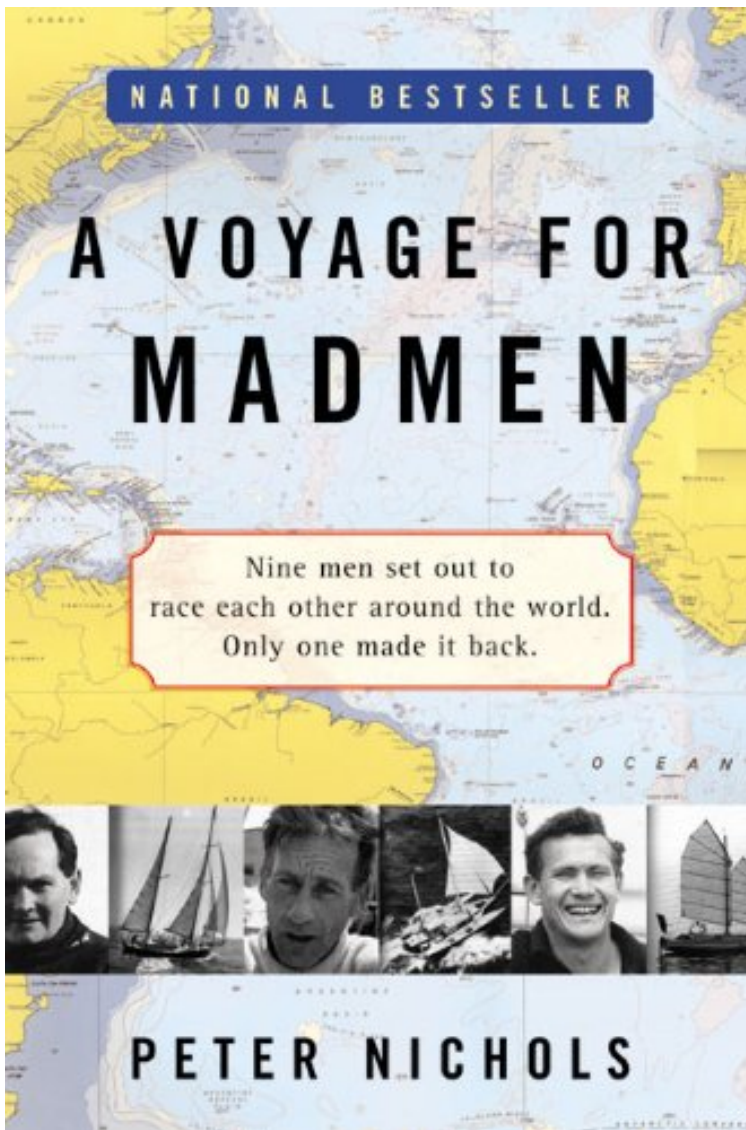


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A Voyage For Madmen



Par Peter Nichols
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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurIn 1968, nine sailors set off on the most daring race ever held: to single-handedly circumnavigate the globe nonstop. It was a feat that had never been accomplished and one that would forever change the face of sailing. Ten months later, only one of the nine men would cross the finish line and earn fame, wealth, and glory. For the others, the reward was madness, failure, and death.In this extraordinary book, Peter Nichols chronicles a contest of the individual against the sea, waged at a time before cell phones, satellite dishes, and electronic positioning systems. A Voyage for Madmen is a tale of sailors driven by their own dreams and demons, of horrific storms in the Southern Ocean, and of those riveting moments when a split-second decision means the difference between life and death..co.ukRich with excitement, accomplished, gripping and authoritative, A Voyage for Madmen is the story of the yachting tournament

from hell written by a man who is himself a gifted sailor as well as writer. Peter Nichols' previous book, *Sea Change*, was the telling account of his own crossing of the Atlantic in a ridiculously small wooden boat. Now he's taken the skills he employed in that much-praised slice of autobiography to relay another quixotic tale. The subject this time is the infamous Golden Globe yacht race of 1968, when nine men, some French, some English, all bonkers (hence the title), undertook the most challenging adventure of their lives. The goal was to sail around the world solo, a feat no one had yet achieved; to make matters just that extra bit tricky some of the sailors were total novices. The book analyses the fate of each sailor in turn. Using polished, craftsman-like, clear and sometimes moving prose, Nichols describes how the nine fought through storms and collisions, through the roaring 40s and the furious 50s, and how each man experienced those moments of solitary despair, lonely disappointment and occasional mystical elation that are unique to long-haul solo sailing. One of the most commendable features of the book is the way Nichols discusses the technical side of yachtsmanship with verve and passion without ever turning into an anorak. This is a fine and absorbing true-life tragicomedy, suitable for landlubbers and sea dogs alike. --Sean Thomas From Publishers Weekly

In the psychedelic summer of 1968, as Apollo 8 soared toward the moon and the Democratic Convention crashed in Chicago, nine men tried finally to accomplish the sailor's age-old ultimate goal: a solo, nonstop circumnavigation of the world. Nichols (*Sea Change*) deftly introduces myriad aspects of a voyage that promised "dubious, unquantifiable" rewards. He insightfully contextualizes the endeavor as an offshoot of Sir Francis Chichester's famous 1967 solo circumnavigation (with one stop), which represented to England a "longed-for" heroism. Detailing the British media's successful exploitation of the so-called race, he approaches the voyage as the remarkable result of nine men wishing to outdo Chichester. Nichols painstakingly describes the enormous difficulty of solo navigation in the pre-global positioning system of the 1960s. These "hardcase egomaniacs driven by complex desires and vainglory to attempt an extreme, life-threatening endeavor" used only rudimentary equipment and their wits. Nichols is at his liveliest when describing the only two participants who "were really happy aboard their boats": the French-Asian Bernard Moitessier, the most skilled sailor, whose mystical seamanship brings surprises, and the British Robin Knox-Johnson, who was energized during his journey by the memory of "the Elizabethan sea heroes of his youth."

Nichols also delivers a compelling portrait of English Donald Crowhurst, an electronics engineer whose "supercharged personality" wreaked havoc on the entire race. While Nichols's pace is neither breakneck nor suspenseful, his careful details and psychological insight make for a riveting account of the triumphant human spirit. 16-page photo insert, 8 maps. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc.