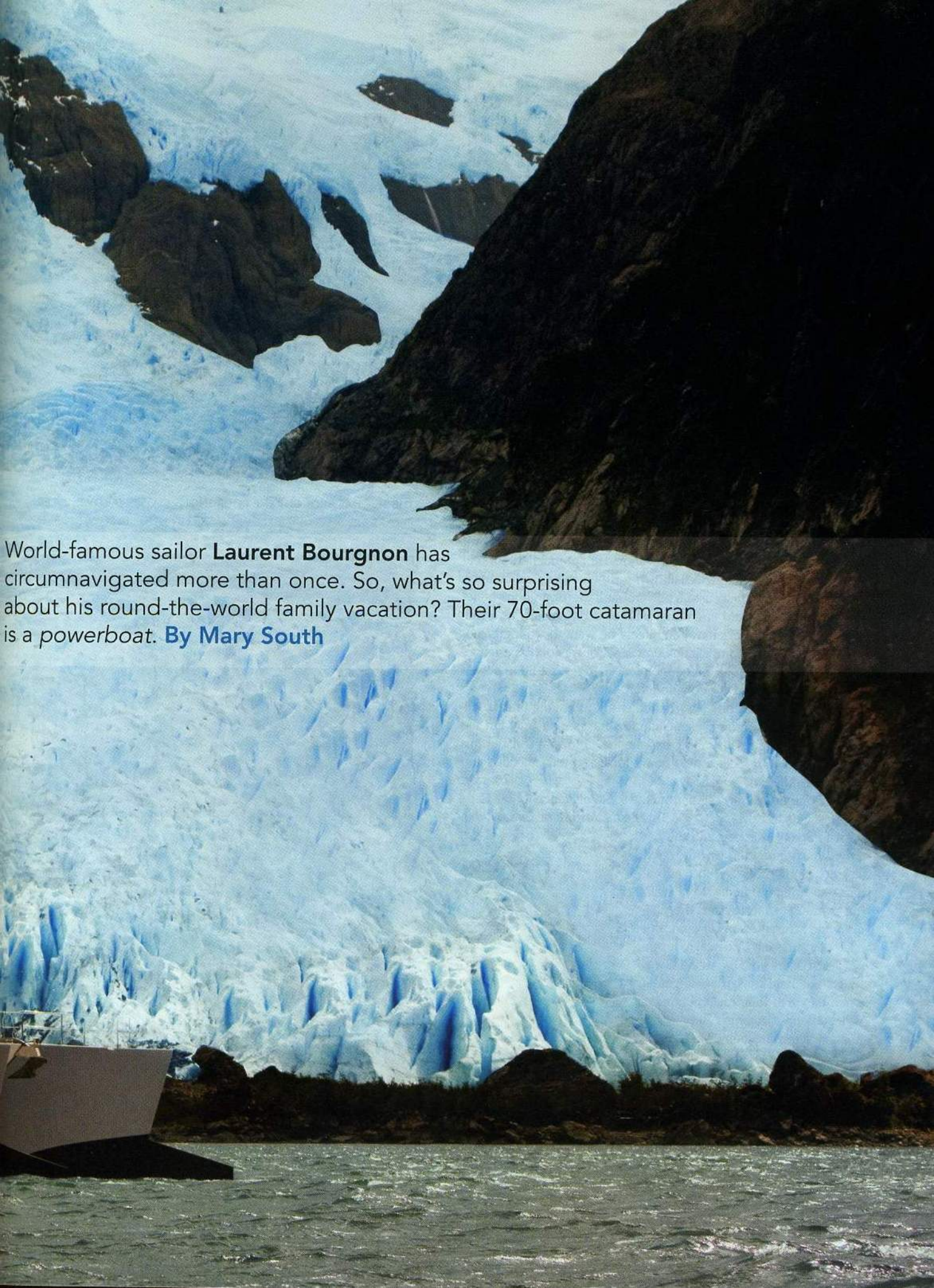




POWER TRIPPING



World-famous sailor **Laurent Bourgnon** has circumnavigated more than once. So, what's so surprising about his round-the-world family vacation? Their 70-foot catamaran is a powerboat. **By Mary South**

It's not much of an exaggeration to say that Swiss yachtsman Laurent Bourgnon has been sailing since he could walk—he crossed the Atlantic with his parents at the age of four—and he has held more records than a jukebox: He made the first transatlantic crossing in a Hobie Cat at age 20. On another occasion, he also set what was a world record, at the time, for a solo transatlantic passage, with a speed of 7 days and 2 hours. Included in that time was a record within a record—a 24-hour run of 538.7 nautical miles that averaged 22.44 knots! He's been aboard multiple winning boats on the Fastnet, came in second in the mini-Transat, has won the Route du Rhum and Figaro races, and was named FICO-Lacoste Skipper of the Year five times. So, clearly, this is a sailor who likes solo adventure and speed in equal measures.

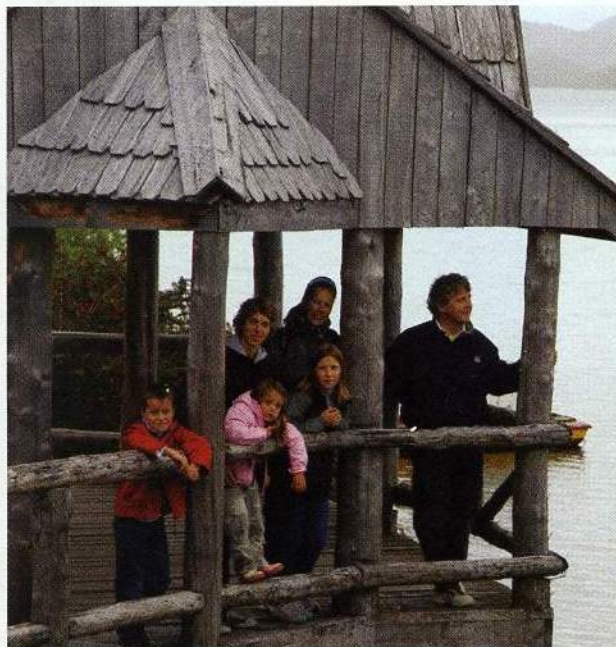
But the trip that influenced him perhaps more than any other was the five-year circumnavigation he made with his family at the tender age of 11. Now, after years of setting records, winning races, and pushing the sailing envelope, Laurent Bourgnon is ready for something different: an adventure with his own family. He and his wife Caroline wanted their children Jules, Justine, Basile, and Loupette to see the world and learn firsthand about the ocean and ecology. They also wanted the kids to learn to speak Spanish and English and to appreciate other cultures. And Laurent, who had spent so much time sailing solo, also yearned to get the family that had always awaited him on terra firma out on the sea to learn the art and share the joys of navigation and cruising.

In some ways it's unsurprising that instead of going the obvious route and setting off on a sailboat, Laurent decided to take up yet another challenge on his family vacation. He approached Sunreef Yachts, of Gdansk, Poland, well-known for their sailing catamarans, about building their first custom powerboat. It was Bourgnon's belief that a powerboat could circumnavigate as economically as a sailboat and, with Sunreef's naval architects, he went to work creating the yacht that would prove it. *Jambo* (See "Conversion Experience," page 49) is the luxurious but economical 70-foot expedition powercat that is the result of this collaboration.

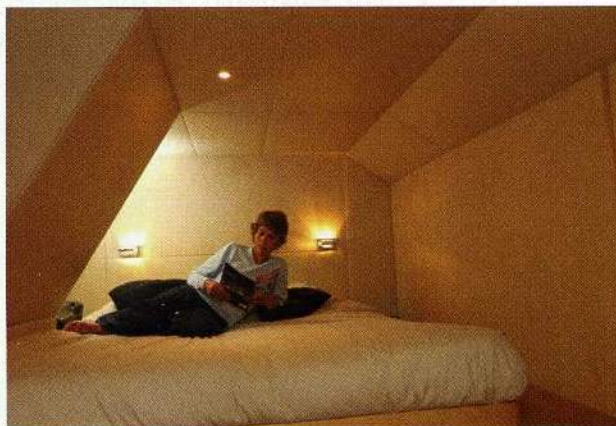
"The powerboat is obviously much easier to handle than a sailboat," explains Bourgnon, "especially for one person only. I'm the only one on board with sailing experience...I love to sail, but this experience is more like a new home for us, so the objective and means are different."

The Bourgnon family set off from the south of France for the Cape Verde Islands in November 2008. This first, short run of 19 days, with stops in Spain, Morocco, and the Canary Islands along the way, provided an interesting start for the adventure—allowing the family to fall into the rhythms of life aboard. The children had school lessons to complete each day and send by e-mail to teachers. Much of the time, the weather was rough but hardships were forgotten when they had their first encounters with bottlenose dolphins, African sunrises, and catching their own dinner.

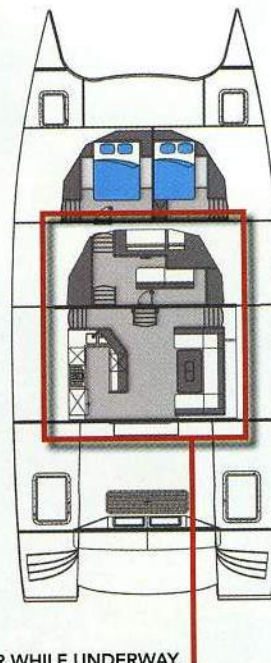
The Bourgnons wanted to linger in the Cape Verde Islands but Laurent knew that they needed to head for Brazil, then south, in order to cross the Strait of Magellan near Tierra del Fuego, while the weather was still favorable. They reached Fernando de Noronha island, off Brazil's northeast coast, on December 10, and spent



THE TRIP HAS BROUGHT THE BOURGNONS CLOSER (ABOVE); JULES RELAXES IN HIS CABIN (BELOW); JAMBO'S ROUTE (BELOW).



LOA: 69'
 BEAM: 30'5"
 DRAFT: 3'9"
 DISPL: 33 tons
 FUEL: 2,377 gal.
 WATER: 264 gal.
 ENGINES: 2 x 370-hp Volvo Penta
 TOP SPEED: 12 knots
 RANGE: 8,000 nm at 8 knots



THE SALON—WITH HELM, GALLEY, AND ENTERTAINMENT AREA—ALLOWS THE WHOLE FAMILY TO BE TOGETHER WHILE UNDERWAY.

Conversion Experience

THE SUNREEF POWER EXPEDITION
 CONVERTS A LEGENDARY SAILOR.

The 70-foot Sunreef Power Expedition yacht is designed for around-the-world voyaging. Twin 370-horsepower Volvo Penta engines give her a range of 8,000 nautical miles at 8 knots. With the optional fuel capacity of two 5,283-gallon fuel tanks, the 70 Sunreef Power can cruise 3,000 nm at 12 knots. Thanks to optimized engines that have been remapped by Sport Systeme, a company specializing in engine electronics for racing cars, as well as a performance-oriented resin-infused hull, Sunreef says this power cat is capable of navigating 20,000 nautical miles at a speed of 8 knots with relatively low fuel consumption. In real life, hull number one, *Jambo*, used only 2,500 gallons of fuel on the passage between Cannes, France, and Puerto Montt in Chile.

Jambo has two navigation stations, one in the salon and one on the mezzanine deck with direct access from the master cabin. The interior features more than 500 square feet of modern yet comfortable living space—all cabins have en suite heads and the salon features fantastic sea views as well as a plasma screen TV and cinema system. The large flying bridge has a dinette with seating, sun mattresses, and a jet ski davit.

"Before buying the Sunreef power catamaran, I was considering a similar-sized sailing yacht," Bourgnon points out. "If you count mast, rigging, and all the parts required by a sailing yacht, the price will be quite the same, if not more expensive, than a power yacht with efficient fuel consumption."

"I'm teaching my son Jules how to handle and maintain the boat. In the future, we will enrich this knowledge with sailboat maneuvering," Bourgnon adds. "But for the moment, and for the entire time of this trip, the powerboat was the only possible choice for me to have fun as well."

three days exploring this ecological wonderland and UNESCO World Heritage site. After Fernando de Noronha, they stopped in Salvador, Rio de Janeiro, Paraty, and Santa Catarina, in the south of Brazil. They celebrated New Year's here, enjoying some foie gras and Bordeaux amid the magnificent scenery, then they burned off the calories with plenty of snorkeling, diving, and windsurfing. Next, they moved on to Uruguay's famed Punta del Este, known as the "St. Tropez of South America," where they arrived on January 8, 2009. They didn't linger long, moving on to Buenos Aires, where they met up with some friends to enjoy the sights and sounds of the Argentine capital for a week.

Continuing their trip down the coast of Argentina, *Jambo* explored the Valdez Peninsula, famous for its mild ocean breeze and warm climate, despite its proximity to the frigid southern latitudes—it was a warm sendoff to Patagonia's less-hospitable climates in Punta Arenas and Puerto Natales.

"The weather while entering the Patagonia channels was not easy," confided Bourgnon. "Fifty to sixty knots wind forward, pretty cold. *Jambo* is very stable and safe but my family, not used to such conditions, needed a moment to get used to it..." The scenery, luckily, was not just distracting, but jaw-dropping, as they navigated past massive blue icebergs and desolate-looking shoreside villages.

In Puerto Montt, Chile, *Jambo* was reprovisioned and prepared for the trip to Robinson Crusoe Island. From there, Team Bourgnon went directly on to Easter Island, with no calls. They crossed the Pacific in fair weather, stopping in the Gambiers and Tuamotu. In Papeete, the two elder children flew to France to spend holidays with their friends.

Jambo is now in Raiatea, which Laurent calls "paradise on earth." In fact, the original one-year plan has gone completely out the port-hole. The entire Bourgnon family is planning to stay here for the next year to explore Polynesia—the kids are even enrolling in local schools. "I hope that this trip will teach them tolerance, openness, and to appreciate what they have," remarked Bourgnon.

Asked about the high point of the voyage so far, Bourgnon admits to no single moment but points to what a great experience it's been to share all this time with his family. "Traveling together, discovering new things together, watching the kids happy, and interested by all the surrounding world...the experience is great." □

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