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While others focus on what's wrong with the environment, *Cruising World* editors choose a different tack for the **2011 SAIL GREEN** issue: people engaged in making things right. Read on.

## Mike Horn: Tap the Energy of Youth

**T**HE IDEA CAME TO HIM in the high northern latitudes, on a lonely trek across Alaska, Canada, Siberia, and Greenland. For Mike Horn, a lifelong adventurer whose epic voyages and expeditions have literally taken him to the very ends of Earth, his solo, two-year circumnavigation of the Arctic Circle gave him plenty of time to ponder the state of the planet and to reflect on where he'd been and what he'd seen. The thoughts, at first unsettling, were ultimately inspirational.

"After years of crossing oceans and deserts, of climbing mountains and going to the poles, I decided to share my knowledge about the elements with the younger generation," he said last September when he arrived in Boston after he'd completed a successful transit of the Northwest Passage.

"To do it properly," he continued, "I'd need a base of operations that could take me anywhere in the world, up rivers, across the seas, into the ice. A vessel that would go wherever I pointed my finger on a map."

Both the vessel and the expedition Horn dreamed of—both named for the hypothetical supercontinent of eons past, *Pangaea*, or "one world"—came to life three years ago. Horn built the boat far from the coast in a Brazilian slum, where he spent time teaching the locals welding and carpentry skills and crafted his 105-foot, state-of-the-art "workboat" of aluminum and other recyclable materials.

Since *Pangaea's* launch, the 46-year-old Horn and his rotating international crew of

Young Explorers, ranging in age from 15 to 22, have covered over 120,000 nautical miles and undertaken nine major projects, from tagging endangered polar bears in the Arctic to eradicating crown thorn starfish that were devouring coral reefs in Indonesia.

Once they're selected for the program—aspiring Young Explorers can apply by visiting Horn's website ([www.mikehorn.com](http://www.mikehorn.com))—*Pangaea's* youthful crewmembers, representing every continent, are put through a rigorous training regimen in Switzerland, and also receive instruction in blogging and filmmaking. During and after their time aboard, through firsthand experience, they become journalists and activists. Horn isn't exaggerating when he says that a stint aboard *Pangaea* is a "life-changing" experience.

"The problem today is that we're losing contact with nature, forgetting its beauty and, most important, its overwhelming power," said Horn. "People ask me about new energy sources for the future, and I always say, 'The younger generation.' They have untapped sources of energy. Why shouldn't we empower the people who are going to live on this planet when you and I are no longer here? We need to invest in the youth, and in a way, that's what I do."

Going forward, Horn envisions a bigger *Pangaea*, a 200-foot catamaran aboard which he can take not a dozen but 40 Young Explorers to sea. "The idea is to finish and sustain the projects we've started and to get more young adults involved in new ones," he said. "We just need more space. We've proven that the concept works. Now we need more projects and more ambassadors. We need to keep the momentum going. We need to make it bigger."

**Herb McCormick**

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COURTESY OF MIKE HORN