

# Mirror Works



# SEA Shelley

LIFT OFF:  
Shelley and  
Debra race in  
their Honda 225  
powerboat

## Grand Prix champion

**S**HELLEY Jory is one of Britain's leading powerboat racers. She and Debra France make up the only all-female team in the Honda 225 British championships.

Shelley juggles her passion for racing with running a successful family bridal-wear business - a far cry from the male-dominated world of powerboat racing. Here Shelley, 34, who lives in Southampton with boat-builder and powerboat racer Peter Berrow, tells **YVONNE SWANN** about her career.

**I HADN'T** had anything much to do with boats before I began racing. Then when I met Peter my interest was

**JOB  
FOCUS**



awakened. He had built himself a Revenger powerboat in his shed. We just used it for pleasure at first and watched the races. We thought: "Wow - how fantastic. We could never afford to do that. It's a millionaire's game."

Then in 1995 Peter said he'd really love to race. I said: "Why don't we?" He and his friend won the first competition they went into. We were hooked.

In 1997 I became the navigator. We raced for about three years and did really well in the British national championships as the boyfriend/girlfriend team - coming second and third.

My next ambition was to drive a powerboat myself. In 2000 I bought the smallest class you can race, a 1.3-litre, and Peter set it all up.

## with a powerboat passion

I asked my best friend Darrell Elmes to be my navigator because I quite fancied the all-girl team idea. We had a great season. We were nicknamed the Bad Girls.

In 2002 ex-marine Chris Bryan asked me to go into the 2-litre world championships with him in South Africa. We won the bronze medal and I was the only female competitor.

Peter and I bought a 27ft Revenger rigid inflatable boat and successfully raced it together for the season.

Driving is the absolute adrenalin buzz - the huge speed, the boats on either side of you and the thrill of competing. When I finish a race I am absolutely physically and mentally drained.

In 2003 I was asked to go into the one-design V24 powerboat series. It was a great boat with a canopy. You

are strapped in like a fighter-jet pilot and it could reach 75mph-plus. I took on a new navigator, Gavin Brown.

That year we had a really serious accident off Cowes. We tripped on a wave and the boat went skyward before nose-diving to the bottom.

We train in a simulator under water, but a crash of this kind is like hitting a concrete wall at 70mph. We both got out without a scratch. But we were very shaken, and the boat had sunk.

Last year I agreed to race in the Honda 225 series. My navigator was Debra France. We did fantastically, winning the Grand Prix in Scotland - the only all-girl team against 15 teams of men. Then Peter navi-



DAY JOB: Bridalwear

gated for me in the Honda 225 during the three-hour Endurance Race on Windermere. We won the class and set two records.

I am now sponsored by Raymarine (Marine Electronics) and Schroders, who organise the Boat Show in London's Docklands.

Racing is my passion, but it's not all I do. Every weekday I'm busy working in the family business. Brides of Southampton was started by my parents in 1976, and I have worked there most of my life.

I spend all week smartly dressed with 13 female staff and hardly see any men, and then at the weekend I'm in a man's world of raceboats and greasy engines.

My business must come first - without it I wouldn't be able to afford my boats. Nothing beats the excitement of driving a powerful boat to victory.

● The London Boat show starts today. For details [www.schroderslondonboatshow.com](http://www.schroderslondonboatshow.com)