

ST BARTH'S BUCKET

MORE YACHTS THAN EVER TOOK PART IN THE CARIBBEAN RACE WHERE FUN IS PLACED FIRMLY AT THE TOP OF THE AGENDA

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The fifteenth edition of the annual St Barth's Bucket, for superyachts of 30 metres and above, attracted 34 entries making it the biggest Bucket ever. 'It has been a huge success on all levels,' said Hank Halsted, the Bucket's managing director. 'We were blessed with exceptional sailing conditions, and although most of the fleet had to remain at anchor because of the "yellow alert" dangerous swell advisory, the enthusiasm of the participants still brought them ashore to enjoy all the festivities.'

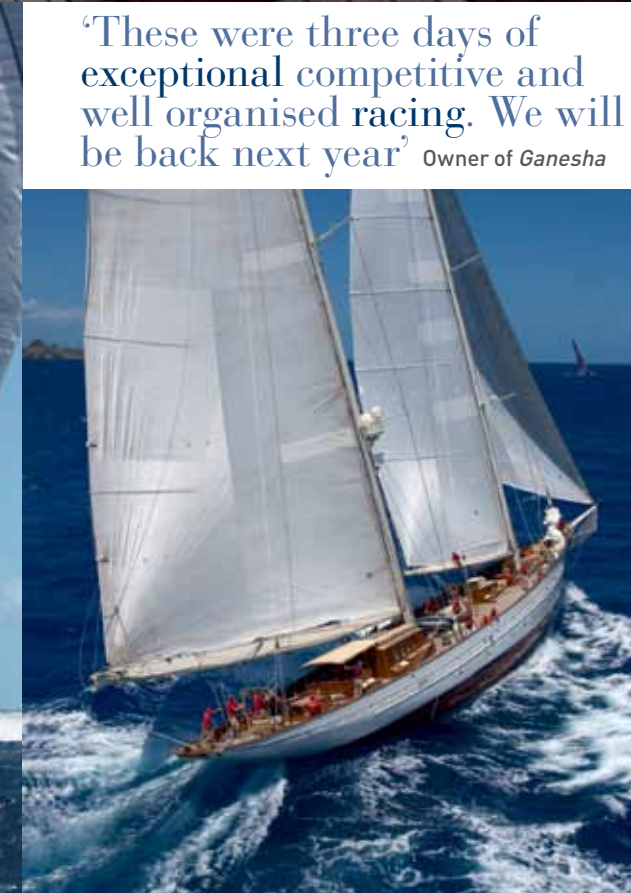
What started in 1995 as a privately organised regatta by four superyacht owners has evolved into a professionally run three-day event where winning, while important, is not the be all and end all. As in the early days, when fishing was also part of the game, it remains a friendly contest based on wholesome fun, and that is also the reason why there are no sponsors from outside the yachting industry. The backbone of the event for funding are Alloy Yachts, Holland Jachtbouw (HJB), Perini Navi, Royal Huisman and Vitters Shipyard.

This year there were two major issues. The intensified collaboration with the French Yachting Association (FFV) led to the inclusion of the Bucket into the official Racing Calendar of the FFV, and the new Superyacht Racing Protocol – the evolving set of safety rules – created a new spirit of respect to the manoeuvring limitations of superyachts. This proved particularly pertinent as the advances in the Bucket rating system created close racing and, as Hank Halsted put it, 'some less than safe situations at a number of our standard turning marks'.

At the prizegiving ceremony after three days of great racing in steady winds of up to 25 knots, the special awards told once again the true story of the event. These included the Vitters Seamanship Trophy for the yacht that gave up the most water in the interests of safety, the Huisman 'Spirit of the Bucket' award for the best Corinthian crew sailing to perfection while creating the best spirit of fun doing it, the 'Skulduggery Cravat' (Admiralty Noose) for the yacht that best promulgated non-adult behaviour, and the sacred Escargot Cup for last place. With a good sense of humour, the two divisions were not simply labelled A and B, but were divided into 'Les Gazelles des Mers' and 'Les Grandes Dames des Mers'.



Clockwise from top right: the crew of Royal Huisman's *Meteor* stand by for action; majestic *Adela* powers down a reach; *Salute* pushes hard; St Barth's – perfect for shoreside entertainment as well as on-water action



'These were three days of exceptional competitive and well organised racing. We will be back next year' Owner of *Ganessa*

Jochen Halbe talks to
Hank Halsted

MD of the Bucket Regattas

BI There were 34 boats this year. Do more boats equal more problems?

HH Having more boats in the fleet, combined with the advances in the rating system, created some less than safe situations at a number of our standard turning marks. The new Superyacht Racing Protocol was well tested and we feel that in general it was safer for superyachts than the standard ISAF rules would have been. Requiring an active bridge-to-bridge comms channel has proven a great tool for collision avoidance.

BI Is the rating still okay for the fast boats?

HH As we build the on-water performance analysis database, the ratings get better and better. On the Saturday we finished 26 yachts within 10 minutes after 2.5 hours of racing! The mechanics of the rating system are in place and working well, but we will continue with our performance analysis in every event in order to refine each yacht's performance potential. With over 120 superyachts in the system, it is becoming a very effective tool. Jim Teeters has refined the rule to where it is an accurate measure of how well each yacht is sailed around the course. If you sail well, you win. Poor tactics and sail handling will drop you down the list. The most reliable results are within the classes, as the yachts have the closest attributes. For the overall fleet we're racing Porsches against caravans, still with remarkably close finishes.

BI It seems there are more and more pro sailors. Does the Bucket lose its family feel as pros sail closer to the rules than cruising owners and captains?

HH The Buckets have become so popular because they are NOT about winning. They are a celebration of the world's largest sailing yachts and the opportunity to sail them to peak performance in a safe format that values seamanship, sportsmanship and fun. Unfortunately, as the racing gets tighter, human nature drives the need to win, which is an ongoing management issue. After all, we're running this regatta for the most competitive guys on the planet! Convincing them that winning doesn't matter is a bit of an uphill push – but we're up to the task and will never let this go the way of normal regatta sailing.

'I am very satisfied. You need a good boat, good sails and of course good crew'

Owner of P2 after the yacht's very first day of racing



Clockwise from top right: *Baracuda* powers to windward; *Meteor's* winning team; toys on *Maltese Falcon*; *Salute* and *Destination* enjoy hard racing; helming *Meteor* to victory; close racing in the turquoise waters of St Barth's

'It was just fun, I enjoyed it very much. It's not serious racing but it is a social race. I like it'

Owner of *Baracuda*



The results

OVERALL

- | | |
|--|------------|
| 1 <i>Meteor</i> , Royal Huisman (51.8m) | 1/13/4=18 |
| 2 <i>Windcrest</i> , Hogdon Yachts (29.9m) | 10/10/1=21 |
| 3 <i>Adela</i> , Pendennis Restoration (54.9m) | 18/3/3=24 |

GRANDES DAMES

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|---|-----------|
| 1. <i>Meteor</i> , Royal Huisman (51.8m) | 1/10/3=14 |
| 2. <i>Maltese Falcon</i> , Perini Navi (88m) | 6/4/5=15 |
| 3. <i>Windcrest</i> , Hogdon Yachts (29.9m) | 7/8/1=16 |
| 4. <i>Adela</i> , Pendennis Restoration (54.9m) | 12/3/2=17 |
| 5. <i>Perseus</i> , Perini Navi (49.7m) | 3/2/14=19 |

GAZELLES

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|---|-----------|
| 1. <i>Ganesh</i> , Fitzroy Yachts (39m) | 1/5/4=10 |
| 2. <i>P2</i> , Perini Navi (38.1m) | 3/2/8=13 |
| 3. <i>Destination Fox Harb'r</i> , Alloy Yachts (40.8m) | 12/1/5=18 |
| 4. <i>Whisper</i> , Holland Jachtbouw (35.3m) | 5/14/2=21 |
| 5. <i>Saudade</i> , Wally Yachts (45.1m) | 6/3/13=22 |

SPECIAL AWARDS

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|----------------------|---------------------------|
| All Star Crew Award | Maltese Falcon |
| Spirit of the Bucket | Meteor |
| Perini Navi Cup | Maltese Falcon |
| Seamanship Trophy | Virago |
| Skulduggery Cravat | Axia |
| Escargot Cup | Baracuda, Varsovie |