were and how they felt – he was very impressed. World Sailing's Training Delivery Manager

Rob Holden make the trip to Pattaya to see the boats perform and was very impressed.

Working closely with the Thai Paralympic Committee, the long-term goal is to support the establishment of a Thai Para Sailing Team which can represent Thailand and compete regional and global sailing events in the future.

There are several options that can be added to the S/V 14, to allow the boat to be used over the widest possible range of requirements for adaptive sailing, allowing even those with a more severe level of disability to compete in the class by making use of the electric actuator controlled tilting seats.

Simpson Marine was the first company to buy one of the Fareast boats. As Peter now lives in Phuket, he's in the process of trying to build a small fleet of SV14s down there, so they can race together and form their own community.

Peter says there has been a lot of interest in the dinghies, especially in Germany and Holland.

The SV14s have already enabled a whole group of new people to experience the wonderful world of sailing and their popularity is bound to grow.

For more information, contact: sailing@sv14.org

www.disabledsailingthailand.org and www.sv14.org 