



## A3 Women's America's Cup Team 15th Anniversary Celebration



'Stars and Stripes v Mighty Mary. Photo: [www.euro-nautica.com](http://www.euro-nautica.com)'

### **Before women's Olympic match racing, before Ellen MacArthur, before the Yngling Girls – there was the Women's Team.**

The brainchild of 1992 America's Cup winner and business maverick Bill Koch, the 1995 America3 women's team brought together top female athletes from across the country, with an unprecedented goal; to race at the same level as the top male sailors in the most prestigious yacht race in the world - the America's Cup.

On May 28 and 29, the team will reunite in San Diego, celebrating the 15th anniversary of their remarkable achievement. The weekend's activities include a Friday sail with local junior sailors and a dinner Saturday night at the San Diego Yacht Club, honoring team founder Koch.

The team was created with dual goals in mind – to earn the right to be the defender in the 29th Match, and to break down barriers. The women of

America3 onboard Mighty Mary (named for Koch's indomitable mother) more than held their own through the grueling defender trials before losing to Dennis Conner's Stars & Stripes. Along the way, they captured the imagination of women (and men!) all over the world, showing everyone just what women can do with their skills, drive and determination.

The idea for the celebration was born during one of three yearly 'mini reunions' of A3 sailors – Annie Gardner, Sarah Cavanagh, Diana Klybert and Suzette Hau'oli Smith. The quartet still works together, coordinating the team building portion of Denver University's MBA program, which helps MBA students gain insight into their leadership style and team effectiveness. Five years ago, at the end of a program, they realized it had been 10 years since they sailed together in the America's Cup. A bottle of Moët later, the reunion took shape.

'We didn't win the Cup, but we won so many other things,' says Gardner. 'We defeated Stars & Stripes in the semis but were informed after the crossing the finish line that a three-way deal had been made that morning (which allowed Stars and Stripes to stay in the competition with Pact 95 and Mighty Mary). It was a heartbreaking moment, but in the end, the cool thing was we proved we could do it. And it really was the time of our lives.'

In addition to the dinner celebration, the main focus of the reunion is the chance to tell their story to a generation that was not yet born when the women's team took the sailing world by storm. On Friday, May 28th, the women of A3 will head to the water in USA11 (Stars & Stripes built for the 1992 Cup and donated for the day by Sail USA) joined by high school sailors participating in the PCISA Women's Invitational. It's an amazing opportunity - for the juniors to sail with women who have competed in the America's Cup, and for the A3 girls to pass along the 'We Can Do It' attitude that embodied the campaign

Expected attendees include Bill Koch, Stephanie Armitage-Kerr, Sarah Bergeron, Sarah Cavanah, Sue Dent, JJ Fetter, Annie Gardner, Diana Klybert, Susie Leech, Katie Pettibone, Marci Porter Lucier, Melissa Purdy, Dawn Riley and Suzette Smith, along with members of the management and shore team.

