



ROLEX SYDNEY HOBART YACHT RACE

NEWS RELEASE

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Eclectic fleet for Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race

Four super maxis, including a radical reshaping of a former line honours winner, head the 93-boat fleet for next month's Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race.

The 72nd running of the race will also be a milestone for one of the world's most respected navigators, Adrienne Cahalan, who will become the first woman to sail in 25 Hobarts. She will navigate the TP52 *Ragamuffin*, the name made famous by the retired Syd Fischer and this version skippered by his grandson, Brenton Fischer.

In Sydney today, Cruising Yacht Club of Australia commodore John Markos, launched this year's 628-nautical mile race that starts in Sydney Harbour on Boxing Day.

"Each year, each technological advance and each enveloping drama enhances the Rolex Sydney Hobart's reputation as the most challenging and prestigious ocean race in the world," Commodore Markos said. "This year we maintain that reputation."

This year's fleet includes 12 international entries and multiple former winners and line honours winners.

Always an exercise in strategy, secrecy and intrigue, the 2016 Hobart is no exception. There is a dark horse to challenge the domination of eight-time line honours winner *Wild Oats XI*.

In 2000 and 2004, Scandinavian Ludde Ingvall won line honours with two versions of his super maxi, *Nicorette*. His 2004 winner has been completely redesigned in New Zealand and rebadged *CQS* after its British hedge fund sponsor. It is radical.

It is longer forward, with huge wings, which are wide shroud bases either side of the mast to secure wider spaced rigging, allowing *CQS* to carry massive headsails deployable from the end of an elongated bowsprit that sits atop a reverse curve bow. It is a most unusual design.

Plus, it has an adjustable plank hydrofoil that works in tandem with the canting keel to balance the boat. AND it has a Kiwi brains trust of Chris Dickson, Chris Main and Rodney Keenan. Dickson, a former America's Cup skipper, took line honours in the ravaged 1998 Hobart race on Larry Ellison's *Sayonara* among his many accolades.

There has been tweaking aboard record holder *Wild Oats XI* and her regular rivals, Anthony Bell's *Perpetual Loyal* and *Scallywag*, the former *Ragamuffin 100* now owned by Hong Kong businessman Seng Huang Lee and skippered by Fischer's sailing master David Witt.

Since Bob Oatley's death early this year, son Sandy and skipper Mark Richards decided to remove her horizontal hydrofoil, saying that the new, 11m long forward section of the hull added in 2015 negated the need for the foil. It will also make the boat 300 kg lighter.

Joining the fleet are 12 from overseas: the Ker 56 *Varuna VI* (Germany); the TP52 *Ark323* and Cookson 50 *UBOX* (China); the Botin 80 *Beau Geste* and *Scallywag* (Hong Kong); the Beneteau 47.7 *Samskara* (UK); the Elliott 44 *Matador* (Sweden); the Humphreys 54 *KLC Bengal 7* (Japan); the V70 *Giacomo* (New Zealand), the Sydney 46 *Simplesail Mahligai* (Russia) and the Swan 44 MK II, *Triple Lindy* (USA) and the TP52 *Sonic* entered by Korea, which makes its debut in the race.

Germany's Jens Kellinghusen had great success in 2013 with his Ker 51 *Varuna* winning Division 1 after finishing fourth overall. He is back with his latest, *Varuna VI*, featuring a canting keel, double rudders and daggerboards.

For admirers of well-found, comfortable, ocean-going yachts, the CYCA's Ervin Vidor brings his 2015 CNB76 *Charlotte* to the race. It is a beautiful, luxurious boat.

"We sailed from Bordeaux to Kefallinia in Greece, then cruised in Greece and Turkey before *Charlotte* was shipped to Sydney, arriving in January 2016," Vidor explained.

Unless it's a downwind drag race, history suggests that the race should be won on corrected time, by a 50-footer or 40-footer, sailing a day behind the super maxis.

That brings the TP52 fleet into focus and their frontrunners: Paul Clitheroe's overall winner from last year *Balance*, Matt Allen's *Ichi Ban*, Peter Wrigley and Andrew Kearnan's *Koa*, Sam Haynes' *Celestial*, the West Australian *M3 and Ragamuffin*.

Joining Adrienne Cahalan in the record books, Bruce and Drew Taylor from Victoria (*Chutzpah*) become the first father and son to sail 25 together.

The Boxing Day start of the Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race will be broadcast live on the Seven Network throughout Australia.

By Bruce Montgomery, RSHYR media

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