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INSIDE *ICHI BAN* AND *COMANCHE*'S RECORD-BLASTING RUNS TO GLORY



HARSH LESSON

MARK RICHARDS ON THE DECISION THAT COST *WILD OATS XI* THE LINE HONOURS CROWN

PERSONAL BEST

FULL WRAP-UP OF ONE OF THE GREATEST HOBART RACES

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FEBRUARY / MARCH 2018

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The Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race 2017 was another fantastic event featuring 102 boats hitting the start lines, including a record-equalling 27 internationals, well supported by our friends in the Clipper Round the World Race. With only five retirements it was very pleasing to see such a large number of boats finish.

The storylines from the 73rd iteration of the race were powerful at every stage; the four super maxis had each taken line honours in the past, and then at the crossing of the line, the top five boats all finished inside last year's record, which itself was an enormous reduction of the previous race record. Last year I felt confident that the 2016 line honours record would not be broken for a long time. Congratulations to Jim Cooney and *Comanche* on a record that should stand for quite some time.

Congratulations also to Matt Allen of *Ichi Ban* on winning overall, an especially popular achievement after many years of trying. Matt and his crew also set a new record for the fastest conventionally ballasted time ever – huge credit to them on an outstanding achievement.

Thank you and congratulations to all the sailors, many of whom were stirred by the rousing applause and cheers from the people of Hobart gathered waterside. Armchair sailors might consider the 2017 race an easy sail. No race is easy and that is especially so when driving for maximum performance in pursuit of our holy grail, the Tattersall Cup.

A special thanks and congratulations to the Clippers; it was wonderful to see Sir Robin Knox-Johnston race with the *Invictus* team. He is the epitome of yacht racing and adventure.

The adage is true; sailors improve with age like a good bottle of wine. Along with Sir Robin, Tony Ellis, who completed his 50th Hobart race this year, and Bill Ratcliff, who completed his 49th, are wonderful examples.

As has been true throughout its history, much of the enjoyment of this iconic race stems from those involved in the production. The CYCA, as the organising authority, enjoys enormous support from Rolex, the title sponsor, along with the Governments of NSW and TAS.

Rolex has supported the race for 16 years and we are very grateful they continue to do so. We once again thank Roads and Maritime Services in Sydney, TasPorts in Hobart and the police in both States.

Across and in between both cities there is an enormous amount of work to ensure

the smooth running of this event. For this I thank the CYCA Board and management team. Our CEO Karen and her managers have put together a complete package. Our Sailing Manager Justine Kirkjian completed her 17th year of working on this race and Michael Neumann our Operations Manager was responsible for building our race villages amongst many other tasks. Thanks also to Communications Manager Ross MacDonald and the excellent media team.

Other outstanding contributions were welcome and came from the Race Committee lead by Tim Cox and the International Jury, the radio relay vessel lead by David Kellett on *JBW* (with thanks to John Winning and Captain Andrew Copley). And this year the *STS Young Endeavour* flanked the fleet with back-up radio relay support.

Special thanks also to the team from our race finishing partner at the Royal Yacht Club of Tasmania, Commodore Matthew Johnston, General Manager Daryl Potter, Biddy Badenach and the team that marshals the information centre. A special acknowledgement to Mick Hocking with his unfailing contribution, berthing the boats at Constitution Dock for over 25 years of the race.

While the work and hospitality of everyone involved is critical to the success of the event it is important to thank the families of each of us (including volunteers) connected with the production of the race. I thank everyone, including the partners and families that give way to this event at this significant time in the calendar.

I encourage sailors to make plans for 2018 and 2019. We will soon be calling for expressions of interest for our 75th Race – the Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race 2019, to help us manage the anticipated larger fleet.

For me it has once again been an enormous privilege to be involved in the race, especially so over the past two years in my role as Commodore. I thank everyone for the courtesy and support of me personally and for the friendships I have formed.

JOHN MARKOS
Commodore CYCA



The adage is true; sailors improve with age like a good bottle of wine. Along with Sir Robin, Tony Ellis, who completed his 50th Hobart race this year, and Bill Ratcliff, who completed his 49th, are wonderful examples.



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After an acceptable amount of post-race celebratory indulgence, the 2017 Rolex Sydney Hobart has forced some challenging introspection.

In the corresponding wrap-up issue last year, I boldly predicted that *Perpetual Loyal's* record "could be among the last in the pre-foiling era."

So much for that piece of precognition.

The 73rd race defied all logic, as an even more favourable confluence of wind systems propelled five boats to Hobart faster than *Loyal*. Those who were there for the sleigh rides of 1975 and 1999 agreed that 2017 should be added to the list of absolute glamour runs.

This of course begs the question, after two such years, what will 2018 be like? I, for one, am anticipating (not predicting), a return to more "traditional" race conditions. Expect more detailed investigation of this vexed topic over the intervening period between now and Boxing Day.

There is, apparently, a big question mark over whether *Wild Oats XI* will line up for another Rolex Sydney Hobart start. It's completely understandable given the acrid disappointment of appearing to clinch the sweetest of line honours wins, only to have the triumph dissolve in the protest room.

There's no question that *Oats* infringed, but the jury's decision must have been an extremely bitter pill to swallow. In this issue, Mark Richards graciously recounts how even the world's best sailors can make a collective mistake. I sincerely hope the Oatley family decide that the boat's Rolex Sydney Hobart racing career doesn't end on such a note.

Our congratulations go to *LDV Comanche* for the way they sailed, and especially to Jim Cooney for the measured and thoughtful approach he took in relation to the protest. It reflected the values of fairness and accountability that we like to think are the best attributes of our sport. We also hear from Jim on *Comanche's* white-knuckle express ride south.

We applaud the fantastic achievement of Matt Allen and the crew of *Ichi Ban* as a yardstick of



skill, preparation and perseverance. Their overall win was completely deserved, and the inclusive way they acknowledged the outpouring of congratulations was equally impressive.

That sense of shared accomplishment was present on every boat that pulled into Constitution Dock, including *SailDNA*, which I crewed on. Like everyone we blew out our fair share of kites, survived a few out-of-control moments, and were genuinely awed and humbled by the beauty of our surroundings.

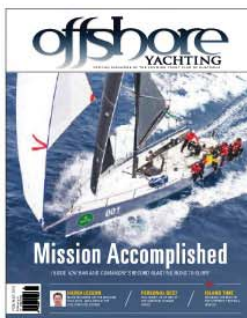
Our thanks go to the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia, the Royal Yacht Club of Tasmania, Rolex, and all the volunteers, as well as the unknown well-wishers whose spontaneous cheers greeted us in Hobart.

There's a season of autumn racing to look forward to, and for me, the opportunity to broaden my experience to other classes, and make new friends doing so.

See you on the water.

SCOTT ALLE
Editor

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Ichi Ban on her way to an overall win in the 73rd Rolex Sydney Hobart. Photograph by Carlo Borlenghi.

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HISTORIC DISPLAY

The Voyages of Camaraderie exhibition showcases interesting CYCA and YSA memorabilia.

Watershed achievement

The hard work continues at pace for the CYCA's Youth Sailing Academy (YSA) which is looking to a landmark 2018 – its 25th anniversary year.

As the youth match racing circuit draws to a close for the season, the YSA will be looking to wrap up an already impressive 2017–18 season with four match-racing events throughout January and February in Australia and New Zealand.

First up, two teams will travel to Perth for the Warren Jones International Youth Match Racing Championship hosted by Swan River Sailing. Originally contested in 2003, the Warren Jones Memorial Regatta honours the late Warren Jones, who passed away suddenly in 2002. Warren was syndicate chief and a driving force behind *Australia II*'s famous America's Cup victory in 1983.

This year, the event will be part of Perth's Festival of Sails, with racing taking place on the Swan River in downtown Perth on board Foundation 36s. Crews of five or six will compete across the five-day competition from 29 January to 2 February, with 12 teams confirmed from Australia, New Zealand and the Netherlands. The two CYCA teams will be led by James Hodgson (world #72) and Harry Price (world #4).

Back in Sydney, the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron (RSYS) will host the Hardy Cup with Sir James Hardy as patron. From 5–9 February, 12 teams will again fight it out for the cup, with the RSYS borrowing the CYCA's fleet of Elliott 7s for the event. Two CYCA

teams are competing. James Hodgson will follow on from racing in Perth and Tom Grimes will skipper the second entry.

There will be no rest for YSA sailors though, with one team skippered by Finn Tapper travelling to Auckland on 9 February for the Nespresso International Youth Match Racing Championship. Hosted by the current America's Cup holders, the Royal New Zealand Yacht Squadron, racing will commence from 10–13 February with up to 16 teams competing.

Finally, the 2017–18 youth match racing circuit will wrap up in Wellington with the CentrePort International Youth Match Racing Championship. Finn Tapper will be looking to defend his title from 2017, which started his match-racing career. In the past twelve months, Finn has risen from no open match-racing ranking to 73rd, after also completing his HSC in 2017.

Having won four of the seven major youth match racing events so far this season, the CYCA's Youth Sailing Academy will be hoping for a strong finish to their season, especially as they approach their 25th year.

ysa.admin@cyca.com.au
Learn more about the YSA's 25 years at the Liverpool Regional Museum's sailing exhibit, touching on notable graduates, the work of the Freedman Foundation in promoting CYCA to young people from Western Sydney and a tribute to *Rani*, the first winner of the Sydney Hobart.

The exhibition runs until 14 April, Tuesday to Saturday 10am–1pm and 2pm–4pm.

French connection

Following a sojourn of over 20 years, the build-up is well and truly on for one of this year's banner offshore events – the PONANT Sydney Noumea Yacht Race.

As *Ross MacDonald* reports, a diverse fleet will be looking to hook into the south-east trades for a fast ride to the vibrant French territory.



ROLEX / STUDIO BORLENGHI



At 1,064 nautical miles, the PONANT Sydney Noumea Yacht Race (PSNYR) will be the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia's longest offshore race for 2018. Returning with the cooperation of the Cercle Nautique Calédonien and starting on Saturday 2 June from Sydney Harbour, some of the world's fastest keelboats will be out to break the 1991 race record.

After racing from the heads, this Category 1 challenge will take the fleet across the Tasman and Coral Seas to Noumea, the capital of New Caledonia, where a winner will be crowned for the fastest elapsed and corrected times. It took George Snow's *Brindabella* five days, 20 hours and four minutes to complete the trip 27 years ago, but the sharks are already circling this year, including the biggest of them all.

RUN TO PARADISE

Fresh from taking the line honours win in last year's Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race and becoming an Australian resident, the 100-foot supermaxi *Comanche* is expected to smash what is a conventionally ballasted record and set a new fastest open time.

Owner Jim Cooney has plans to keep the boat busy in the CYCA's biggest races, and Noumea is potentially on the agenda. "We're definitely looking at it. We've put it in the calendar, but whether we actually get to the starting line depends on a few things.

"We are considering some modifications to the boat, and there's also the availability of crew and adequate training times to consider.

"There are some caveats there, but we are definitely interested. It would be a fun race and a great one for *Comanche* to be involved in."

Rupert Henry has also entered the race with his Judel-Vrolijk 62 *Chinese Whisper*, but the boat's appearance at the start will similarly depend on a couple of factors.

RACING PEDIGREE

Sure to be racing on 2 June, however, will be the reigning Rolex Sydney Hobart overall winner Matt Allen.

"We haven't worked out which boat we'll take to Noumea. The crew and I probably have slightly different views on which one, but

we're looking at it," he said.

If it does end up being the Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race winner *Ichi Ban*, she could be one of three TP52s, along with Peter Wrigley and Andy Kearnan's *KOA* and Michael Martin's *Frantic*.

Allen is one of three past CYCA commodores who have entered. John Cameron (*More Witchcraft*) and Howard Piggott (*Flying Cloud*) are contenders, while the current board will be strongly represented by Tony Kirby and Noel Cornish. Topping the Blue Water Pointscore Series in 2017, Kirby's *Patrice* will be a force to be reckoned with, as will Cornish's *St Jude*, which led the same series for a substantial period before finishing a very respectable third.

The smaller boats of the fleet will be well supported by the ever-impressive Komatsu Azzurro. Shane Kearns' S&S 34, is aiming high: "Obviously, I think I'm going to win as usual. It will be one of the biggest races we've ever done, which presents logistical problems in terms of fuel and water; I'm working on seven days to get there.

"It's a really good fleet, and with the feeder races happening, we'll make a bit of a holiday of it before competing in the Groupama Race around New Caledonia. Then, of course, we have to get back to defend our Sydney Gold Coast title," Kearns concluded.

It is indeed a wide open field with the added interest of a cruising division to boost the diversity of the challenge. noumea.cyca.com.au



FRONT RUNNER

Tony Kirby will guide *Patrice* on her longest race to date.

CROSBIE LORIMER

Recognition for sailing greats

Established in 2017 by Australian Sailing in collaboration with the Australian National Maritime Museum, the Australian Sailing Hall of Fame, in conjunction with the 2017 Australian Sailing Awards, saw seven Australian sailing greats honoured and inducted into the inaugural hall of fame. Australian Sailing President Matt Allen noted: "Sailing has a long and wonderful history in Australia, and has been responsible for some of the most iconic sporting moments the country has ever seen. Recognising those who have been part of that history and acknowledging their contribution is at the heart of the Australian Sailing Hall of Fame."

Director of the Australian National Maritime Museum Kevin Sumption continued by saying, "The Australian National Maritime Museum is delighted to be a part of this important new venture with Australian Sailing."

"We hope the Australian Sailing Hall of Fame program will promote greater recognition of the role of sailing in Australia's history and community life, and encourage the development of the sport in Australia."

A MOMENT IN TIME

Inducted into the Australian Sailing Hall of Fame was the illustrious *Australia II* crew who captured the hearts of a nation when they won the America's Cup in 1983, breaking America's 132-year winning streak in sport's oldest trophy. Perhaps one of the most remarkable – and iconic – feats in Australian sporting history, the competition caught the attention of sailors and non-sailors alike, throughout Australia and around the world.

Australia II crew

John Bertrand AO (skipper)
Colin Beashel OAM
Will Baillieu OAM
Peter Costello OAM
Damian Fewster OAM
Ken Judge OAM
Skip Lissiman OAM
John Longley AM
Brian Richardson OAM
Phil Smidmore OAM
Grant Simmer OAM
Hugh Treharne OAM
Rob Brown OAM
Sir James Hardy OBE
Scott McAllister OAM

Syndicate Chairman: Alan Bond
Syndicate Executive Director:
Warren Jones AM
Designer: Ben Lexcen AM
Coach: Mike Fletcher AM

CYCA members who were involved in this momentous event include **Will Baillieu, Damian Fewster, Grant Simmer, Hugh Treharne, Sir James Hardy and Mike Fletcher.**

STARS OF THE SEA

Also inducted into the 2017 Australia Sailing Hall of Fame were the following women and men who have contributed to the sport of sailing in extraordinary ways.

Jenny Armstrong OAM and Belinda Stowell OAM

Jenny Armstrong and Belinda Stowell created history when they became the first Australian women to win an Olympic sailing medal, winning gold in the 470 class at the Sydney 2000 Olympics Games. In doing so, they also broke Australia's 28-year sailing gold medal drought.

Kay Cottee AO

Kay Cottee was the first woman to perform a single-handed, non-stop and unassisted circumnavigation of the world

by way of both hemispheres. She performed this feat in 1988 in her 37-foot (11-metre) yacht, *Blackmores First Lady*.

Daniel Fitzgibbon OAM and Liesl Tesch AM

At the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games, Daniel Fitzgibbon and Liesl Tesch created history when they become the first ever crew to win back-to-back Paralympic gold medals in sailing. Their achievement of winning gold medals in both London and Rio also made them the first Australian sailing team or crew to defend an Olympic or Paralympic gold medal.

Victor Kovalenko OAM

Known as the Medal Maker, Victor Kovalenko, pictured right, is renowned as the most successful Olympic sailing coach

in the world. Since arriving in Australia in the lead-up to the Sydney 2000 Games, he has coached Australia's 470 athletes to five gold and one silver Olympic medal.

Bill Northam CBE, Peter O'Donnell and James Sargeant Sailing *Barrenjoey*, Bill Northam CBE, Peter (Pod) O'Donnell and James (Dick) Sargeant won Australia's first Olympic sailing gold medal at the Tokyo Olympic Games in 1964 in the 5.5-metre class. Northam, the skipper, was 59 and a grandfather of five, and the oldest Australian to have ever won an Olympic gold medal.

Rolly Tasker AM

Rolly Tasker won Australia's first Olympic sailing medal and first sailing world championship. He was a highly regarded and successful ocean racer who built one of the world's most successful yachting businesses. sailing.org.au



ABOVE The crew of *Australia II*. Front row (L-R): John Bertrand, Sir James Hardy, Mike Fletcher, John Longley, Rob Brown. **ABOVE RIGHT** The Medal Maker, Victor Kovalenko, was amongst the inaugural inductees.



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Shared values

French yacht and expedition cruise line Compagnie du Ponant is forging close bonds with the ocean racing community, sponsoring the PONANT Sydney Noumea Yacht Race in June. Sarina Bratton AM, PONANT's Asia-Pacific Chairman, spoke with *Ross MacDonald* about the line's unique approach to adventure cruising.



What is PONANT's connection with the sea?

PONANT specialises in small ship luxury expeditions – the epitome of modern-day exploration. Luxury merges with adventure on voyages that include polar, tropical and sub-tropical destinations onboard the youngest and most modern fleet of small ships in the world.

Established in 1988 by Jean Emmanuel Sauvé and a dozen other enthusiastic young officers from the French merchant navy, PONANT is the world leader in luxury expeditions. The only French-owned cruise line, many original officers remain with the company, which reflects the continuation of our shared values and vision, and our passion for the sea.

What is unique about PONANT's offering?

There are cruise ships, there are expedition ships, and then there is PONANT. Heralding in a new era of luxury expeditions on purpose-built ships, more than 400 voyages are scheduled annually.

Luxury expeditions extend around the globe, from PONANT's French Mediterranean base in Marseille to Australia, Melanesia, Asia, North and South America, the Mediterranean and the Baltic. Our small ships provide exclusive access to destinations unavailable to large ships, such as transiting the Corinth Canal or probing the Amazon.

Some cruises are relaxed cultural experiences, while others are expeditions to UNESCO world heritage sites or remote places far from the mainstream tourist

route. All expeditions are accompanied by our specialist team including naturalists and select lecturers to enhance the experience onboard and ashore.

PONANT is the world leader in polar exploration voyages, including Alaska, the Arctic and the Antarctic, and carries more passengers to these regions than any other company.

What does the future hold for PONANT?

In mid 2018, PONANT will welcome two new ice-class Explorer ships, with a further two due for delivery in 2019. Smaller iterations of the current fleet (with just 92 staterooms and suites), these luxuriously appointed ships will also offer the latest in maritime and environmental protection technology. One, *Le Laperouse*, will be positioned in and around Australian waters all year from 2019.

Pioneering comforts abound onboard including an infinity-edge swimming pool, spa, lecture theatre, boutique, open bar, all balcony staterooms and suites, 24-hour room service and a world-first underwater lounge, Blue Eye. Large glass windows either side of the ship will allow guests to feel immersed in the marine environment, while hydrophones located in the keel and video cameras in the hull will allow the visual and acoustic sensations to be experienced firsthand.

We have also recently announced another extraordinary maritime world first: the construction of an electric hybrid luxury icebreaker with LNG propulsion, capable of taking guests to the North Pole (90 degrees north). Due in 2021, this will broaden our capabilities to take inquisitive guests to hitherto unexplored parts of the world in great comfort.

Our sponsorship of the PONANT Sydney Noumea Yacht Race, in conjunction with the CYCA, aligns our company's sense of adventure, our respect for the natural environment, and our enthusiasm for other cultures and traditions with this intrepid race. We look forward to continuing this association.

au.ponant.com





ROLEX / STUDIO BORLENGHI

Perfect Partnership

Former CYCA Commodore Matt Allen is the latest recipient of a prized Rolex timepiece that comes with the accolade of overall winner of the Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race.

For Allen it's been a long wait – 34 years in fact – but according to the Australian Sailing President, it's been worth it.

"It represents history for me," he explained. "It symbolises a huge amount of effort over many years and I think the nice thing is, it's something that's with you every day. A trophy you can put in the cabinet or on the mantelpiece but the Rolex time piece, with its engraving, is always there."

Allen says the Rolex Oyster Perpetual Yacht-Master is a celebrity in its own right, engraved with the Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race

RIGHT TIME

Ichi Ban skipper Matt Allen proudly accepts his Rolex from Patrick Boutellier.

logo and "Overall Winner 2017."

"It's a beautiful watch, elegant, looks good at day and night and it's easy to read, which appeals to the older demographic," he said.

"I've been keenly asked a number of times already, 'Is that the watch, is that the watch?' And of course when I answer 'yes', people want to see the engraving on the back; the money-can't-buy aspect."

Rolex has been the Title Sponsor for the iconic bluewater race since the early 2000s, and has extended its support until 2023.

The prestigious timepiece manufacturer has a long association

with activities that share its excellence, precision and team spirit. Inventor of the world's first waterproof wristwatch, the brand naturally gravitated towards the sea and the elite world of yachting. For over half a century since, Rolex has built on this to establish deep ties with influential yacht clubs across the globe.

A core feature of Rolex's yachting portfolio is its support of the world's most famous and challenging 600-nautical-mile offshore races, notably the Rolex Fastnet Race and the Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race. rolex.com



Smooth transition

A substantial amount of pre-planning is paying off, as an important stage of the Club's refurbishment gets underway.

The temporary clubhouse opened on 1 February, 2018 with a working group investing substantial time to make the best use of the available space, as well as minimising the inevitable disruption to day to day club activity; and most importantly make the temporary clubhouse a great place for members to meet and socialise.

The temporary clubhouse is fully air conditioned and all walls are solid or glass with a three metre awning on the waterside of the structure.

The current lower deck tables and umbrellas have been relocated, to ensure significant outdoor seating and shelter, allowing us to easily accommodate post-race summer, autumn and winter gatherings, dining and general socialising.

HOUSE RULES

The temporary CYCA clubhouse has all the creature comforts members have come to expect.

The temporary clubhouse utilises existing clubhouse furniture.

There is a substantial "Members only" area – divided by an operable screen system to expand and contract based on demand, and the furniture relocated from Coasters Retreat, including the bell, bookcase, noticeboard and TV.

The archives committee has lent support to ideas for the interior of the temporary clubhouse with appropriate reproduction photos, memorabilia, and so on, most of which will be safely stored offsite during the refurbishment.

We have acquired a new, substantial portable kitchen trailer which opens into the canopy space Blond Catering are serving a limited, but quality menu throughout the refurbishment period.

It is important to note that the main entry to the club and the small car park is closed. Access and egress to the temporary clubhouse, the marina and Sailing and Marina Offices is via the main carpark. A clearly marked and signed walkway from the carpark to the temporary clubhouse and offices is provided for safety and security reasons.

We are looking forward to more time in our temporary home while we undertake the existing refurbishments, in conjunction with our builder Belmadar who did such a fine job on the Sailing & Marina building, now known as the John Messenger Building.

The aim is to be in our newly refurbished, permanent clubhouse in early October 2018. cyca.com.au



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The Sydney Race Village came to life on 8 December for the pre-luncheon drinks sponsored by Mumm Champagne and CUB at the 2nd annual RSHYR Corporate luncheon. 2016 Tattersall Cup winner, Jim Delegat was the guest speaker as the club raises funds for the CYCA SOLAS Trusts.

On 18 December the Commodore's 'Stella Artois' Beer and Prawn Night further built the atmosphere of excitement before the exclusive VIP Cocktail Party on 21 December officially sparked the final countdown to the Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race on Boxing Day.

The CYCA acknowledges the contribution of its major sponsor, Rolex, and the many other supporters including JANUS et Cie, Mumm Champagne, Carlton and United Breweries (Stella Artois), MUSTO, Oatley Wines, Smartsheets, RMS, John Winning, and his business Appliances Online, and Moreton Hire.



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1. Kate and Jim Delegat, 2016 Tattersall Cup winners, open the RSHYR Corporate Luncheon 2017.
2. Commodore Markos and Patrick Boutellier of Rolex Australia.
3. Shirley Robertson, Tim Butt and Rob Mundle.
4. Richard Bearman, Gail Lewis-Bearman and Jonathan Levy.
5. The Commodore's 'Stella Artois' Beer and Prawn Night was the perfect event for summer.
6. Paul Clitheroe, Gordon Bray, Jim Delegat, Mike Green and Matt Allen with the Tattersall Cup.
7. Cara Macdonald, Nic Douglass, Brigitte Berry, Janey Treleaven and Deanne Chapman.
8. Emma May and Tara Blanc-Ramos.
9. Janice Feldman, founder of Janus et Cie, and Commodore John Markos.
10. Pam Rorke-Levy and Matt Brooks of Dorade.
11. RSHYR Race Director Tim Cox and Kate Cox.
12. Matt Lawrence and Samantha Lloyd-Holmes at the RSHYR Launch Party.

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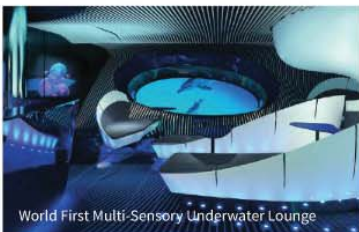
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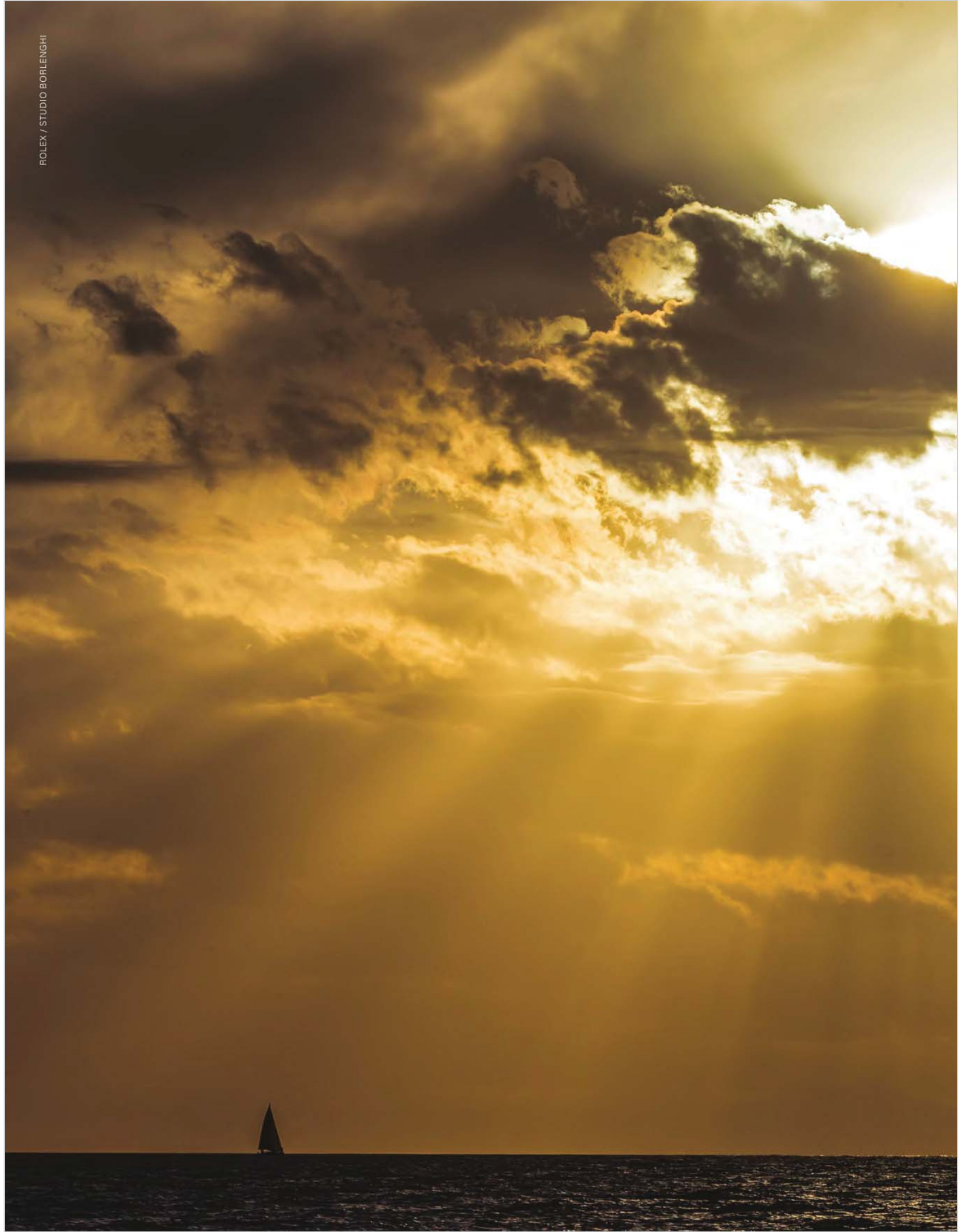
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73rd Rolex Sydney Hobart

— * —

Race Round-Up



Fast & furious

A swag of records tumbled in a sleigh ride south but as *Di Pearson* reports, the race for line honours ended in the protest room.

Five yachts finished the 2017 Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race inside record time. Amid a throng of media and wellwishers, *Wild Oats XI*'s crew celebrated with sprays of Mumm champagne, but controversy followed when *LDV Comanche* lodged a protest against *Oats* – and robbed her of a ninth line honours victory. There were no such qualms for Matt Allen's *Ichi Ban* though, who was cleanly named overall winner after a close battle with two-time winner and her TP52 stablemate, *Quest* (Bob Steel).

Crossing the start line in the 73rd running of the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia's 628-nautical-mile race were 102 entries, including 27 internationals (a record shared with the 2015 race).

The weather was dull, but the racing was anything but as a light easterly breeze set the fleet on its way. *LDV Comanche* jumped well off the pin end, but Peter Harburg's *Black Jack* was quick to respond, chasing the aircraft carrier down Sydney Harbour.

Later *LDV Comanche*'s skipper Jim Cooney acknowledged the importance of their good start. "We were away cleanly, with no damage. That really was goal number one," he recounted.

Other goals were soon in sight, but meanwhile, the Oatley family's *Wild Oats XI* was buried mid-line, and Christian Beck's *InfoTrack* was a little slow off the blocks, both trailing even the transoms of Karl Kwok's *Beau Geste* (HKG), Peter and David Askew's *Wizard* (USA), and the 66-foot *Wild Oats X*, skippered by Troy Tindill.

While all others were clear at the start, on the second line *St Jude*, *Smuggler* and *Jazz Player* were forced to return and restart after jumping the gun. Disappointed, Geoff Cropley commented from *St Jude* at the time: "We also lost all our instruments 12 minutes before the start (they repaired later); only our compass is working. We are sailing like dinghy sailors – by the seat of our pants."





DRAG RACE

Ichi Ban in the clear and setting the cracking pace that would deliver an overall victory.





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SINGLE COMBAT *Wild Oats XI* and *LDV Comanche* left the other supermaxis in their wakes.

SPATIAL AWARENESS

Black Jack caught and passed *LDV Comanche* before the first mark, claiming the honour of first out of Sydney Heads, while *Oats* picked up pace. Mark Richards aimed her at the western shore, but when he tacked back, *Wild Oats XI* was on a collision course with *LDV Comanche*. The Oatley boat didn't tack in time, so Jimmy Spithill called protest from the helm and the red flag was seen fluttering from Cooney's boat as the top three headed south for Hobart. (At the first sked that afternoon, *Comanche* confirmed she was protesting *Oats*.)

With skipper Mark Bradford at the helm, *Black Jack* had carved a nice lead at the sea mark, but as the wind bent to the east/northeast, *Comanche* caught up and found the overtaking lane. Joined a short time later by *Wild Oats XI*, the two were to battle throughout the rest of the race for line honours.

General opinion expected *Comanche* to leave the fleet behind as she sailed in her ideal off-the-wind strengthening north-easterlies, but after her retirements in the past two battles, we finally witnessed the effects of *Wild Oats*' major modifications. An all-absorbing battle between the two ensued with *Comanche* in front, but *Oats* stuck to her rival like glue and never more than 16 nautical miles separated the pair.

Early that night, a man overboard was reported from *Invictus Games 2018 Down Under*, with Clipper entry *HotelPlanner.com* retrieving the man within 15 minutes. With only minor scratches, he was delivered back aboard *Invictus*. Later the rescuer received 120 minutes redress, which gave her the leg win from *Sanya Serenity Coast*, skippered by CYCA member Wendy Tuck.

By 8.50 pm and averaging 19 knots,

Cooney was just eight nautical miles in front of *Oats*. *InfoTrack* was a further three nautical miles astern, with *Black Jack* a further three and a half miles adrift. The 80-foot *Beau Geste* and last year's overall winner *Wizard* (then *Giacomo*), were another five miles astern, followed by *Wild Oats X* and *Ichi Ban*.

By evening, the predicted strengthening 20–25 north-easterly had begun to weave its magic on the two frontrunners and it was on as *LDV Comanche* increased her lead over *Oats* to 16 nautical miles. *Black Jack* was another 15 nautical miles away, with *Beau Geste*, *InfoTrack* and *Wizard* chasing.

RECORD DAZE

By mid-morning the next day, all six were sailing in a 25–30 knot north-easterly and aiming at *Perpetual Loyal*'s record from last year.

Comanche's lead had evaporated to 11 nautical miles as the two flew along the Tasmanian coast. *Wild Oats XI* had closed the gap during the morning despite ripping the top out of the headsail most suited to the conditions. Richards reported they had sailed bare-headed (mainsail only) for some time while the remnants of the damaged sail were recovered and a new sail set.

Comanche held the ace in strong winds, but ahead of record pace, neither gave way. At this point *Indian*, *Celestial*, *Quest*, *Rockall*, *Concubine* and *Smuggler* were top six overall, with *Ichi Ban* hot on their tails, but by lunchtime *Ichi Ban* led from *Wizard* with a challenge from *Quest* looming.

As the two super maxis sailed the final miles, they found light airs and parking lots in the Derwent. As we saw in 2014, the big wide *Comanche* struggles in light air, and so it was that *Wild Oats* grabbed every zephyr she could, kept moving, and overhauled her rival to cross the line first. Sailing in just one day, eight hours, 48 minutes and 50



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Left: **PACK MENTALITY** *Quest* leads the TPs out of the harbour. Right: **SCENIC ROUTE** *Concubine* enjoys a stellar run past the Organ Pipes.





seconds and 26 minutes before Cooney's boat, she took four hours, 42 minutes and 30 seconds off *Perpetual Loyal's* 2016 time.

In fact, five yachts finished inside last year's record: *Wild Oats XI*, *LDV Comanche*, *Black Jack*, *InfoTrack* and *Beau Geste*. *Wizard* missed out by 12 minutes, but finished nearly two hours faster than she did when she won overall last year.

REVISIONIST HISTORY

In any sport, it's a shame when victory ends in the protest room, but that's how it was with line honours. Jim Cooney had signalled his intention early in the race and went ahead, winning the protest.

The international jury penalised *Wild Oats XI* one hour for the port and starboard incident, and it cost them a ninth victory. Instead, the new race record of one day, nine hours, 15 minutes and 24 seconds was established by *LDV Comanche*, bettering last year's record by four hours, 15 minutes and 56 seconds.

"It was an exhilarating race. Who'd have thought we'd finish in time to turn the Hobart into an overnighter!"

Jim Cooney, Owner & Skipper of LDV Comanche

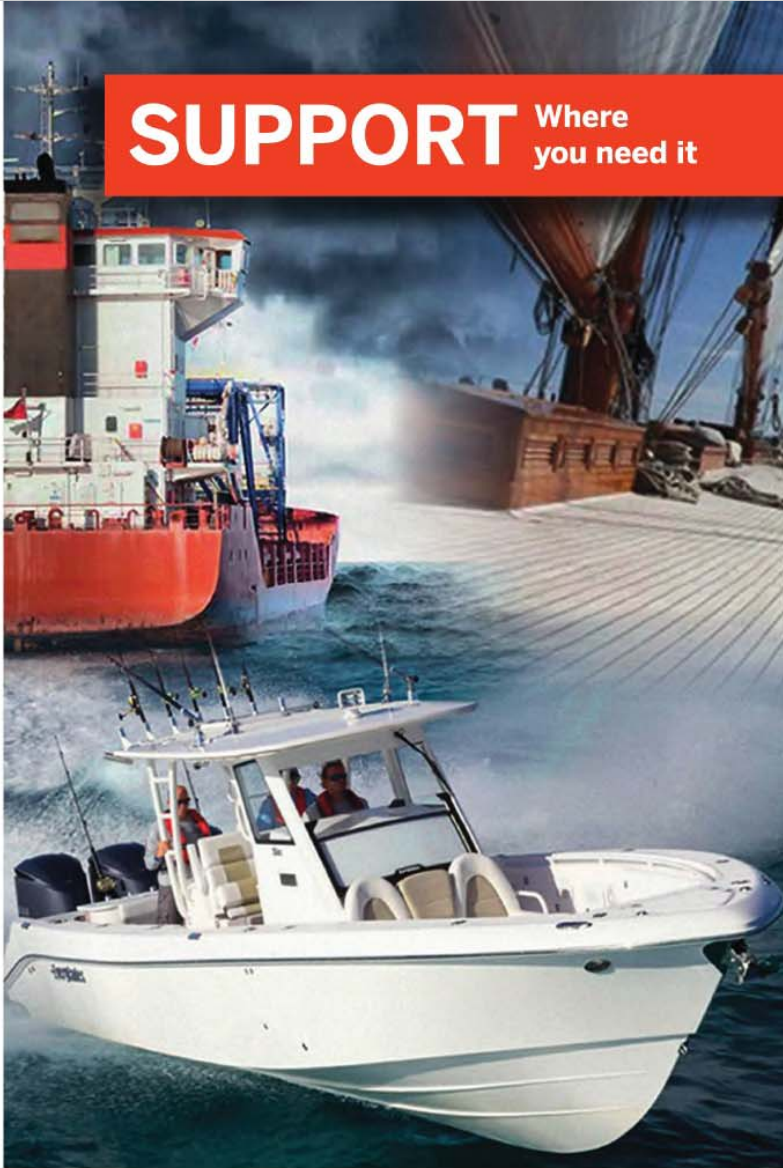
On the evening of 28 December, while the bulk of the fleet was sailing in a northerly wind, Jim Cooney and those of his crew still in Hobart were presented with the J H Illingworth Trophy, while Rolex Australia's General Manager Patrick Boutellier presented Cooney with a Rolex timepiece.

"It was an exhilarating race. I loved every minute of it," Cooney said. "The boat exceeded my expectations and who'd have thought we'd finish in time to turn the Hobart into an overnighter!"

"The result is a fitting testament to the crew and the potential of the boat. The guys were fantastic. Stan Honey is not just a navigator, he is *the* navigator. Jimmy Spithill, too, is brilliant. Nothing escapes his attention anywhere – on the water or around him."

A previous line honours winner in 2015 (on *Comanche*) and 2011 (*Investec Loyal*), veteran navigator Honey commented on his sixth Rolex Sydney Hobart: "Conditions suited *Comanche*, but it's always a challenge in a 100-footer in that kind of wind to sail the boat in such a way that you don't break stuff.

We had a lot of very good sailors paying very careful attention, and my decisions were geared to giving us the fastest passage."



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Difficult though it must have been, Sandy Oatley congratulated Jim Cooney on his win while Mark Richards accepted the penalty with grace, acknowledging, "That's yacht racing."

On finishing, offshore racing novice Christian Beck (*InfoTrack*) said: "It's hard, very hard, but worth it in the end. It was scary at times with a lot of stuff breaking. The scariest thing was the sail changes at night with big waves washing over the boat. It's one of those things that are more fun thinking about later than during the race."

THIN EDGE OF REASON

With line honours confirmed, the race was on for the Tattersall Cup, which was to be awarded to the overall winner along with a Rolex timepiece.

Throughout the race, *Ichi Ban*, *Quest*, *Mascalzone Latino* (Italy), *Wizard* and the 40-plus-footers *Chutzpah* (VIC), *Patrice*, *Concubine* (SA), *Smuggler* and *Indian* (WA) flirted with the top five placings, and although it may have looked like an easy sleigh ride, it was not the case:

"Everybody always says that when it's off the wind it's a fast and easy run but really, it's very tough," Ray Roberts commented from his Farr 55, *Hollywood Boulevard*.

"It's probably the most dangerous angle for these boats. We had boat speeds of 30 knots and if someone happens to get knocked overboard, or falls overboard, it's hard to go back and pick them up. You have to be very cautious, and sometimes sail a little conservatively, but still keep pushing the boat."

Many had their share of drama, including Bob Steel's *Quest*. A broach under spinnaker cost them dearly – perhaps the race – when Mike Green and Adam Brown were thrown, and Green took out the port steering wheel. Others, including *Ichi Ban*, blew up spinnakers, while rudders and



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CLOUD NINE *Wizard* settles into the groove, making her run south.

other damage were reported throughout.

But when Matt Allen docked his new TP52 on 28 December after 01:19:10:20 days at sea, he knew he was in good shape. And while he waited to see if any of the smaller yachts could beat his time, the Australian Sailing president celebrated *Ichi Ban* breaking the conventionally ballasted record set by *Brindabella* (George Snow) in 1999 (by one hour and 36 minutes), and the under 18.5 metre yacht record set by *Yendys* (Geoff Ross) in 2008.

Finally confirmed the following day, Allen slowly came to grips with his first win in the 628-nautical-mile race as a boat owner: "It hasn't sunk in yet. It's been 34 years since we

won on *Challenge II* with Lou Abrahams. In 1992 I finished second with *Morning Mist* (Alf Neate), but this is special because it's my boat.

PURPOSE BUILT

"I've been planning this race since about 2001. I've built a number of boats, including the Farr 52, and in a way the Volvo, to do it. Then I built the (Carkeek designed) 60-footer, then bought the original *Shogun* and modified it.

"This time I tried to find a boat that fit the formula and could compete in lots of conditions," he says of his new TP52, launched in time to convincingly take line and overall honours in the Newcastle

"I can't tell you how pleased we are – I had a great crew this year; they worked hard,"

Tony Kirby, Owner of *Patrice*



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Left: **STAR POWER** Ben Sinton wrangles the bow requests on *Celestial*. Right: **SWEET REWARD** Tony Kirby and his *Patrice* crew charged home to a third overall in IRC.





DERWENT SPEEDWAY *Triton* and *Koa* battle it out as they power into the river.

Bass Island Yacht Race in mid-October.

Ichi Ban is lighter than her fellow TP52s. Allen says, "The first thing I built this boat for was ocean racing, and especially the Rolex Sydney Hobart. It's the premier event. Everyone follows it and knows the winners of this race. It's been a long-held passion to win it since I did my first in 1980 at the age of 17."

Allen says putting the right crew together is paramount. "Gordon Maguire and I have been sailing together since 2002, and I originally sailed with Hicko (the late Roger Hickman). You have to get it right and have the right sort of ingredients for good camaraderie.

"The guys just worked so hard. When we had to put the pedal to the metal, we had to steer the boat at high speeds without comprising the integrity of boat."

Going into the first evening, *Ichi Ban* had a bit of a margin on her contemporaries, but next morning the crew blew out the A3 and A6 (reaching and heavy air spinnakers respectively). "It slowed us down," Allen said.

"With our backs against the wall, we had to come up with the goods to bring the boat home."

Allen's main rival *Quest*, also a TP52, finished second overall, just 21 minutes behind *Ichi Ban* on corrected time. Bob Steel commented: "Matt deserves to win – it's his 28th Hobart. I've had my share (2002 and 2008 with two different boats), so I am disappointed for us, but happy for Matt!"

An incredible boat, *Quest* won the race in 2008 and again as *Balance* in 2015, and was fourth overall as well as top Division 1 boat last year, and still managed to clinch first in ORCi from *Ichi Ban*.

Meanwhile, Tony Kirby was thrilled with third overall on his Ker 46 *Patrice* as it makes for his best result from 10 Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Races as an owner. The result also made him the 2017 Blue Water Pointscore champion, which Noel Cornish's *St Jude* had lead coming into the race.

"I can't tell you how pleased we are – I had a great crew this year; they worked hard," Kirby said.



CROSBIE LORIMER

LOCKED ON

Beau Geste prepares to shift up a gear.

ALL OR NOTHING

Foreign entries cleaned up IRC Division 0, with *Wizard*, *Mascalzone Latino* (Vincenzo Onorato) and *Beau Geste* taking the top three places – 20 years after Kwok won the race overall with a smaller *Beau Geste*.

Further down the course, Warwick Sherman (*Snowdome Occasional Coarse Language Too*) recalls being belted by a southerly. "I heard boats only seeing up to 26–28 knots – we saw 42. I decided we needed to look for more pressure, but I was sorry I

made that call. When we got into the river, there were just zephyrs. That was hard because we'd lost all our instruments by then," he said.

Sherman, who has just gone a second round with lymphoma, set out to finish the race and raise awareness for the Snowdome Foundation – and won the Corinthian division into the bargain.

On the smallest yacht in the fleet, 9-metre-long *Maluka* owned by Sean Langman, crew Erin Cameron said, "Like others, we had park-ups, but came screaming home in 35 knots of southerly."

And so it was down the fleet. The bulk of the race sailed in a nor'-easter that later clocked to almost due north, then, as is usual at some stage, the second half of the fleet found themselves in a stiff southerly and nothing at all.

Tony Ellis crossed the finish on *Triton*, becoming the second man to reach 50 Rolex Sydney Hobarts behind Tony Cable. Ellis praised "the fantastic owner who was prepared to put it all on the line, upgrading the boat and putting on new sails.

"Jacko (old mate Jack Goluzd), Gotzey (co-owner David Gotze) and I were very hard on putting together a very, very good crew. It was one of the happiest and most go-fast oriented crews I've been lucky enough to sail with," he said.

"We didn't want a sleigh ride on *Triton*, but you have to go with what you're given. We've got a boat that is a good all-rounder, great upwind and good in up to 18–20 knots downwind. With the TP52s and so on – skiffs on steroids – we don't have any answers for them in a sleigh ride and it's very obvious.

"We had a great race down the river though with *Koa* (Andy Kearnan/Peter Wrigley's TP52). We'd run out of breeze; she'd run out of breeze. The front was coming down and she'd hit it like a twin-turbo racing car when a gust hit. But upwind (*Triton* has been reconfigured by Andy Dovell), we had it. It's a really good boat."

LAST BUT NOT LEAST

The last boat home was *Freyja*, after Richard Lees pulled into shelter along the Tasmanian coast, but she still finished at 8:09:59 on New Year's Day. And while there were some retirements – *Blunderbuss* (broken boom), *Imalizard* (dismasted), *Jazz Player* (HF radio not operational), *Opt2Go Scamp* (sail damage), *Rockall* (broken rudder) and *Wots Next* (broken rudder bearings) – overall, the race delivered once again.

Find all the news, results, photos, video and more on the official race website: rolexsydneyhobart.com. ⚓



Salutary lesson

Billy Wilder once noted that all hindsight is 20-20, and if Mark Richards and the afterguard of *Wild Oats XI* could have the start of the 2017 Rolex Sydney Hobart over again, no doubt they would. Sadly, having sailed the fastest ever time of one day, eight hours, 48 minutes and 50 seconds, the achievement was short-lived when an international jury penalised *Oats* one hour for a port-starboard infringement in the harbour. It's hard to understand how the *Oats* brains trust – all extremely skilled and experienced sailors – got one of the basic rules of sail racing so wrong. *Wild Oats XI* skipper Mark Richards explains exclusively what happened...

I've been asked to give my viewpoint on the recent Rolex Sydney Hobart, in particular the port/starboard incident with *LDV Comanche* and the subsequent outcome of the protest hearing.

This will be the only time that I will write anything about this event. I've agreed to tell my side of the story because Ocean Media (the publisher of *Offshore Yachting* and *Sails* magazines) has been an amazing supporter of my businesses over the years.

The entire *Wild Oats* team is extremely conscious of the high standard of sportsmanship and conduct expected and instilled in us by the late Bob Oatley. A commitment we still uphold to the Oatley family today, we consider it a great honour to be representing *Wild Oats*. Our reputation as an international sporting team is also hugely important to us, which is another reason why I have chosen to respond to our critics.

The spectacle of the Rolex Sydney Hobart on Boxing Day was as big as ever and like all skippers and crews, everyone on board *Wild Oats* was excited to get underway.

After a very average start, we trailed *Black Jack* and *Comanche* on starboard tack by several hundred metres at the first rounding mark. We tacked onto port and sailed into



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a very bumpy sea-state, toward the outer clearance mark, making a very quick gain on *Comanche* who was getting badly gassed by the lead boat *Black Jack*. (Well done to Peter Harburg and Squark and his team on a great start.) *Comanche* soon tacked onto starboard, and at first it looked like we were going to clearly cross in front. However, in the light conditions – and a few bad waves later – we were in a very dire situation and forced to tack. Everyone's a genius in hindsight, but after a very awkward tack onto starboard, we were just too close. We were in *Comanche's* water and had infringed them.

Looking back, the obvious thing would have been to duck and take their transom or tack earlier, but unfortunately that was not the case. The five of us who made up the

afterguard on *Wild Oats* did discuss doing a 720-degree penalty turn. (It had to be done before the sea mark and heading south, which by then was very close.) But as a team, in the heat of the battle, we made the wrong decision and continued to race without doing a penalty.

Once we cleared the sea mark, we were in the hands of the protest that we had talked ourselves into thinking *Comanche* wouldn't go through with. That was obviously another mistake!

With the sea mark receding into the distance, we put our heads down and sailed our beautiful old girl harder than we have ever sailed her before. We were pretty surprised how well we were hanging onto *Comanche*, and were also making good ground on *Black Jack* and *InfoTrack* in the reaching conditions.

As the wind went round to the north and our flying sails were deployed, we became very competitive. The breeze was blowing over 25 knots, and we had a very strong advantage over the three other 100-footers.

We always said that if we could be in touch with *Comanche* at Tasman Light we would be in with a chance of attacking up the Derwent. After 26 hours of awesome downwind sailing and on our final approach to the Tasman, all of a sudden we spotted *Comanche* on the horizon only about four miles in front.

This spurred on a new level of focus in our crew to drive the boat as hard as possible to the end. As is typical, Storm Bay threw many scenarios at us: 20 knots of breeze one minute jumping to 41 knots the next, then to nothing, then back to 25 knots.

It was a very demanding reach with lots of reefing and a couple of difficult sail changes. *Comanche* held a three- to four-mile lead across Storm Bay, but when she got to the Iron Pot at the mouth of the Derwent River there was no breeze – and that's when our opportunity materialised.

Their big lead very quickly evaporated to a 40-metre buffer; we were both very close and only sailing at one to two knots of boat speed. We had to decide which side of the bay to sail; first we went for the east side that quickly shut down. We then went hard on to the little breeze that we had, and sailed up behind *Comanche's* transom before sailing over the top of them into a little more breeze.

Above:
HARD TALK

A combination of incorrect assumptions and the intense pressure of the start led to a very regrettable decision.

Right:
NO GOING BACK

The moment it all unravelled for *Wild Oats XI*.





The whole situation was very unfortunate, but we brought it on ourselves. We have the utmost respect for the jury's decision.

That's when *Wild Oats*' skinny hull just kept slipping away, effortlessly.

We finally crossed the finish line 27 minutes in front, taking line honours, which we were ecstatic about.

We arrived at the dock to an amazing welcome from the Hobart crowd, but once *Comanche* docked a short time later, and it was made public that the protest would go ahead, the festivities were put on hold until the next day.

You all know what happened

next: we ended-up with an hour time penalty that reversed the final result in *Comanche*'s favour.

The whole situation was very unfortunate, but we brought it on ourselves. We have the utmost respect for the jury's decision.

The moral to this story is: do your penalty turns if you are in doubt of an infringement, and never think that your mates won't protest you!

Still, there are two things that can't be taken away from *Wild Oats XI* in the Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht

Race 2017. The first is that she was the first boat to cross the finish line. The second is that she achieved the fastest time of any monohull to ever sail the 628-nautical-mile passage from Sydney to Hobart. A time of one day, eight hours, 48 minutes and 50 seconds. And that's something we are all very proud of.

The Oatley family has been amazing throughout this whole event, which is in addition to the massive support they show our great sport of sailing through the Australian Olympic sailing team and Hamilton Island Race Week.

As much as it may hurt sometimes, we all live and learn from our mistakes. Hopefully many other sailors will be better informed by this experience. I know I am.

Good sailing,

Mark 'Ricko' Richards ⚓





Setting the record straight

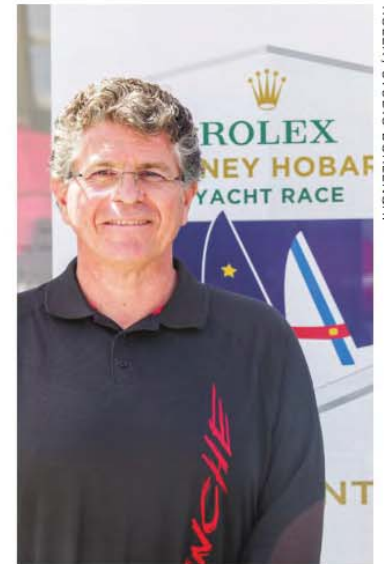
While a deal had been months in the making, Jim Cooney only secured the 2015 line honours winner *Comanche* just a little more than a week out from the Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race 2017. It was Cooney's eighth trip south, and delivered a big result: a record-breaking line honours win for *LDV Comanche*; the culmination of three decades of offshore racing for the Sydney-based yachtsman. But the dramatic manner in which the title was won – the result of a protest against *Wild Oats XI* – sparked debate and controversy that went way beyond yachting circles. Here Jim Cooney recounts exclusively how yachting history was made.

Initially, the opportunity to sail at the front of the fleet was good enough for us. Before the race, we were looking forward to understanding the performance of the boat, and with the forecast, we certainly had great expectations. The sailing community did too. And the conditions delivered – as did both supermaxis, ours and *Wild Oats XI*. It was a fabulous race and hard fought.

Neville Crichton and I were talking in August about what we could make of this possibility: *Comanche* wasn't for sale, it had been brought here specifically to do the race, and that was the condition under which it was imported.

As it got closer in time, we became more interested in taking it on, and we managed to sort out the import paperwork so that the boat could be purchased here in Australia. By the time that had happened, it was only a week and a half before the race.

I know for a fact that Neville wishes he had been on board for the race. He kept asking me, "How's the



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knee?", "Need any support?" and, "Don't need another helm?" I'd had some knee surgery in October so I was happy for him to be there just in case I had a problem – I told him to keep his sea-boots handy – but it turned out the knee was fine.

EVENT HORIZON
Three reaching headsails set, *LDV Comanche* cranks toward a date with history.





PERSONAL RESET

Comanche is a huge step up from the Volvo 70. It has the same basic components – daggerboards, a canting keel and water ballast – so the mechanics of actually sailing the 100 Supermaxi in terms of process and procedure is quite similar, but the loads and the speed of the boat is extraordinary. You don't feel like you're playing with loads that are any greater than a Volvo 70 though, because of the width of the boat and the way the systems are laid out.

However, as was the case when we stepped up from *Brindabella* to *Maserati*, the consequences of your mistakes are greatly magnified and greatly increased. That part was immediately obvious. Although the loads may not feel that different in your hand or on the wheel, you just know instinctively that you're dealing with more than twice the power.

It's extraordinary in anything slightly off the wind right down to nearly VMG running. It almost

For me, it was a misjudgement, and there was a significant danger of impact.

handles like a multihull because you sail her at a 20- to 25-degree heel (even if we can put some water in and flatten it out), but at that angle that hard chine just digs in and you have most of the hull out of the water almost from the bow to the mast; certainly, the windward half of the hull. That's not to say she's shy upwind. Going to windward in any wind conditions, perhaps with the exception of five knots or less, she will get along just as quickly as any of the other hundreds.

PROTEST CALL

We'd practised the start a dozen times in the previous week, so our plan was to be about three boat lengths from the pin. We thought Ricko would be there

as well because that's his favourite spot, but as it turned-out he was a few boat lengths behind us. We weren't going for anything ambitious, we were happy to be a few seconds late. We got away cleanly, we had clean air, and we were heading to the first mark.

In the immediate lead-up to the near miss, we were on port tack below *Wild Oats*. We then tacked on to starboard and held our course almost to the metre. I can say that because for the hearing, we printed a plot of our course. It's drawn from *Comanche's* mass inertia compass that's exceptionally accurate, which was developed for the helicopters doing footage of the America's Cup. It plotted our position every quarter-of-a-second, producing a beautifully



straight line from our tack on to starboard all the way until we took evasive action. It was a classic right-angle, port-starboard crossing.

I was watching *Wild Oats* from about five boat lengths out, and was absolutely confident that they weren't crossing, so I said to everybody at the back of the boat, "They're not clear, he's not crossing. Be prepared for one of us to take some action."

It was very surprising that they judged they were clear, but it always looks different from the other boat – I can't put myself in Mark's shoes at that point. The surprise was they made that decision very, very late rather than taking the prudent course and tacking earlier, in which case none of the subsequent problems would have occurred. There was certainly a simple solution to the problem available.

We called them about three boat lengths away. I would have thought they would have tacked instantly on the call, but they didn't. They left it very late and attempted to tack into a lee bow type position, but it wasn't lee bow, it was a bit too late

Left: HANDS ON
Jim Cooney says his stints at the wheels of *Maserati* and *Brindabella* meant the step up to *Comanche* wasn't so daunting.

and definitely bow to stern. Then we steered the boat up very sharply to avoid the collision, and once we had our boat stable, we were overlapped by the bowsprit and about a metre of the bow. So at that point, had we not evaded, several metres of our boat would have been inside theirs.

In the end, I suspect it was a clear-cut decision by the jury on the right of way. I think they spent the bulk of their time deciding what to do about it. For me, it was a misjudgement, and there was a significant danger of impact. There's no way that a separation like that can be judged as a safe way to conduct these huge boats, especially with another 625 miles to go.

SHIFTING GEARS

We wanted to maximise boat speed after clearing the heads, and for the first few hours that was pretty close to down the rhumbline. We cleared all the points, then set with open ocean in front of us.

In hindsight I think we ought to have had the A3 up on Boxing Day evening and night down the NSW

coast. We were expecting the breeze to freshen and head us a little so we had the fractional zero up. It was slightly less powerful and meant we couldn't sail quite as deep, so if I have a regret in the race that was it – we could have covered some more miles on the 26th.

BASS STRAIT SPEEDWAY

It was very exciting. Great conditions. The boat was flying toward the 30-knot mark. I think our maximum was 35.5 knots. It was noisy, and it's a blistering pace, especially with a bit of seaway.

There's certainly a lot of water that comes over the boat. Because it's sailing at such a heel, happily the water's off the foredeck pretty quickly before it gets back to the cockpit. The other thing that you notice at the wheel or sitting on the rail is that there's an enormous drop down to the water. The boat is so wide and at an angle of 25 degrees, it's an awfully long way down to the water.

The boat is very well-balanced and responsive to the rudder, even at that heel and at those speeds. There's no fight on your hands at all, it's just a matter of altering sail trim or the water



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RIVER ROULETTE

After 620 nautical miles it came down to a light air duel up the Derwent.

trim, and suddenly the helm becomes neutral again.

You are at liberty to throw the Volvos around a bit, and you can do that to an extent with *Comanche* too, guiding her up and down waves and getting a boost from a wave. She responds quickly and is fairly forgiving. If you are slightly off course, she just slows down to let you know you're not concentrating.

Wild Oats had a great day on the 27th and they whittled the lead down. We got out to 15 miles at some stages during the night of the 26th. During the following day they sailed exceptionally well and the wind swung around to be VMG running, so they

were able to point a little deeper than us. In the end, I think we covered 40 miles more than *Wild Oats* between the Heads and Tasman Island.

TASMAN ISLAND MILESTONE

I don't think any of us expected to be at Tasman Light at 5 pm on the 27th. We were all surprised to be there that quickly, but actually, with better sail choices at certain stages we could have shaved an hour off our time. Everyone was a little incredulous about it; we had a blistering run across Storm Bay. Flat water and 25-30 knots of breeze on a reach. That boat likes nothing better than those conditions. We actually opened up a bit on *Oats* at that point.

DERWENT DEADLOCK

We still held the breeze as we got to the Iron Pot and were thinking it couldn't possibly be absolutely dead in the river, there must still be 10-15 knots, but then we got there and just parked; it looked like glass all around. So then it was about being extra vigilant on trim and preserving what was a three-mile lead at that point, but they just kept coming. While we parked, they ate up the three miles and came into the river probably half-a-mile behind us.

So then the race was really on: find every puff, step carefully on the boat, sponge out any water in the bilge. We did everything we could to keep going in the light airs. We had a





The winner of the race
is the one that crosses the
line first with a clear slate.
That was us.

discussion about whether we headed up and covered them (as they moved from below to above us). We decided that looking ahead, there appeared to be more breeze on our side of the course. While it might have made tactical sense to cover them, if we were heading up into even lighter breeze, they would have found a way to get past us up there.

But in the end, they slid by, sailing their boat extremely well in the conditions to get further up the river proper in front of us. We had a shot at catching them just past Opossum Bay where we picked up some more breeze to make some gains. Then we got to that spot close to the finish where it

was starting to glass-out completely, but they held just enough breeze to get toward the finish line, and across it.

PROTEST RESOLVE

The guys were waiting to see what I wanted to do. We were incredibly disappointed to have led for 620 miles, only to lose it in the last five. I said to the guys immediately, "It wasn't over at any point up the river, so we're not going to give up now. There's an issue of the rules having been broken that has to be dealt with, so let's keep our heads up."

After you finish a race, there's always a feeling that you'd have preferred to have fought it out on the

water rather than in the protest room, but yacht racing is about both. Almost every single person on that boat apart from me, James [Jim's son] and Julia [Jim's daughter], has either won an America's Cup or a Volvo Ocean Race. These are ultimate professionals; and they know the sailing instructions. They also know that in any other race in the world, disqualification is the only result for an infringement like that and a failure to do the turns.

The crew were a hundred per cent in support of going ahead with the protest. A couple of them said to me, "It's not just about us and *Wild Oats*. It's about the other hundred boats in the race and the reputation of the race."

QUALIFIED SYMPATHY

I feel for Sandy, Ricko and the team that they didn't do their penalty turns when they should have, but the salient point is that we oughtn't fixate on the first boat across the line being the winner if that boat broke the rules on the way there. The winner of the race is the one that crosses the line first with a clear slate. That was us.

FAMILY AFFAIR

The whole trip was a fabulous experience for us all. Ocean racing isn't just a passion of mine that the kids tag along for: we do it because we can do it together. We've always loved being on boats together, the whole family, and this race in particular. Once the kids have turned 18, they've all been desperate to get on board and race to Hobart with me. It's an incredible thrill to see each other working hard on the boat, putting in the effort, and sharing in both the sense of achievement and the success. ⚓

SWEET RELIEF

The *LDV Comanche* crew reap the rewards of their line honours victory.

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Just reward

Few people have notched up as many minor placings in the great race as *Matt Allen*. The popular president of Australian Sailing finally steered his latest *Ichi Ban*, a straight-out-of-the-box TP52, to a long overdue overall win in 2017. But as Allen details, it was a hard-fought battle against a relentless chasing pack, including arch rival *Quest*.

We were pretty settled on Boxing Day. We looked at the weather models again and we were all convinced that the winner of the race would come from the 45- to 55-foot category. The models had been very stable for three to four days, if not longer. You can never quite predict what you're going to get in the harbour, or Storm Bay and the Derwent, but the bit in the ocean was fairly clear; all the models were aligned. We were even reasonably confident of wind angles, which is why we made a slightly different selection of sails, and ran an A3 (a reaching spinnaker) instead of a masthead (Code Zero). There's only a small difference between the two sails, but that five degrees is important.

We also decided to go for a fairly conservative start, which probably backfired on us because we were fully done over by *Wild Oats X*. They thought they were early and basically put us head to wind at the start, but I said to the crew: "You can lose the race on the harbour, but you can't win it."

After that we stalled and went to the eastern shore right among the TPs, although because it was light, the spectator chop was a factor too.

Our line from the seamark was dictated by our sail selection. We knew we were going to get lifted. With the A3, we were quite close to the first couple of headlands, but all of a sudden the lift came and we kept sailing the favourable angle — that worked really well for us.

PHOTOGRAPHY: ROLEX / STUDIO BORLENGHI







LOCOMOTIVE BREATH

That night I was steering. You could feel the pressure was starting to increase again, and I switched out to the strongest guy on the boat, 'Bubsy', Wade Morgan, and he steered awesomely during that challenging section under kite. We knew *Quest* is very good in those hard running conditions. We were pushing it and we were on the edge, but we were under control.

Will Oxley and Gordon Maguire were working on the lay line to make sure we could get quite deep into that shift (see course track opposite). They decided it was time to go, to gybe, so we put up the Fractional Zero. The wind shift came and we stormed in very hot, very fast and very wet; everyone just hanging on. I think we saw 28, 29 knots, but I don't think the speedo is that accurate in those circumstances.

That's when I think we won the race, in that section. In fact, for the second time. The first time was on the night of the 26th when we whad a really good lead on everybody. We gave it away, but built it back up again.

At that stage, the only option we and *Quest* had was to keep the foot down. If we broke something like a bowsprit, it would have been game over. [As it turned out, *Quest* experienced breakages including a spectacular nosedive that catapulted sailing master Mike Green through the wheel.]

It's such a great feeling when you actually win; there's plenty of hard luck stories... I think every year there's an amazing story that happens on board each boat.

SACRIFICIAL SPINNAKERS

We went into our watch system early, about three o'clock in the afternoon, and very unusually I was first off watch. So I went down below and came back up at 6. We'd already made good gains through that stretch. We were keeping a close eye on all the Cookson 50s and the TPs. We always thought *Quest* and the best Cookson – the Italian *Mascalzone Latino* – were the main competition. We knew if we could beat those boats we would be fine.

There were beautiful sailing conditions on the first night; we were averaging in the mid to high teens in boat speed. At some stage we destroyed the A3, and by the next morning it was a proper nor'easter with gradient breeze.

We radioed-in at Green Cape very early, and were into Bass Strait at 9 in the morning. Just incredible. We started to get big spikes in the breeze at about 11, and we broke the A6 (heavy air spinnaker) just before that big spike by going into the back of a wave.

By 12 pm on the 27th, we really only had one running spinnaker left as the A2+ wasn't going to survive the experience. That was a major concern. We were then forced to go to the Fro (Fractional Code Zero), which meant we were at the wrong angle and people were running us down pretty quickly.

We had to wait for the breeze to

back off and it did at about 3, so we needed to get the A4 up, which we did. The boat was then going very nicely in reasonably flat sea conditions. We were powering through, and by the evening I was watching the waypoints to Tasman Island roll down – 250 nautical miles, 200, 150. There were certainly plenty of hours we were averaging 23 knots.



SUCCESS STORY

Top: The crew of *Ichi Ban* on their way to an overall honours victory. Above: The speedy TP52 heads towards the Iron Pot on the home stretch.





We were around Tasman Island just after dawn, only one day and 15 hours into the race. Amazing. We switched to a jib at about Cape Raoul due to a bit of a wind shift and a tighter angle.

Then we grabbed the binoculars and were trying to figure out what was going on up the track. The observations were pretty good: there was wind at the airport. It looked pretty simple so we tight reached across Storm Bay, and there was quite good breeze coming in around the Iron Pot.

RIVER DANCE

We all knew in our hearts that it must get more complicated at some point. We figured we had 25 minutes up on *Quest* (on corrected time), and we were extending on her a bit.

We got into the river and were south of John Garrow Light but not quite at Tarooma, and all of a sudden the breeze started to recede. We could see wind behind us and wind ahead of us, but for about two miles there was a full transition zone; just nothing.

It was going to build from the east so we tried to get to the eastern shore, but there was no wind. We could see a cruising boat sailing down from the city in quite good breeze. They were sailing in 12–13 knots of breeze and we had nothing. You could cut the atmosphere; it was very tense. Everyone was thinking, "Please let that breeze come down."

Then a cruising boat stopped half a mile away from us. About 25 minutes later the breeze finally filled in and we were going. We just focused on the job and got across the finish line, which was straightforward once the breeze came in, but we were extremely worried about what the margin was to *Quest*.

GLITTERING PRIZE

Matt Allen and the *Ichi Ban* crew savour their overall honours win.

EDGE OF GLORY

When we were across the line I said to everyone, "Great job, well done. I'm proud of you all, but let's just take 15 minutes to work out where we are regarding *Quest*."

We still couldn't see her, which we thought was quite nice because if we had been able to, we would have been in all sorts of strife.

We were looking at the calculations (the yacht tracker doesn't help you very much because it's a bit delayed), but eventually we saw *Quest*. When there was ten minutes left, we looked at the distance she had to

cover and thought, "No, she can't." After that I said, "Ok guys, let's go in."

Those 15 minutes waiting at the finish line were excruciating. I was constantly asking where *Quest* was, what their speed over ground (SOG) was, and looking at the tracker. The boys could tell I was on edge.

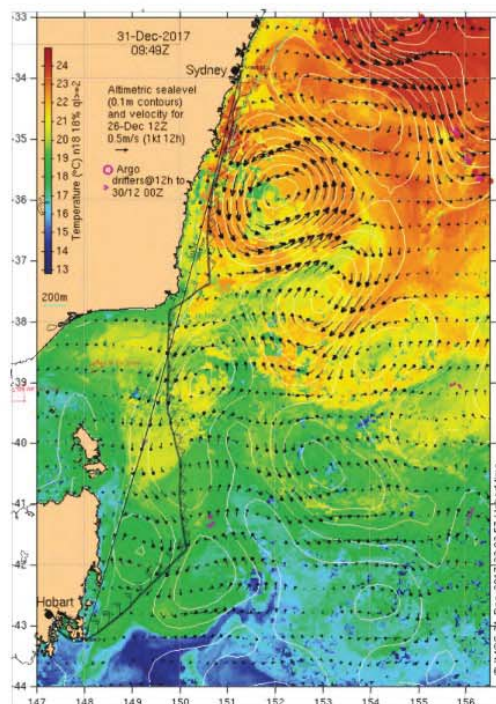
When *Quest* came in they gave us three cheers and we gave them three cheers. The crew are good mates. We knew we had them on corrected time, and really only thought at that stage that *Chutzpah* might be a danger. We went and had a shower and lunch, and by three o'clock in the afternoon it was pretty clear *Chutzpah* couldn't do it.

Relief was the main emotion for me when we worked out we had beaten *Quest*, then absolute elation when we worked out that no other boat could beat us.

It's an amazing experience. It's so easy to be on the losing end of this equation. In 2006, when we arrived at the dock, I'll always remember people saying we couldn't be beaten. Then there was a lot of wind on the east coast of Tasmania that night and we ended up fourth or fifth. Then there was the Volvo year when we broke a rudder, and the last couple of years when we had a few hours then sat there superglued in Storm Bay for five hours.

That's why it's such a great feeling when you actually win; there's plenty of hard luck stories. Win, lose or draw you just enjoy the challenge, and I think every year there's an amazing story that happens on board each boat.

I've been humbled by the messages of congratulations from everywhere around the world, and the recognition the crew and I have received. ⚓



SYDNEY.

Dream run

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROLEX / STUDIO BORLENGHI

2017 was the year it all came together

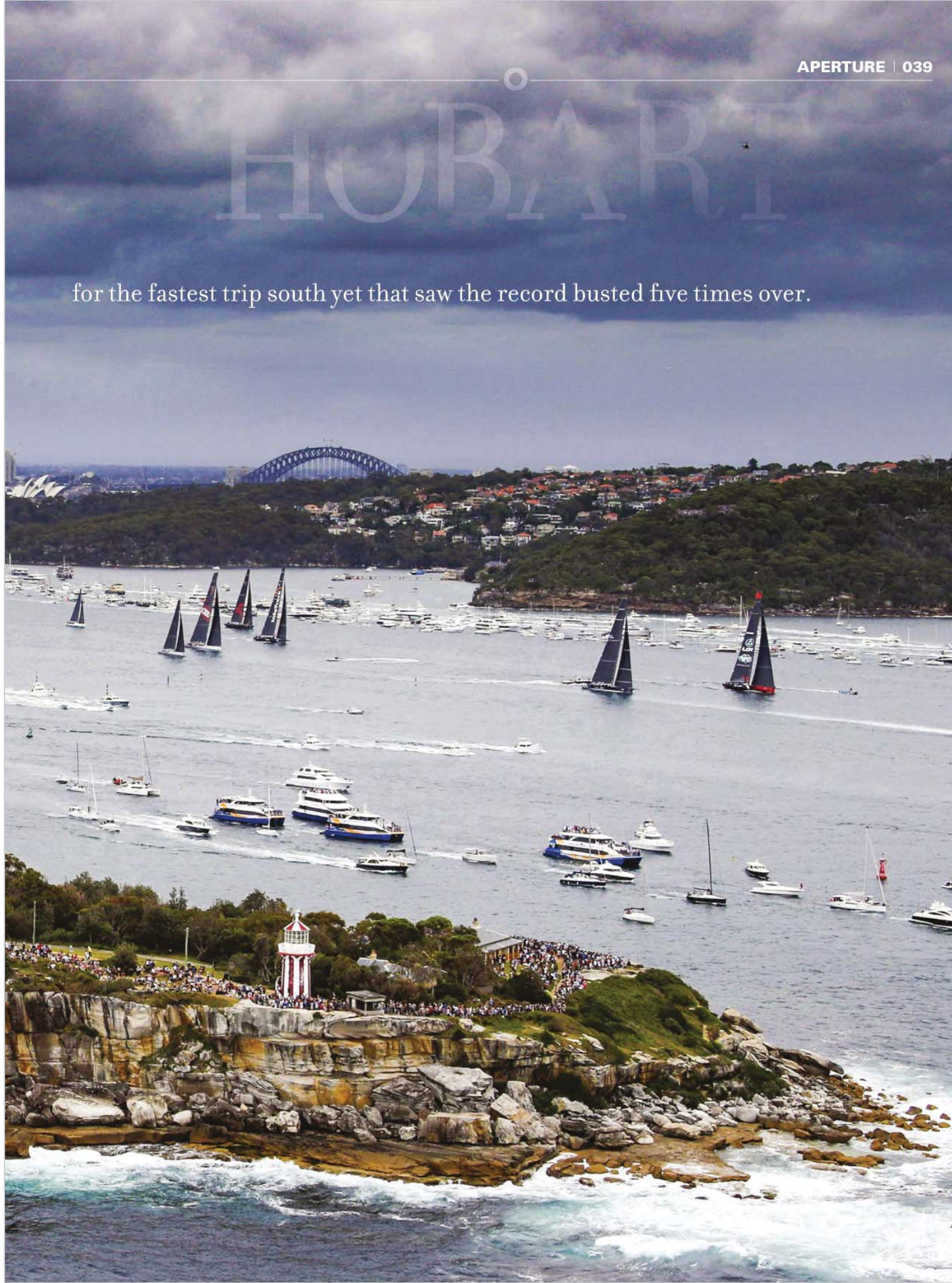


CURTAIN UP

Leadен grey skies and fluky winds at the start belied the spectacular favours the wind gods would later bestow upon a disbelieving fleet.

HOBART

for the fastest trip south yet that saw the record busted five times over.





Left:
POINT OF HONOUR
A poor start saw *Wild Oats XI* ceding at least 100 metres to her supermaxi rivals, but she clawed her way back into contention by the Derwent. Port/starboard incident aside, it was a thunderous return to form.



Left:
PERFORMANCE BENCHMARK
There was really no question Matt Allen's brand new TP 52 was the boat to beat on handicap. *Quest* knew they had to try and break their largely untested rival, but *Ichu Ban's* experienced crew drove her just as hard, and it was *Quest* that suffered damage.



Left:
HIGH PROFILE
Despite the downwind sprint conditions definitely not being to her liking, one of the most famous names in ocean racing, *Dorada*, the classic ketch from the United States, still managed to win two divisions – IRC 4 and ORCi Div 4.





Above:
CLOSE PURSUIT
Wild Oats XI's
regimen of tweaks,
tucks and surgery
has only made her
quicker.

Right:
ALLEGRO CON BRIO
One of the world's
best performing
ocean racing yachts,
Italy's *Mascalzone*
Latino carves up a
Bass Strait swell. The
Cookson 50 was in
the hunt even though
the first day they
were still adjusting to
Australian conditions.





Above:
STEEL SKY
A succession of magnificent panoramas provided the backdrop for the passage south – each of the usual weather gates seemed to manufacture a breathtaking display of individual beauty.



Left:
TRADITIONAL WELCOME
Komatsu Azzurro is buffeted by a powerful westerly as she heads into the Derwent.





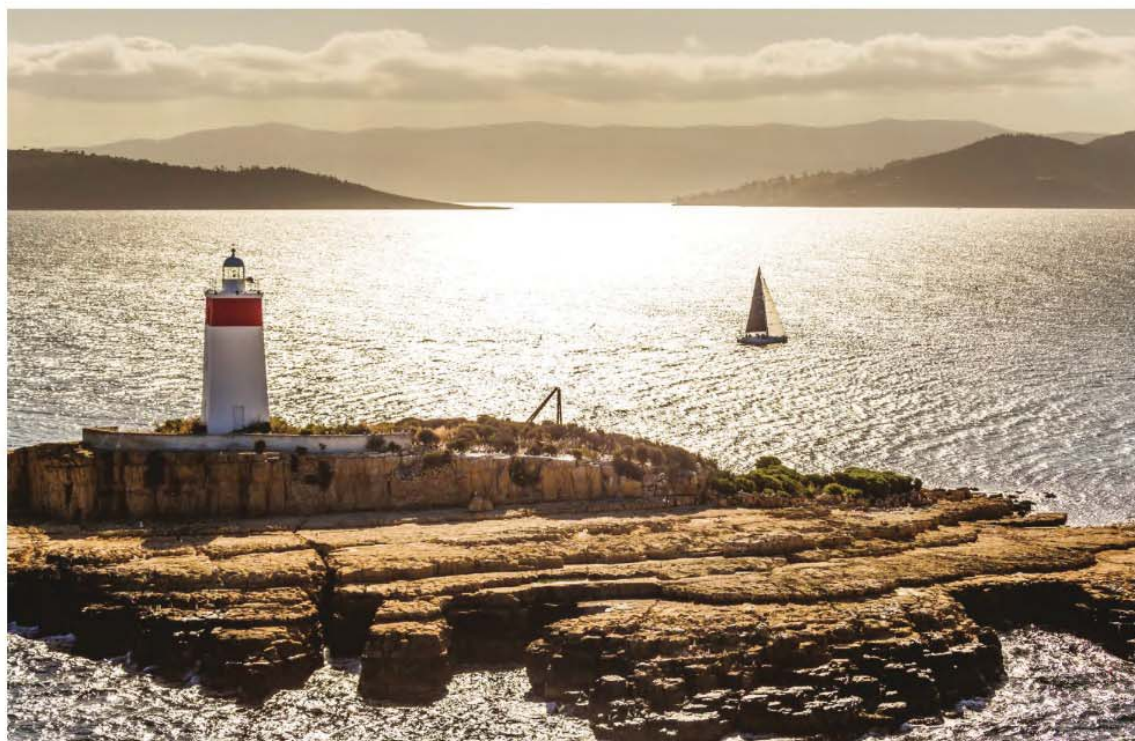
Left:
FIGHTING SPIRIT
Sean Langman and the crew of *Maluka* hunker down one more time as they grind through a stiff southerly toward Hobart. The mighty little gaff rigger notched up her seventh trip south.



Left:
IMPACT ZONE
Quest launching in the sort of hard running conditions she excels in – like for nearly all the TPs there were long periods when her boatspeed was sitting above 20 knots.

Right:
ESCAPE VELOCITY
Fully powered up under her massive sail-plan, *LDV Comanche* tramples across the Tasman, using her heeling angle to maximum effect. Her average speed from Sydney Heads to Tasman Island was 23.6 knots.

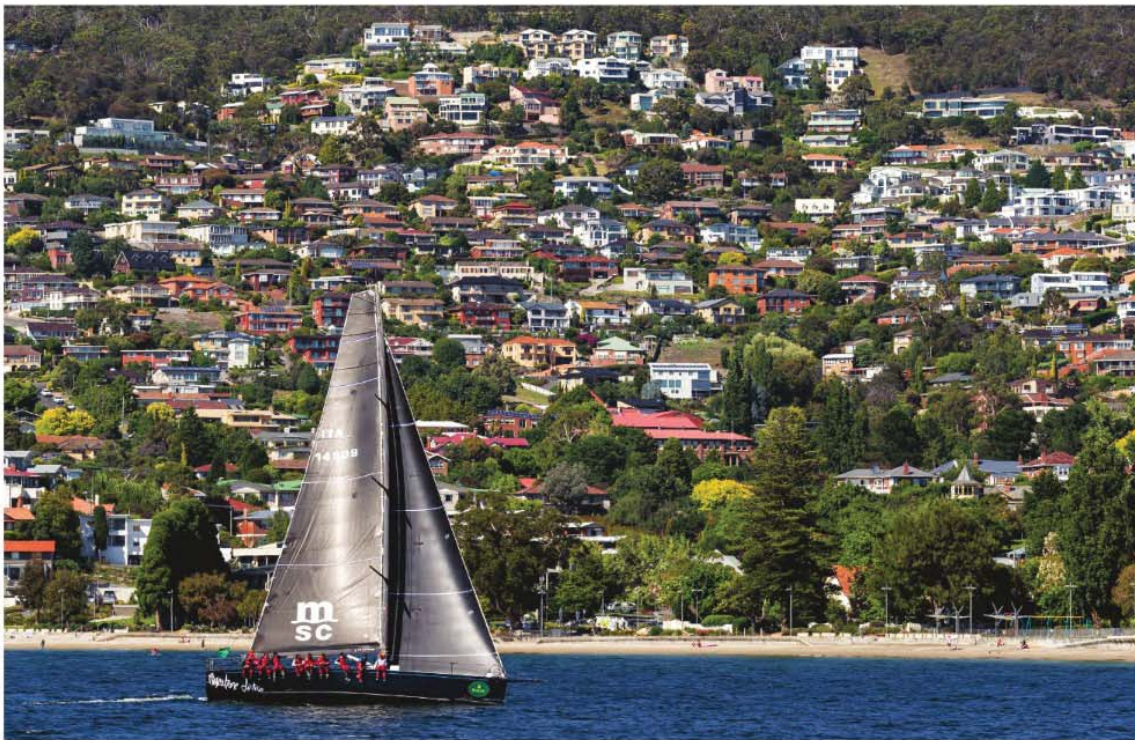




Above:
FINISHING BURST
Celestial on a fast reach past Cape Raoul's distinctive columns. The leading group of TPs hooked in to a shift that saw them fly across Storm Bay and surf well into the river.

Left:
GOLDEN MOMENT
Rounding the Iron Pot, *Mister Lucky*, a Jeanneau Sun Fast 3600, harnesses solid pressure for the 12 nautical miles to Battery Point.





Left: RINGSIDE SEAT
An impressive armchair view from bayside homes of *Mascalzone Latino* as she tracks upwind, staying close to the shore to capitalise on any lifts out of adverse tide.

Below: TWILIGHT DRAMA
After 620 nautical miles, *Wild Oats XI* slips past *LDV Comanche* in a nailbiting showdown in the Derwent. Celebrations were put on hold, then became commiserations after *Comanche's* successful protest.





ORCi OVERALL

DIVISION	YACHT	OVERALL	LINE PLACING	DIVISION NAME	DIVISION PLACING	ELAPSED TIME	CORRECTED TIME	HANDICAP	OWNER	STATUS
ORCi	Quest	1	8	1	1	1:20:08	2:11:54	1.357	Paul Clitheroe & Bob Steel NSW	Finished
ORCi	Ichi Ban	2	7	1	2	1:19:10	2:12:30	1.402	Matt Allen NSW	Finished
ORCi	Mascalzone Latino 32	3	10	1	3	1:21:05	2:12:55	1.351	Vincenzo Onorato Italy	Finished
ORCi	Smuggler	4	22	2	1	2:00:54	2:13:01	1.248	Sebastian Bohm NSW	Finished
ORCi	Patrice	5	18	2	2	1:23:36	2:13:05	1.283	Tony Kirby NSW	Finished
ORCi	Concubine	6	13	2	3	1:23:19	2:13:32	1.301	Jason Ward SA	Finished
ORCi	Celestial	7	11	1	4	1:22:06	2:13:53	1.343	Sam Haynes NSW	Finished
ORCi	Chutzpah	8	27	2	4	2:04:10	2:14:22	1.196	Bruce Taylor VIC	Finished
ORCi	Indian	9	17	1	5	1:23:34	2:14:51	1.321	Craig Carter WA	Finished
ORCi	Koa	10	15	1	6	1:23:33	2:15:23	1.333	Peter Wrigley & Andrew Kearnan NSW	Finished
ORCi	Highfield Caringbah	11	19	1	7	2:00:00	2:16:36	1.346	Ian Short NSW	Finished
ORCi	Wild Oats XI	12	2	1	8	1:09:48	2:16:41	1.913	The Oatley Family NSW	Finished
ORCi	Sonic	13	23	1	9	2:01:22	2:17:00	1.317	Kwangmin Rho South Korea	Finished
ORCi	ENVY Scooters Beachball 52	14	12	1	10	1:22:58	2:17:31	1.395	Barry Cuneo QLD	Finished
ORCi	M3	15	21	1	11	2:00:51	2:17:44	1.345	Peter Hickson WA	Finished
ORCi	Oskana	16	26	1	12	2:01:59	2:18:31	1.331	Michael Pritchard TAS	Finished
ORCi	Black Jack	17	3	1	13	1:11:41	2:18:38	1.867	Peter Harburg QLD	Finished
ORCi	Triple Lindy	18	25	1	14	2:01:54	2:18:42	1.337	Joseph Mele USA	Finished
ORCi	Triton	19	14	1	15	1:23:33	2:18:57	1.408	Michael Cranitch & David Gotze NSW	Finished
ORCi	St Jude	20	30	2	5	2:17:39	3:04:58	1.173	Noel Cornish NSW	Finished
ORCi	Mister Lucky	21	76	4	1	3:06:25	3:06:52	1.006	Mark Hipgrave QLD	Finished
ORCi	Dorado	22	77	4	2	3:06:37	3:07:11	1.007	Matt Brooks USA	Finished
ORCi	China Easyway	23	71	4	3	3:05:47	3:07:47	1.026	Travis Read & Tim Wilson NSW	Finished
ORCi	Ariel	24	63	4	4	3:04:49	3:08:58	1.054	Ron Forster NSW	Finished
ORCi	Mayfair	25	61	4	5	3:04:44	3:09:13	1.058	James Irvine QLD	Finished
ORCi	Calibre	26	57	3	1	3:04:29	3:10:28	1.078	Richard Williams NSW	Finished
ORCi	Black Sheep	27	47	3	2	3:03:58	3:10:43	1.089	Derek & Martin Sheppard NSW	Finished
ORCi	Eve	28	66	3	3	3:05:14	3:11:20	1.079	Steven Capell NSW	Finished
ORCi	Christopher Dragon	29	32	2	6	2:22:27	3:12:22	1.198	Andrew & Linda Weiss USA	Finished
ORCi	Enigma	30	74	3	4	3:05:54	3:12:34	1.086	Jason Bond NSW	Finished
ORCi	Grace O'Malley	31	42	3	5	3:03:37	3:13:02	1.125	Zoe Taylor NSW	Finished
ORCi	Mondo	32	78	3	6	3:07:28	3:14:04	1.083	Ray Sweeney QLD	Finished
ORCi	Warrior Won	33	70	3	7	3:05:47	3:14:39	1.114	Christopher Sheehan USA	Finished
ORCi	Ocean Gem	34	86	4	6	3:16:50	3:14:41	0.976	David Hows QLD	Finished
ORCi	XS Moment BNMH	35	69	3	8	3:05:34	3:14:53	1.120	Ray Hudson NSW	Finished
ORCi	Komatsu Azzurro	36	92	4	7	4:02:23	3:15:00	0.884	Shane Kearns NSW	Finished
ORCi	Khaleesi	37	38	2	7	3:03:05	3:16:09	1.174	Andrew & Pauline Dally NSW	Finished
ORCi	Dare Devil	38	45	2	8	3:03:53	3:16:29	1.166	Sibby Ilzhofer NSW	Finished
ORCi	Kialoa II	39	68	3	9	3:05:34	3:17:10	1.150	Patrick & Keith Broughton NSW	Finished
ORCi	Dark and Stormy	40	81	4	8	3:12:03	3:17:26	1.064	T Kourtis & S Mellington VIC	Finished
ORCi	Extasea	41	51	2	9	3:04:02	3:17:35	1.178	Paul Buchholz VIC	Finished
ORCi	Hartbreaker	42	34	2	10	2:23:51	3:18:26	1.259	Tony and Gaye Walton VIC	Finished
ORCi	Climate Action Now	43	59	2	11	3:04:40	3:18:44	1.183	Lisa Blair NSW	Finished
ORCi	Euphoria II	44	90	4	9	3:23:03	3:20:38	0.975	Marc Stuart QLD	Finished
ORCi	Another Painkiller	45	84	3	10	3:13:40	3:21:15	1.088	Rod West QLD	Finished
ORCi	Merlion	46	88	4	10	3:18:33	3:21:30	1.033	Eddie Mackevicius VIC	Finished
ORCi	Chancellor	47	87	3	11	3:17:24	4:01:51	1.095	Edward Toher NSW	Finished
ORCi	Weddell	48	35	1	16	2:23:54	4:11:06	1.490	Afanasy Isaeu Poland	Finished
ORCi	Rockall	999	999	1	999	0:00:00	0:00:00	1.366	Christopher Opieklo Germany	Retired
ORCi	Wots Next	999	999	1	999	0:00:00	0:00:00	1.166	Charles Cupit NSW	Retired
ORCi	Opt2Go Scamp	999	999	4	999	0:00:00	0:00:00	1.063	Mike Mollison QLD	Retired
ORCi	Jazz Player	999	999	3	999	0:00:00	0:00:00	1.149	Matthew Lawrence VIC	Retired
ORCi	Blunderbuss	999	999	4	999	0:00:00	0:00:00	1.056	Eric Marsh VIC	Retired

PHS OVERALL

DIVISION	YACHT	OVERALL	LINE PLACING	DIVISION NAME	DIVISION PLACING	ELAPSED TIME	CORRECTED TIME	HANDICAP	OWNER	STATUS
PHS	Flying Fish Arctos	1	73	2	1	3:05:52	3:07:01	1.015	Flying Fish Online NSW	Finished
PHS	She's The Culprit	2	67	2	2	3:05:26	3:07:20	1.024	The Culprit Syndicate NSW	Finished
PHS	Helsal 3	3	31	1	1	2:22:21	3:07:49	1.135	Helsal 3 Syndicate NSW	Finished
PHS	Takani	4	79	2	3	3:08:17	3:08:31	1.003	James Whittle NSW	Finished
PHS	PYR-ArnoldCo/Wot Eva	5	49	1	3	2:10:02	3:05:33	1.336	Performance Yacht Racing NSW	Finished
PHS	Abracadabra	6	58	1	2	3:04:33	3:09:10	1.060	James Murchison NSW	Finished
PHS	Wax Lyrical	7	62	1	4	3:04:47	3:09:51	1.066	Les Goodridge NSW	Finished
PHS	Reve	8	83	2	4	3:13:30	3:10:48	0.969	Kevin Whelan NSW	Finished
PHS	Arch Rival	9	75	1	5	3:06:19	3:11:01	1.060	Steve Connors NSW	Finished
PHS	Pekijus	10	60	1	6	3:04:42	3:11:11	1.085	David Suttie NSW	Finished
PHS	Vanishing Point	11	80	1	7	3:08:59	3:12:31	1.044	Bill Wheeler NSW	Finished
PHS	Seamo Racing Mahligai	12	65	1	8	3:05:00	3:14:55	1.129	Murray Owen & Jenny Kings NZ	Finished
PHS	Duende	13	46	1	9	3:03:53	3:17:12	1.176	Damien Parkes NSW	Finished
PHS	SailDNA	14	37	1	10	3:03:02	3:17:40	1.195	Emir Rudzic NSW	Finished
PHS	Magic Miles	15	89	2	5	3:18:41	3:17:45	0.990	Michael Crew TAS	Finished
PHS	Allegro	16	72	1	11	3:05:51	3:18:29	1.162	Adrian Lewis NSW	Finished
PHS	She	17	91	2	6	4:01:32	3:19:19	0.936	Philip Bell QLD	Finished
PHS	Imalizard	999	999	2	999	0:00:00	0:00:00	1.028	Bruce Watson NSW	Retired



2017 Results

CORINTHIAN

DIVISION	YACHT	OVERALL	LINE PLACING	DIVISION PLACING	ELAPSED TIME	CORRECTED TIME	HANDICAP	OWNER	STATUS
Corinthian	<i>Snowdome Occasional Coarse Language Too</i>	1	29	1	2:13:32	3:01:59	1.202	Warwick Sherman NSW	Finished
Corinthian	<i>Eve</i>	2	66	2	3:05:14	3:02:44	0.968	Steven Capell NSW	Finished
Corinthian	<i>She's The Culprit</i>	3	67	3	3:05:26	3:07:20	1.024	The Culprit Syndicate NSW	Finished
Corinthian	<i>China Easyway</i>	4	71	4	3:05:47	3:07:52	1.027	Travis Read & Tim Wilson NSW	Finished
Corinthian	<i>Calibre</i>	5	57	5	3:04:29	3:08:29	1.052	Richard Williams NSW	Finished
Corinthian	<i>Takani</i>	6	79	6	3:08:17	3:08:31	1.003	James Whittle NSW	Finished
Corinthian	<i>Abacadabra</i>	7	58	7	3:04:33	3:09:10	1.060	James Murchison NSW	Finished
Corinthian	<i>Ariel</i>	8	63	8	3:04:49	3:09:17	1.058	Ron Forster NSW	Finished
Corinthian	<i>Wax Lyrical</i>	9	62	9	3:04:47	3:09:51	1.066	Les Goodridge NSW	Finished
Corinthian	<i>Reve</i>	10	83	10	3:13:30	3:10:48	0.969	Kevin Whelan NSW	Finished
Corinthian	<i>Arch Rival</i>	11	75	11	3:06:19	3:11:01	1.060	Steve Connors NSW	Finished
Corinthian	<i>Enchantress</i>	12	82	12	3:12:25	3:12:15	0.998	John Willoughby SA	Finished
Corinthian	<i>Black Sheep</i>	13	47	13	3:03:58	3:13:20	1.123	Derek & Martin Sheppard NSW	Finished
Corinthian	<i>Dare Devil</i>	14	45	14	3:03:53	3:13:21	1.125	Sibby Ilzhofer NSW	Finished
Corinthian	<i>XS Moment BNMH</i>	15	69	15	3:05:34	3:13:35	1.103	Ray Hudson NSW	Finished
Corinthian	<i>Seamo Racing Mahligai</i>	16	65	16	3:05:00	3:14:55	1.129	Murray Owen & Jenny Kings NZ	Finished
Corinthian	<i>Euphoria II</i>	17	90	17	3:23:03	3:16:03	0.926	Marc Stuart QLD	Finished
Corinthian	<i>Merlin</i>	18	33	18	2:23:45	3:16:50	1.238	David Forbes NSW	Finished
Corinthian	<i>Komatsu Azzurro</i>	19	92	19	4:02:23	3:17:18	0.908	Shane Kearns NSW	Finished
Corinthian	<i>Dark and Stormy</i>	20	81	20	3:12:03	3:17:23	1.063	T Kourtis & S Mellington VIC	Finished
Corinthian	<i>Chancellor</i>	21	87	21	3:17:24	3:17:37	1.003	Edward Toher NSW	Finished
Corinthian	<i>Khaleesi</i>	22	38	22	3:03:05	3:18:18	1.203	Andrew & Pauline Dally NSW	Finished
Corinthian	<i>Kialoa II</i>	23	68	23	3:05:34	3:18:22	1.165	Patrick & Keith Broughton NSW	Finished
Corinthian	<i>Allegro</i>	24	72	24	3:05:51	3:18:29	1.162	Adrian Lewis NSW	Finished
Corinthian	<i>She</i>	25	91	25	4:01:32	3:19:19	0.936	Phillip Bell QLD	Finished
Corinthian	<i>Another Painkiller</i>	26	84	26	3:13:40	3:20:55	1.085	Rod West QLD	Finished
Corinthian	<i>Gun Runner</i>	27	94	27	5:00:22	4:00:13	0.799	Australian Army NSW	Finished
Corinthian	<i>Opt2Go Scamp</i>	999	999	999	0:00:00	0:00:00	1.056	Mike Mollison QLD	Retired
Corinthian	<i>Wots Next</i>	999	999	999	0:00:00	0:00:00	1.148	Charles Cupit NSW	Retired

CLIPPER 70

DIVISION	YACHT	OVERALL	LINE PLACING	DIVISION PLACING	ELAPSED TIME	CORRECTED TIME	HANDICAP	OWNER	STATUS
Clipper 70	<i>HotelPlanner.com</i>	1	36	1	3:02:31	3:02:31	0	Clipper Ventures Great Britain	Finished
Clipper 70	<i>Sanya Serenity Coast</i>	2	40	2	3:03:29	3:03:29	0	Clipper Ventures Great Britain	Finished
Clipper 70	<i>Garmin</i>	3	41	3	3:03:31	3:03:31	0	Clipper Ventures Great Britain	Finished
Clipper 70	<i>Nasdaq</i>	4	43	4	3:03:39	3:03:39	0	Clipper Ventures Great Britain	Finished
Clipper 70	<i>Visit Seattle</i>	5	44	5	3:03:49	3:03:49	0	Clipper Ventures Great Britain	Finished
Clipper 70	<i>PSP Logistics</i>	6	48	6	3:03:59	3:03:59	0	Clipper Ventures Great Britain	Finished
Clipper 70	<i>Unicef</i>	7	52	7	3:04:03	3:04:03	0	Clipper Ventures Great Britain	Finished
Clipper 70	<i>GREAT Britain</i>	8	53	8	3:04:08	3:04:08	0	Clipper Ventures Great Britain	Finished
Clipper 70	<i>Dare to Lead</i>	9	54	9	3:04:08	3:04:08	0	Clipper Ventures Great Britain	Finished
Clipper 70	<i>Liverpool 2018</i>	10	55	10	3:04:09	3:04:09	0	Clipper Ventures Great Britain	Finished
Clipper 70	<i>Qingdao</i>	11	64	11	3:04:56	3:04:56	0	Clipper Ventures Great Britain	Finished

CRUISING

DIVISION	YACHT	OVERALL	LINE PLACING	DIVISION PLACING	ELAPSED TIME	CORRECTED TIME	HANDICAP	OWNER	STATUS
Cruising	<i>Charlie's Dream</i>	1	95	1	5:00:58	5:00:58	1	Peter Lewis QLD	Finished
Cruising	<i>Freyja</i>	2	96	2	5:19:09	5:19:09	1	Richard Lees NSW	Finished

LINE HONOURS

DIVISION	YACHT	OVERALL	LINE PLACING	DIVISION PLACING	ELAPSED TIME	CORRECTED TIME	HANDICAP	OWNER	STATUS
Line Honours	<i>LDV Comanche</i>	1	1	1	1:09:15	1:09:15	0	Jim Cooney & Samantha Grant NSW	Finished
Line Honours	<i>Wild Oats XI</i>	2	2	2	1:09:48	1:09:48	0	The Oatley Family NSW	Finished
Line Honours	<i>Black Jack</i>	3	3	3	1:11:41	1:11:41	0	Peter Harburg QLD	Finished
Line Honours	<i>Beau Geste</i>	4	4	4	1:12:36	1:12:36	0	Karl Kwok Hong Kong	Finished
Line Honours	<i>Wizard</i>	5	5	5	1:13:43	1:13:43	0	David & Peter Askew USA	Finished
Line Honours	<i>Wild Oats X</i>	6	6	6	1:15:20	1:15:20	0	The Oatley Family NSW	Finished
Line Honours	<i>Ichi Ban</i>	7	7	7	1:19:10	1:19:10	0	Matt Allen NSW	Finished
Line Honours	<i>Quest</i>	8	8	8	1:20:08	1:20:08	0	Paul Clitheroe & Bob Steel NSW	Finished
Line Honours	<i>Hollywood Boulevard</i>	9	9	9	1:21:03	1:21:03	0	Ray Roberts NSW	Finished
Line Honours	<i>Mascalzone Latino 32</i>	10	10	10	1:21:05	1:21:05	0	Vincenzo Onorato Italy	Finished
Line Honours	<i>Celestial</i>	11	11	11	1:22:06	1:22:06	0	Sam Haynes NSW	Finished
Line Honours	<i>ENVY Scooters Beachball 52</i>	12	12	12	1:22:58	1:22:58	0	Barry Cuneo QLD	Finished
Line Honours	<i>Concubine</i>	13	13	13	1:23:19	1:23:19	0	Jason Ward SA	Finished
Line Honours	<i>Triton</i>	14	14	14	1:23:33	1:23:33	0	Michael Cranitch & David Gotze NSW	Finished
Line Honours	<i>Koa</i>	15	15	15	1:23:33	1:23:33	0	Peter Wrigley & Andrew Kearnan NSW	Finished
Line Honours	<i>Ran Tan II</i>	16	16	16	1:23:34	1:23:34	0	Brian Petersen New Zealand	Finished
Line Honours	<i>Indian</i>	17	17	17	1:23:34	1:23:34	0	Craig Carter NSW	Finished
Line Honours	<i>Patrice</i>	18	18	18	1:23:36	1:23:36	0	Tony Kirby NSW	Finished
Line Honours	<i>Highfield Caringbah</i>	19	19	19	2:00:00	2:00:00	0	Ian Short NSW	Finished
Line Honours	<i>Derucci</i>	20	20	20	2:00:35	2:00:35	0	Noahs Group China	Finished
Line Honours	<i>M3</i>	21	21	21	2:00:51	2:00:51	0	Peter Hickson WA	Finished
Line Honours	<i>Smuggler</i>	22	22	22	2:00:54	2:00:54	0	Sebastian Bohm NSW	Finished





Dock talk

As Boxing Day ticked over and the countdown to the start got going, crews began their final preparations, some keeping cooler than others. The CYCA surged with friends and family wishing

the competitors good luck and contributing to the atmosphere of apprehension and excitement. Sailing fans also got into the mix, seizing the opportunity to admire the some of the world's best racing yachts up close. As always, it was a

battle for visitors to make their way through the crowds to pick out the yacht they were seeking. Those who didn't have a spot following the fleet out on a spectator boat were able to watch the live coverage of the start in the Race Village.

PHOTOGRAPHY JANE EVANS



1. DOCK JAM "A" and "B" fingers at the CYCA. **2. READY TO LAUGH** The crew of *Wax Lyrical* psyched for the trip. **3. KEY SUPPORT** *Yeah Baby* crew members Marc and Louis Ryckmans with their mum. **4. BEAR NECESSITIES** *Patrice* skipper Tony Kirby, wife Bles and young Kids' Cancer Project supporters. **5. FINAL VOYAGE** Pete Messenger and Jeremy Rowles were entrusted with former CYCA Commodore John Messenger's ashes. **6. TALK IS CHEAP** The crew of *Hollywood Boulevard* get the latest weather update before casting off. **7. PARTY OF FIVE** *Triton* bowman Andrew Simpson and stylish send-off squad of wife Jemima Lohse, Arabella, Madeleine and Manning. **8. EXIT PLAN** *Oskana's* crew relaxed and looking forward to racing the Cookson 50 back to Tasmanian waters. **9. WESTERN FORCE** *Indian's* crew spent six weeks flying back and forth from WA to get the boat ready for Boxing Day. **10. FAMILY AFFAIR** Angela and Mike Mollison, and their crew from Brisbane-based *Opt2Go Scamp*.



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TRUE GRIT Front row: Libby Greenhalgh, Lisa Blair, Alison Kent and Ellie Draper. Back row: Alex South, Allie Gray, Kaz Young and Carina Becker.

Leading from the front

Ocean racing still has a long way to go before there are equal numbers of male and female sailors regularly taking part in major races. That's why *Lisa Blair*, well-known for her solo exploits, decided to give other passionate women sailors the chance to compete in the Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race 2017 aboard her Hick 50 *Climate Action Now*. It's the sort of opportunity that didn't exist when Blair started sailing over a decade ago – but one she is determined to forge for other women. Here, she charts the highs and lows of the journey.

The morning of the Rolex Sydney Hobart dawned with cloudy skies and fickle winds. We farewelled our loved ones around 10 am before pushing back from the dock at D'Albora Marinas.

Most of my amazing crew had flown in from either England, the US or New Zealand to join *Climate Action Now* for this classic, world-famous race. Working in partnership with The Magenta Project, we had formed the first all-female team to race to Hobart in 16 years. During the selection process we opened up applications internationally, and received a staggering – and inspiring – 170 applications.

It was tough narrowing it down to the final five, but with the help of my co-skipper, Volvo Ocean racer and founding member of The Magenta Project Libby Greenhalgh, we assembled a strong, diverse team. We were together for one week of training before race day, and I was proud to see how well we connected.

INTO THE SWING

My heart was in my mouth as we ducked and weaved around the other yachts in the pre-start. With 105 yachts spread across three start lines, it was intense. I kept thinking, "Don't hit anyone."

Like a mantra, it was on a loop. The worst thing would have been to have had a collision that forced us to retire from the race before it had even begun. That was not an option.

The communication was fluid as we went into the start sequence. Olympic sailor Alex South and Libby were my tacticians, calling the best breeze and allowing me to focus on helming. It immediately got easier the second we gathered speed over the closing metres to the line as all the boats were finally travelling in the same direction. I took a deep, calming breath and really got into the swing of driving as fast as I could. The light, 10-knot north-easterly meant that keeping the focus on the helm was important, along with making sure that all the sails were trimmed for the conditions.





We tacked around the windward mark and sailed out toward Sydney Heads. When we reached the headlands, the winds eased even more, dropping down to the 6-8 knot mark. In addition, we were racing with the heavy sails from my solo Antarctica circumnavigation, and the wash from the hundreds of spectator vessels created a very sloppy sea state that slapped the wind out of the sails.

Finally we got into clear air and a better sea-state as we headed out to open ocean, but we had lost a lot of ground. Twenty minutes after leaving Sydney, we finally hoisted the biggest spinnaker we had, affectionately called 'Big Yella', and started to make headway south.

TAMING THE WIND

It was a glorious downwind race. We were able to hold Big Yella for the next day and a half as we sailed down the New South Wales coast, then across Bass Straight and on toward Tasmania, where we aimed a little further offshore. (With the expected wind shift, we wanted to get a better angle for the final leg into Storm Bay and up the Derwent.) On our final evening at sea we were expecting a southerly change. Luckily, we could see it coming as the boats in front all started sailing odd angles and dousing their spinnakers, so we dropped Big Yella too. Very soon we also reefed the main as we were sailing close hauled in 25-30 knots of wind. The stronger winds held for most of the night, and by sunrise we were less than 70 nautical miles from the finish.

The winds shifted around to the west north-west, allowing us to rehoist Big Yella. But we were pushing the top of the kite's wind range, and rounding up in the gusts was causing the spinnaker to flog. One such round up, Big Yella flapped so hard that the spinnaker sheets broke free and we had an emergency drop.

When we rehoisted Big Yella, it dropped into the water. Little

did we know that this was the start of eight hours of hell where we broke every single spinnaker onboard. Finally, Alison Kent (AKA Gator) was able to dry out Big Yella, which was now known as 'Banana Split', and we went for a rehoist. Banana Split finally succumbed to a death at sea, and we sadly collected all the pieces.

PERSEVERANCE FACTOR

That was our best spinnaker, and while I was gutted we'd lost so much ground, most of the breakages were because we were using old sails and I just needed to take the knocks on the chin. Despite the fact that we were now severely under-canvassed with the last (repaired) spinnaker being our small storm spinnaker, I was thoroughly impressed it hadn't dampened the teams' spirits as they tackled the final miles.

We entered Storm Bay and realised everyone had sailed into a huge wind hole. With over 25 yachts within five nautical miles of each other, it was still anyone's game, but it was going to be luck of the draw.

We all drifted across Storm Bay before picking up the strengthening northerly winds that allowed us to sail a great run up the Derwent River. The final mile allowed for a slight course change that meant we could rehoist our storm spinnaker, which had now been repaired four times. It was enough for us to hold off the boat directly behind us, and saw us finish with an honourable position of 59th across the line.

We pulled into Constitution Dock with ear-splitting grins; our reward arriving at the other end having overcome all the challenges faced at sea.

It is my greatest hope that more opportunities like this can be offered to women in sailing. Who knows, maybe next year there will be two all-female yachts racing in this iconic race.

I sure hope so. ⚓

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BRITTANY COOPER



Ticket to ride

This year's crop of sailors pulling on the sea-boots for the first time enjoyed the kind of downwind conditions only witnessed a few times in more than seven decades. Four of them lapped-up the multi-faceted experience which is the Rolex Sydney Hobart.

Roseann McGlinchey

Boat: *HotelPlanner.com*

Position: Watch leader

24 year-old Roseann McGlinchey from Derry-Londonderry in Ireland was looking for a challenge, and signed-up for the 40,000 nautical mile Clipper Round the World Race. The Rolex Sydney Hobart, which was a short leg on the Clipper route, provided a real-time man overboard test for her crew.

I didn't know anything about sailing before starting training for the Clipper Race, so when I heard about the Sydney to Hobart, I shrugged and thought, "Cool, it's just another race."

But the closer it got, the more excitement I noticed amongst our crew. We had one guy, Carsten Busk, from Denmark, who signed up for the whole entire world race just in order to do the Sydney to Hobart. He was absolutely delighted.

It was amazing, wind conditions were excellent and we had a really dramatic race. Seven hours in, we saw an *Invictus* boat in trouble – they'd dropped their spinnaker and were turning around. They issued a PanPan, so we radioed them and found they had a man overboard situation.

From the moment we decided to try and collect their man overboard, we worked really well together as a team. All our training and drills came together, and after that our confidence went through the roof.

As it turned out, Adrian, the man overboard, works for the

Royal Australian Navy, training people how to rescue others from the water. So he knew what to do, himself. It took fifteen minutes for us to turn around and rescue him. We had a rescue swimmer approach him and clip him onto their lifejacket. We blew up our dinghy and sent him back to his boat with a lovely cheesecake. After the race, he spent a fair bit of time with us at the Hobart village and we'll definitely stay in contact.

Saving Adrian was the best highlight of the race for me. Not far behind, though was winning our division (because of the 120 minute redress awarded). So that was an incredible feeling as it was also the first Clipper race that we'd won for *HotelPlanner.com*. And also winning the Rani Trophy was an amazing surprise because we hadn't realised how highly

observers thought of our actions.

There was a lot of camaraderie between all the Hobart boats. Normally when we race we don't see anyone for a month. We got a fantastic welcome, and Taste of Tasmania Festival was on, so the whole place was buzzing. And the people were so friendly.

Dan Ryding

Boat: *InfoTrack*

Position: Sail handler

Chalking up the Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race 2017 on supermaxi *InfoTrack* was Dan Ryding's first offshore race – and a dizzying learning curve – but he's embraced the challenges only ocean racing can bring.

My dad is a keen fisherman, so I've spent plenty of time on boats in rivers and lakes, but never the ocean. And except for a few twilight sessions with Christian Beck (owner of *InfoTrack*), I hadn't really done any sailing either. I put my hand up because I thought it would be an amazing opportunity to be tested both mentally and physically, but also to be around professionally skilled and dedicated people.

To be honest, I didn't know what to expect. I went into it knowing that I wanted to work as hard as I possibly could for as long as I could, and to always be part of the team and do the best for the team, but it blew my expectations away. I'm really happy and feel proud to have been part of it.

The best part was getting a glimpse into the world of the professional sailors on board. I have so much respect for them. The camaraderie that develops among the crew makes it all worthwhile; through adverse situations comes a mateship like no other.

Competing in the race also made me realise just how extremely physical sailing is. Keeping fit is crucial, as is building up your knowledge and understanding of sailing so you're prepared for any situation – you never know what can happen out on the water.

As for parallels between sailing and my position as Chief Technical Officer at *InfoTrack*, I'd say that teamwork and good leadership are essential to success in both. There needs to be clear messaging and a common goal. This can't be achieved alone: you need a strong team, the right people in the right position, and to make sure everyone carries their weight.

Will you see me back on the boat, racing in 2018? I wouldn't think twice about doing it again, there's no thrill quite like it, but I'd love to leave the space open for another *InfoTrackian* this year – and give someone else the experience of a lifetime!



BRITTANY COOPER





JANE EVANS

Kaz Young

Boat: *Climate Action Now*
Position: Pit

Kaz Young won a coveted spot on the all-female crew aboard *Climate Action Now*. Classed as an amateur on the boat, she still had over 6000 ocean miles under her belt, and brought "a lot of life experience" to her big adventure. Her dream is to encourage more women into sailing, and compete in the Melbourne to Osaka race on her own yacht.

Sailing in a Rolex Sydney Hobart has been an ambition of mine since I first started sailing around 15 years ago. Then I saw an article promoting the collaboration between Lisa Blair and the Magenta Project, calling for sailors. I was very fortunate to be selected for one of the four spots from over 170 applicants, and literally jumped for joy when I found out I was part of the crew. My kids thought I was nuts!

We had a week in Sydney before the race to get to know each other and the boat. That was really valuable and gave us a chance to gel as a team. My position was in the pit, one I've done quite a bit, but of course,

not on this boat and all boats are different, as are all teams. The great thing was that although we had a main position, we all rotated spots throughout the race, including the helm, so we could learn from the highly experienced sailors on board.

The atmosphere of the start and finish can't be rivalled. The sheer number of participating boats, the media boats, helicopters, spectator boats and people around is just incredible.

It was amazing to see how the pro sailors go about everything.

They are constantly 'on' throughout the race, trimming and trying to get the best out of the boat, assessing tactics, weather and so forth.

The crew was a mix of nationalities from Australia, the US and the UK, and they had great experience and skills to share. I picked up a lot of practical sailing knowledge from them in terms of mainsheet trim, spinnaker trim, helming and much more. Also, if you say it with a serious enough expression, foreigners will believe that drop bears are real!

Chris Gardener

Boat: *SailDNA*
Position: Grinder

After a long break from sailing, Chris Gardener found himself on a spectacular night ride, surfing across Bass Strait, aboard a former race winner. The experience renewed his connection with the ocean, and he's already contemplating his next offshore appointment.

I used to harbour race regularly when I was younger, but the dream of doing a Sydney to Hobart slipped away. So, when I got the opportunity to participate on a great boat and with a great crew I jumped at it.

We were very lucky with

the weather. Blue skies during the day, moon at night, and northerlies for most of the way down to Tasmania. The start was way more orderly than I thought it was going to be and we beat a lot of bigger boats out the heads.

Crossing Bass Strait with a full moon and surfing the swells was a real highlight, seeing the boat speed continually move from 10 to 17 or 18 knots impressed me; as did the skills of the skipper. We hit a southerly towards Maria Island and I was happy to have it, just to mix it up a bit as we had a perfect run until then. We tore a couple of sails which was not ideal, but no other major problems. We had a sensational duel with *Khalessi* right up the Derwent; it was so close but we managed to get them just before the line.

What really amazed me was how many sail changes there were. If it was not working we would change it. It sounds fairly obvious, but it surprised me how hard the crew worked to get the best out of the boat.

Eating and sleeping was an interesting experience. You sleep between one and three hours after every three to five hour shift and you sleep anywhere you can: on a sail, on the floor, a bunk (more like hammock), if available. To save time (and energy) I had the same clothing on for the entire race, even my cap (a handy sleep aid), though it was a bit woofy by the end.

My most memorable meal was a chicken noodle soup at two am when it was getting cold near Tasman Island, sitting over the edge watching two dolphins swimming right next to us.

Going into the race my main concern was around my ability and not letting the team down. The safety precautions in place gave me total confidence in my safety. I am constantly asked if I would do it again and I say that I would love to, it was such an amazing experience and I really enjoyed it. I have been told don't get a false sense of security because the conditions were almost perfect and rare, so maybe I should reassess. What it has done is rekindle my love of sailing. ⚓



COURTESY OF SAILDNA



First principles

Freyja, the 72-year-old yacht from Newcastle, has shown the spirit of her namesake the Norse goddess, finishing the Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race after six days at sea.

The 11-metre wooden ketch *Freyja* was built in 1945 in California. Having navigated the Pacific to arrive at our shores in 1979, she lay languishing for some time before being bought by Richard Lees' daughter in 2003. As co-owner, Dr Dick (as he is affectionately known), spent six months restoring her, and had big aspirations for this Scandinavian lady.

SHIPSHAPE

Freyja had already made her way to Hobart for two Australian Wooden Boat Festivals, but for her latest mission – braving the Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race – she would need to be in considerably better shape.

Enter Andrew Miller, shipwright and veteran of 16 Rolex Sydney Hobart races who was charged with refitting the boat.

The process took about four months: "There was quite a lot of work to be done. We pulled the mast out and changed the rigging set-up so we could

let the main out. We fixed the shrouds. We also changed the mizzen backstays. The rudder had to be completely rebuilt, and the ballast had to be fixed down to ensure it made the trip down there," explained Miller who joked, "We even put in cup holders!"

Like many of the boats taking part in this year's Rolex Sydney Hobart, boat and crew preparations went right down to the wire, with running repairs still taking place as they were stepping off the dock.

Sailing master Miller was by far the most experienced, as no other crew member had finished a Hobart before, but he noted:

"Everyone on board was right up for it; they handled

themselves really well.

"It got hairy out there sometimes, like when we were surfing down the swell. Credit to the crew though, no-one got seasick," he said in jest.

ALL IN

Around Flinders, with winds gusting up to 35 knots, the crew were amazed when their very traditional wooden ketch hit 15 knots.

Approaching Wineglass Bay, crew member Ernie Thirkell suffered a nasty head bump that caused concern for onboard physician Dr Dick.

"Obviously, crew safety is paramount. Dick was concerned that Ernie might have had concussion, so the decision was

made to shelter in Wineglass Bay and make sure he was all right," says Miller. Being so close to the finish after such an arduous journey, the crew could have been forgiven for wanting to push ahead. But the decision to seek medical attention, a decision that added 12 hours to their time, typifies the spirit onboard: all in.

Ultimately, Ernie was well enough to continue, and after six days *Freyja* sailed up the Derwent to complete their campaign:

"The crew had a great time; we gave it everything we had. All you can do is try your hardest," reflected Miller.

"I reckon there were bigger smiles on the faces of those who finished at the back of the fleet than those up the front.

"Sean Langman from *Maluka* greeted us with a magnum of champagne and we celebrated on the dock."

And rightly so: completing the Rolex Sydney Hobart is no easy feat.

"Mission accomplished," reckons Miller. ⚓
rolexsydneyhobart.com





STEVE CHRISTO



Top: SOCIAL SPORT
Supporters soak up the atmosphere at the CYCA's Sydney Race Village on the big day.

Above: FAREWELL FUN
Clowns and face painters enthralled the kids at the fleet's send-off.



ROLEX / STUDIO BORLENGHI

City to city

Bringing the big race to life with a physical home at the start and end, the Hobart and Sydney Race Villages took the celebrations to a new high in 2017.

From the build-up parties in Sydney to the live music, engaging activations, food and beverage options, and the trophy presentations for Line Honours and the Overall RSHYR Winner 2017 in Hobart, the villages helped develop a festival atmosphere from the start to the end of December.

With strong support from major sponsor, Rolex, along with Mumm Champagne, Carlton & United Breweries, TasPorts, Tourism Tasmania, Hobart City Council, 7HOFM, Piper's Brook Vineyard and the University of Tasmania, we hope to see more of the same in the coming years as the race builds towards the milestone 75th year in 2019. ⚓

Above: PROMISED LAND
Constitution Dock revs up for the post-race celebrations.

Below: FRIENDLY FIRE
Crews, supporters and spectators line the docks to bask in the glow of a race well run.



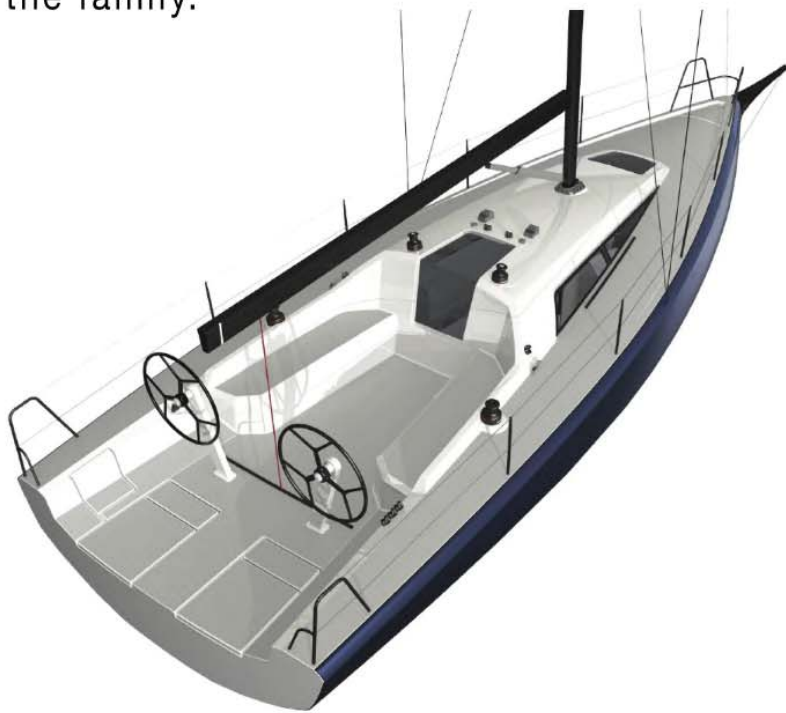
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Clean sweep

Matt Allen and his *Ichi Ban* Team have another trophy to add to their cabinet after claiming Allen's second Australian Yachting Championship early in what is shaping to be a bumper 2018.



Allen, who last won at this regatta in 2003, said it was a great thrill to claim all eight races at the Championship, which concluded at Sandringham Yacht Club.

"It's not too often you get eight from eight but, I must say, in the middle race, we only got it by one second from *Secret Men's Business*," said Allen, whose yacht claimed handicap honours in the Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race in December.

"I think the whole week was a great success, a lot of great sailing, and I think every race has been really good fun on Port Phillip Bay."

Allen, who is also Australian Sailing President, learnt to sail at Sandringham, which he praised for having staged a fine regatta.

"It's always great to come back to Sandringham Yacht Club," he said.

"I've done most of my offshore keelboat racing as a young lad out of here... It's great fun to be back here and to see so many of my friends."

South Australian boat, *Secret*

Men's Business finished second with *Patrice* in third after three days of consistent and tight racing.

Ichi Ban won the ORCi Division 1 title with *Patrice* in second and South Australian entrant, *Concubine* third.

Local Hobsons Bay Yacht Club competitors, *Ikon* dominated Division 2 IRC and Bruce McCracken was pleased to come away with his second Yachting

Championship title.

"The crew work for the whole weekend was excellent," McCracken said.

"Seven out of the 13 are family, so I've very pleased with that, we all get on really well and have a lot of fun – that's the main thing, I think, and that sort of generates the results that we get."

Reverie finished the regatta second overall and *Khaleesi* third. In Division 3 IRC *Philosopher*

edged out *Executive Decision* on countback to win the title

"Very happy with the result, very happy with our crew, they're a good young bunch of people from Hobart," said skipper Shaun Tiedemann. "This has been an absolutely awesome regatta. It's been very very well conducted, unreal Race Officer and support team. Just amazing."

Tiedemann said his team "might have a crack" at the next Championship, which will be held in the Team's home state.

Doesn't Matter rounded out the podium places in third.

The 2018 Australian National Multihull Championship was won by *Victorian Fury Road* with an impressive scorecard across the regatta.

"We don't race other boats, we race the clock," skipper George Owen said.

"So we try to do the course as fast as possible and sailing underneath our OMR."

Carbon Credit finished second with *Dux Nuts* in third. australianyachtingchampionship.org.au



Top: **NUMBER ONE** Matt Allen won his second Australian Yachting Championship on *Ichi Ban*, while Hobsons Bay yacht *Ikon* (above) took out division two.

JEN HUGHES



Tuning mode

Edake's winning streak continued at the Farr 40 One Design Trophy Series in sublime summer conditions on Sydney Harbour.

Nabbing two consecutive pointscore wins has given owner Jeff Carter some confidence rolling towards the season climax, but he's well aware that facing the full complement of 10 boats reduces the odds of a trifecta for the experienced Sydney crew.

Over eight harbour races in 12 knot nor'easters on Saturday 20 January and up to 20 knots on the next day, Carter and his crew finished the Middle Harbour Yacht Club series seven points clear of Rob Pitts' Melbourne boat *Double Black*, with guest tactician Joe Turner fulfilling the pressure-cooker role.

"As always it was very tight racing, and the crew work and getting off the start line was the key to success for the entire regatta, plus picking up the occasional shift today," Carter said. "Sometimes you

had to hang in there even though it looked bad at times, until the breeze came back to your quadrant.

"It was a great weekend; you don't get much better than 12 knots for most of day one and scores for us of 1,2,2,1 then today the conditions built a bit quicker, 18-20 knots for the last two races. It was terrific that Sam Hill won the last race, by a mile. They had Bobby Wilmot on board so they weren't short of talent," the victor added.

Pitts in second said having a few crew away at the Australian Yachting Championship on Port Phillip gave the owners a chance to test new people. "The clash worked fine for us. Conditions were amazing on the Sunday, plenty of sunshine, moderate nor'easters and really flat water. It was so competitive out there."

Third was the class president

HOT STREAK

Edake's impressive form puts them in good stead for the upcoming Australian titles.

Gordon Ketelbey helming *Zen*.

"There's been a lot of good camaraderie over the season, a few argy bargy calls but I don't think there's been a single protest," he said. "As usual this weekend was super competitive; one sneeze and you may as well pack your bags and go home."

Sam Hill played an integral role in reinvigorating the class a few years ago and made his Farr 40 return at the helm of *Forty*, the crew pulling off a bullet in the final race.

The one design fleet is working towards their state and national titles, which signal the end of the 2017-18 racing season. The NSW State Title will be hosted by MHYC over two days, 3-4 February, with the National Championship, the John Calvert-Jones Trophy to be staged over three days, 17-19 March.

farr40.asn.au

ROYAL QUEENSLAND YACHT SQUADRON

SKILL SET

Otto Henry and Rome Featherstone made it back-to-back titles in Queensland.



Top of the class

The 2018 Australian Youth Championship wrapped up in style at Royal Queensland Yacht Squadron with tight racing on the final day deciding national titles, podium finishes and Australian Youth Team selection.

The stars of tomorrow showed their skills in blustery conditions off Royal Queensland Yacht Squadron, completing four days of intense competition.

The Laser Radial class was hotly contested with Tom Needham sneaking home by two points from Sam King in the boys' division and Paige Caldecoat winning by four points over Maddie O'Shea in the girls' division.

Michael Compton won the Laser 4.7s after scoring six bullets from 10 races.

"I really enjoyed racing at the Youth Champs and I'm proud to



SISTER ACT Melbourne twins Matilda and Lily Richardson put their training into practice, taking out the girls' 420 national title.

have won both the nationals." Sylvie Stannage was the first female in the 4.7s to top off a huge summer sailing schedule.

"It was my third time at Royal Queensland including nationals," Sylvie said.

"I really liked the conditions, really fun really competitive fleet, such an amazing regatta, best one so far to top off the season."

Otto Henry and Rome Featherstone made it back-to-back national titles in the 420s. After winning at the Youth Worlds in China last year, the boys said they were keen to keep learning and improving.

"I was so focused last year on



Australian Team for Youth Worlds

Australia will field a team laced with raw talent, discipline and experience at the Youth Sailing World Championships this year.

The 2018 Australian Youth Team to head to Corpus Christi in the US in July was announced after the Australian Youth Championships.

Among the squad to represent the nation in Texas will be reigning Youth World Champions in the 420, Otto Henry and Rome Featherstone. Other team members who have competed previously at the major event are 29er crew Henry Larkings and Miles Davey, and windsurfers Hailey Lea and Alex Halank. It will be Halank's third Youth World Championship.

Those going to their first Youth Worlds are Maddie O'Shea (Laser Radial girls), Zac Littlewood (Laser Radial boys), Alice Buchanan and Dervla Duggan (29er girls), Will Cooley and Evie Haseldine (Nacra 15) and Matilda Richardson and Lily Richardson (420 girls).

Team selection is subject to Australian Sailing Board approval. Australian Sailing will now undertake a process to select the Team Leader/Coach and coaches. This process is expected to be finalised in February.

doing well at the Youth Worlds I didn't really think about anything happening this year at all," Rome said. "I barely even knew we were going to do this event."

Otto said: "I'm kind of just relieved to get the spot again. Usually these smaller events with not many boats can be a bit tricky."

Melbourne twins Matilda and Lily Richardson took home the girls' 420 title and said their hard work at training was the key.

"We just had to manage mainly the other girls' boats to try and stay in front, which we managed to do," Matilda said.

"We've done a lot of

training with a really good coach, Adrian Finglas. He's helped us a lot. He's great."

Tassie girls, Alice Buchanan and Dervla Duggan won the 29er girls' class.

Dervla said: "It's our first regatta together. We're really happy to come out on top. It's been really tough, the conditions, obviously, have been really challenging. But overall it's been an awesome regatta and a great learning experience as well."

Will Cooley and Evie Haseldine backed up their Nacra Class Nationals win with first place at the Youth Championships.

Moonlight special

A very quick turnaround after the Rolex Sydney Hobart put *Frantic* in the box seat for the inaugural Pittwater to Paradise Race on 2 January.

Michael Martin's TP 52 enjoyed sensational sailing up the NSW north coast to arrive at Southport Yacht Club under the light of a full moon and rising sun, taking line honours in the 2018 Club Marine Pittwater to Paradise Regatta.

The P2P result of two days, seven hours and 24 minutes saw *Frantic* kick off 2018 with a win, something the whole crew was very proud of.

"It's a new race and is gradually making a name for itself – it's a great destination," said Mick of the P2P, hinting that they would be keen to enter again in 2019.

Overall winner, Ray Roberts' *Checkmate of Hollywood*, came in fifth place and was unanimously admired for her looks and her performance.

The 40 year-old, 50 foot IOR Doug Peterson design was competing in her first Australian race and after missing the Rolex Sydney Hobart due to damage on the delivery to the start line.

Second over the line and winner of IRC Division 1 was Bob Cox's DK 46 *Nine Dragons*.
pittwatertoparadise.com.au



© SALTY DINGO



Crowd pleaser

Entries and the Notice of Race for the 2018 Sail Port Stephens Race Week have now gone online as organisers anticipate another highly successful regatta for 9-15 April.

The popularity of last year's 10th anniversary regatta is projected to provide a significant springboard for entries, with close to one thousand competitors expected aboard a plethora of sailing craft – from large racing, cruising and sports yachts, to junior dinghies and Sailability vessels.

Included are the Australian Sports Boat Association (ASBA) national titles, the NSW IRC Championship with Rolex Sydney-Hobart winner *Ichiban* set to compete, and the Super 12s state titles, adding to the iconic Commodore's Cup series and Performance Racing and Cruising Divisions for the Pantaenius Port Stephens Trophy.

The Women Who Sail Australia (WWSA) group held its first "Gathering on the Bay" as an entrée to last year's Sail Port Stephens and they are also planning to return.

A Junior One-Sail dinghy

© SALTY DINGO



PARADISE POINT

REO Speedwagon will return to Sail Port Stephens in 2018.

division remains a satellite event in the first week of the holidays, being sailed out of the Port Stephens Aquatic Club at Salamander Bay.

The 16-Footers are also coming for the first ever Keg Run regatta on 21-22 April as part of Port Stephens Council's 'Season of Sailing' promotion. To the

winners go six kegs of beer as a way of letting their hair down.

It's believed to be the first time that the ASBA nationals have been held at the same venue consecutively. The regatta location is central to the Sydney boating scene and convenient for Queensland and Victorian sailors.

In 2017, a fleet of 21 sports boats enjoyed the challenging three-day series with variable weather conditions, from light to gusty winds. Word of mouth should ensure another competitive fleet in 2018.

Current champion Andrew York will be back to defend his title aboard *REO Speedwagon* with the same crew from 2017 – including 16-year-old Newcastle sailor Felix Prince. The boat remains unchanged, unusually for a development class, but York is confident it still has the speed.

Other familiar faces include Graham Sherring, the 2016 Queensland champion who will return with mostly the same crew on board his modified *Leech 750 Retuned*.

The region's three major marinas – d'Albora Marina Nelson Bay, The Anchorage and Soldiers Point Marina – all reach berthing capacity quickly, so competitors are advised to book well in advance. sailportstephens.com.au

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In for the long haul

A strong fleet will contest one of the toughest short-handed endurance events around, the Sundance Melbourne to Osaka Cup in March.



Held every four years, the epic 5,500 nautical mile passage is Australia's longest ocean race and one of the only south-north long distance races in the world.

The teams span a number of age groups, and the 26 yachts entered range from specialist foiling race versions to comfortable classics.

Among them is *Nexba*, a Class 40, which Sydney-based John Bacon and David Sampson will be campaigning.

The pair did the 2017 Land Rover Sydney Southport race with four extra as per the race regulations, and are expected to arrive in Melbourne in early February to

DESIGN EDGE

Guillaume Verdier-designed *Nexba* has been optimised to go the distance with a crew of two.

make final preparations.

Designed by the French foiling guru Guillaume Verdier and built in 2013 by FR Nautisme, the Class 40 was lightly raced in America until Bacon made his purchase late 2016 and had the boat shipped from Newport, Rhode Island. After it landed in Sydney it was immediately rebranded in the striking orange of *Nexba*, the team's major commercial sugar-free drink partner, and spent time at McConaghy Boats having the systems optimised.

The Osaka Race idea first crossed the skipper's mind a decade ago: "It's been on my radar for ten years then when the announcement came out in November 2015 that the race was

on again in 2018 I thought maybe I have the time and enough runway to get organised," Bacon said.

When he reached out to Sampson, a friend and core member of Bacon's *Dark Star* MC38 crew, there was no hesitation: "I always try and challenge myself with the sailing I do," Sampson said.

Starting off Portsea Pier, the race has a starting window of 18 March 2018, with the main start on Sunday, 25 March and a third start for the faster boats on 1 April. Entries represent Victoria, Western Australia, South Australia, Queensland, NSW, Tasmania, Hong Kong and Japan. melbourneosaka.com

China defence

Alive is gearing up to defend her line honours title and IRC titles in the Rolex China Race on 28 March.

The extremely well-travelled RP 66 owned by Phil Turner will have a couple of TP 52s and one Cookson 50 to keep her honest on the 565 nautical mile course from Hong Kong to Subic Bay in the Philippines.

Tasmanian Turner lives in Thailand and *Alive* maintains a busy schedule of racing in Asia and Australia. The boat recorded some impressive results in 2017, including a second in IRC Racing Division at Audi Hamilton Race Week, just pipped by *Wild Oats X*, chartered by Crown Prince Frederik of Denmark.



ANDREA FRANCOLINI

Alive, a navy-hulled canting-keeler took line honours in the Volvo Hong Kong to Vietnam Race last October, arriving in Nha Trang, Vietnam on a two sail reach, after a very quick mainly downwind 673 nautical miles.

At least 25 yachts have entered for the Rolex China Sea Race one of the major offshore events on the Asian calendar. *Alive's* record for the journey stands at just under two days, set in 2016. rolexchinasearace.com



Image: www.afrancolini.com

— 2018 — SYDNEY HARBOUR REGATTA

Saturday 3rd & Sunday 4th March 2018

Hosted by Middle Harbour Yacht Club (MHYC), the Sydney Harbour Regatta is one of the biggest keelboat regattas in Australia.

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PARADISE

FOUND

There is one place in Fiji that continues to amaze the cruising sailors who've seen it all — or almost everything — on their world circumnavigations. And as *Brittany Cooper* reports, it's easier than ever for the well-informed yachting to gain access to this pristine hideaway.

Photography *Stu Johnson*



Over the years, trade winds, geography and local customs have colluded to ensure that one chain of islands on the Fijian archipelago has remained well and truly off the beaten path – the remote Lau group. Comprising 60 small islands and atolls located about 175 nautical miles east of the mainland, half of the group’s islands remain uninhabited.

OFF THE MAP

It’s from the air that I first spot my destination: the village of Daliconi in Vanua Balavu. The little-known wonderland of Daliconi’s bay of islands shines an unbelievably light blue, and is strewn with mushroom-like protuberances of volcanic and carbonate rock, each topped with a mop of jungle.

A must for snorkellers, the region’s magnificent coral reefs were the nightmare of early European mariners, and served as natural protection from western colonisation up until halfway through the 19th century. As a result, Fijian culture has preserved a largely non-commercial attitude toward land ownership, with land and natural resources shared between extended family groups.

Until relatively recently, the region was forbidden to tourists except by special invitation from the village chief. But after cyclone damage to their copra plantations in the 2000s, the islanders began looking for ways to rebuild their infrastructure, especially their schools, and today tourism is starting to provide an alternative income.

ISLAND WELCOME

I’ve come over on the once-weekly Twin Otter flight from Suva to meet the 27-strong Oyster World Rally fleet as they trickle in. We touch down on a steep, grassy airstrip

off tiny Malaka village and head down to greet the first arrivals in Daliconi Bay, an excellent anchorage with plenty of places to drop the pick and carry out arrival formalities. As with any arrival in a rural area in Fiji, the visitors need to carry out *sevusevu*, a respectful presentation of kava root to the chief to acknowledge ownership of the land and its waters.

The people of Daliconi are warm, curious and softly spoken. They are keen to meet us, and invite us to share fresh coconuts on the hillside, to visit the church, school and the small hospital. We are welcomed



into the communal dining hut to enjoy some delicious fresh rotis, lemon tea, steamed fish and vegetable curries. Other culinary highlights for me were the young ferns, and a seaweed known as sea grapes served in a dressing of coconut milk, lime juice, chilli, garlic and ginger.

Having explored the village and undertaken a few sailing sparring matches, we set off on a dinghy safari led by our local guide Joeli Vuetanavanua through the bay of islands. He takes us to prime snorkelling spots with giant clams and rays, and to some remarkable diving sites including hidden

underwater caves that have been important to the villagers for centuries. After a cold, windy, rainy time in Tonga, many of the rallygoers feel they are back in paradise. Paolina Kierebinski of the Oyster 46 *SunSuSea* says, “It’s tropical, warm, and the whole island is lush green with flowers, neat. It’s like a big garden with its different scents.”

A DEEPER EXPERIENCE

For many of the Oyster owners I meet, like Charles and Nicky Manby of Oyster 575 *Calliope*, their trip provides a unique opportunity to make contact with villagers

from the remote communities they visit along the way, many of whom are still struggling to rebuild and recover facilities after severe weather events like Cyclone Winston.

Winston was the strongest Southern Hemisphere tropical cyclone on record, sweeping directly through Vanua Balavu at record-breaking speed in February 2017, destroying communications with the mainland as well as housing, generators and healthcare facilities. Infrastructure is still fragile, and many visitors have carried out small services like fixing generators or helping repair fibreglass

boats as expressions of goodwill.

About half of the Oyster World Rally fleet, including the Manbys, have signed up to Sea Mercy, a not-for-profit organisation that provides thousands of villagers in the South Pacific with food, shelter, desalination equipment and professional medical care after natural disasters. As part of the Give Sight Program, the Oyster owners have been trained to set up small eye clinics where they can perform basic eye exams and distribute hundreds of pairs of adjustable prescription glasses.

Small actions can make a huge impact



Far left: **NATURE'S THEMEPARK** The unreal blue of Vanua Balavu's bay of islands.
 Left: **DINGHY SAFARI** Even Oyster owners have been known to spend time on land, away from their yachts.
 Above: **SHOW & TELL** Nicky Manby visits the tiny local school, crayons, teddies and books at the ready.

on life in remote island communities, so villagers have express their gratitude for the eye clinics by presenting the volunteers with grapefruit and bananas, and on one occasion, a huge chunk of freshly caught tuna.

THE SOFT CORAL CAPITAL

For those wanting to explore further, Fiji offers many more hidden jewels amongst its 333 islands, ranging from large and volcanic with high peaks, remote villages and tropical rainforests; to sand keys, coral atolls and rugged limestone cliffs. This is a wonderful pocket-cruising ground for sailors from Australia or New Zealand with a month or few to spend exploring, relaxing, diving or surfing, and an important stopover for those making a Pacific passage. But there's more to cruising Fiji than its incredible landscape and gentle weather. It's the friendliness of the local people who make travellers feel completely at home – and who willingly share invaluable information for journey planning – that really makes the experience.

It also explains why so many yachties I meet here describe the Lau group of islands as one of the most rewarding of all the locations they'd visited in the Pacific, or indeed the world. There is a magic in the combination of stunning shores and smiles as genuine as they are warm.

We guide the tenders to a sandy beach for a barbecue under the stars, as fruit bats fly home overhead and skipjack tuna perform their frenzied synchronised swimming around the yachts. The bay turns a dark, silvery blue while my adventurer companions throw around plans for the next day, week and month. I doubt my time here will ever be matched. ⚓

Fiji / Travellers' tips

Bula! Be prepared. What may look like untouched stretches of paradise is actually owned and cared for by whole villages, whose custodianship and traditions must be respected.



SAILING

There are five distinct cruising areas to visit:

- The Yasawa and Mamanuca Islands north-west of the mainland, popular for island-hopping
- Northern and Southern Lau on the east side
- Beqa and Kadavu to the south
- Lomaiviti group in the centre, between Viti Levu and the Lau group
- Taveuni, Vanua Levu and the Ringgolds to the north.

Chartplotter software (based on original surveys), is not always accurate in the more remote areas of Fiji – and can sometimes be up to thirty metres off. Arriving at unknown anchorages during daylight is therefore essential, and cruisers rely on a combination of admiralty pilots, GPS, Navionics and visual lookouts to avoid the bommies and other hazards. *The Pacific Crossing Guide (3rd Edition)* by Kitty van Hagen is a great reference.

TOURISM

fiji.travel

AID ORGANISATION

Sea Mercy – "Sailing with a greater purpose."
seamercy.org

WEATHER

Fiji has a tropical marine climate, with slight seasonal variation. The wet season between November and April is most likely to produce cyclones, which are easy to track. Trade winds blow east most of the year.

VISAS

Australians can obtain visitor visas for stays of less than four months on arrival. With help from David Jamieson of Asia Pacific Superyachts, a team of Fijian customs, immigration and biosecurity officials were flown to the island to set up a temporary port of clearance – and avoid doubling back from Suva or Savusavu; a tough slog against the trade winds.
asia-pacific-superyachts.com

SAFETY AND HEALTH

Local water is usually safe to drink. Dengue fever is common, so protection from mosquitos is important. There is currently no operational hyperbaric (decompression) chamber in Fiji.
smartraveller.gov.au

FLIGHTS

There are daily flights into Nadi from Australia and New Zealand. Sydney to Nadi takes four hours with Jetstar, Fiji Airways, Virgin and Qantas.

MONEY

Australian cards work in most ATMs, but few businesses take cards. Plan to use cash.

POWER VOLTAGE

240V

RACES AND REGATTAS

The Musket Cove Regatta (Sept)
 Yachting Easter Regatta in Savusavu (April)
 President's Cup at Denarau Marina (June)
 Savusavu Regatta Week in Savusavu (July)

CHARTER SERVICES

Most charter deals include a local skipper with knowledge of the area. Some marinas have private sailing schools. There is currently no bareboat yacht chartering in Fiji.

yachtchartersfiji.com

ssc.com.fj

batikicharter.com

MARINAS

Denarau Marina in Nadi (*Fiji's largest*)
Musket Cove Marina in Malolo Lailai
Suva Yacht Club in Suva
Levuka Port in the Lomaiviti Islands
Vuda Marina in the Nadi (*has a 63-ton travelift*)
Savusavu Marina on Vanua Levu (*specialises in strong cyclone moorings*)
Copra Shed Marina on Vanua Levu (*a major landmark, built in the 19th century*)

RECOMMENDED ACCOMMODATION

For those inclined to a little on-land luxury, world-class resorts dot the sparsely inhabited outer islands.

In Suva, the **Grand Pacific Hotel** is not to be missed. **grandpacifichotel.com.fj**

There is a great array of options around Port Denarau, from the **Sheraton (sheratondenarauvillas.com)** to **The Terrace Apartments** for the budget conscious. (**theterraces.com.fj**).

Musket Cove Resort is an easy hop over from Port Denarau and well worth a visit.
musketcovefiji.com

IMPORTANT WORDS

Bula! – Hi, hello
Vinaka – Please or thank you
Moce (pronounced mow-they) – Goodbye
Io (pronounced ee-o) – Yes
Sega (pronounced senga) – No



Next level

When it comes to offshore racing, 2017 was a breakthrough year for the CYCA Youth Sailing Academy's India Howard. With the Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht under her belt, India is setting her sights on new challenges to build on her strong foundation of skills.

After starting her bluewater career in July last year on Les Goodridge's X50 *Wax Lyrical* in the Land Rover Sydney Gold Coast race, the sailing-focused 20-year-old India Howard took every opportunity to maximise her experience in the run up to the Rolex Sydney Hobart in December. "I did a couple of races on *Wax Lyrical* in the winter series, and

they invited me to do the Land Rover Sydney Gold Coast Yacht Race with them," India enthused. "After that I did every I offshore race except the Cabbage Tree Island Race."

Her sailing skills started in school, but have been honed with three years as part of the Youth Sailing Academy's (YSA) advanced squad.

"I devote a lot of time to sailing. It's definitely my thing. I find it a really good way to relax and a great skill to

SETTING COURSE

It's onwards and upwards for passionate young sailor India Howard after her first Rolex Sydney Hobart finish.

learn. It was really special to be one of the current YSA sailors getting into offshore racing," she says.

India's learning for 2017 culminated in taking her skill set to the Southern Ocean, competing in her first Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race: "It was really cool. It was windy, but I wasn't too stressed because it was expected to be largely downwind; that settled my nerves.

"I'd never done a race that long before. Of course, it's not for everyone, but so much of it is about your mindset. When you get out there, there's no-one around you. You can turn your phone off and just concentrate on sailing.

"Experiencing nature was a big part of it for me too. On the ride down we saw whales, dolphins and sunfish, which was incredible."

It's not every day you meet someone who's done the Rolex Sydney Hobart, and India says, "That's really special to me. I'm the first one in my family to do it, and my parents have been really supportive. Much of my family is based in Hobart, so I had a really great welcome from aunts, uncles and cousins on the dock. It was the perfect way to finish the race."

With three more years with the YSA, India has set her sights on building her skill set even more: "I do bow in offshore, and I'm trying to get on to the bow in the YSA. I currently trim main and got to do that on the big boat. I also spent a lot of time trimming the kite.

"Taking my skills from offshore to the YSA and vice versa is a big goal for me. I'm already looking ahead to this year's Blue Water Pointscore Series and of course, the Rolex Sydney Hobart later this year."

After such a quick three days in 2017, she's hoping it lasts a bit longer in 2018: "I found that once we got into the swing of things, and got the watches going, it went really quickly. You just want it to continue!"

We'll be watching. ⚓
cycyca.com.au/youth



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GIVING BACK Olympian Mat Belcher continues to compete while nurturing the next generation of Australian sailors.

The long game

After securing a record seventh world 470 championship and his fourth title with Will Ryan, Mat Belcher is back in home waters, guiding future Olympians. He spoke with *Brittany Cooper* about his plans for 2018.

Mat, how do you feel about the coming year?

I'm excited because the focus starts to shift toward Tokyo 2020. Many of the top teams, us included, used 2017 as a transition year. The focus was on getting over Rio 2016, rather than looking toward Tokyo 2020.

This will be a busy year for us as we look to qualify Australia at the 2018 World Sailing Championships in Aarhus, Denmark. We'll also be heading to Japan to get an understanding of what we can expect. At this stage of the year, in early January, everything feels great. We just need to wait until we start racing everyone else!

Are you going over for the World Cup Series in Miami in January?

Unfortunately, not. We have decided to stay in Australia until the start of the European circuit. This year will be busy, and we felt that attending Miami in January would extend our season by too long. Coming from Australia, it is always so far to attend events.

How much training will you be doing in Japan this year compared to last year?

We are fortunate to have a partnership with Japan, and it is only a relatively short flight for us. This gives us an opportunity to go over to Japan more than we could for Rio, however by the time you factor in class events, world cup events, continental and domestic events, plus training, it doesn't leave much time. We are looking to head over to Japan later in the year like we did in 2017.

What's on the cards for the training programs at the Gold Coast 470 sub-site out of the Southport Yacht Club (SYC) Sailing Academy?

The Gold Coast Australian Sailing Team (AST) sub-site has been a long-term project of mine and something I am passionate about. I'm really happy the team has supported this as much as they have, and helped make it happen. The facility is great and it's really helping to give our younger men's and women's squads the support they

need to develop. The site provides a central place for Australian 470s to operate from, and we will be doing a fair number of our Australian training camps there. We have some great programs and initiatives in place to continue Australia's legacy in the 470 class.

How about your mentoring work there, what are you focusing on in those mentoring programs?

As part of the Gold Coast AST sub-site, we were able to introduce a performance program for clubs, targeting sailors looking to gain state-based membership. We also ran a state-based program (in the form of the Queensland Academy of Sport Sailing sub-site) in addition to our national 470 programs. The academy project was about activating all levels of the sport from a central base. The Gold Coast is where I grew up and Southport Yacht Club was the club I learnt to sail from. It was a great starting point. southportyachtclub.com.au

Perfect match

AkzoNobel has come up with a new digital tool offering a wide selection of colours to make dockside touch-ups faster, cheaper and more accurate.

Building on existing International and Awlgrip colour palettes, MIXIT is a fast, easy-to-use tool that offers over 18,000 colours – more than any existing offering on the yacht market. Its newly developed cloud interface also means that users have quick and easy access to the latest colour formulas globally.

The system played a key role in developing the custom-made colours for all the competing teams in the current edition of the Volvo Ocean Race, as it catered for the need for great accuracy and efficiency in colour matching.

As the official Boatyard supplier, AkzoNobel coated all the boats in the fleet, and a mixing tool is also travelling around the world to help the shore teams carry out repairs and maintenance at each of the stopovers.

In addition, yacht owners now have access to the Awlcraft SE product line of effect pigments. The basecoat provides a variety of colour options, such as solid, metallic and pearl effects, as seen on team AkzoNobel's own race boat.

"This new colour offer and digital customer support

package will enable us to supply the majority of colour requests much faster than before," explained Hans Slegtenhorst, Global Segment Manager for AkzoNobel's Pro and Superyacht business. "By offering such a large database of colours, we will continue to guarantee premium customer service."

AkzoNobel has been developing digital colour techniques and technologies for yacht customers since the 1990s.

The MIXIT app is now available for iOS and Android devices. mixitcloud.com



Delta good hand

Doyle Sails' Delta sails have been developed as a sail solution for cruising and racing yachts under 15 metres.

A modern alternative to the traditional panelled sail construction, Delta provides high-quality fibre options and proven fibre layouts. Specifically designed for local cruising and club racing yachts, these sails use the adhesives and lamination process from Doyle's Stratis plant and are built for versatility, performance and longevity.

Their design and engineering are based on tried and tested moulds to suit the size and purpose of sail.

The choice of fibres used in Delta laminates includes Black Technora and carbon with the option of white taffeta or clear UV films. Technora fibres are extremely durable and resistant to flex fatigue, while carbon fibre has the ability to resist stretch and maintain great shape retention over the life of the sail.

doylesails.com



Refined design

Ronstan's series of Continuous Line Furlers put great performance and reliability within reach of cruising and racing sailors alike. The big new 200mm and 280mm furlers feature a fast pin to facilitate easy changeover of sails sharing a common furler set.

Top-down furling provides a new level of simplicity, safety and speed for handling of soft luff sails such as asymmetric spinnakers and gennakers. Cruisers can now store, deploy and retrieve these sails as simply as they would a furling headsail from the safety

and convenience of the cockpit. Racers too can benefit from the characteristics of top-down to allow superfast retrieval of Code Zeros by the pre-winding the torsion rope and firing the sheet when ready. Ronstan furlers are available with top-down adapters or in dedicated top-down models with practical accessories such as top swivel lashing pins to provide the perfect solution.

Furlers and top swivels feature a factory sealed, maintenance free bearing. Roller bearing sets run on hardened races for smooth high load performance. The continuous

furling line is easily fitted and removed from the furler, so it can be left on deck when the sail and furler are stowed below.

Furlers and top swivels have retained clevis pins and top swivels have a snag-free low profile shackle pin head. Attachment options include quick release pins, high resistance shackles, snap shackles, fairleads and torsion rope thimbles. The furling line guide can be adjusted to suit either 0 or 90 degree attachment as required to match the take-off alignment and deck layout.

Another star of Ronstan's new

product line, developed over the last nine months, is the Ropeglide fairlead. They can be positioned wherever they are needed to deliver your lines cleanly to a cleat or winch. The elliptical holes tolerate alignment variations, simplifying line threading, while the smooth and lightweight design looks good on any boat. The range includes single, double and triple hole versions.

ronstan.com

RRP AU\$2,915 for Series 200

standard furler

RRP AU\$62 - \$167 for Ropeglide

fairlead range



Artisanal inspiration

Working from the principles of traditional craft with the precision and quality control of modern manufacturing, Sunbrella's Makers Collection is an embrace of colour, texture and artistic heritage. Careful study of artisanal techniques from around the world has been applied to Sunbrella's patented performance fabric technology – the result is a stunning collection of durable upholstery fabrics with a beautiful, handmade feel. sunbrella.com

EMERGENCIES CAN HAPPEN ANYWHERE



For the producers of TV's Biggest Loser, safety was paramount when contestants sailed from Sydney to Hobart. They chose super tough Great Circle Life Rafts for both the pre-sail safety training and their passage across the notorious Bass Strait.



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Safe harbour

Sometimes “any port in a storm” isn’t the port you want. Imagine being able to book a marina berth on the fly and make sure you get all the facilities you need. That’s the service Marina Exchange brings with their new app for iOS and Android.

Set to change the way boat owners interact with commercial marinas, users of the Marina Exchange App have the choice of booking a marina berth in advance or finding one at the last minute, anywhere in Australia.

The app is easy to use – after setting up all your boat’s details, you can search for available marina pens wherever you want to stop for the night. With a couple of clicks your marina berth is guaranteed and the dockmaster has your details seamlessly, 24/7.

Owners, Alister Copley and Carl Crafoord, are proud that the Marina Exchange App achieves a long-term goal of making it easier for boat owners to spend more time on the water with a lot less hassle.

marinaexchange.com.au
free download



Healthier hulls

The Remora SOLO is an innovative new waterproof power cleaning tool from the US. A little more attractive than its namesake, the suckerfish that remove parasites and debris from large marine animals, this is a handy little device that makes underwater surface cleaning tasks come naturally. Tough enough to use in both salt- and freshwater environments, the completely self-contained, battery-powered SOLO eliminates the need for cumbersome hydraulic hoses or dangerous power cords.

It is easy to use, with a powerful gear motor that provides ample torque for even the toughest cleaning jobs. The reversible rotation equalises brush wear to maximise brush life and allows for left and right hand operation, while the ergonomic design gives for multiple ways to grip the tool, meaning less fatigue. Its unique shape and adjustable buoyancy make for effortless handling underwater.

remoramarine.com
RRP US\$1695



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Garmin see the real thing

Ever wanted to be there in the thick of the action as elite crews compete? 383,000 viewers were, on board *Comanche* for the latest Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race.

How? The *Comanche* crew used Garmin Australia's new immersive 360-degree 5.7K camera: fully spherical, compact, rugged, and waterproof to ten metres.

Key features are one-touch or voice command ("OK Garmin, start recording"), high-quality video, four built-in microphones, in-camera stitching and easy uploading. Garmin also offers a free app and desktop software to edit, stabilise, share and add data overlays to any VIRB 360 video content.

garmin.com
RRP AU\$1099

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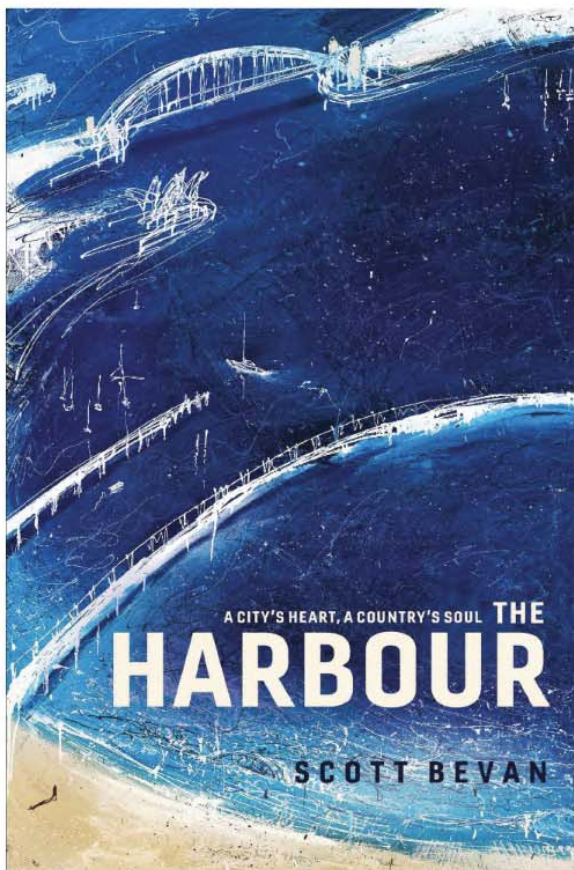
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The Harbour:
A City's Heart, A Country's Soul
 Author: Scott Bevan
 Publisher: Simon & Schuster Australia
 630 pages
 Price: AU\$49.99

“Everyone knows Sydney Harbour. Or at least, we think we do.”

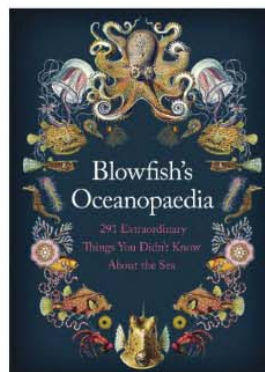
So opens writer, journalist, broadcaster and playwright Scott Bevan's new tome *The Harbour*, a homage to the remarkable body of water that defines Sydney and holds many of its secrets.

This is the meditative journey of a deep thinker with journalistic training and historical acumen, who takes us from cove to cove by kayak, yacht and barge to explore the story of each landmark, meeting boat builders, skippers, fishermen, artists, divers, historians and environmentalists along the way.

The stunning hardback cover design, featuring the deep blues and splashes of white of *Rockin'*

Redleaf by Sydney artist Mark Hanham, is reason enough to give this volume pride of place. But with its extensive index, *The Harbour* is also a resource book for an ambitious array of characters and events, from the early colonists (the waterway's many thousands of years of Indigenous inhabitation are disappointingly sidestepped), to a vignette of Sean Langman at Noakes, to the challenges in the construction of the Gladesville Bridge, then the longest concrete arch bridge in the world.

A colourful, fascinating account, this is a must-read for history buffs and anybody who has been lucky enough to call the harbour home, workplace or playground. simonandschuster.com.au



Blowfish's Oceanopaedia: 291 Extraordinary Things You Didn't Know About the Sea
 Author: Tom 'The Blowfish' Hird
 Publisher: Atlantic
 304 pages
 Price: AU\$32.95

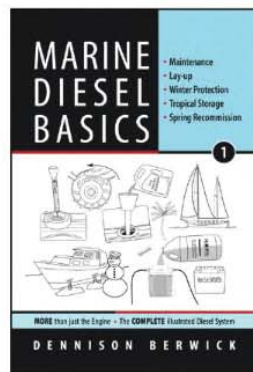
A fascinating and fun-filled book of extraordinary facts about the oceans, seas and waterways of our world.

The seas of our planet cover more than seventy percent of the Earth, but still remain shrouded in mystery. We know more about the surface of the moon than we do about the lifeforms that have existed in the Earth's oceans since long before humans became explorers of the deep.

One such explorer is Tom 'The Blowfish' Hird, a marine biologist and star presenter of BBC Earth. In this entertaining and enlightening new book, he lifts the lid on a treasure chest of fascinating facts to reveal what lurks beneath the waves.

From the invisible world of meiofauna living in the sands of our beaches to a cephalopod called the 'Vampire Squid from Hell' stalking the lightless depths, Hird takes us on an astonishing journey as he follows the tides and currents from shoreline to the bone-crushing pressure of the deep sea.

For the simply curious and the budding scientist alike, *Blowfish's Oceanopaedia* is a one-stop guide to all we know about our oceans and the weird and wonderful creatures that inhabit them. allenandunwin.com



Marine Diesel Basics
 Author: Dennison Berwick
 Publisher: Voyage Press
 212 pages
 Price: US\$15.99

Too often we can become passengers on our own boats if we don't understand or are intimidated by the systems we rely on. *Marine Diesel Basics* aims to help all boaters become familiar and confident with their diesel system - from the fuel deck fill and engine, to the shaft and propeller.

Most engine trouble can be avoided by using quality components, installing them correctly and servicing them regularly. *Marine Diesel Basics* aims to ensure that owners understand the importance of routine maintenance and basic system lay-up.

The book is laid out in three sections, each divided into chapters covering different parts of the marine diesel system. *Marine Diesel Basics* helps boat owners with all aspects of maintenance, lay-up and recommissioning, and provides step-by-step explanations and clear drawings of how things work so readers can learn the boat. With more than 300 illustrations, this first book in a series explains all basic maintenance tasks of the marine diesel, covering sailboats, motorboats and narrowboats.

This book will be a boost to owners' confidence and comfort and will help make pre-purchase assessments which could save piles of money, time and heart-ache. marinedieselbasics.com

RACE & REGATTA DATES

KEEP TRACK OF THIS SEASON'S IMPORTANT EVENTS.

AUSTRALIA	DATE	CLUB	INTERNATIONAL	DATE	COUNTRY
FEBRUARY			FEBRUARY		
Hardy Cup 2018 - Sydney Int Match Racing Regatta	4 Feb	RSYC	Semana de Buenos Aires	3 Feb	Argentina
Mt Gay Ocean Pointscore - Port Hacking	3 Feb	CYCA	Tour de Martinique Regatta	6-10 Feb	Caribbean
SOPS - Short Ocean Race	10 Feb	MHYC	Youth International Match Racing Cup	9-13 Feb	New Zealand
Mt Gay Ocean Pointscore - Sydney Newcastle Race	17 Feb	CYCA	Jolly Harbour Valentines Regatta	10-12 Feb	Antigua
Short Haul Race - Sydney to Pittwater Race	17 Feb	CYCA	Mardi Gras Race Week, New Orleans	14 Feb	USA
SOPS - Short Ocean Race	24 Feb	CYCA	2018 CentrePoint Youth Int Match Racing Championships	16 Feb	New Zealand
			RORC Caribbean 600	19 Feb	Caribbean
			Hong Kong Race Week	20 Feb	Hong Kong
			RYA Winter Match Racing Weekend	2 - 24 Feb	Great Britain
MARCH			MARCH		
Chartered Accountants Australia Regatta	2 Mar	CYCA	38th St. Maarten Heineken Regatta	1-4 Mar	Caribbean
Sydney Harbour Regatta	3 Mar	MHYC	RYA Winter Match Race Weekend	3-17 Mar	Great Britain
SOPS - Short Ocean Race	10 Mar	MHYC	Barcardi Miami Race Week	5 Mar	USA
Farr 40 Australian Championships	16 Mar	RSYS	Loro Piana Caribbean Superyacht regatta	9 Mar	Caribbean
Mt Gay Ocean Pointscore - Lion Island Race	17 Mar	CYCA	Nasugbu-Busuanga Regatta	9 Mar	Philippines
Melbourne - Osaka, Double Handed Yacht Race	18 Mar	SYC	2018 St Barths Bucket Regatta	15-18 Mar	Caribbean
SOPS - Milson Memorial Cup	24 Mar	RSYS	Rolex China Sea Race, Hong Kong to Philippines	28 Mar	Hong Kong
			Bequia Easter Regatta	30 Mar	Caribbean
APRIL			APRIL		
NS14 NSW Championship	1 Apr	BYRA	International One Metre European Championship	7 Apr	Croatia
Commodore's Cup BWPS Race	7 Apr	CYCA	BUCS Match Racing Championships	7 Apr	Great Britain
Sail Port Stephens	9 Apr	NCYC	Ficker Cup 2018	13 Apr	USA
Varuna Trophy Race	14 Apr	RSYS	Congressional Cup 2018	17 Apr	USA
Victorian Youth Championships	14 Apr	SSCBC	2018 World Cup Series - Round 3	22 Apr	France
Pittwater Inshore Race	21 Apr	RPAYC	Palavska Regatta	28 Apr	Czech Republic
Young 88 Class NSW Championship	21 Apr	RPAYC			
Ted Elkes Memorial Regatta	21 Apr	SPYC			
Broken Bay Offshore Series	28 Apr	RPAYC			
MAY			MAY		
Mooloolaba Marathon	4 May	SPYC	Bourgass Sailing Week	2 May	Bulgaria
Lion Islands Series	5 May	RPAYC	GKSS Olympic Classes Regatta	11 May	Sweden
Pittwater Beneteau Regatta	5 May	RPAYC	21st Match Race Germany 2018	15 May	Germany
Two Handed Series	6 May	RPAYC	470 European Championship	16 May	Bulgaria
Elliot 7 & One Design Series	13 May	RPAYC	Delta Lloyd Regatta	21 May	Netherlands
ORCV Apollo Bay	19 May	SYC	TP52 Superseries Regatta	22 May	Croatia
			RS:X North American Championships	23 May	Mexico
			Homerus Match Race Championship for Blind People	28 May	Italy

To have your event added to the calendar, please email: editor@oceanmedia.com.au.





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Pictured here: Whisper quiet & ultra smooth, a Fleming 58 cruising in Chesapeake Bay.



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