

the crew

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REPORT



A Whole Lotta Bucket

By Esther Barney



Thirty-four sail yachts careering towards a finish line within minutes of one another is quite something to behold; as I stood at the stern of *Kalikobass II* on the last day of the St Barths Bucket the excitement was at fever pitch. This is the reason why countless man-hours – from naval architects to deckhands – are devoted to the creation of superyachts; the adrenaline, harnessing of the wind and the exhilaration of passing another contender illustrate why we are involved with superyachts. A record-breaking fleet took part in the 19th Caribbean Bucket, particularly interesting considering the economic activity of the last 12 months. It has been a relatively slow season for charters in the Caribbean but many owners were wanting to actually enjoy these toys in which they have heavily invested – which can only be a good thing if more crews are able to race.

The fleet was diverse, from the relatively diminutive 23-m *Wild Horses* to the Goliath of the group, *The Maltese Falcon*, at 88m. Not that size is all that matters; there were record breakers and rock stars contending as well, including *Leopard* – fresh from breaking her 12th record at the RORC Caribbean 600 – and race circuit regulars *Ranger* and *P2*. Eight Perini Navis raced, including new launch *Barracuda*.

The winds promised great race conditions, although the surge prevented most vessels from docking post-race. The racing community was predictably resilient and made the best of the situation, partying until the small hours at the Baz Bar, or the yacht club for those with the most stamina.

The Bucket Rating System that decides the racing order has evolved over the years. An incredibly complicated formula for velocity prediction, taking into account weather conditions, the yacht's design features and previous performance calculates expected timings. For each race the start order changes depending on the previous days' results with the intension that on the last day, if all yachts perform perfectly,

they will finish at the same time – or as close as possible. This makes for an exhilarating – and at times hair-raising – experience for all involved. “We try not to reward bad sailing,” commented Jim Teeters, who has the unfavourable task of calculating the various ratings. The system has become so successful that it has now been adopted by the Superyacht Cup.

The Round the Island race is first, with vessels circumnavigating St Barths anticlockwise. *Meteor* crossed the line first in two hours, 34 minutes followed by *Shamoun* and *Ganesh*; *Barracuda* – getting to grips with racing for the first time – finished last in three hours, 19 minutes. With terrible luck *Rebecca* split her spinakker during the race and had to use a heavier spare for the rest of the weekend. Onboard *Antara* we had a fantastic day, starting off relatively early and holding position for the most part to finish seventh.

My favourite of the three races, the Wiggley Course, took place on day two. Starting off in front of Gustavia, yachts head clockwise, round various satellite islands before heading back to the finish line. With less of a focus on speed and more on manoeuvrability, the yachts jostled to get past one another and felt much closer – no doubt helped by the changes in start time from the previous day’s results. *Paraiso* took first (in 2:07:25), followed by *Perseus* just 12 seconds later, and *Adela* a further 11 seconds behind. The aggregate positions meant *Perseus* was in the lead, followed by *Shamoun* and *The Maltese Falcon*. I was onboard Pendennis classic *Rebecca* for the racing, a beautiful ketch with >>





an air of classic charm; the race crew has been together for several years and works together like a well-oiled machine.

At 14.30, amidst the racing action, *Moonbird* disastrously lost a reacher swivel, which could have signified the end of racing had it not been for the perseverance of the team. Organised by Patrick Welton, the only replacement available was flown from Antigua to St Maarten where race crew Jamie Small collected it by tender; Ben Wood and Marko Bakker then worked their socks off to change the swivel and the job was done by midnight, followed by Cuba Libres all round to celebrate.

Meanwhile, the crew party on the dock was buzzing, live bands and the DJ keeping everyone dancing. It was also a night for practical jokes – an inflatable doll found itself affixed to the *Andromeda* bow and a tender was sabotaged to look like belonged to another yacht.

The Wrong Way Round race started with just 13 points' difference between the top ten yachts and the reviewed start times were slightly rejigged, aiming to give an even tighter finish than the day before. Onboard *Kalikobass II* I enjoyed a very different experience to my two previous days; she is slightly smaller than *Rebecca* and *Antara*, and I felt closer to the elements being nearer the waterline. Helmed by her owner we had a fantastic day, with plenty of to-ing and fro-ing to help counterbalance I was kept on my toes. In the final furlong the fleet felt like horses cantering together, we



could practically touch the flanking yachts. But there had to be a winner and *Virago* finished first in two hours, 25 minutes, chased by *Adela* and *Meteor*.

In the overall results *Meteor* took first place, followed by *Windcrest* and *Adela*. In the Grand Dames class *Meteor* won again, with *The Maltese Falcon* and *Windcrest* taking second and third respectively. And in the Gazelles class *Ganesha* took first place, *P2* second and *Destination FoxHarb'r* third. *The Maltese Falcon* was awarded the Cool Crew award, sponsored by *The Yacht Report* and Holland Jachtbouw, and *Axia* took the Skullduggery Cravat. But with the Bucket it is not the winning that matters, it is the spirit of getting out on the water and enjoying yourself as much as possible – and not hitting anyone in the process!

Many of the vessels that raced look to be taking part in the Newport Bucket in a July, so we look forward to seeing how they fare in the next Bucket instalment... ■

[For a gallery of the crews and prize giving turn to page 59.](#)

St Barths Bucket

With so many competitors there was plenty of action at the St Barths Bucket this year.



A bit of post-race R&R on 'Rebecca'



Ben Carne, race crew on 'Kalikobass II', checks the sail trim



'Adela' race crew kick back



Bosun Nick Akroyd eases out the spinaker on day one



All hands on deck on 'Antara'



Overall winners of the Bucket 'Meteor'



Bucket veteran Ian Craddock crewing on 'Rebecca'



'Leopard' steaming past the fleet at the end of the last race

'Leopard' full speed ahead



'Kalikobass II' crew uses its weight on day three



'Perseus' making repairs post-race



'Maltese Falcon' wins the Cool Crew award from 'The Yacht Report' and HJB



'Ranger' crew prep for day three



'Rebecca' prepares to salute the committee boat



Sabotage onboard 'Andromeda la Dea'



'Rebecca's well-loved mascot





'Sapphire' in action



The Roman 'Axia' crew wins the Skullduggery Cravat



Onboard with the 'Leopard' crew



Some of the winning 'Meteor' crew



The 'Axia' Romans



The 'Rebecca' crew relax on prizegiving night