



Lower Manhattan before...



...and after 9/11



The North Tower well ablaze

# 9/11 REVISITED

BY MICHAEL PIGNÉGUY

**T**he dramatic outline of Lower Manhattan stood out clearly against the early morning cloudless blue sky, the Twin Towers of the World Trade Centre dominating the scene.

A light nor'nor'easter barely caused a ripple on the fast outflowing Hudson River, and flags in the marina hung limply. Although I was less than 1.5km from one of the busiest cities in the world, it was remarkably quiet and peaceful for a Tuesday morning. It was September 11, 2001, and there was absolutely no hint of the history-changing catastrophe that was about to occur.

I had the 27.6m (84ft) *Aisling* berthed in the Newport Marina in Jersey City, right on the banks of the Hudson River, having moved the previous day across from North Cove Marina, which lies in the shadows of the Twin Towers. At US\$5 per foot per day it was (luckily, it turned out) a tad too expensive for a long-term stay.

After joining the boat in Boston the previous week, I had brought her down to New York, arriving there on Saturday,

September 8. It was my first visit to this icon of Americanism, and I was actually looking forward to seeing what forms of life stirred within the concrete canyons of Manhattan.

Approaching New York from the north after leaving Long Island Sound and entering East River, we were confronted with a view of the Bronx, which looks just about as bad as a high-density area can get. Things didn't really improve until we passed through Hell's Gate (appropriately named in more ways than one!) under the Triborough Bridge, and for the next 11km we had the towering, more modern, buildings of Manhattan to starboard.

There was, as always, a lot of traffic to avoid, and after negotiating past the fast-moving Staten Island ferries, we rounded Lower Manhattan and headed north into the murky and fast-flowing Hudson River.

Berthing in North Cove was similar to a Mediterranean port; stern-to, with fenders out each side and the public walking on the quay right past our gangway. After some on-board functions for

the owner we moved across to Jersey City on the Monday.

Later that day I paid a quick visit to a bank on the ground floor of the World Trade Centre, little knowing what the scene here would be like less than 24 hours later.

All on board heard a "whump" sound, not very loud, but enough for us to take notice. There was a lot of building activity going on around the marina, and at first we associated the sound with that, until we saw a lot of people running towards a small park, close to the marina, which presented a clear view across the river to Manhattan. It was then that we saw smoke billowing out of one of the Twin Towers. It was 0846, and American Airlines flight 11 had just flown into the northern side of the North Tower of the World Trade Centre.

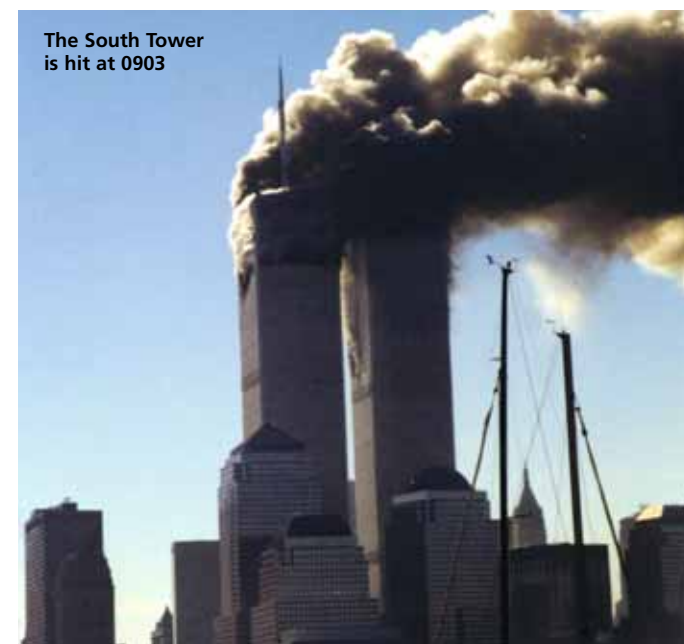
The cause of the fire was still unknown to us, and it just looked like a terrible accident from within the building. I had just taken a series of photographs and had turned to walk back to the boat when there was another explosion. This time it was followed by a collective moaning cry of "Oh no!" from the crowd, and it made the hairs on the back of my neck stand up. Of all the events that happened that day, it was that sound of frightened people that stands out in my mind.

I turned just in time to see the vivid orange and red flames of the explosion caused by United Airlines flight 175 flying into the side of the South Tower. It was now 0903, and millions around the world had just witnessed this history-changing event live on television.

We were watching a surreal scene. Two of the tallest ►



The North Tower is hit at 0846



The South Tower is hit at 0903

**International®**  
Marine Coatings

*International Paint*  
A global company  
providing coatings and service  
to the marine industry  
within New Zealand  
and throughout the world

For information on our range of Marine and Protective coatings, phone 0800 808 807 or visit [www.international-marine.com](http://www.international-marine.com)

International Paint  
686 Rosebank Rd, Avondale, Auckland

**Reliability. Durability. Simplicity.**

- Marine generators from 4.5kw to 700 kw
- Compact and powerful package
- Low RPMs for long life
- Proven quality and reliability
- First choice of many production boat builders and most super yachts worldwide
- New super quiet sound enclosure

156 Beaumont St  
Westhaven  
Box 46 192  
Heme Bay  
Auckland

**NORTHERN LIGHTS**

Ph: +64 9 358 2050  
Fax: +64 9 358 0285  
Email: [sales@whitingpower.com](mailto:sales@whitingpower.com)  
[www.whitingpower.com](http://www.whitingpower.com)