

offshore

YACHTING

VICTOIRE AT HAMMO

DARRYL HODGKINSON'S BENETEAU 45 WINS IRC CLASS B AT AUDI HAMILTON ISLAND RACE WEEK

FASTNET DISASTER

THE STORY OF RAMBLER 100'S DRAMATIC MID-RACE CAPSIZE

GRETEL II'S SECOND LIFE

CLASSIC AMERICA'S CUP RACER RESTORED TO PAST GLORY

FALLEN HERO

A TRIBUTE TO GARY TICEHURST, THE TOP GUN ABC HELICOPTER PILOT

CUP COMEBACKS
RORC COMMODORE ON REVIVING ADMIRAL'S CUP

CLOUD CONTROL
THE EVOLUTION OF WEATHER MODELS FOR OCEAN RACERS

FRENCH FOR FAST
DUFOUR'S 40 E HITS THE CRUISER-RACER SWEET SPOT

THE REAL RIVIERA
SAILING THE MED COAST FROM TOULON TO MONACO

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE CRUISING YACHT CLUB OF AUSTRALIA

OCT/NOV 2011
\$7.95 (inc gst)
PP: 255003/07868
9 771446 117003





The long haul to Gold Coast glory

RACE GIFT WRAPPED FOR BIRTHDAY GIRL *LIVING DOLL*, WRITES DI PEARSON.

At the end of the Audi Sydney Gold Coast Yacht Race, which according to participants went on for an eternity, *Wild Oats XI* took line honours from *Investec Loyal* after a protracted battle and Michael Hiatt received a great present when Living Doll was declared the IRC overall winner from *Loki* and *Ragamuffin* on his 59th birthday.

Michael Logan from the Bureau of Meteorology warned everyone in the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia's annual 384 nautical mile race that the weather would be light and changeable, but the direction of wind and pressure was a little different than anticipated.

Contested by 69 boats, of which eight retired (mostly due to time constraints), the race was characterised by its light to medium winds and the sundry wind holes that trapped even the smartest players. It was agreed the race was tactically and navigationally challenging, but nevertheless enjoyable.

Swords were drawn between the two 100 footers from the outset. Bob Oatley's *Wild Oats XI* with Mark Richards in his usual role of skipper, and *Investec Loyal*, now solely owned

by Anthony Bell, boasted some of the biggest yachting names in Australia and New Zealand.

Richards' crew contained 32nd America's Cup winner Grant Simmer (*Alinghi*) calling the shots and Adrienne Cahalan navigating. Bell beefed up his crew with helmsman Billy Merrington, tactician Michael Coxon, 32nd America's Cup winner Will McCarthy, Tommy Braidwood, and New Zealander Mike Quilter, who along with Cahalan, is among the world's top navigators.

Wild Oats XI won the day, finishing the Audi Sydney Gold Coast Yacht Race in one day 18hr 11min 27sec, but it was only by a nine minute 22sec gap after Bell and crew pulled to within two miles of the winner in the closing stages. Never more than 8 or 9 miles ever separated the two.

In fact *Investec Loyal* led the fleet off the Nielsen Park start to South Head on July 30, her nemesis only taking control after turning the corner at North Head in a lovely 8-10 knot north-easterly breeze. A light westerly blew all that morning, but transitioned to a light 5 knot sea breeze in time for the start.

It was around the time *Wild Oats XI* turned the corner at North Head that

the CYCA's Principal Race Officer, Denis Thompson, warned there was a pod of whales in the vicinity. He asked the fleet to take care and give the whales a wide berth as they headed north on their annual migration pilgrimage.

After taking line honours, Richards conceded *Investec Loyal* had kept them honest throughout the race. "It was good stuff – really close the whole way – it reminds us we're not infallible," he admitted.

"It was very close towards the end. The most important thing was getting to the finish first. We made it so that they (*Investec Loyal*) had to sail around us to beat us."

Richards said they were very happy with the modifications made to the boat, "The new daggerboard worked well," he said.

Of course Bell was just as happy with his yacht's result. "We're in stage one of some modifications and this was our first big race since Hobart. We've altered the keel and got a new rig, so we didn't want to press the rig too hard in our first race, so we've got more to give," he said.

Closing the gap on *Wild Oats XI* at around 3.00am in the morning, Bell said: "Tactically we pushed a bit harder in the early hours and took a bit out of them. We made a couple of tactical errors in the race, but who didn't?"

Despite being one of many who had to return to the start after crossing early, Michael Hiatt's *Farr 55*, *Living Doll*, featured at the top of the standings from early on, so her win was no accident, nor was it controlled by the whim of the weather.

The Victorian yachtsman, who owns the funky Living Doll clothing label, put together a winning crew, and his yacht was race-ready. Malfunctions and breakages have been setbacks for Hiatt in the past, but not this time.

However, it took all of Will Oxley's considerable navigating skills to keep the Royal Yacht Club of Victoria entry out of the wind holes and in the right place, mostly on the rhumbline for the ever-transitioning wind; it swung from land to sea breezes and back again, from nothing to 12 knots or so.

Grey hulled *Living Doll* was leading the race overall on the first afternoon and Oxley, who is in big demand on the international scene, said at the time: "We're working hard to try to get the sea breeze timing right with closing on the coast, and then thinking about how best to deal with tonight.

"Looks like a few parking lots ahead and behind us. Trying hard to avoid this fate, but we'll have to go through

HEAD START
Wild Oats XI makes her break from Sydney Heads at the start of the Audi Sydney Gold Coast Yacht Race.

this all again tomorrow morning/afternoon.”

Throughout, they warded off challenges, especially from those who finished second, third and fourth behind them: 2010 winner and reigning Audi IRC Australian champion, *Loki*, a Reichel/Pugh 63 owned by Stephen Ainsworth; Syd Fischer’s TP52 *Ragamuffin*; Harvey Milne’s Archambault 31 *Aroona* (the smallest boat in the fleet at 31ft), skippered by Anthony Paterson and *Victoire*, Darryl Hodgkinson’s Beneteau 45, all from NSW.

Picking up a nice southerly to finish off the race, *Living Doll* stormed home under spinnaker to claim the IRC overall trophy after the smaller boats did not get enough puff to bring them into contention.

Hiatt said their premature start had no bearing on the outcome and did not disrupt their game plan. “Will (Oxley) looked at the weather pre-race and all went as planned. Our timing was good; we knew it would be a tactical race and that navigating would be tedious, but Will and Steve Cotton (a top Kiwi sailor) worked really well to make it happen,” he said.

Oxley and Cotton were assisted by prominent long standing afterguard, Ross Lloyd calling tactics. “I had a lot of confidence in the three of them, and all of my crew, which includes seven from New Zealand,” Hiatt remarked.

“It was refreshing having Will aboard; this is his first ocean race with us,” Hiatt said. “It’s a great feeling to win; it’s a nice birthday present.”

When light winds were forecast for the race, *Living Doll* was proposed as a top prospect by others. “We really enjoy light air – if we get eight hours or more of reaching in light winds we do very well and can take time away from opponents – and we were keeping our eye on *Loki*, *Hooligan* (Marcus Blackmore’s TP52) and others,” Hiatt said.

Hiatt said the best part of their race came just after *Living Doll* was trapped in her only park-up, two miles north of Point Byron (40 odd miles from the finish). “We were three-sail reaching with a Code Zero up. We were on fire and it felt very comfortable,” he said. “Then we put the kite up and flew home.”

Living Doll charted a course close to the coast. “We couldn’t see the value in heading out to sea,” he said. *Hooligan* and others spent time further out and it did not pay off for them.

Lahana, Peter Millard’s 98ft yacht, also left the safety of the coast to find breeze. Navigator Carl Craford was drowning his sorrows at Southport Yacht Club after finishing. “You either rock-hopped like most did and took the risks that came with it – stopping and starting – too many parking lots – or you went out looking for breeze that would give you the edge,” he said.

Stephen Ainsworth, who was third on line and beat Hiatt by a little over two hours, and lost on corrected time by just over one hour, commented: “They deserved to win, they sailed the best race and I congratulate them. We’re happy, even though we didn’t win – you can’t knock second place.”

Ragamuffin was the first of the TP52’s to finish the race, beating *Hooligan* (sixth overall) and Rob Hanna’s Victorian yacht *Shogun* (10th overall) by over 20 minutes and David Pescud’s *Wot Eva* by a bit more.

Fischer said he had three things to be pleased about. “We beat all the other TP52’s, we were third overall and I always like when I win ORCi – I hope more owners get into it,” he said. “Staying close to the coast was the best way to sail the race; I think that’s where boats like *Hooligan* came unstuck,” he said.

There was only one sour note in the race. Bruce McKay reported the keel had fallen off his Sayer 12, *Wasabi* on the second night at sea. The Sydney owner remained very calm

NEW OFFICE
IN AUSTRALIA

YACHT TRANSPORT IS AN ART

member of
the
spliethoff group

AUSTRALIA

Sevenstar - Australia Agencies
20 Sarah Street, Mascot NSW 2020

Phone:
+ 61 2 9693 2100
Email:
info@sevenstar-australia.com

NEW ZEALAND

Navigator Shipbrokers Limited

Phone:
+ 64 9 302 3753
Email:
yachts@navship.co.nz



Head Office
THE NETHERLANDS

and was organised. All his crew were wearing life jackets and the life boat was ready to go. He was only three nautical miles offshore and four miles from Camden Haven, not far from Port Macquarie.

Fortunately, the breeze was soft and the water flat. The boat's water ballast and crew weight kept the yacht afloat as it motored under escort by the Volunteer Marine Rescue to Camden Haven.

Mike Welsh and his *Wicked* crew from Sandringham and NSW Sydney 38s, *Eleni* (Tony Levett) and race retiree, *Calibre* (Geoff Bonus) stood by *Wasabi*, but her crew were all well and in no danger.

As to how slow the going was, at 8.00am on Day 4 at sea (two days 19 hours into the race), only 14 yachts had finished the 26th edition of the race. In stark contrast, *Brindabella*'s race record, set in 1999, is 27 hours 35min 03sec. *Wild Oats XI* finished this race nearly 12 hours behind it.

"It was slow, but it was very enjoyable, my whole crew enjoyed it. It was the driest my yacht has ever been at the end of race," said Geoff Lavis, owner of the downwind flyer *UBS Wild Thing*. "We saw so many whales and the weather was beautiful, even if it was cold at night."

"It's a cruel sport sometimes," *Patrice Six*'s owner, Tony Kirby said laughing about the changeable winds. "It was a very technical race – and I like that. Some of the easiest-looking races are some of the hardest, and this was one of them," he said after just missing out on a podium place with an IRC fourth in Division 2.

CYCA Vice Commodore Howard Piggott summed it up when he said: "It was a unique race, one where everybody had their opportunities and one where you could look at the scenery and relax a bit."

Comments that Julie Hodder, the Middle Harbour Yacht Club Commodore and navigator on Rob Reynolds' *Exile*, made on the morning of Day 4, were typical of several others in the fleet: "Last night was another mixed bag of conditions. We were in a good nor' easter (which was forecast) and were going great guns against the boats inshore; *Victoire* and *Balance*. Then the wind died out, so it was obvious that the westerly was going to come back in.

"We pulled away in low breeze to get into the westerly and took off again. We took Ballina and Smoky Cape fairly wide (1.5 miles) as there was not much current and more wind slightly offshore. From there, the wind was

up and down all night – so now we're going towards the finish with 9 miles to go – boat speed 8.5 knots with the A1.5 up."

Ten minutes later, she said: "As I speak to you, the wind's dying and we have 8.5 miles to go..."

Exile subsequently finished second in Division 2, behind *Victoire* and in front of Paul Clitheroe's *Balance*, skippered by Bruce Hollis. The three, along with *Patrice Six*, traded places throughout the race.

Clitheroe was following the race from Mt Kilimanjaro in Tanzania, and reported: "Ironically, while *Balance* is in light breeze, up here in crater camp at 18,600 feet, it's minus 10 degrees and the wind is so strong our toilet tent just got blown off the mountain – last seen heading for Nigeria!"

Jonathan Stone's Davidson 34, *Illusion*, finished on the afternoon of August 3, bringing the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia's 26th Audi Sydney Gold Coast Yacht Race to its conclusion at long last.

The Audi Sydney Gold Coast Yacht Race was the penultimate event of the Audi IRC Australian Championship, and when the yachts headed to the decider, Audi Hamilton Island Race Week, the pointscore standing was a cliffhanger.

Aboard the Radio Relay Vessel, *JBW*, offshore sailing veteran Tony 'Glark' Cable experienced his first offshore race under motor. Many of Cable's friends were nursing the hope he might suffer his first bout of seasickness, but the benign conditions robbed them of that particular laugh.

Instead, Glark kept the troops amused. Bob 'Scriv' Scrivenor shared a cabin with him and said it was a laugh a minute and confirmed the authenticity of one story: Cable had been told if the phone rang aboard, to answer it. Never having heard a sea phone ring before, it took a while to register that the bleeps and blips he was hearing was the phone ringing.

Gingerly answering, Glark heard a voice say "Anger management, anger management," to which he replied, "Not now thanks mate, we're at sea and we're busy," and abruptly hung the phone up, thinking it was one of those unsolicited phone calls we've all had, offering some service or another.

Shortly after, he discovered the call had come from Phil and Richard Arnall's yacht, *Anger Management*, and having problems with their radio, were trying to contact *JBW* on the sea phone! ⚡
www.goldcoast.cyca.com.au



TACKING OFF
Left: *Lahana* and *Wot Eva* cross tacks.
Above: Mark Richards gives a triumphant wave as he crosses *Wild Oats XI* over the finish line.