



Lia Ditton is attempting to become the first woman and only the third person to row solo across the North Pacific. Photo credit: Christian Agha

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Ocean Signal: Renowned Naval Architect Jim Antrim to Design New Boat for Lia Ditton's Bid to Become First Woman to Row Solo Across North Pacific

Ocean Signal-backed athlete will attempt the world-record row from Japan to San Francisco in April 2019

Award-winning naval architect Jim Antrim is designing a new cutting-edge

ocean rowing boat for a groundbreaking North Pacific row attempt next year.

Renowned in the industry for his leading-edge vessel designs and diverse portfolio, Antrim is working with experienced and talented solo rower Lia Ditton to develop the boat for her world record-breaking bid to become the first woman and only the third person to row solo across possibly the wildest stretch of ocean in the world.

The new boat by Antrim Designs will be lighter, faster and, perhaps most importantly, safer than Ditton's existing training boat. It will be easier to propel through the water, less likely to be severely damaged in the event of a capsize and capable of withstanding the tough conditions expected during the 5000-nautical mile crossing from Japan to San Francisco, scheduled to start in April 2019.

With safety a primary concern, Ditton is also supported by safety at sea specialist Ocean Signal as the Project Safety Sponsor. The Ocean Signal equipment, which will be secured to the interior of the boat or carried by Ditton to help reduce the risk as much as possible, includes two rescueME PLB1 Personal Locator Beacons, a SafeSea E100G EPIRB Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon, a SafeSeaV100 VHF handheld radio and a rescueME EDF1 Electronic Distress Flare,

Based in El Sobrante in California, Antrim has designed a huge variety of boats, including raceboats, cruisers, rowboats and electric boats, many of them record-setters. One of his custom-made vessels, Orca, holds a Guinness World Record for the first multihull to successfully row across an ocean and set new records for most miles rowed in 24 hours.

Ditton's collaboration with Antrim Designs has already yielded successful results after Antrim designed a new carbon rudder, built last year by US foil builder Larry Tuttle, for her existing boat. The new rudder resulted in a remarkable 30% increase in boat speed, which could mean a month less time at sea on next year's epic voyage.

Jim Antrim said: "I am really excited to be designing a new boat for Lia Ditton in her quest to be the first woman, and third human, to row the North Pacific solo. It's a project loaded with unique challenges, bold adventure, woman against nature, or rather working with it. It's life on the edge. I love this stuff!

“After more than 45 years designing boats I have a pretty good sense of what projects have legs. Lia is an excellent speaker: very personable, witty, and engaging, good at self-promotion; and she has the experience to back it up. Lia is organized and goal oriented. She is approaching this row like a professional athlete - training hard, and surrounding herself with a team of skilled advisors. Finally, she is tenacious and driven to succeed. Success in ocean rowing has a lot to do with perseverance. Face the obstacles and keep going. Make no mistake: this is a tough challenge. Many have tried and failed. But I feel confident that one day I will be greeting Lia as she rows under the Golden Gate Bridge, at the end of her long voyage. It’s going to happen!”

Licensed captain Ditton, 36, has more than 150,000 nautical miles of experience and has competed in some of the world’s most challenging ocean races. She was the only woman to complete the OSTAR 2005 single-handed transatlantic race; finished second in the Route du Rhum, France’s most-prestigious, single-handed transatlantic race; captained the boat from the film Waterworld; become the 53rd woman to row the Atlantic and the 64th woman to row any ocean, and project managed the largest solar-powered boat in the world.

Ditton, who announced the new partnership in her latest [blog](#), said: “Antrim Designs was a natural first choice, so I am delighted to be working with Jim. My first solo transatlantic race was in a 35ft trimaran in 2005, after which I took an Antrim 40 trimaran 1,000 miles up the coast of the US from Florida. During the delivery, I gained first-hand experience that Antrim designs were both solid and safe, as well as incredibly fast - a rare combination. In the same boat, I raced the Black Dog Dash double-handed, which remains one of the best days of racing of my life!”

Ocean Signal Sales and Marketing Manager James Hewitt added: “We are really excited to hear that Lia’s ground-breaking attempt will now be backed by such a well-known name from the world of design. The improved capabilities and features of the new boat will make the voyage much safer for Lia and reduce the probability that she will actually have to contact rescue services using one of the Ocean Signal devices! However, we are really pleased that our products will give her the further reassurance she needs when she is thousands of miles from land that she can reach the rescue authorities at the press of a button. We wish her good luck with all her preparations.”

For more information on Lia Ditton, go to www.rowliarow.com follow Lia on Twitter @RowLiaRow or Facebook at www.facebook.com/rowliarow. To support the RowLiaRow crowdfunding campaign, go to www.patreon.com/RowLiaRow.

For more details about Jim Antrim, visit www.antrimdesign.com/. For further information about Ocean Signal's products, visit www.oceansignal.com.

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Notes for Editors

Suitable for use on land or at sea, Ocean Signal's [rescueME PLB1](#) is the world's smallest personal locator beacon and is specifically designed to be small and light enough to carry or attach to clothing for instant access to emergency services at the press of a button. The Ocean Signal [SafeSea EPIRB](#) will be attached to the boat and also communicates a survivor's location to the rescue authorities. It has the longest quoted operational battery life in the industry with enough capacity to operate the EPIRB continuously, typically for four whole days (96 hours). The rugged and fully waterproof [SafeSeaV100 VHF](#) features ergonomic design, durable laser etched keypad, high contrast backlit LCD and backlit keys and is supplied with all the 21 international simplex channels required. A highly efficient transmitter helps to maximise the battery life. The lightweight [rescueME EDF1](#) is 40% smaller than similar devices and burns for six hours whereas a traditional flare burns for about 30 seconds.

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About Ocean Signal

Communication and safety at sea specialist Ocean Signal™ is dedicated to providing the technology and quality of product that will set industry standards.

Ocean Signal's product portfolio consists of the rescueME range of products, including the rescueME PLB1, the rescueME MOB1, the rescueME EPIRB1 and the rescueME EDF1 electronic distress flare, plus the AIS Alarm Box, and the SafeSea range of GMDSS products, including the E100 and E100G EPIRB, S100 SART and V100 handheld VHF radio, as well as the M100 and M100X professional MSLD and E101V float-free EPIRB with integrated voyage data record memory capsule. They provide both recreational and commercial mariners with simple to use, compact and affordable life-saving solutions. All products are engineered by a highly experienced team of marine electronics professionals.

Ocean Signal products are trusted by high-profile sailors, rowers, surfers and powerboat racing teams. Providing some of the world's best competitors and adventurers with vital safety and communication devices, the company's rescueME MOB1 has been selected to enhance safety standards for crew taking part in the Clipper 2017-18 Round the World Yacht Race. Ocean Signal has also sponsored the crew of Simply Fun with rescueME MOB1s, rescueME PLBs and a rescueME EPIRB1 in the 2016 Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race, the 16-man crew of Triton with rescueME MOB1s in the 2015 Rolex Sydney

Hobart Yacht Race, record-breaking sailor Andrea Mura in the single-handed OSTAR race, Mini Transat 2015 solo sailor Lizzy Foreman, Atlantic rowing duo Ocean Valour, Venture Cup offshore powerboat race team Cinzano, kite racer Gina Hewson and canoeist Adam Weymouth.

Safety and communication products from Ocean Signal offer exceptional value, meeting or exceeding international technical and safety standards. Careful design and innovation provides commercial shipping, fishing and recreational users the confidence that their Ocean Signal equipment will work to, and beyond, their expectations when it is needed most.