

ISSUE 11 | MAY 2007

the crew

The magazine reporting on the key issues
directly affecting today's large-yacht crew

REPORT



passport to barcelona & valencia

gotta regatta

the icing on the cake

The largest sailing fleet ever, featuring the most recent magnificent offerings from builders, owners, and designers worldwide, all congregated in Paradise to enjoy brisk breezes, world-class sailing and yachting's best party of the year.



All involved surely agree that this year's St. Barth's Bucket was astronomically over the top in all respects. The fleet – to our knowledge the largest fleet of the largest yachts ever to meet on a race course – was as diverse as it was elegant, from the new paradigm in yachting defined by *Maltese Falcon*, to the grandeur of *Felicita West*, the massive and efficient *Kokomo* fresh in from Kiwi Land, to fast and lovely *Rebecca* and the thoroughbred performances of *Sojana*, *Highland Breeze* and *Virago*, this was the meeting of a fleet to be long remembered.

This year, the Race Committee did a good job, as usual. Nothing to do with their focus on setting reasonably safe and good courses, nor even for their perseverance on Saturday morning after they blew out the fourth printer – so that start times could only finally be hand written and photocopied for distribution – while 700 people patiently waited for the information. Neither do they merit more than a nod for their subsequent recovery – after discovering a cruise ship anchored in the middle of the starting line. Overall, a normal day of jumping through the hoops of arduous Bucket Committee work.

However, after the previous two years of Bucket Racing in light to zero wind, the idea of bringing the Navigator's Fluid at the Skipper's Meeting aboard *Maltese Falcon*, for a toast to King

to meet all your crew and on deck.

Neptune in supplication for a good sailing breeze, was not only timely, but a generous sharing of a well-guarded secret. The Committee has sailed together a lot over the past two decades and the Navigator's Fluid has never let us down. As all will recall, there was no wind before this year's Bucket either – in fact, there was barely a zephyr for a practice sail. But with a full glass of fluid over the side at the Skipper's Meeting and a boisterous salute to Neptune, the wind gods brought forth what built to a romping breeze over the next few days. Whoever would have guessed that Neptune has a Grappa habit?

Speaking of the Race Committee, we owe a large thank you to the owners of two of the most beautiful Committee Boats ever in Bucket History; Peter DeSavary's 127' Classic Camper & Nicholson motoryacht *Savvy* and Steve Grossman's new Huisman 118' motoryacht, *Arcadia*. These yachts truly match the stature of the sailing fleet and we are most grateful for the opportunity to use them as targets for hit and run accidents twice a day, by a fleet of over 25 megayachts in the far reaches of control. . . Seriously, many thanks Peter and Steve on behalf of the fleet.

Also on a serious note, after this weekend of good sailing in consistent breeze, we've seen results from the Bucket rating system that are proving to be very reliable indeed. The guesswork

is pretty much gone from the Bucket system and has been replaced by the Velocity Prediction Programme developed by Jim Teeters of US Sailing. Given the inputs from your entry forms along with additional research on each yacht's design, Jim builds a computer-based performance model for each yacht in the fleet that reflects the yacht's potential in all wind angles and velocities. Each race is then defined in terms of percentage of upwind, reaching and downwind components along with the input wind velocity.

The weakness of the pursuit race format is that we must predict the wind direction and velocity accurately, prior to the start – as the handicapping is entirely applied by your start time. If we guess the wind speed too low, the start time differences will be expanded – which will favour the slower yachts that start first. If we guess too high, the start times will be compressed, not giving the slower boats enough head start.

Thursday's practice race was a classic case in point, wherein we overestimated the breeze by about two knots, thus expanding the start time deltas to over 90 minutes for a 22-mile course. We owe *Virago* a big "sorry" for that one – she was still in sight sailing away from the starting line when *Maltese Falcon* rounded Isle Fourche 10 minutes from the finish! These days we only do between race adjustments for "gross anomalies" and both boats certainly got one. Rather than simply throwing PHRF time at the boats however, Jim reviews the yacht's design inputs, making a calculated adjustment to further refine the yacht's individual VPP.

The net result of underestimating Friday's breeze is that the slower end of the fleet was favoured. Consequently, eight of 'Les Grand Dames' finished before the first place "Gazelle", *Patient Falcon*. Even with the wind slightly underestimated, the finish times for Friday's race were well compressed, with 23 of 27 yachts finishing within 30 minutes of each other.

After a few foibles getting the fleet underway for Saturday's race, the sailing and the results were equally impressive. *Virago's* start time was adjusted to bring her into the hunt, which worked. *Maltese Falcon's* start time was also adjusted, and with regard to Saturday's Race we can only say that, well, she's not an easy yacht to rate! Friday she'd smoked the fleet, winning by nearly a 25-minute margin. Saturday, she got last by 5 minutes. That was some degree of progress. The rest of the results though, were by far the closest Bucket Racing ever! The first five finishes occurred within 54 seconds! The first ten finishes were in just over five minutes, half "Grand Dames" and half "Gazelles". All in all, 23 of 24 Yachts finished perhaps the most exciting race in Bucket History in just over 17 minutes.

On Sunday, the clockwise sail around the Island was spectacular, with moderately large seas for great visuals and interesting steering. And we finally got the starting time for *Maltese Falcon* right! Jim crunched the data from Saturday's race and Sunday, she sailed around the course within 1.5 seconds per mile of her predicted speed – meaning that for a 20-mile course, she finished within just over 30 seconds of her predicted finish time for a well-sailed race! That was the good news. The bad news is that the lion's share of the fleet got to experience her massive wind shadow – which is a bit like being passed by Monserrat!

Sunday's finish times were also well compressed by Bucket standards, with 20 of 25 yachts finishing in the same 20 minutes. But one boat did get away, to win by over 15 minutes. Having placed 13th on Friday and won on Saturday by only 20 seconds, *Avalon* was certainly under the radar for rating anomalies. Then on Sunday in very similar conditions, she sailed fully 45 seconds per mile faster!! Hmmm. Either they had some extremely lucky breaks, or the crew of long tooth Rock Stars that have been sailing the yacht together for 20 years finally got the programme, or perhaps they shared that glass of Grappa with Neptune! Whatever *Avalon* did to smoke us all on Sunday, was very special indeed!

We are very grateful to our hosts at a number of "over the top" parties; Tom Perkins, and the crew of *Maltese Falcon* for the Skipper's Meeting, Peter DeSavary and Port Louis for our Welcome Party and for the use of Savvy as Committee Boat on Friday. Thanks very much to David Ray for use of his magnificent home La Pointe for the Owners Party, and to *The Crew Report/The Yacht Report* and Holland Jachtbouw for a rollicking good time at the Crew Party. Also thanks to the boatbuilders: Royal Huisman, Perini Navi, Holland Jachtbouw and Alloy Yachts, along with La Cave du Port Franc for a wonderful awards presentation and bubbly libations to match.

While speaking of the Awards Presentations – Jimmy Buffett is a hard act to follow! It would be difficult to express the fleet's gratitude for his timely tunes – unless one had the opportunity to see the collective ear-to-ear smile of 700+ happy sailors. Thanks Jimmy. Your tunes iced the cake!
Story by Norma Trease. Images by Norma Trease and Billy Black





**ST. BARTHS BUCKET 2007
REGATTA RACE RESULTS**

First Overall Kaori

Second Overall *Avalon*

Third Overall *Windcrest*

Les Gazelles des Mers

1st *Sojana*

2nd *Highland Breeze*

3rd *Rebecca*

Les Grandes Dames des Mers

1st *Kaori*

2nd *Windcrest*

3rd *Avalon*

Cool Crew Award

Capt. Sparky and Crew of *Rebecca*,
Presented by The Yacht Report &
Holland Jachtbouw

Perini Navi Cup

Maltese Falcon

Alloy Cup

Paraiso

Walter Huisman Memorial

Sequell

Churchill Yacht Partners Corinthian Cup

Rebecca

Escargot Cup

Parlay

Genesis Diamond Award

Amy Laing, Churchill Yacht Partners
S/Y Whisper

