

STEVE MURRAY □ HOBIE FLEET 259, SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA, DIVISION 3, HCA SPORTSPERSON OF THE YEAR - 2015

Steve Murray has contributed his time and effort to support the Hobie Community, local and national regattas and has provided insight and development of numerous products to make our sailing experience an excellent one. Steve's qualifications have been earned over forty years of sharing the adventure and love of the sport of Catamaran sailing.

Steve Murray grew up in Los Angeles working and living at his parents' swim school. As the Murray's Swim School grew, Steve and his brother Doug began running it and looking for areas to grow the business. Steve and Doug were always up for an adventure and always looking for the "Next Best Thing." Little did Steve know at the time, that his enthusiasm for adventure and his desire to share his experiences would define his life and professional

career. Steve's way of life would soon become what we all know now as the "Hobie Way of Life."

In 1965, Steve Murray's interests were snow and water skiing. Shortly after Mammoth Mountain ski resort opened, the brothers began their own business of running bus loads of friends and clients up the hill to the resort during the winter and trips to nearby lakes in the summer. Always having an eye for need, these brothers would eventually open a ski shop and rental business out of the Murray's Swim School.

One day, a friend came into the Murray's shop and offered to trade a sail boat for some snow skis. Steve wasn't a sailor, but he thought the proposed trade was fair, so he struck a deal. This whetted Steve's interest in sailing. In 1968, Steve found a Hobie 14 and he never

looked back. Steve jumped on the Hobie 14 early to compliment his water skiing adventures on lake trips. Soon Murray's water ski boat was a common sight at sailing regattas as Steve's interests were turning to sailing. He would stack his Hobie 14 on top of his ski boat so that they could always play, with or without the wind.

In the late '70s to mid '80s, Murray's Marine sold boats out of the old downtown Carpinteria location. Murray's Marine was also an official Hobie parts distributor into the late '80s helping the Hobie company fill parts orders to dealers. They were regularly invited to set up their booth at the Hobie dealer meetings and show their wares. They were producing dozens of products and working with the sailors to improve and innovate on the boats they loved.

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Murray's Marine started building Hobie Cat parts in the mid-70s starting with the Super Traveler, tiller connectors kits, rudder stiffening kits, rigging, non-skid kits, sail repair kits, Coffey Marine wind vanes and Cool Cat Coolers. Eventually, Murray's branded harnesses, wetsuits, bags and spray tops as well as many more products designed to meet sailors' needs. Nowhere else could anyone find someone more dedicated to the Hobie line of products than Steve Murray.

Steve has always been personable and supportive; he listens to people and wants to help. He is innovative, pursuing the next best thing to go faster or be more comfortable while sailing. Many developments came about through talking and playing with friends - experiencing the "Hobie Way of Life."

In the '80s, Steve set off in new directions by organizing ski / sailing adventures in Nebraska, Colorado, Utah, and Mexico. Steve is a community builder and a networker, organizing his ski trips and water ski/sailing adventures. Murray's Marine sponsored thousands of regattas, mostly up and down the West Coast. He hosted the Cachuma regatta from the late '80s to the mid '90s, which was largely known for its generous BBQ dinner on Saturday night.

Murray's crew would attend **thousands of regattas** over the next 30 years with a road booth filled with spare parts. Murray's wasn't just another sponsor at these events, they were a permanent fixture. When Fleet 259 hosted the California State Multihull Championships, the majority of its fleet members did not own a boat of their

own. The fleet owned some Hobie 18s and 16s and kept them on the beach to introduce sailing to the public. While the fleet owned these boats, Steve Murray was instrumental in keeping these boats in repair and ready for use. Steve supplied all the parts necessary, and the fleet supplied the labor to keep the boats maintained and safe.

By the late '90s and 2000s, Murray's sold the majority of their sailing products online. Unfortunately, the Hobie Cat Company's policies precluded any dealer from selling online, so Murray's reluctantly gave up their Hobie dealership to maintain the online business which has proven vital to their survival. Murray's continued success hinges on multiple product lines including kite boarding, wind surfing, SUPs and marine safety.

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Steve Murray favored a fund raising regatta in Santa Barbara years ago. Steve spent countless hours in front of City Council and Water Front Department meetings sacrificing many nights to get this plan approved. Steve was instrumental in making sure that the Santa Barbara Beach was available to catamaran sailors. To this day, Santa Barbara is one of the few places in California that allows catamarans to be stored and sailed right off the beach, all because of Steve.

At the first fund raising regatta for the Santa Barbara Cancer Society, 130 teams showed up. The fleet donated over \$8000. Over the next three years, checks close to the same amount were given to the American Cancer Society.

The Santa Barbara Charity Regatta is now called Wine and Roses and still

donates \$2000–\$3000 every year to the Make-A-Wish Foundation. Steve and Murray's regularly donate thousands of dollars to this charitable Regatta.

Steve officially retired in 2014, but not before inspiring another Hobie Fleet to take its wings in California. In 2011, Steve met a wayward sailor from San Luis Obispo that had somehow sadly missed out on the previous 20 years of the "Hobie Way of Life." Steve's generous donations renewed Hobie Fleet 259 in the form of equipment for raffles and his personal participation in club events. This provided a group of new sailors enough momentum to take flight. Steve Murray (now accompanied by his son Dray), are regular Hobie 18 sailors that actively sail in Fleet 259 fun sails. Steve and Dray travelled to the 18 NACS in the past 3 years as well as Mexico and other local events.

I have known Steve for a few years, but I really got to know him in Mexico in 2013. In a dinner setting over fish tacos and beer (Steve now 71 yrs. old), we were discussing Murrays Marine with a group of sailors. One of the young men at the table asked Steve about the success of his business. Steve's statement was one that could have been predicted. Steve said, "I made a lifestyle choice. If I wanted to be wealthy, there were far more opportunities than the small catamaran industry." He continued, "This is what I wanted to do, these are the people are who I wanted to be with."

Submitted by Scott Erwin  
Hobie Fleet 259