

In the other room, Pony Nehmert and Andrea Rauscheid had played a tremendous set. They had also finished early and were watching the last four or five hands on Vugraph. They were cheering along with all the German supporters, secure in the knowledge that we couldn't lose no matter how stupid Daniela and I were on the remaining hands. What a feeling. We had finally done it — we were World Champions!

1998 Macallan Invitational Pairs

The *Macallan* is one of world's truly great bridge events, and 1998 was particularly special as two pairs of women finished in the top three. There was one memorable hand from the match on Vugraph between Daniela and myself and Britain's Nicola Smith and Pat Davies, who eventually just beat us out for second place.

<p>WEST</p> <p>♠ Q</p> <p>♥ 8 4 3</p> <p>♦ J 7 4 2</p> <p>♣ AK 10 9 3</p>	<p>NORTH</p> <p>♠ 10 9 5</p> <p>♥ J 10 9 2</p> <p>♦ Q 10 9 8 3</p> <p>♣ 4</p>	<p>EAST</p> <p>♠ AK 8 2</p> <p>♥ A Q 5</p> <p>♦ AK 5</p> <p>♣ Q J 8</p>	
<p>SOUTH</p> <p>♠ J 7 6 4 3</p> <p>♥ K 7 6</p> <p>♦ 6</p> <p>♣ 7 6 5 2</p>			

Neither vul., IMPS

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
<i>Daniela</i>	<i>Smith</i>	<i>Me</i>	<i>Davies</i>
1♠ ²	pass	1♣ ¹	pass
3♣ ³	pass	2NT	pass
		6NT	all pass

1. Strong, artificial
2. Controls — K = 1, A = 2
3. Transfer to clubs

Most East players opened 2♣, and those who finished in 6♣ were pleased



to have reached an excellent tenace. On a trump lead ♦A-K. Provided these last one, and throw two ruptured by South ruffing one down.

Three tables reached kind enough to lead a dummy's queen. I ca this as being from a five running the clubs. South on the fifth club, I cam rounds of spades. South heart tenace.

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*Sabine and Daniela
at a victory banquet*

to have reached an excellent contract, having also managed to protect the heart tenace. On a trump lead, they unblocked the queen of spades and cashed the \diamond A-K. Provided these held up, they planned to play another diamond, ruff the last one, and throw two hearts on the top spades. This plan was rudely interrupted by South ruffing the second diamond, and declarer inevitably finished one down.

Three tables reached 6NT by East, one succeeding easily when South was kind enough to lead a heart. Against my 6NT, South led the four of spades, won by dummy's queen. I cashed two clubs and when North threw a diamond I read this as being from a five-card holding, so I cashed only one top diamond before running the clubs. South was under pressure, and when she discarded a spade on the fifth club, I came to hand with the king of diamonds and played three rounds of spades. South could win the last one, but then had to lead into the heart tenace.

To explain why I have picked this hand out as a particular favorite, I need to mention one of my primary bridge goals, which is to be able to focus completely when I sit down at the table, and always to play up to my potential. My experience is that when I succeed in focusing and have my antennae tuned, I can play well. It is when my mind is wandering that the mistakes sneak in. I do not have a magic formula to ensure concentration, and if anyone does I would love to hear about it. One good piece of advice I would give any ambitious pair is never to discuss a hand at the table — neither with your partner nor with the opponents (even worse). Don't even think about the last hand. It's over and the result cannot be changed. All you can achieve by doing so is to get distracted and mess up the next hand.

Readers may think that being a World Champion means you don't have to work really hard to concentrate, but believe me, it doesn't. This slam hand from the *Macallan* is one of the most satisfying hands I can ever remember playing.