

# THE NEW ZEALAND CLASSIC YACHT JOURNAL



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Alan Houghton Photo

## *The Southern Trust Classic Yacht Regatta – one gaffer's point of view*

Once again, in 2011, the CYA put on a downright enjoyable event. All eyes had been on the weather leading up to the regatta because of recent La Nina cyclones diving down on New Zealand, some with devastating damage as in Queensland. The Mahurangi Cruising Club Regatta was cancelled for the first time in 23 years and some fierce winds affected the Auckland Anniversary regatta,

resulting in several of the classics gracefully retiring. We can expect the odd blow this time of the year, but normally we are blessed with champagne cruising.

And the weather gods did look favourably upon us for our own regatta. If anything, they almost left

us wanting a little more breeze. On a personal note, I prefer the light airs as *Ngatira* has proved herself to be a slippery witch and, still coming to terms with the four-sided sail, I have trouble following through in breezier conditions against the larger gaffers.

Because of recent construction developments in the Viaduct Basin and the AC45 cats commandeering the usual berth area in front of the race HQ, berthage was at a premium. Tony Stevenson generously allowed visiting yachts a place to park. It really is great to see all these lovely classics snuggled up together. Thankfully the AC45 allowed the classics the usual spot for the Saturday and Sunday



*By Stephen Horsley  
Ngatira*

nights right in front of the race HQ and for everyone to view these gracious old ladies.

We had light airs for the Friday racing with wind speeds of only 6-9 knots at the start, building to 10-14 as the day progressed. Some good keen starting saw a closed-out start line with the A Div bermudans too early and sailing down the line, really getting in the way of the gaffers coming in on port.

Some decisive helming saw boats passing on opposite tacks within inches of each other and crews absolutely jumping out of their skins. It seemed that the only calm people were the guys with their hands on the tillers. A split fleet saw some dramatic changes in the light as boats sniffed out the breeze heading to the top mark, which was quite congested.

*Waitangi* enforced Rule 18, beating *Thelma* to the first mark, but had to tack round the beacon and in the process tried to sweep several of the crew off *Thelma* with her bowsprit. It was all done in fine humour as boat speed was a nail biting 2-3 knots. Unfortunately this was the only windward mark as the remainder of the course was straight-line sailing and any passing was down to sail trim and waterline length.

There was some confusion between Rangi Yellow Buoy and Flax Point Yellow Buoy, which resulted in several boats suddenly altering course out to the mark and then most of the fleet following suit. Those with their wits about them saw the Stewart 34s cutting the corner and missing Rangi Buoy altogether. This was to become a telling factor

in tactics during the course of the regatta: follow the Stewarts and come out on top.

We stole the race in the light air for the gaff division and finished ahead of some bigger boats. Even some of the bermudans had a struggle passing on the downward leg to the finish against the four sided sails.

A small front saw some stiff breeze and a bit of rain pass over on Friday night, but most crews were tucked up nicely and some were enjoying the night reveling in the day's racing spent on board amongst the visiting crews.

On Saturday, there were signs of a building breeze in which gaffers did not fly their top sails. The task ahead was to complete two races in the day. Wind, NE 9-12 knots morning, 12-15 afternoon. There was

another aggressive start from the Corinthian classics more akin to a Thursday night Rum race. Nothing was held back. Boats that were crying for breeze on Friday now got down to business and showed what they could do with a bit more pressure.

The fleet tacked up the Rangi shore to Islington Bay Red Buoy out of tide. Some cut and thrust saw positions change back and forth. A massive wind shift coming out of Islington Bay caught out the unwary, who lost valuable boat lengths. Then followed a close-hauled run across to Motuihe Green Buoy with a strong flood tide sucking boats down on the mark. Again, the remainder of the race was a case of follow the leader and again we could not follow through on our Friday's good performance.

The afternoon race was



similar but finished after clearing Navy Buoy. It was another tight start for both bermudans and gaffers with all the fleet starting on starboard. One yacht of sizable proportions audaciously started on port and got away with it clearing all right-of-way boats by the skin of their teeth.

Tony Blake skippering *Thelma* ought to be congratulated for such a bold move, or perhaps he just saw what the rest of us didn't. Well done Tony.

On the long downwind leg to the finish, the gaffers set their topsails on the reach across to Browns Island Beacon from Navy Buoy for the run down to the Orakei finish. The course took us through a fleet of starlings out from Kohimarama. The expressions on the faces of some of their crews showed awe as they looked upon such a spread of canvas. It was a great breeze for racing and a most enjoyable race for the crew, not too wet, sun shining and the spectacle of Auckland's yachting history doing what they've done for over a century. The northeasterly breeze was in a comfortable quarter for the sail back to Race HQ after two races – sheets were eased and a beer or six were relished with banter about the day's racing.



Stephen Horsley Photo

Sunday saw a very calm Waitemata with not much prospect of a brisk sail. The race was around Motuihe Island, keeping it to starboard. The first leg was to windward through the Motuihe Channel with a flood tide. Again, the fleet split between those choosing the Tamaki estuary side and skirting up the side of Browns Island or the Rangi shoreline. There were sinking hearts (a more polite way than writing unprintable expletives) amongst those who worked up the Rangitoto shore as they looked across the course and saw in utter disbelief boats so far ahead that it was game over. Once again... follow the patikis! There was no way out but to cross over to the other side

and play catch up. This was becoming a cat and mouse game.

*Ngatira* made massive gains working up under Motuihe with Waitangi while much of the fleet crossed over the channel to Emu Point and parked. What could have been our defining moment once again turned to rout as those seemingly parked at Emu Point picked up a building nor'easter. *Thelma* ventured out too far into the channel and lost wind against tide and had to tack back in, while *Prize* and *Rainbow* capitalized on their good breeze. We had no choice but to head for Emu Point, out of the channel, and follow the leaders. Oh, hang on, we couldn't see the leaders by this point,

they had just done a horizon job on us. Again waterline length and sail area won out as the breeze built.

Everyone enjoyed the after-match dissection of the highs and lows of the day's sailing back at Race HQ. As always, there were plenty of laughs as Steve Cranch ran the prize giving and Tony Stevenson handed out the spot prizes at the end of another top CYA Southern Trust Regatta. Next year we will enjoy the new function complex, with ample berths for all yachts out front. This should make for an even bigger and better event.

Now all that remains is to have a quiet word with Steve Cranch about handicaps!



Alan Houghton Photos



## Regatta results ...

### A Division Bermudan. 6 entries

Prize	(3) / 1 / 1 / 1	1
Wraith of Odin	1 / (2) / 2 / 2	2
Katrina	2 / (6) / 3 / 3	3
Ranger	(4) / 4 / 4 / 4	4
Arcturus	(5) / 3 / 5 / 5	5
Helen	(dnc) / 5 / 6 / 6	6

### A Division Gaff. 4 entries

Rainbow	(3) / 2 / 1 / 1	1
Thelma	(4) / 1 / 2 / 3	2
Ngatira	1 / 3 / 3 / (4)	3
Waitangi	2 / (4) / 4 / 2	4

### B Division Bermudan. 7 entries

Gleam	1 / 2 / (3) / 1	1
Spray II	3 / (4) / 1 / 2	2
Gypsy	5 / 1 / 2 / (6)	3
Tucana	2 / 3 / (5) / 3	4
Petrel	4 / (5) / 4 / 5	5
Aramoana	(6) / 6 / 6 / 4	6
Aotearoa	(dnc) / dnc / dnc / dnc	7

### B Division Gaff. 5 entries

Wairiki	1 / (2) / 1 / 1	1
Frances	2 / 1 / dnf / (dnc)	2
Gloriana	(dnc) / dnf / 2 / 2	3
Imogen	3 / dnf / (dnc) / dns	4
Dolphin	(dnc) / dnc / dnc / dnc	5

### Mullet Boat Division. 3 entries

Scullet	(2) / 1 / 1 / 2	1
Orion II	1 / (dnf) / dnc / 1	2
Vamarie	(dnc) / dnf / 2 / dnc	3

### H28 Division. 6 entries

Burda	1 / 2 / (4) / 3	1
Karie	(5) / 3 / 2 / 1	2
Ninepence	2 / (5) / 1 / 5	3
Tropicbird	3 / 1 / (5) / 4	4
Stamp Machine	(4) / 4 / 3 / 2	5
Bluebird	(dnf) / 6 / 6 / 6	6

### Stewart 34 Division. 5 entries

Pelagian	1 / 2 / (3) / 1	1
Panacea	(3) / 1 / 2 / 2	2
Princess	2 / 3 / (4) / 3	3
Pia	(dnc) / 4 / 1 / 5	4
Playbuoy	4 / (5) / 5 / 4	5

### A Modern. 6 entries

Rainbird	(4) / 2 / 1 / 1	1
Hornblower	1 / (3) / 2 / 3	2
Tern	(5) / 1 / 3 / 2	3
Achernar	3 / (4) / 4 / 4	4
Northerner	2 / (5) / 5 / 5	5
Shearwater II	(dnf) / 6 / 6 / dnf	6

### B Modern. 3 entries

Crimson Dynamo	1 / (3) / 2 / 1	1
Talent	(2) / 2 / 1 / 2	2
Young Nick	3 / 1 / 3 / (dnc)	3

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