

Close to the Wind

Pete Goss

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On November 3, 1996, former Royal Marine Pete Goss embarked on the most grueling competition in his sailing career: the Vendée Globe, a nonstop, single-handed round-the-world yacht race. For the next seven weeks he met every challenge in his stormy path, from combating waves the height of six-story buildings to grappling with his spinnaker in high winds. Then everything began going wrong: His sails were destroyed, his navigation equipment proved useless. And on Christmas Day his radio picked up a Mayday that a French competitor was sinking 160 miles away. Turning into the hurricane-force winds, Goss set out to rescue a near-dead man on a life raft somewhere in the vast wilderness of the merciless southern ocean. How he did it makes this extraordinary tale as amazing as it is thrilling.

Close to the Wind Details


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Author : Pete Goss

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From Reader Review Close to the Wind for online ebook

Ohenrypacey says

Pete Goss is a larger than life heroic personality. Alone in the southern ocean, tossed by a monster storm, he gives up on his personal ambition in the Vendee Globe race to turn back in to the storm to come to the aid of a fellow racer. It turns out he saves the guy from certain death and as a bonus the race organizers allow him to continue to the finish.

Every bit of the sailing in this book is edge of the seat exciting, and for the most part Goss is very modest about his heroics. The only downside is that the reality of raising the capital to undertake these kinds of adventures has turned him into a self-promotion machine, and the trials and tribulations of the struggle to float his boats bleeds into the story just enough to make the book seem as much a sales pitch as the tale it really is.

Judy says

I think this book would easily have been a 5 star if he had professional help. Just because it is non fiction doesn't mean it has to read like a text book. Still a good read.

Brad Brain says

From what I remember the book is split into 2 sections. Everything that leads up to his sailing the Vendee Globe round the world race and him sailing the race. i found the first part tedious. Not so much because of the background he gives about himself but because of his focus on how he raised the funds to do the race. It is a poor mechanism for suspense since the reader knows that the race is going to be sailed. That being said I found the second half of the book to be totally fascinating. Beating against the "wind" in the southern ocean on a fragile racing yacht is most probably the definition of madness. In my mind Pete Goss is a sailors sailor. And so I didn't think the book was that great the second half totally redeems it for me.

Chris says

3.5/5 Not a bad book. Kept me entertained, but not as good as a voyage for madmen, or other sailing books I've read.

Tim Corke says

A frank and honest account from Pete Goss as he realised his dream of competing in the Vendee Globe and single handedly sailing around the world. The financial difficulties, the impact on friends and family, the wonderful generosity and kindness and of course the personal determination and endeavour. At times it was very specific, and at others not so much. It feels like a true and honest account as it's not glossy and polished,

and clearly some memories stood out more than others, and others weren't pursued as much.

Lisa Swanepoel says

A fascinating story about determination and true grit. People who have so much bravery to go after their dreams no matter what and refusing to live a conventional life amaze me. An inspiring book

Peter Staadecker says

A sailing classic - one of the most extraordinary and heroic sailing rescues imaginable. Wonderful stuff.

The related book covering the same Vendee Globe race, Derek Lundy's "Godforsaken Sea" is a great companion read to this book.

Mrs.Lady says

So much suffering, sure makes you wonder why these people do it. I have read other longdistant sailing accounts though from before when things were not high tech. Back years ago once they left port they were completely out of touch. With the tech comes the need for generators to keep up the battery power to run all the electronic instruments and communication and it seems a great deal of the time was spent fixing these things. And this book was written 20 years ago, now I can imagine. But the sea does not change, no matter the gizmos the challenge to sail in those horrific cold conditions does not change. I guess you have to have a certain insanity to sail the Southern Ocean. This account was certainly full of thrills and a lot of "sure am glad to not be aboard" thoughts. Good going Pete!

Saam says

This non-fictional biography written by the person himself, Pete Goss, is about this sailor who's dream was to participate in the ultimate sailing challenge: the Vendee. When in the Vendee, a sailor had to sail across the world without assistance and make it to the finish line. After some financial difficulties, Pete finally got his shot at the Vendee and he started off pretty well, knowing that he had the smallest boat in the fleet. He came across a couple of storms and a few injuries but he was doing fine until they call every sailor on the radio saying a sailor's boat was sinking and the sailor, Raphael Donelli, needed assistance and he was in the middle of the Southern Ocean. Pete was the closest to him and he had to decide whether he was going to sacrifice his life to save that man or will he let him die in the ocean. I really liked this book because I too am a sailor. I also liked it because of the action happening and the way Pete made it to the Vendee. My only problem was that the pictures were put before the scene in the picture which spoiled the story. I would recommend this book to people who are interested in sailing, who are sailors or people who want to know what courage really is.

Gry says

It's hard to rate this book because it's a phenomenal story, but it just takes way too long for the author to get around to telling it. It seems to me that Goss spent way too much time recounting in detail how he funded his sailing adventures. He could have glossed over much of the first part of this book, and readers would not have minded one bit; in fact, I imagine most would have preferred that. He seemed to want to use this book to document his whole sailing career instead of the adventure the book was supposedly about.

Interestingly, he does gloss over one event, an around the world sail he did with a group of laypersons from a sailing class he was teaching. I almost felt like that event could have been a book in itself!

Finally, the end of this book has the adventure readers had been craving, and it is spectacular. He turns his yacht around in the treacherous Southern Ocean to attempt a rescue of one of his competitors, in spite of all the risks. His sense of duty and loyalty to his fellow sailors is very admirable. I agree with other reviewers that the prose at times is a little clunky--the author has a habit of inserting strange exclamations in the middle of action scenes, but that's just his style, quirky though it may be.

The technical financial talk at the beginning of this book, in all its painstaking detail was two stars in my opinion, but the second half and the ending were five stars all the way. It will make you want to cheer along with the spectators as Goss and his grateful companion cross the finish line.

Lee Yahnker says

Fairly interesting true story on a man who enjoys single handed boat races around the world.

Melissa Luna says

Even having some sailing experience, much of the nautical jargon was lost on me. However, it did not diminish my enjoyment of this harrowing account. Being British, he has a good sense of humor about things, yet it is clear this man is cut from an uncommonly tenacious cloth. I would often find myself whipping along at a frantic pace with him and have to stop, catch my breath, and shake my head in awe.

Pete says

Pete Goss may not be William Shakespeare, but his life is so fascinating, and the story of his solo round-the-world yacht race so gripping, that you never notice the occasionally clunky prose. Forget other so-called 'extreme sports' - sailing a 50-foot long yacht around the bottom of the world through hurricanes where the waves get to be 60 feet high puts all other sporting endeavors to shame. This book is as good a window into the mind and experiences of one of the world's best sailors as you'll probably ever get.

Stephen Kiernan says

Among the great library of ocean adventure stories, this one has a lot to recommend it: A sailor's obsession with a solo circumnavigation, the pressures of costs against safety, the wild sea in the Southern Ocean, even sacrificing a global race in order to make an incredible rescue of another sailor.

But there are two problems.

One is proportion. We read twice as much about preparation (or maybe three times) as we do about the actual sailing. I kept telling the book to get on with it.

The other problem is what I can only call log-rolling. It's as if the sponsors of his boat were also sponsors of this book. There's even a list at the back of the book of companies that donated money or equipment -- totally cringe-worthy.

Colin says

Ma Mami always said that if you want to own a boat just stand in the shower tearing up hundred dollar bills, this book sheds a little truth on that. Super wet, super expensive and never without it's problems yet full of adventure and brushes with death, especially in the violent storms of the southern ocean. This fella Pete Goss lives for the thrill of the sea and the wind that whips it. On the other hand his writing style is a bit dry and he often uses nautical terms that most people wouldn't understand. It's almost like he wrote this book for a sailing buddy to read and "sod" the rest of us. That's right, anywhere you would usually expect a classic cuss word, ol' Pete uses "sod", It's just not as satisfying as saying fuck or shit... I've tested all three in succession.
