

TRANZ TASMAN RACE 2002

Gunsmoke for Hong Kong



MANY CONGRATULATIONS TO TWO RHKYC SAILORS, ANTHONY DAY AND MARK FINDLAY WHO TOOK BOTH LINE AND HANDICAP HONOURS IN THE RECENT TRANZ TASMAN RACE 2002.

“We’d talked about doing a double-hander, but Lefty started it when he dropped the flyer onto my dinner table last November. He’s since claimed he was only joking.”

Then it became a case of “find a boat”. They explored a few charter prospects including *Sayernara*, a Sayer 43. Her owner, Rob Drury, is Chairman of the SSAA (Short-handed Sailing Association of Australia), and the designer and builder of the boat, John Sayer, was his partner in winning the last Melbourne-Osaka Race as well as the

Tranz Tasman 2000. Rob’s assistance in getting the boat up to Cat 0 spec was later to prove invaluable, but first of all the boat had to be insured, and no insurer would even look at it. The answer was simple: buy the boat, and sail the race uninsured.

But before the start gun went, there were a couple of things to do...

In the continuing aftermath of the '98 Sydney-Hobart race, a percentage of crew in Aussie races has to have a Survival Course ticket, and for a double-handed race, it's 100%. So first there was the mandatory Survival Course, very rapidly organised by Teki Dalton. The AYF (Australian Yaching Federation) course is a

rather more strenuous affair than a quick visit to the GFS to watch a video and a hi-line demo on a sunny afternoon: there was a whole day of classroom and theory on heavy weather tactics, SAR and helicopter rescue techniques, distress procedures and first aid, then a half-day practical in the water with a life raft. Post '98 considerations also meant that all skippers in the race had to join the Race Committee... the idea being that if something went badly wrong and someone wanted to sue the organisers, they would end up suing themselves.

It was only their second sail on the boat, and very rapidly they “had a bit on”. Three hours out of Sydney and there was 50 kts across the deck. Ant says, “we rapidly got to grips with reefing. Three in and no headsail still gave us 18kts through the water. It was a good way to get to know the boat...quickly.”

So after a mere eight days in Australia including a survival course and a fairly strenuous 400nm shakedown, it was time for the start. “It was only our second sail on the boat of more than one hour. After we led the fleet out of the Heads it was just a case of laying off a course for Cape Reinga. The Open 60, *Liberty*, passed us shortly after that, but an hour-and-a-half later we saw her coming back again having retired due to delamination concerns.” That really left the front door open,





and *Sayernara* gradually stepped out the lead: 5nm after the first night, 24nm by the second, and 44nm by the third. "It was generally cold, wet and bumpy" said Ant. "We had 20-30kts broadly from the south for nearly all the race, white sail reaching, with 200nm plus days and just one light day as we approached the NZ coast. Seas were quite intimidating on occasions but never breaking, and the boat behaved very well."

By day 5 Lefty wanted to play with the sail wardrobe. "We got bored with the No 2, so started with the masthead asymmetric. That turned out to be a massive sail which sent us very fast towards Noumea. Then the fractional asymmetric had us heading for Tonga, so it was back to the No 2. But it did kill half a day and played some mind games with the boys on our nearest competitor, *Spirit of Down Under*, who were clearly becoming increasingly frustrated at being beaten by "the Chinamen"."

Spirit indeed clawed back some of the distance, but at an 11.00 finish on 03 May (day 6) the lead was still a healthy 25nm. "We beat to the finish and laid the line by 50' from 8 miles out... if that's not the perfect yacht race, I don't know what is".

Ant is bringing *Sayernara* up to Hong Kong very shortly, and we look forward to seeing another competitive boat in the RHKYC fleet. And how about a two-handed event out of Hong Kong? Hainan anyone?

Guy Nowell

1ST KOH SAMUI INTERNATIONAL REGATTA Thailand

It all sounds a little too good to be true, but by all accounts the 1st Koh Samui International Regatta was a huge success. A drop dead gorgeous location, decent breeze (but not so much as to make it really hard work), five days' sailing with round-the-cans and coastal passage races, and very reasonable accommodation and provisions costs. "Just terrific!" said Frank Pong. "I'll be going back again... and



Jelik (custom sloop), the only Hong Kong boat in the Regatta, enjoying the scenery just as much as the racing. Frank Pong and his team almost brought the trophy home! After five days of racing, both Jelik and Pla Loma had 7 points (3 firsts and 2 seconds) after 1 discard. However, on the count back basis Jelik has had to give concede the overall winner trophy to that Pla Loma had earned the overall winner's trophy for by getting a placing second in the final last race. Undeterred, Frank and his team enjoyed the Regatta so much that and he has booked his accommodation is already booked for the next year's race!

again... and again!" From what we hear, the fun was just as much social as sailing, and organisation of both sides of the event was flawless. ISAF observers were present, and next year's regatta has been marked down in the calendar.

Organised by the Royal Varuna Yacht Club, it is inevitable that the Koh Samui Regatta is going to attract comparisons with the King's Cup event in Phuket. One competitor remarked, "I happen to like going around the islands, and the Koh Samui courses were absolutely beautiful. It's a shame that events like the Phi Phi race are no longer part of the King's Cup." For Hong Kong owners and crews a trip to Koh Samui makes a lot of sense: it's a great deal shorter distance to the Gulf of Thailand than the other side of the Malaysian peninsula.

And don't forget that *Jelik* very nearly brought home the silverware: after five days' racing she was tied on seven points with *Pla Loma* who eventually took the trophy on the countback after a 2nd place in the very last race.

Any takers for tropical paradise sailing next time around?