

Build a
boat
with *Bill*

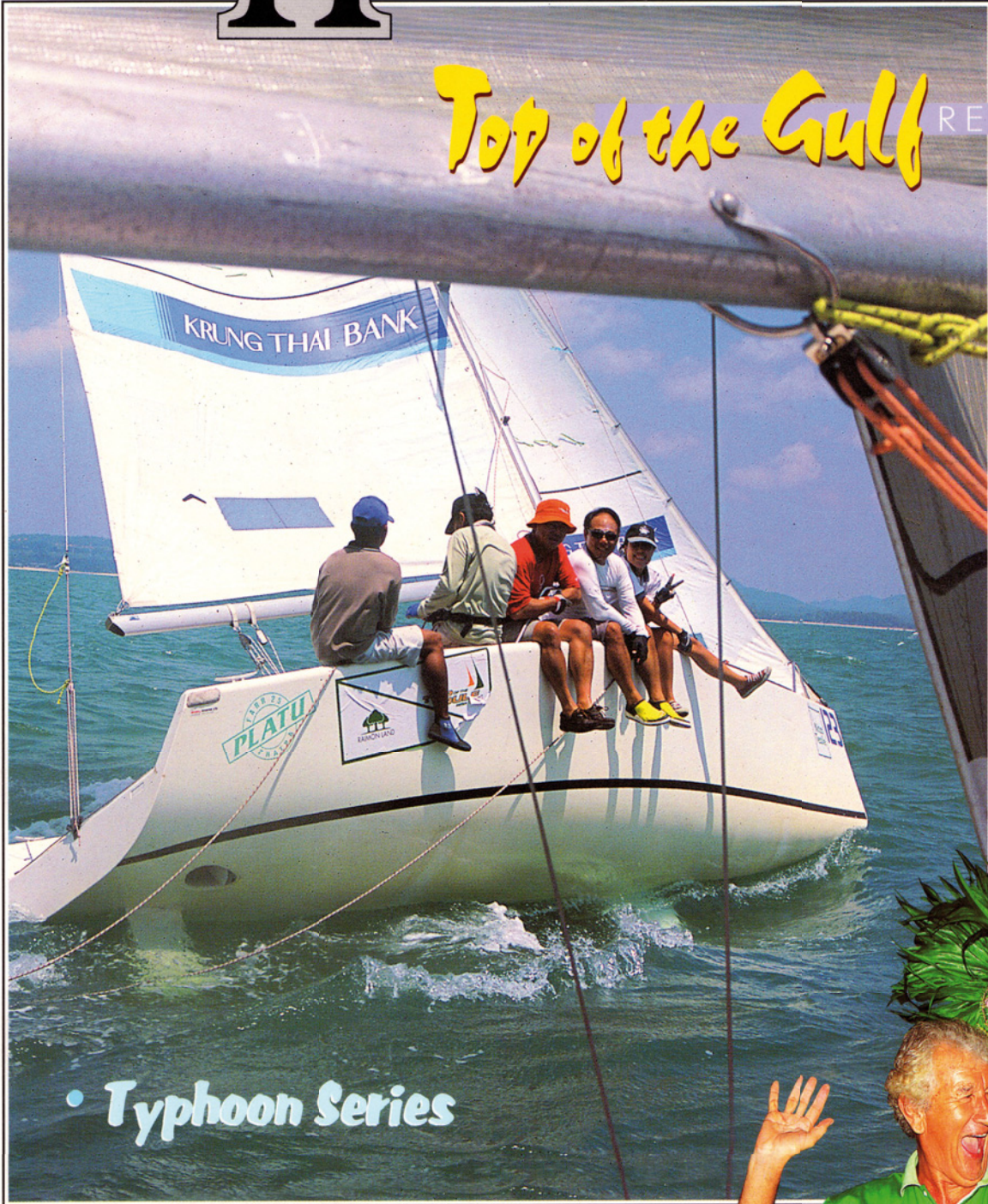
FRAGRANT HARBOUR

Year **2005**

P140 • HK\$30 • Bt120 • S\$7 • M\$12 • Rp70000

Top of the Gulf REGATTA

HOOKED FOR SURE



• Typhoon Series

RACING IN KOH SAMUI





The infrastructure around the Ocean Marina Yacht Club at Jomtien Beach also played an important role. Just 157km from Bangkok on the outskirts of Pattaya, the marina eliminated the hassle of ferries, while the hotel facilities provided accommodation and catering for the numerous post race functions.

The organisers were also fortunate to secure the commitment and sponsorship of Raimon Land, sponsors in 2004 of the Phuket King's Cup. Not content with sitting on the sidelines, the Raimon Land team, including CEO Nigel Cornick and former Hong Kong resident Robert McMillen, were an integral part of the event.

Additional sponsorship and support came from Thai Airways International, Heineken and Phil Harper and crew at Gulf Charters Thailand, to name but a few.

The event was co-organised with Sattahip Naval Base, the Royal Varuna Yacht Club, Ocean Marina Yacht Club, Yacht Racing Association of Thailand and the Tourism Authority of Thailand.

The Top of the Gulf Regatta 2005 sensibly encompassed a number of events, which helped swell numbers. By including the Thailand Optimist National Championship 2005, it added some 70 under 16 youngsters who may someday, or perhaps even now after the regatta, aspire to be the keelboat racers of tomorrow.

The regatta also embraced the Platu

Coronation Cup, held annually since 1996 to commemorate the anniversary of the coronation of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej. This added an interesting class racing dimension and demonstrated that, with boats to charter, teams from abroad will participate. In this instance, five boats were chartered to crews from Singapore and the Singapore Management University.



Treasure Trove (left), Foreign Exchange II at the pin end (above) and Platu start (bottom)

In Class 1 Keelboats, Saranya (Pook) Maikinson, alias Captain Araldite (irremovable from the helm) in her JOD 35, *Magic Roundabout*, finished ahead of David Pollard's X-412, *Foreign Exchange II*.

Melissa, skippered by George McCready, took 1st place in Class 2 Cruising Keelboats ahead of Simon Denye's *Narinthip*.

In Class 3, David Bell's *Pink Pussycat* tangled with a fishing net but still managed to

finish 2nd behind the John Vause-skippered *Buzz 8*, despite losing seven minutes in the process.

In Class 4, Neil Semple's Platu captured the first of his victories ahead of Wiwat Poonpat.

Glassware entrepreneur Kirati Assakul in Ocean Marina's *Sonic* took his 2nd bullet of the day beating off Radab Kanjanavant's *Cedar Swan* in Class 5 Ocean

Multihulls resulting in special celebrations for the anniversary regatta of the opening of the marina.

Heineken Raes

Monday, 2nd May 2005

On Monday, principal race officer, Jerry Rollin, set two windward/leeward courses, while for Classes 1 and 3 the abandoned Race 1 was also resailed.

In Keelboats, *Foreign Exchange II* snatched line honours in Race 4 and the resailed Race 1, but narrowly lost out

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Ingredients:

Consistent winds

Convenient marina access

Good nearby accommodation

Interesting sailing arena

Great hospitality and catering

Add dollops of sponsorship and sprinkle with Thai spices and you have the makings of a great event. So it was for the inaugural Top of the Gulf Regatta 2005.

A dream come true for regatta chairman, Bill Gasson who, more than eight years ago, realised that the top of the Gulf of Thailand could deliver the principal ingredient — reliable wind — which is always a worry for other regional regattas.



Top of the Gulf

REGATTA

Keelboats and Class 3 Sportboats and it was decided to abandon the race for the following day.

Meanwhile Dick Sanders, in his home-built *Thai Raver*, Alex Skaria and Kirati Assakul's *Sonic* took 1st places in the Cruising Keelboat, Platu and Ocean Multihull classes respectively.

With winds having built from 8 to 15 knots the second race of the day was a longer passage race skirting some of Pattaya's glorious offshore islands.

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to *Magic Roundabout* on
corrected times respectively.

In Cruising Keelboats,
Melissa took Race 3 but had
to retire with a torn jib in Race 4
with victory going to *Thai Raver*.

In Sportboats, FH joined
Pink Pussycat for a splendid day
on the water. In Race 3, *Buzz 8*
finished on top but *Pink*
Pussycat had its revenge in
the longer Race 4 in which,
after touching 7.9 knots,
finished 55 seconds ahead on
corrected time.

It was a cat and
mouse chase, or perhaps
more appropriately a bird
chase (given the *Buzz*
abbreviation for *Buzzard*), as
to who would win the
resailed Race 1. *Buzz 8*
finished 1 minute 37 seconds
ahead giving it victory by just
16 seconds on corrected time.
Anthony MacDonald's *CU*
Later put up a consistent
challenge, sailing the angles, but
with little reward finishing 3rd
on handicap in all races... not
helped at one stage by losing a
man overboard.

Neil Semple's *Platu* took
Race 3, but could only finish in
6th place in Race 4 with Alex
Skaria earning his 2nd bullet.

Cedar Swan finished
ahead of Francesco Brancaccio's
Vivace in Race 3. In Race 4
Cedar Swan's line honours lead
was insufficient to hold on to
corrected time victory from
Sonic. Trevor Whalley's *Treasure*
Trove finished 3rd.

The evening's party was
held at the Royal Varuna
Yacht Club.

Lay day

Tuesday, 3rd May 2005

With the regatta on
schedule, the participants were
free to do their own thing, which
for some locals, meant a return



Suyasinto's *Platu* (above) and *Optimist* start (right)

to Bangkok. Some of the media
were invited onboard *Seraph*,
the 1906 Danish-built North Sea
schooner. The voyage involved a
day trip to the island of Koh Rin
for swimming, snorkelling or just
chilling out. Based at Ocean
Marina, *Seraph* was, on race
days, commandeered as the
committee boat.

Northshore Race

Wednesday, 4th May 2005

Two courses were set for
the longer passage race, the
Cruising Keelboats having some
10nm or so shaved from their
race. Rollin settled on a

downwind mass 1000 start. FH
had hitched a ride on *Melissa*.
Both courses took the fleet into
Pattaya Beach where,
coincidentally, Raimon Land's
new development Northshore
Condominiums was being topped
out. Classes 1, 3, 4 and 5 headed
straight for Pattaya before
heading around Koh Phai.

Foreign Exchange II
continued to press
Magic Roundabout
finishing just nine
seconds ahead in
4:45:12 but lost out by
nearly three minutes on
corrected time. In
Sportboats, victory
went to *Pink Pussycat*
by over five minutes on
corrected time after
Buzz 8 finished barely
14 seconds ahead on
elapsed time in 5:08:28.
Neil Semple finished
over 13 minutes clear of
the next *Platu* in
5:01:13 but just 10

seconds separated Viroj
Mualkhair and Wiwat Poonpat
for 2nd and 3rd respectively.
Cedar Swan, in an elapsed time
of 4:06:57, took Ocean Multihull
line honours ahead of *Treasure*
Trove but both were relegated
one place by *Sonic*, which
finished 1st on corrected time.

In Cruising Keelboats, to
avoid potential mishaps,
McCready kept *Melissa* slightly
back at the start line giving
Narinthip an early lead.
Constantly closing on it, after 35
minutes *Melissa* eased ahead.
For the next 45 minutes or so
Narinthip trailed in *Melissa*'s
wake barely a few metres apart.

McCready on the helm of *Melissa*
held firm forcing *Narinthip*
higher up towards Koh Lan.

Clearing Koh Khrok
Melissa sneaked through on the
inside and headed for Koh Chun
off Pattaya Beach. Leaving it too
starboard the crew tightened up
before tacking around the
Northshore Condo mark and
retracing the boat's wake back
out towards Koh Chun. By this
time, again as predicted by
McCready, a sizeable gap had
opened over *Narinthip* and the
chasing *Thai Raver*. A couple of
tacks saw *Melissa* clear of the
Royal Cliff Hotel headland and
heading back towards Ocean
Marina with the lead continuing
to expand.

Nearing the finish the
wind eased forcing *Melissa*
slightly off course but after two
tacks the rest of the fleet could
barely be seen. Completing in an
elapsed time of 3:57:01 *Melissa*
took both line and corrected time
honours finishing some 19
minutes and 30 seconds ahead of
Narinthip. *Thai Raver* finished
3rd, whilst Peter Jones' ketch
Stressbuster retired.

Raimon Land Races

Thursday, 5th May 2005

The final day saw racing
underway on schedule at 1000
for the first of two windward/
leeward races. The 6-knot breeze
eased slightly but then picked
up. Both races were not without
incidents. In Race 6, *Buzz 8*, *CU*
later and Pascal Leray's *Hi Jinks*
misread the finish line for the
shortened course and finished on

the wrong side of the marker
buoy before realizing and
correcting their errors.

Pink Pussycat was in
the middle of the action with
David Bell's shirt being almost
ripped off his back rounding one
mark by *Hi Jinks*. While
protests were threatened they
were eventually dropped with
the spirit of sailing sensibly
prevailing. *Pink Pussycat*
was later to again see
action colliding with the
committee boat.

In Class 1 Keelboat,
Magic Roundabout completed its
rout of the opposition on
corrected time with two victories
to give it 7 out of 7.

In Class 2 Cruiser
Keelboats, honours for the day
were shared between *Melissa*
and *Thai Raver* the latter
winning overall.

In Class 3 Sportboats,
two victories to *Buzz 8* gave
them overall ahead of *Pink*
Pussycat and pleased boat

builder
and re-
gatta org-
anizer Bill
Gasson,
whose
more ex-
perienced
crew
prevailed.



In Class 4 for the *Platu*
Coronation Cup, Neil Semple's
assertive sailing saw him finish
with a 2nd and a 1st, losing the
former by just 15 seconds and
winning the latter by 6
seconds. This
gave him
and his
team the
overall
title from
Wiwat
Poonpat.
Semple,
who
finished
last in
the in-
augural
Platu
*Corona-
tion*
Cup in
1996 and
4th last
year,
credited
his team.

In
Class 5
Ocean
Multi-
hulls,
Cedar
Swan
again
took two
line
honours
but was
topped
on cor-
rected by
Sonic,
which
added
two more
bullets
giving it
the over-
all title.

In Class 6 Beach
Catamarans, Damrongsak &
Sakda Vongtim (Sattahip) in
their *Taipan 4.9* with seven
bullets held off a late challenge
by Les Nyerges' (Royal Varuna)
Nacra 16 with Alberto Cassio's
Nacra 16 3rd.

In Monohull Dinghy
Class 8, Sutee Poonpat (Royal
Thai Navy) and crew Kittipong
Khambang with four bullets in a
closely fought duel held off
Veerasit Puangnak's *Laser* with
Manat Pootong's *Laser* 3rd.

Thailand Optimist
National Championships 2005
Eleven races over three days 1st,
2nd & 5th May saw the young
13-year-old Thai girl Benjamas
Poonpat, with 10 top four
finishes including six bullets and
after two discards including one
OCS, crowned champion. Navee
Thamsoontorn with two bullets
and four 2nd places was
runner-up.

The evening's closing
celebrations, a lavish sit-down
Thai and Western buffet
followed, along with the prize-
giving, hip hop music and an
impressive fireworks display
until the Heineken ran dry.
In addition to the principal
regatta awards, the RO's awards,
presented by FH went to:
Stressbuster (for being the only
ketch), *Pink Pussycat* (for its
fight with the committee boat),
Platu 107 (for the crew most
pleasing to the eye, the
Singapore girls!).

Summing up the regatta, both
Cornick of Raimon Land and
organiser Gasson expect to see
everyone back next year —
the 4-7th of May 2006 to enjoy
good winds, good Thai food
and good fun in perhaps
Asia's best kept secret
sailing grounds.