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St Barth's Bucket



Thirty of the world's finest superyachts assembled for this year's annual regatta in the beautiful French West Indies. An essential guest, a decent wind, failed to turn up but no one was downhearted. Photographic report by **Andrew Blatter**

Few islands anywhere can match the unique blend of style, culture and natural beauty that is St Barth's in the French West Indies. This is a tiny island with huge appeal, where quality is most certainly more important than quantity. Far away from the normality of life, it is a perfect getaway destination for some of the highest profile names in the world, from rock and film stars to politicians and businessmen. St Barth's, then, is all about style. It is a place where luxurious living

intertwines with the allure and perfection of unspoilt nature. Within a short walk of your yacht in the dock you will find superb swimming at Shell Beach, a wonderful selection of stylish boutiques and designer clothing stores, some great Indonesian furniture shops, an amazing selection of fine cigars, panama hats and sumptuous bed linen, a choice of fine dining, beachside restaurants, an Espresso Martini on the waterfront, and even a relaxing Swedish massage. St Barth's really has it all.



Above: the Port de Gustavia, tropical setting for the St Barth's Bucket
Top right: the trophy-winning crew aboard the J Class Endeavour
Centre: the J Class Ranger
Above far right: Avalon to windward with Mariella

Every year, at the end of March and beginning of April, the island hosts the St Barth's Bucket, a Caribbean version of the original Nantucket Bucket, which has since moved on to Newport. The event has grown into its present status as one of the most prestigious regattas on the world superyacht events calendar. It is now running with a maximum of 30 boats and an ever-growing waiting list.

On Thursday 30 March this year a spectacular selection of 30 superyachts gathered at the Port de Gustavia for the start of the 11th annual event. The line-up included the world-renowned J Class yachts *Endeavour* and *Ranger*; a number of serious performance yachts including *Visione*, *Unfurled*, *Sojana* and *Ghost*; four Perini Navis, *Antara*, *O'hana*, *Parsifal III* and *Perseus*; and two classic William Fife

designs, *Altair* and *Mariella*. A host of other yachts represented the eminent designers Ed Dubois, Gerald Dijkstra, German Frers and Sparkman & Stephens, and builders Holland Yachtbouw, Royal Huisman and Alloy Yachts. With 22 vessels berthed stern-to the newly restored capitainerie and quay, there was an exciting buzz of anticipation before the skippers' meeting of nearly 100 people aboard the motor yacht *Altitude*. This was followed by a fun welcome party at the open marquee on the dock sponsored by Peter de Savary, The Abaco Club and the sailing yacht *Rogue*.

Friday morning dawned totally windless – an unusual Caribbean trade wind concept – and although the levels of hope and optimism for some consequential breeze



Above:
superyacht line
up in the Port
de Gustavia
Far left: La Plage
restaurant at
Baie de St Jean
is a popular
refuelling stop
Left: local artist
Jean Paul Soret
captures the
scene. **Below:**
the sleek Dubois
yacht *Helios*

remained high enough to get the yachts over the start line each day, the wind sadly never filled in with enough consistency to give a full day's racing on any of the event's three days. While this was naturally disappointing for the yacht crew involved, it did not stop all the participants enjoying the schedule of wonderful social events and island attractions.

Friday night saw one of the Bucket highlights under way, with all the yachts moored stern-to the quay going 'open house' to serve each other's visiting guests and crew a delicious array of hors d'oeuvres and cocktails. On the following evening the Owner's Cocktail Party was hosted

by fellow yachtsman David Ray at his stylish new home on the promontory at the entrance to Gustavia harbour, an event that was further honoured by being sponsored – and attended in person – by Ralph Lauren. Back at the dock marquee, a fun crew party hosted by Holland Jachtbouw was a popular event.

After another quiet day on the water on Sunday, the awards presentation was held, sponsored by Alloy Yachts, Holland Jachtbouw, Perini Navi, Royal Huisman and Moët Chandon. The Huisman Trophy for the 'Spirit of the Bucket' went to dear Grandma Betty on the 50 metre *Perseus*, the Perini award was won by the 46 metre *Antara*,





Above: the classic William Fife *Altair*, second in the prize list
Right, clockwise from left: captain Mike Beardall at the helm of *Endeavour*; Mickey Gooch (owner of *Antara*) and his son Stephen, with Dick Johnson and captain 'Johnno' Johnston; and 'Spirit of the Bucket' winner Grandma Betty, who sailed aboard *Perseus*



and with no official winner of the Bucket, no race having been completed, special prizes were awarded to the yachts with the two best cumulative start times (in crossing the line closest to the 'gun'). First was the Perini *Antara*, captained by 'Johnno' Johnston, with *Altair* second and *Visione* third. A special award was made for the best crew, which deservedly went to the highly professional captain Mike Beardall aboard the J Class *Endeavour*.

Finally, and amusingly, the snail 'Escargot Cup' for the slowest performance was awarded by the race committee to themselves – to a huge round of applause by all. The spirit of the Bucket lives on!

Participating yachts

YACHT NAME	LENGTH	BUILDER	DESIGNER
ALTAIR	36m	W Fife & Son	W Fife & Son
ANTARA	46m	Perini Navi	Perini Navi
ATLANTA	36m	Alloy Yachts Int.	Dubois N. A.
AVALON	33m	Alloy Yachts Int.	Ron Holland
BOO TOO	28m	Pendennis	Ron Holland
DESTINATION FOX HARB'R	40m	Alloy Yachts Int.	Dubois N. A.
ENDEAVOUR	41m	Camper & Nicholson's	Charles E Nicholson
FREEDOM OF FLIGHT	38m	Ficchiotti	S & S
GHOST	37m	Vitters	Luca Brenta
HELIOS	37m	Fitzroy Yachts	Dubois N. A.
MARIELLA	24m	W Fife & Son	Alfred Milne
METOLIUS	26m	Royal Huisman	German Frers
OHANA	43m	Perini Navi	Ron Holland
PARAISO	38m	Alloy Yachts	Fontaine
PARSIFAL III	54m	Perini Navi	Ron Holland/Perini Navi
PERSEUS	50m	Perini Navi	Perini Navi
RANGER	42m	Danish Yachts	S & S/Starling Burgess
REBECCA	43m	Pendennis	German Frers
RIPPLE	31m	Brooke Yachts	Ron Holland
ROGUE	31m	Chantier Trehard	Gilles Vaton
SAPPHIRE	32m	Klaussen	Hoek Design
SOJANA	35m	Fast Cruising	Farr Yacht Design
SEAQUELL	34m	Alloy Yachts Int.	Dubois N. A.
SYMMETRY	29m	Yachting Dev.	German Frers
UNFURLED	34m	Royal Huisman	German Frers
VICTORIA OF STRATHEARN	40m	Alloy Yachts	Langan Design
VISIONE	45m	Baltic Yachts	Reichel Pugh
WHISPER	35m	Holland Jachtbouw	Fontaine
WINDROSE	46m	Holland Jachtbouw	Gerard Dijkstra
ZINGARO	34m	Derecktor	S & S