



Antigua Sailing Week 2009

Tranquility, Nightlife, Historic Beauty: Antigua has it all!

By Nancy Birnbaum

Caribbean racing has grown over the years starting with the glory days of the old charter boats. These beautiful old boats could be seen fighting it out on courses that certainly were not “windward/leewards.” Today racing is very different. Those lovely ladies of yesteryear can only be found in special classic regattas like the annual Antigua Classic Yacht Regatta, which precedes the Antigua Sailing Week where the rest of the fleet, whether they have canting keels, hydraulics, powered winches or hi-tech sail material, can be found. Since the boats have changed, so have the Regattas. As they have grown in size and popularity, they have opened doors for new classes and series.

Antigua, part of the Caribbean’s Leeward island group, is host to the Antigua Sailing Week where hundreds of yachts, racers and cruisers alike, compete for serious silver and party up a storm. Antigua offers sailors a lovely balance between both the sport and its well-known, after-hours lifestyle. With 108 square miles, 365 beaches and more than enough drinking establishments, the island is

the quintessential yachting venue. And it's not just from late April to early May when it hosts more than 1,500 sailors for Antigua Sailing Week, the Caribbean's second-largest regatta. It is a year-round cruising destination, whether you choose to stay through the hurricane season in one of its many safe harbors or just stop over on your way through the Caribbean. The island offers both racers and cruisers many options: quiet anchorages offering up luxurious stays ashore or easy access to the important amenities that we all crave.

The 42nd Antigua Sailing Week was officially called "The Stanford Antigua Sailing Week" until this past February when former title

sponsor Sir Allen Stanford, a Texas billionaire who has invested heavily in Antigua and owned Stanford International Bank of Antigua, was charged with fraud by the SEC. His name was unceremoniously pulled from the official website and a new Gold Sponsor in the form of Corum Watches came onboard as the official timekeeper. Fortunately, this helped to offset any shortfalls and the show went on.

A total of 140 boats in fifteen dedicated classes competed, enjoying the extraordinary experience of racing sailboats in perfect conditions around tropical islands. Racers ranged from neophytes on chartered sloops to America's Cup winners crewing sleek million-dollar yachts



and a few actual cruising boats thrown into the mix. In one of the new racing series, *Sojana*, Peter Harrison's Farr 115, won the Inaugural Corum Round Redonda Race—establishing a benchmark elapsed-time race record in the process—while Adrian Lee's Cookson 50, *Lee Overlay Partners*, corrected out to first overall in the same contest to win the first-ever Antigua Ocean Series. Among the bareboat winners were the Dufour 455, KH+P *Sea You Later* in Bareboat 1; the Moorings 515, *Nifty*, in Bareboat 2; the Moorings 473, *Crumpet*, in Bareboat 3; and the





ashore to enjoy the beachside Bistro and then take a chaise poolside to relax. You don't even need to use your own dinghy. The water taxi can pick you up or take you to the restaurants and nightlife of bustling 18th century Nelson's Dockyards in just a couple of minutes. With all the fabulous amenities and delectable cuisine, The Inn is a remarkable



seen on their website—www.ondeckoceanracing.com/fleet/index.htm.

Antigua and its nearby neighbors like Montserrat are seeing modest increases in tourism at a time when tourism is generally down.

A report in last month's Travel Agent Central said that the islands' yachting sector has seen a 62-percent spike in yacht arrivals since 2005. Up from 219 yacht arrivals in 2005, arrivals in 2008 reached 354 yachts and brought a total of 1,840 passengers to the island.

If you are looking for a different island experience, Antigua can offer just that; amazing anchorages, idyllic sailing, interesting onshore experiences ranging from a variety of restaurants, lovely spas to zip line tours over the rainforest. (Yes, Antigua has a rain forest!). You might anchor in English Harbour and take in the serene beauty of The Inn at English Harbor, which just underwent a dramatic \$1.5 million renovation. Come

able get-away treat!

Perhaps you want the best of both worlds: You can fly in (both American Airlines and USAir have regular schedules) and charter. Horizons Yacht Charters offers a charter fleet of 13 yachts ranging in size from 39 feet to 54 feet, monohulls and catamarans. Their fleet is made up of Bavaria, Beneteau, Jeanneau and Fontaine Pajot yachts, which sleep six to 10. Skippers are available upon request. Horizon is currently offering a special "Two free days on any seven-plus night charter." With Horizon Yacht Charters you can take a one-way trip to St. Martin, either with a crewed or bareboat yacht charter or set sail to Nevis, St. Kitts and St. Barths—with each island as different as the last—and finish your cruise at their base in St Martin. Check them out at www.horizonyachtcharters.com.

Sunsail also has a base here. Their fleet of yachts includes boats from 33 feet to 52 feet, spanning both monohulls and catamarans. Learn more at www.sunsail.com.

With all these fabulous ways to enjoy Antigua, you should start planning your next trip now! ≈

Dufour 40, *Fantasque*, in Bareboat 4. The Flint 54, *Running Cloud*, won the Cruising Multihull class, while *Compass Point* was again the top Dragon.

Offering a few of the bareboats was Ondeck, one of the Sailing Week Sponsors. Ondeck has brought a new standard of excellence to Antigua through new sailing certification classes offered by The Royal Yachting Association. Through the new Ondeck Sea School, visitors can learn from local (born and bred Antiguan), Logan Knight – Chief Instructor. The school will offer both Sailing and Powerboat RYA-certified courses at their Falmouth Harbour base. Ondeck offers Beneteau 40.7s, Farr 40s and Farr 65s for whole boat or individual charter, which can be

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Racing Highlights: Stars of Antigua Sailing Week

"We got what we came for, sunshine and 25 knots every day," said Richy O'Farrell, the skipper of *Rio*, winner of Overall Honors at this year's Antigua Sailing Week. These ideal sailing conditions were enjoyed by the entire fleet, of course, but the TP52 *Rio's* crew, which included some of *Team Origin's* America's Cup folks and music/sailing celeb Simon Le Bon, had to be feeling it just a tad more after their victory.

In Cruising 1 Class, Dr. Ulrich Rohde's *Swan 53*, *Dragon Fly Plus*, earned its fourth straight first place finish in a row, while in Cruising 2, Hugh Bailey's First 456, *Hugo B*, again outlasted Burt Keenan's Frers 48, *Acadia*, to remain atop the 15 boat

fleet. This annual fight for first led Mr. Keenan to make an offering of five roses and two shot glasses emblazoned with his boat's name to Mr. Bailey. Interrupting the prize giving on Saturday night, Mr. Keenan told Mr. Bailey that he hoped that he would "drink all the rum you've won over the past five years in my shot glasses!" The *Hugo B* is a local favorite of all Antiguans.

The multihull class was quite thin this year resulting in a tie between the two contenders in the Cruising Multihull Class. There's a terrific opportunity here for next year's Sailing Week. All you multihull enthusiasts—get your boats down to Antigua and let's have a real race in 2010!



Antigua Sailing Week Race Results

Overall Finish Place - Boat Name -
Owner/Entrant

RACING 1

- 1 *Rio* Charles Dunstone/Richard O'Farrell (Overall Honors 2009)
- 2 *Yeoman XXXII* Brian Benjamin
- 3 *Windemere III* Maarten DE JONG/
Joseph Jackson (only one race completed)

RACING 4

- 1 *Curacao* Marine Dig Van Der Slikke
- 2 *Elandra* Calvin Reed/John Linton
- 3 *El Ocaso* Rick Wesslund/Mike Caldwell

PERFORMANCE CRUISER 1

- 1 *MAD IV* Clive Llewellyn/Alec Schwed
- 2 *Katrina* Damon Guizot
- 3 *Desna* Sven Wackerhagen

PERFORMANCE CRUISER 2

- 1 *Crescendo* Martin Jacobson/
Nick Burns
- 2 *Pocket Rocket* David Cullen
- 3 *Coyote* Ken Acott

PERFORMANCE CRUISER 3

- 1 *Biwi Magic* Geoffrey D. Pidduck
- 2 *Pavlova II* Richard Burbridge
- 3 *Augustine* Tony Sayer

CRUISING 1

- 1 *Dragon Fly Plus* Dr. Ulrich L Rohde
- 2 *Spirit of Montpelier* David Yelloly
- 3 *Northern Child* Julian Sincock

CRUISING 2

- 1 *Hugo B* Hugh Bailey
- 2 *Acadia* Burt Keenan
- 3 *Shamrock* Thomas N.T. Mullen

BAREBOAT 1

- 1 KH+P *Sea you later* Nicole Lameter
- 2 KH+P *Girl* Alexander Pfeiffer
- 3 KH+P *Let Me Go* Alfred Geisser

BAREBOAT 2

- 1 *Nifty* Wenzlaff
- 2 *Team DHH* Argos
- 3 *Pascal* Houghton

BAREBOAT 3

- 1 *Rossi* Punge
- 2 *Mauputi* Michel Troesch
- 3 *102 Crumpet* McCathie

BAREBOAT 4

- 1 *Fantasque* Rolf Jacob
- 2 KH+P *Sun King* Hans-Robert Nitsche
- 3 KH+P *Clarabella* Mareike Guhr

RACING MULTIHULL

- 1 *Spirit of Antigua* Tony Bullimore (unchallenged)

CRUISING MULTIHULL

- 1 *Running Cloud* (Flint 54) Larry Pollock
- 2 *Cover Shot* (Seawind 1000XL) Roger Webb (tied in points)

INTERNATIONAL DRAGON

- 1 *Compass Point* Poul Richard Hoj Jensen
- 2 *Murka* Mikhail Mouratov
- 3 *Team Loginov* Anatoly Loginov