

NEWPORT BUCKET REGATTA

Rhode Island Sound, Newport, Rhode Island | July 19-20

The Bucket regattas, St. Barth's and Newport, are all about having fun on big boats. With accolades such as the All-Star Crew award, the Skullduggery Cravat and the Newport Bomb at stake, how could it be any other way? What can you do, after all, with a dozen cruising-oriented superyachts on a racecourse *except* have a good time?

The 6th annual Newport Bucket Regatta was sailed on Rhode Island Sound July 19 and 20. In the tradition of Buckets past, a good time indeed was had by all, despite heavy fog for the second day that compelled captains to post lookouts on foredecks and made trimming asymmetrical headsails a challenge.

With some competitors groggy from Friday night's opening reception, barbecue and dance party at host venue Newport Shipyard, Saturday's race was sailed in a near-perfect Newport sea breeze of 15 knots with the race committee officiating from the shore at Castle Hill Inn. The Bucket regattas are sailed as pursuit races, with each yacht given an individual start time. The Bucket's rating system has evolved over the years, but it took a turn in a more serious direction not long ago, which discouraged the common practice of Champagne bribes being paid to the race committee. Handicapping Perini Navis, production yachts, one-offs and classics ranging in length from 70 feet to 163 feet, requires some tact and sensitivity—and, of late, a more empirical system based on a sophisticated Velocity Prediction Program.

On Saturday, the 92-foot, S&S-designed *Carmella* started the 20-mile course and never looked back. She led the 116-foot, Fontaine-designed *Whisper* by six minutes at the finish with the 70-foot Swan *Chippewa* a minute and a half behind her. The evening's fleet open house at Newport Shipyard was followed by dinner and the Bucket Bash, which saw competitors and friends dancing until midnight.

Sunday was a different story on the racecourse. Dense fog met the fleet at the start line. The race committee polled each yacht and crew on their desire to race. Several »



1. Some of the Bucket fleet moored stern-to at Newport Shipyard 2. *Whisper* owner Hap Fauth at the wheel 3. Halsey Herreshoff (right) and a guest of the owners of *Eleonora* 4. The W-Class *White Wings* charges to weather 5. *Chippewa* (foreground) and *Avalon* have a friendly joust downwind 6. *Avalon* owners Jason and Leigh Taylor 7. *Antara* owners Mickey and Diane Gooch with sons Stefan and Christopher (in shades) 8. *Chippewa*'s crew sorts out a takedown.



NEWPORT BUCKET REGATTA *continued*

opted out and a few more retired after their starts. *Whisper* felt her way around first, 52 seconds ahead of the 108-foot, Ron Holland-designed *Avalon* and the 138-foot schooner *Eleonora*. As if Mother Nature were determined to get the last laugh, shortly after the finish, the fog lifted revealing a perfect Newport summer day. Competitors gathered that evening for awards and cocktails at the International Yacht Restoration School.

This year's All-Star Crew award went to Johnno Johnston and the crew of *Antara*. The Skullduggery Cravat, presented to the crew that best promulgates the spirit of fun—and non-adult behavior—went to the crew of *Avalon*. And the Newport Bomb, a real aerial bomb, originally presented to the race committee some years back by *Chippewa* for an abominable rating, now goes to the crew that exhibits proper Bucket behavior. This year, *Avalon* presented the bomb to *Whisper*.

Conviviality and frivolity notwithstanding, competitors do take the racing seriously. Tactics, sail trim and selection and rivalries are all tended to as if the fleet were racing in the America's Cup. In the Les Grandes Dames des Mers class (cruising division), *Avalon* placed first, *Eleonora* second and *Antara* third. In the Les Gazelles des Mers class (racing division), it was *Whisper* followed by *Chippewa* and the Swan 80 *Selene*. Overall fleet results had *Whisper* in first, *Chippewa* in second and *Eleonora* in third. —KENNY WOOTON

AND THE WINNERS ARE...

FLEET

- 1st *Whisper*
- 2nd *Chippewa*
- 3rd *Eleonora*

GRANDES DAMES

- 1st *Avalon*
- 2nd *Eleonora*
- 3rd *Antara*

GAZELLES

- 1st *Whisper*
- 2nd *Chippewa*
- 3rd *Selene*



1. The crew of *Whisper* handles a takedown 2. *ShowBoats'* Kenny Wooton (left), Bucket Regattas Managing Director Hank Halsted and Karin Halsted 3. *Avalon's* crew rocks out 4. *Chippewa* heads in from the race course 5. The awards party at the International Yacht Restoration School 6. Owner Hap Fauth and members of his *Whisper* crew accept the Bucket Cup 7. *Chippewa* owner Clay Deutsch and Nancy Hood 8. The Perini Navis *Klosters* and *Antara* pass in the fog that enveloped the race course on Sunday.

