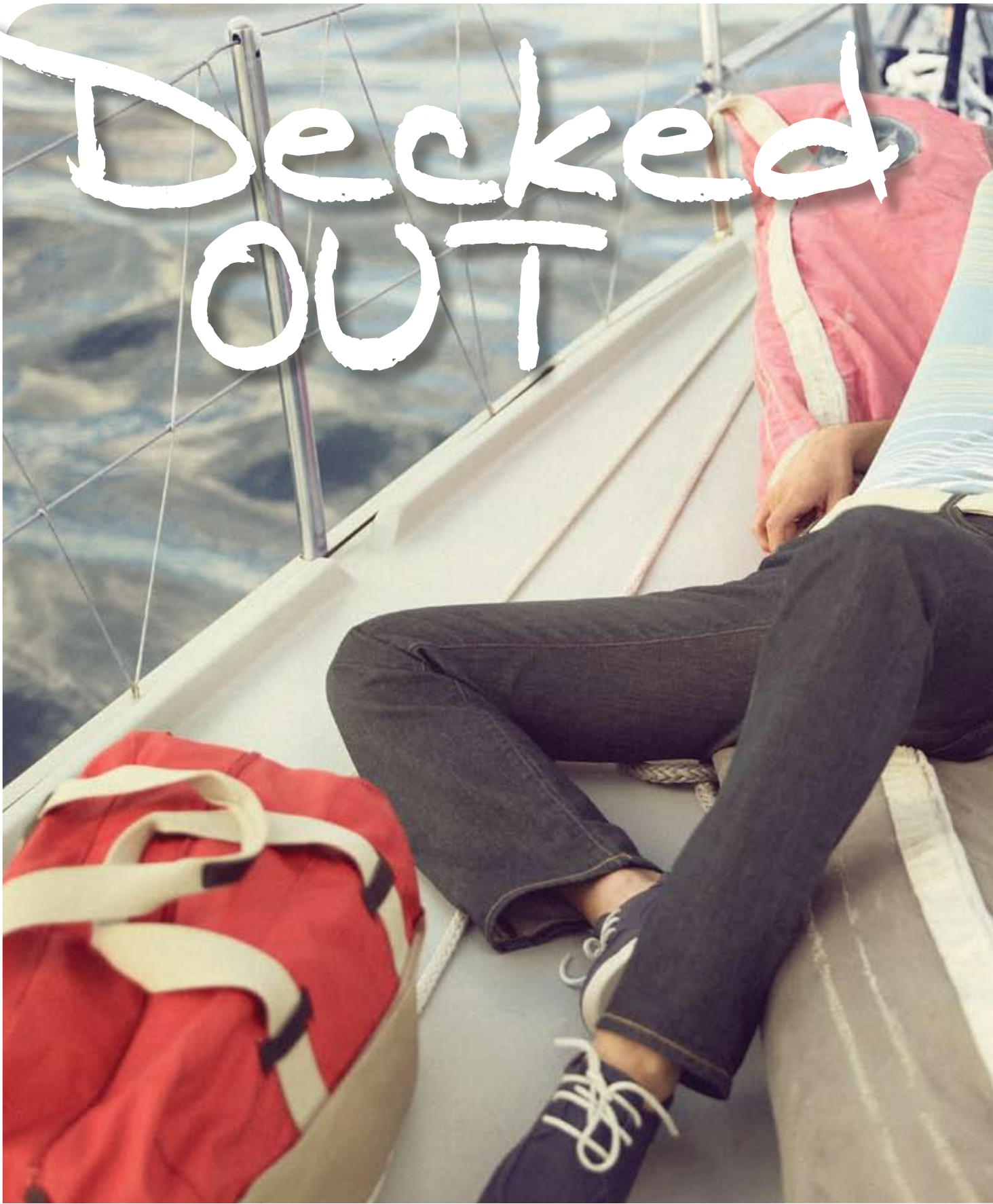


Decked OUT





Salma Hayek. In Boston. On a yacht. Launching a new range of clothing from Puma. Oh, and would you like to go? Is Tiger Woods any good at hitting balls with sticks? iQ packed its sailor cap and headed to TV's lawsuit capital



Ever the entertainer, Salma invites Puma CEO Jochen Zeitz to "pull my finger"

You know that a product launch is going to be special when it involves flying out a collection of fashion editors, sailing journalists and big industry players from every corner of the globe. And when a brand that reinvented the golfing uniform and recently collaborated with fashion big-hitter, Alexander McQueen, launches a new product, expectations are high. Add to this an appearance from a genuine Hollywood A-lister, actress Salma Hayek, and you understand the importance of this move for Puma.

Using the around-the-world sailing extravaganza that is the Volvo Ocean Race as a platform for the launch, Puma are moving into their most adventurous area yet, both in terms of performance and leisure clothing, and sponsorship. The company has splashed out on a state-of-the-art racing yacht called *Il Mostro*, poached a crew of 10 world-class sailors and even got an on-board media director. The 10-month race, also known as the 'Everest of Sailing', will see Puma's new craft travel 37,000 miles around the globe, from the icy conditions of the Atlantic ocean to the tropical climates of Brazil and India.

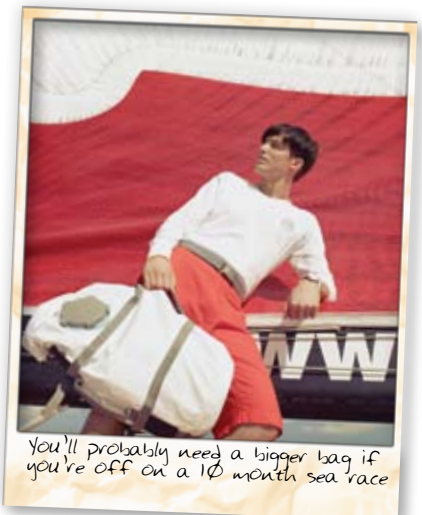
The crew's training base will be in Newport for the next four months and the race will be making its only US stop in Boston, also the home of Puma's US headquarters.

The performance clothing collection was developed with feedback from the racing

team and will be worn by the *Il Mostro* boys throughout the race. Even the boat's design – menacing red and black – has been influenced by Puma's strong graphic details, and is based on the look of one of the company's most popular and iconic shoes, the 'mostro'.

But will the range of clothing have a similar impact? Puma's chief marketing officer, Antonio Bertone – a twenty-something marketing visionary – believes so. He arrived at the Boston launch fresh from his first visit to the UAE where PPR, the French conglomerate and parent company of Puma and Gucci, held a large strategic meeting.

"I was so excited when I found out I was going to Dubai," he told iQ. "I wasn't sure what to expect but with all the construction that's going on, it's like an instant metropolis – I think the vision behind the place is fascinating.



You'll probably need a bigger bag if you're off on a 10 month sea race

*Puma's black and red cat of the seas, *Il Mostro**

It's very Las Vegas but I want to go back in about five years, once everything's calmed down. I think the place is going to be amazing."

Bertone may be back sooner than expected, especially if the Puma collection has as much of an impact on the world of sailing as he expects – because, let's face it, Dubai is full of boats. Bertone continues: "Sailing has always been on the radar and the Volvo Ocean Race was the perfect avenue to launch a sailing collection. Sailing needs Puma, and we made the same statement when we entered golfing. There are so many kids out there that don't

'I hope I didn't break the boat!' - Salma Hayek

find these sports accessible and often that's an image thing. I mean, how do you make sailing attractive to a fashion-savvy Puma consumer? We took the basic sailing silhouette and tweaked it for a younger, cooler kid, creating functional, edgy and attractive products, and I think we've found a good match between what the crew are wearing on the boat and what everyone's going to be wearing on the street. Our deck shoes are exciting, they're a great product." iQ interrupts to rave about a pair of tailored navy striped shorts from the collection that a passing sailor is wearing. "Yeah, they're cool too! And my favourite piece from the collection is the red barrel bag. Even though it's from the performance wear collection, it'll look great on the street with jeans and sneakers," nods Bertone.

Puma's recent collaboration with Alexander McQueen produced a successful range of unconventional footwear, inspired by the anatomy of the foot, and Bertone believes that other partnerships with designers is something that Puma is very open to. Hopefully it's

something that we may see more of in the future.

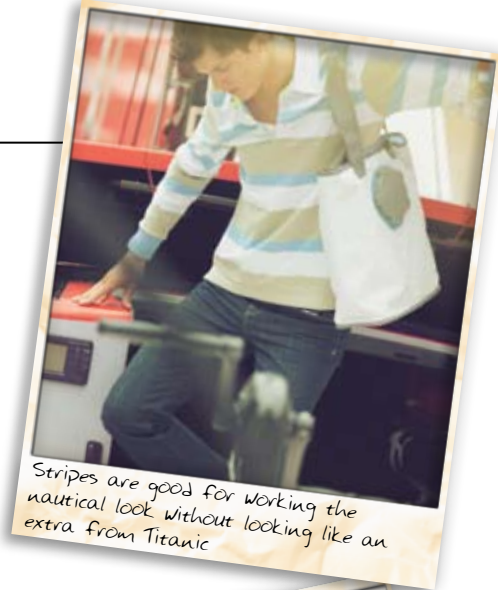
"There are many brands that work with designers and I still think that these partnerships are very commercially viable. And with the huge pool of design talent out there, there are still plenty of people we'd like to work with," said Bertone.

Using the Institute of Contemporary Art as a venue for the launch, Puma transformed the lobby into a showroom for the performance and lifestyle collections, including footwear and accessories. The waterfront venue was also used as a setting for a fashion shoot for the collection by world-renowned photographer Todd Cole earlier in the day. And speaking

of fashion, Puma's venture into sailing has coincided with a timely trend for all things nautical and naval in the menswear collections from some of fashion's big-hitters.

Following a lavish dinner and plenty of bubbly at the bar, Salma Hayek finally made her appearance to christen Puma's new racing vessel, which was revealed in the chilly New England evening. We doubt it was nerves, but for whatever reason, it took the *Frida* actress and *Ugly Betty* producer five tries – and some muscle from a nearby sailor – before eventually smashing the bottle of champers against the side of Il Mostro. "I hope I didn't break the boat," she joked with iQ afterwards.

Thankfully, luck seems to be with Il Mostro, despite the superstitiously dubious presence of a rather large black (Puma) cat on its side. Salma didn't sink it with her mildly pathetic bottle-smashing antics. In fact, the last we heard, the yacht was leading the biennial Newport-Bermuda race, a 635 mile slog the Il Mostro team were using as a tune-up for the Volvo Ocean Race. ★



Stripes are good for working the nautical look without looking like an extra from Titanic



Are those cycling shorts? Surely not. We'll take the pullover though



BOTTLED IT

Salma needs several attempts, and some help from a passing sailor, to christen Puma's new Il Mostro yacht.

POWER BAG

Bold, bulging and bright – the new bag of choice for sailors is also the perfect no nonsense weekend bag for the rest of us.



HOODIE

It might not be useful mid-July in Dubai, but you'll be thankful for this funky waterproof out at sea.

Words PAUL EWART