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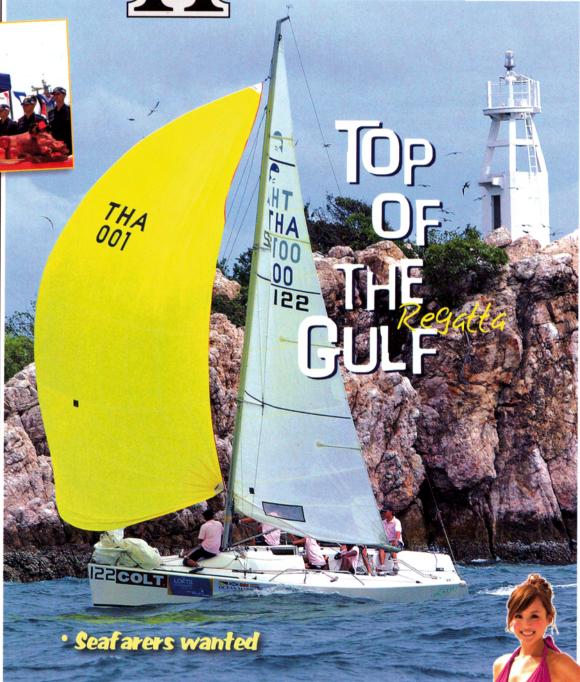
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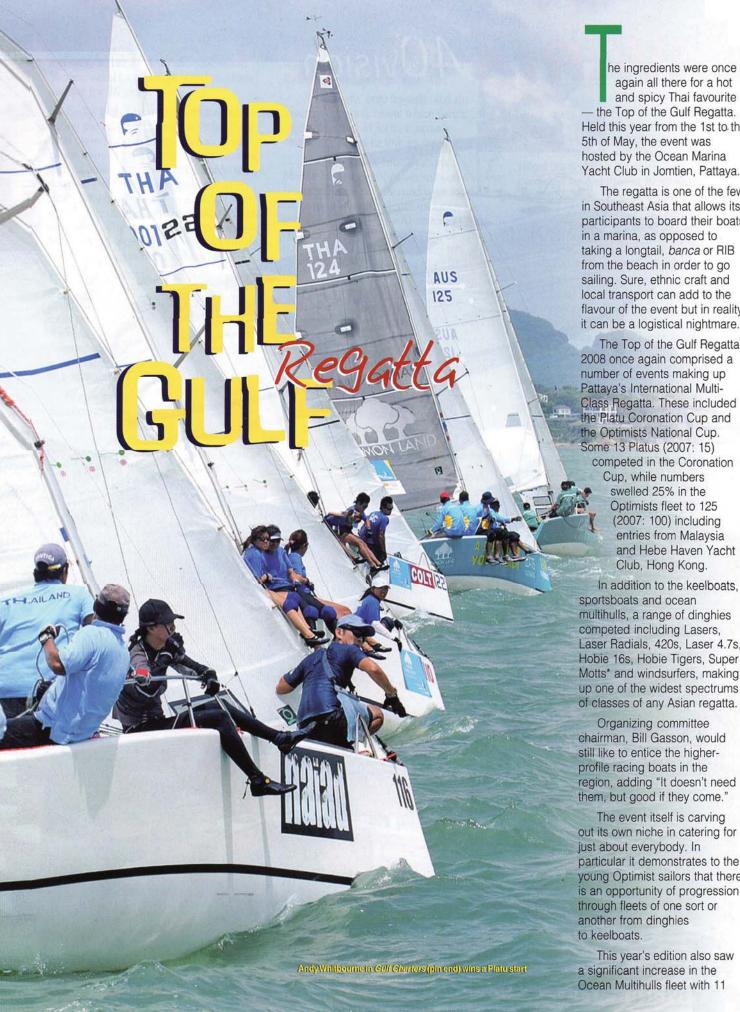
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Year **2008**

JOSS HOUSE BAY CEREMONY



Gold Coast show



he ingredients were once again all there for a hot and spicy Thai favourite - the Top of the Gulf Regatta. Held this year from the 1st to the 5th of May, the event was hosted by the Ocean Marina

The regatta is one of the few in Southeast Asia that allows its participants to board their boats in a marina, as opposed to taking a longtail, banca or RIB from the beach in order to go sailing. Sure, ethnic craft and local transport can add to the flavour of the event but in reality it can be a logistical nightmare.

The Top of the Gulf Regatta 2008 once again comprised a number of events making up Pattaya's International Multi-Class Regatta. These included the Platu Coronation Cup and the Optimists National Cup. Some 13 Platus (2007: 15) competed in the Coronation

Cup, while numbers swelled 25% in the Optimists fleet to 125 (2007: 100) including entries from Malaysia and Hebe Haven Yacht Club, Hong Kong.

In addition to the keelboats. sportsboats and ocean multihulls, a range of dinghies competed including Lasers, Laser Radials, 420s, Laser 4.7s, Hobie 16s, Hobie Tigers, Super Motts* and windsurfers, making up one of the widest spectrums of classes of any Asian regatta.

Organizing committee chairman, Bill Gasson, would still like to entice the higherprofile racing boats in the region, adding "It doesn't need them, but good if they come."

The event itself is carving out its own niche in catering for just about everybody. In particular it demonstrates to the young Optimist sailors that there is an opportunity of progression through fleets of one sort or another from dinghies to keelboats.

This year's edition also saw a significant increase in the Ocean Multihulls fleet with 11

entries (2007: four). Numbers were swelled with the addition of several Corsair trimarans built at their new facility in Vietnam.

Day 1 FRIDAY, 2ND MAY 2008

After a splendid opening party on the jetty at Ocean Marina Yacht Club the day before, the skippers' briefing followed first thing next morning. Racing got underway in bright but overcast conditions with the principal factor an 8-knot breeze.

First away at 1100, the six Cruising Class yachts, including an entry from the Singapore Management University (SMU) on Amanda and a Japanese team on Missy, sent on a windward/ leeward course.

The 13 Platus competing for the Platu Coronation Cup were next away.

The 11 Ocean Multihulls were followed by the six Racing Class vachts and two Sportsboats, to make a fleet of 38 boats (2007: 30) under the watchful eye of race officer (RO), Jerry Rollin.

The course for Cruisers was shortened, which confused the Singapore team on Amanda, who instead of crossing the specifically repositioned shortened course finish line continued on to the main finish line where it was inappropriately awarded a horn.

In the Platu race, two boats were over the line at the start (OCS) and whilst one returned the other, Platu 109 YachtPro, did not and was scored accordingly.

Defending champion Wiwat Poonpat's Platu Naiad got his series off to the worst of possible starts with disqualification after a port/ starboard incident

With winds strengthening to 14-15 knots, the RO sent the fleet out on a longer Race 2 around Ko Rang Kwian. The conditions took their toll on a

number of vessels, which included a broken halvard on Firefly 850, SEA Property, skippered by the designer Mark Pescott.

The trimaran Shark Tail started taking in water, put out a call for assistance and was towed ashore and beached. It's



racing was sadly over for the regatta with the discovery of an 18-inch crack in the hull.

Incidentally, there appeared some confusion over results initially with timekeepers encountering problems in identifying finishing boats. It didn't help that some vachts had no sail numbers - worse, some Platus had differing sail and boat numbers.

Day 2 SATURDAY, 3RD MAY 2008

In ideal sailing conditions and a steady 15-knot gusting breeze there were numerous on the water incidents to keep race officials, spectators and the media entertained.

With the wind having swung from 210 degrees, a new windward mark was laid at 235 degrees for the second race of the day. This was clearly displayed on the board at the stern of the committee boat and relayed over VHF. Further, the RO had even warned the skippers at the briefing that, "If you want to know what's going on get a radio."

After a bunched start, nine of the Platus headed for the old mark whilst four, Naiad, Platu 114. Platu 122 Team SMU 1 and Platu 132 Jelly Fish Kiss laid the new. Subsequently they all sailed the new course. Initially Scott Duncanson, skippering

Kevin Scott's The Ferret 'The Lofts** chose to retire but, on learning a request for redress was being submitted by the other Platus, requested its retiral be withdrawn and it be allowed to join the joint redress request of the seven others, which was duly granted.

> raised the concern that the marks were not black as described in the Sailing Instructions but being draped with sponsors' logos appeared more white than black!

One appellant

The International Jury, under the

chairmanship of Brian Willis. considered all the evidence. interviewed those who sailed the correct course and denied the request for redress. "With evidence from three of the four boats that sailed the course, it was possible for a 'competent crew' to find the correct windward mark," the IJ concluded. Quite obviously, following the leader doesn't always pay!

Back on the course several broaches ensued — Platu 102 (Team SMU 2) demonstrated a penchant for this throughout the race, even crossing the line broadside.

Sonic 43 relished the conditions . . . until they wreaked havoc with two of its spinnakers. Platu 132 managed to finish still flying its torn pink kite.

Meanwhile

the Cruisers had been sent on a 16nm geometric island course after which Alvin Ong, skipper of Amanda, crossed the line holding a broken rudder handle above his head.

Testsuo Ogino brought Missy home under genoa with no main. With the approval of the RO they replaced Missy for the rest of the regatta with an identical boat, Melissa,

An enjoyable evening's party was hosted by Raimon Land at its Northpoint property development combined, once again, with the Raimon Land Chris Kay's Pattaya International 10s 2008*** where the presence of last year's Philippines' women's rugby team (the Nomad Bullettes) was sorely missed.

Day 3 SUNDAY, 4TH MAY 2008

Race 5 (Race 4 for Cruisers) proved a splendid day on the water for an incident-filled island passage race. Broaches galore and men and women overboard all livened it up.

Platu 122 (Team SMU 1) led the Platu fleet early on. Later, close hauled on port tack, its port side quardrail failed casting three unfortunate sailors into the water! Two were recovered by Platu 122 while a third was retrieved by Morten Jakobsen's Platu, Emma Mathilde XX. Jakobsen seems to be making a habit of this, having rescued a Japanese competitor in the 2007 Phuket King's Cup. Where were the other Platus?

Emma Mathilde XX still managed to finish 4th, having hit 12 knots in the 20-knot breeze. Their honourable deed was, however, rewarded on



redress with an equal 1st place along with line winner Naiad. Platu 122's claim for redress by the organizing committee for the failure of their charter boat was dismissed.

Meanwhile onboard El Coyote, on which FH secured passage from Gary Baguley of Blue Water — continued overleaf

Continued from previous page — Watersports, after a good start, progress was made through the fleet to the first mark. Clearing the mark and attempting to raise the kite a halyard jammed at the top of the mast. A crew was sent aloft but considerable time was lost and all previous gains eroded. Having fixed the halyard, an attempt was made to carry the kite to the next islands but, bearing 10 degrees shy, El Coyote reverted to the No.1. What remained of the race was relatively uneventful, a pleasurable experience with a fun team.

Day 4 MONDAY, 5TH MAY 2008

Going into the final day conditions had eased considerably. SEA Property, with four bullets and one DNF which was discarded, looked to have sown up the Multihulls but was in for a surprise when it and Blade Runner received individual recalls. Although dipping back, it appears SEA Property failed to clear the line and was penalised 12 points with an OCS. A 2nd place in the last race was insufficient to catch Sonic 43 which, with consistent top three finishes, crowned the day with a bullet, taking the Multihulls overall. Khun Chaiek's Zenith finished 2nd and SEA Property 3rd.

In the Platu Class, with two bullets apiece, *The Ferret 'The Lofts'* held a narrow lead over *Naiad*. While both added further bullets in Races 6 and 7, a 5th place in Race 6 for *Naiad* and a 4th place for *The Ferret* in Race 7 meant Duncanson and crew lifted the Coronation Cup. Andy Whitbourne's *Platu 125 Gulf Charters* took 3rd place.

With four races under their belts in Cruising Class, *Amanda* with three bullets was in a commanding position. Just one point separated *Team Gulf Charter Contenza* from *Melissa* for 2nd place. 3rd and 5th places for *Contenza* matched *Melissa's* two 4th places giving *Contenza* the silverware. A 1st and 2nd left *Amanda* with gold.

Kipsen Beck's bright red *Pornstar*, having missed the first two races, finished with five bullets over Ian Day's First 7.5 *Team Simpson Marine* but by the end the margins were definitely diminishing.

Áfter three 1st places by David Bell's Magic Roundabout against two by Pascal Leray's Breakaway (Why do I do it?), Bell held a one point advantage but with a 3rd place in Race 6 to Leray's 2nd, despite being called over and having to start again, made it all square for the final showdown

The nightly exertions of the *Magic*Roundabout crew — continued on page 84



Continued from page 22 — appeared to take their toll, which finished 2nd. Breakaway took overall with a one minute 14 seconds margin in Race 7.

With a win in the final race Wildon Goh and his SMU team on *Hi Jinks* took 3rd.

Good race management and organization, competitive fleets, a marina for berthing, excellent parties courtesy of Ocean Marina and Raimon Land, good winds and 222 craft (2007: 160) of all shapes and sizes were the key to the success of the Top of the Gulf Regatta 2008. A place where the youngest of sailors aged eight may enjoy the limelight with the oldest of salts.

- * Super Motts designed and originally sailed by Thailand's King Bhumibol Adulyadej
- ** The Lofts a new Pattya condominium under development by Raimon Land
- *** Chris Kays Bali bombing victim

MULTI CLASS DINGHIES AND OPTIMISTS NATIONAL CUP

With racing held over three days, Saturday to Monday (3-5.May.08), competition in the dinghy classes was equally fierce. Somewhat surprisingly in the Super Mott Class, which was well supported in 2007, only four of this year's 11 entries took to the water.

Graham Southwick from Fiji joined the Hobie 16 races and finished in 2nd place. Meanwhile he was keen to promote the Fiji Big Hobie Challenge (22.Aug-6.Sep.08) a new event, modelled on the annual Philippine Hobie Challenge.

In the Optimists National Cup 125 (2007:100), competitors aged eight to 12

ventured out — 38 were girls and 78 under age 12. Split into four groups they completed eight races with one discard.

Two young girls were the stars of the show taking the top two slots. Nuppakao Poonpat (*THA112*) and Jittiwa Thanawitwilat (*THA111R*) both aged 12 took 1st and 2nd places respectively. Commenting on their performance, technical director

for the Yacht Racing Association of Thailand, Anirut Posakrisna, said, "They are already in training for the Asian Games in Guangzhou, China in 2010."

Sittisart Ponpun, also from the Junior Sail Training Squadron of Thailand, took 3rd place for the boys. Commendably, Yann Cudennec one of a contingent of six from the Hebe Haven Yacht Club

OVERALL CLASS WINNERS DINGHIES

Optimists National Cup Laser Laser Radial 420 Laser 4.7 Hobie 16 Hobie Tiger Super Mott

Nuppakao Poonpat Nik Ashrhf Ohedi Khairul Nizam Thanakarn Karkerd Keerati Bualang Damrongsak Vongtim Aroon Ruengcharungporn Supawat Homchuen

Windsurfing

Mod Male Mod Female Junior Start Board Male

Nakarat Wuntana Sunaree Seamros Pisit Purahong

took 4th place, presumably aided by his lucky sail number HKG888.