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*On a sparkling day, Corona
makes a pretty sight on Patio
Bay weekend
– John Bertenshaw photo*

Patio Bay turns on the Golden Weather

There is no event in the CYA as eagerly anticipated as the Patio Bay Christmas Race and BBQ. To top off a warm week, this year we were treated with an even better weekend!

With the first yachts starting out around 1000hrs, it was set to be a slow race in a light nor-easterly breeze. The *Lucinda* had spent a star-filled night at Issy Bay and planned to greet the passing yachts at around 11. Her engine's water pump had other ideas! Some serious jury-rigging of pump seals finally saw us on our way to Patio Bay.

Being a Mark Foy start,

the handicapper is to be commended as a great fleet of yachts descended upon the finish line mid-afternoon, where Doug Reid and Santa-hatted crew were waiting to record finish times.

Ashore on the lawn, yachties and launch owners alike shared BBQ facilities, friendly banter and Chad Thompson's (last year's A-division winner) wooden keg of rum. Thanks go to our CYA Chairman, Peter Mence, for leading the organisation and prizegiving, to Margaret and Bert Woolcott for the use of their family bach, and to the CYA clean-up crew for making sure all the gardens

and lawns were trimmed and ready for our visit.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you all!

Results: A Classics – *Katrina*

11, *Rawhiti*, Prize; B Classics – *Jonquil*, *Gypsy*, *Wairiki*; A Modern – *Achernar*, *Leda*, *Tamariki*; B Modern – *Paramour*, *Serene*, *Harmony*.

By Nathan Herbert



Chad Thompson dispenses the obligatory rum.

Nathan Herbert Photo

Doughty Spray II completes Coastal Classic

For some years we had hoped *Spray II* might once again race to the Bay of Islands.

An underlying incentive to do the Coastal Classic race this year was that 60 years ago *Spray* under her original rig won the Hodgson Memorial Gold Cup, the Squadron's Boxing Day race to Oruakawa Bay. Ross and I with our dad Nelson were able to enlist the support of Con Thode – on the understanding that he could stay in his bunk unless needed to catch up on all the sleep he had missed as a dairy farmer! As it happened we trimmed all that night with a flat kite to catch up at dawn with the A-class, including *Kahurangi* and *Moana*, and thereby saved our time to win on handicap.

These days stringent Category 3 preparations meant purchases of an EPIRB, new compass, up-to-date life vests, harnesses and tethers, although *Spray* still had some of these items from her epic Round the North Island race in 1986 when owned by Howard Patterson.

While basically a family affair, our crew of myself, daughter Lisa and grandson Mukai was



Jason Prew Photo

Spray II looking spick and span on her way to the Bay of Islands.

critically supplemented by Sam Meldrum from Opuā, square rig sailor and bosun of *R Tucker Thompson*, and Mike Strong, ex-commodore of Devonport Yacht Club, owner of *Ladybird* currently under refit. Mike provided his GPS navigation system, which proved valuable in pitch darkness off Cape Brett. For weeks before the event I trawled through the Cat 3 regulations, which highlighted several key issues, not least the discovery of blocked limber holes under the cockpit accumulating fresh water, and poorly fastened cockpit drain outlets.

Improvements included lee cloths by Frank Warnock, along with new lifelines, hatch fastenings, all contributing towards an 80-year upgrade.

Competing in the No Extras class, I started cautiously to the south of

the mob before a moderate sou'westerly, poling out the big jib to port and avoiding a gybe round North Head.

Inevitably we were passed by almost everyone – a fine sight, with the two huge trimarans racing away to finish around 4 pm that same afternoon. We continued on a broad reach until nightfall north of Whangarei Heads, a highlight being surrounded by 100 dolphins off Sail Rock.

The channel between the Brett lighthouse and the Island looked too daunting in the pitch dark with negligible wind, so we followed most of the fleet outside Piercy Rock to start the long beat into the Bay, reducing sail about 3.30am as the wind freshened.

We finished around 1000 hrs, last, but pleased to get second place on handicap by 1 minute 20 secs. We felt we had

adequately represented both DYC and CYA, flying Dad's RNZYS Past Commodore's burgee.

After attending the prize-giving that evening, we started for home at 0820 from Opuā, sailing inside the islands before a slashing reach to the Brett. The subsequent gybe produced a loud bang, which was found to be the shearing off of the main boom track.

Mike did a masterly lash-up to get us home; it was realised that the track had not been designed for the heavy loads produced by our kicking strap.

After meeting our dolphin friends again off Sail Rock at dusk, the wind died away and we motor-sailed to Kawau, completing the voyage the following day.

By John Duder