



Race Week News

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Something has to give. Hap Fauth's 2006 Newport-Bermuda Race winner *Bella Mente* (JV 66), with Jim Swartz's Rolex Swan Cup winner *Money Penny* (Swan 601) and Dan Meyer's IRC North American Champion *Numbers* (Farr 60) to leeward, shows her starting form last year. They will pick up right where they left off in the highly competitive IRC1 class on Division 2.

World Class

This week a twenty year milestone will be celebrated with an extraordinary international field boasting entries from a record matching 20 different nations. While exciting new designs and world class talent are standard fare for this mid-winter classic, the 2007 edition of race week will be a special one, delivering an abundance of both.

Acura Key West 2007 presents a scratch sheet that can only be described with superlatives. A star-studded IRC fleet, the customary, dynamic one design classes, and a first-ever PHRF National Championship promise unprecedented competition on all four divisions.

The afterguard rosters read like an America's Cup and Volvo Race all star team with the likes of Butterworth, Bekking, Coutts, Pepper, Read, Celon, Whidden, Brun, de Ridder and Beashel, to name but a few.

"I've run my share of World Championships over the years", remarked Division 3 PRO Dave Brennan, "This 2007 fleet has world championship caliber talent across the board."

There will be no shortage of new designs debuting this week. The Club Swan 42, with a projected one design start next year, will feature hull #2 *Esmeralda* racing in IRC 3. Three new IRC designs, Michael Brennan's new R/P 45 *Sjambok*, David Aisher's Rogers 46 *Yeoman 32* (UK) and Colm Barrington's

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Monday is Nautica Watches Day
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Ker 50 *Magic Glove* (IRL) will test one another in IRC 2. We all get our first look at John Kilroy's new Botin & Carkeek designed TP52 *Samba Pa Ti* while Division 4 will host the new Beneteau 10R (5 boats) and J/92s (4 boats).

As in years past, racing on divisions 1 and 3 will be exclusively one design. Divisions 2 and 4 will feature handicap racing under the international IRC and national PHRF rules.

The 2007 Boat of the Week winner — the class winner who prevails in the most competitive, closely contested class — will earn the prestigious carbon and mahogany *Acura Trophy*. This will assuredly be a most deserving, 'world class' champion this year.

Let's take a closer look at this year's fleet, starting with the handicap racing followed by each of the 8 one design classes.

IRC

The IRC rule made its Key West debut last year with 17 entries separated into two classes. 2007 features noteworthy growth with 27 boats allowing for three very competitive classes. PRO Bruce Golison, an active Etchells sailor, will have his team ready to host the IRC racing on Division 2 along with the two PHRF classes. Nearly half of the IRC entries are from overseas, repre-



Erik Wulff's BH 36 *Endorphin* picked up 2 second place finishes and lots of heavy air experience early in the week last January.

senting seven different countries.

The "big boat" on the eleven 3-boat International Teams will hail from the IRC 1 & 2 classes (see page 9). Having four Swan 601's and four TP 52's battling for 'sub class' awards adds another dimension and intensity to the IRC racing in the big boat IRC classes.

IRC 1

The IRC 1 class will include a Porto Cervo Swan 601 rematch with *Money Penny*, *Artemis*, *Spirit of Jethou* and *Cuordileone* going head to head again. Russell Coutts, back with *Artemis*, is looking to turn the tables on Swan Rolex Cup winner *Money Penny*. The biggest Key West



The Farr 40 class has its usual strong international make up with 8 different countries represented. Eivind Astup and his Norwegian *Steam* crew took Boat of the Day honors and 4th overall last year.



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Photo Courtesy J/Boats

J/Boats designs, competing in both one design and handicap classes, will comprise nearly one third of the 2007 Key West fleet! 34 J/105s and 17 J/80s will compete for their respective Mid Winter Championships, as will the 10-boat J/109 class. The J/92s (shown here), making their Key West debut with 4 boats, join five J/120's and numerous other J/Boats designs participating in PHRF and IRC classes.

entry on record — the R/P 81 foot *BonBon* (former *Carrera*) — joins 2006 Newport-Bermuda winner *Bella Mente* and two Farr 60's *Numbers* and *Hissar*.

IRC 2

This 8-boat class is for the most part a lighter displacement group of 50 footers (45'–52' LOA) featuring a relatively tight rating band. Most of these grand prix entries — four hailing from Europe — will get up on a plane earlier than the boats in IRC 1. The class includes four TP52's, including the Russian entry *Rusal-Synergy* and John Kilroy's new *Samba Pa Ti*. David Aisher's Rogers 46 *Yeoman 32*, the R/P 45 *Sjambok*, Ireland's swing keel Cookson 50 *Chieftain* and Ker 50 *Magic Glove* round out this competitive class.

IRC 3

This 11-boat class includes a number of returnees from 2006 as well as Makoto Uematsu's Club Swan / NYYC 42, making its Key West debut. This fairly diverse group of boats includes a Swan 45, a pair of Farr 40s, a J/133, 2 Ker designs, Sydney 38, J/44, Sinergia 40 and Grand Soleil 37. Two class winners from 2006 include Jim Bishop's J/44 *Gold Digger* (IRC 2) and Peter Conrad's *Sister Golden Hair* (PHRF 2). As with the other two IRC classes, IRC 3 will have international intrigue with 4 entries hailing from Canada, Japan, France and the UK.

PHRF

The PHRF handicap rule was a cornerstone of the first *Yachting Race Week* in 1988 and has been an important component of this regatta every year since. It is fitting that the rule continues to draw and that the 2007 fleet, separated into six classes, will compete for their first ever PHRF National Championship twenty years later. A special championship scoring criteria has been developed (see page 19). The six PHRF class winners will be eligible for the National Championship crown with the top three boats receiving beautiful Chelsea clocks. The winning team will also receive Sperry Top-Sider's new Figawi2 footwear.

PHRF 1

This 8-boat class of top raters is primarily a lighter displacement class with 7 boats falling within a relatively tight rating band of 15 sec/mile. The 1D48 *Blue* (Hunts Point TX), is significantly bigger/faster than the

other boats in class and as such has been assessed a rating adjustment (allowed for under the PHRF Rules & Regulations). Craig Crossley's CrossCurrent 33 *Electra* is making its Key West debut, taking on a veteran cast that includes three 1D35's, Pete Hunter's Thompson 30 *Wairere* and Jeff Gale's Henderson 30 *Beautiful World*.

PHRF 2

This moderate displacement 12-boat class has a very narrow 9 sec/mile rating band. As such, they will likely be one of the more closely contested classes in the PHRF fleet. Over half of the class is comprised of J/120's (5) and Beneteau 40.7's (3). Rick Wesslund's J/120 *El Ocaso* (Tiburon, CA), 2006 PHRF Boat of the Week, has an eye on the National Championship trophy. The Mumm 36 *Hurricane 4* (Stockholm, SWE), and race week regulars Hadley 40 *Cash Flow*, Sydney 36 *Bounder* and BH 36 *Endorphin* round out the class. The five J/120's are eligible for 'Sub Class' trophies.

PHRF 3

Four PHRF classes (3–6) will race on Division 4 under the direction of PRO Wayne Bretsch and his race management team, which returns nearly intact from 2006. The 13-boat moderate to heavy displacement PHRF 3 class is the largest in fleet. The new Beneteau 10R's (5) will be competing against a group of boats with a substantial amount of Key West experience. This class, with a reasonable 24 sec/mile rating band, has a pair of returning C&C designs at the top of the class with a Cape Fear 38 and C&C 40 on bottom end. A pair of J/35s, a Schock 35 and Swan 48 round out the class. The Beneteau 10R's will be eligible for 'Sub Class' trophies.

PHRF 4

This is a lighter displacement class of 30 to 34 footers featuring a 33 sec/mile rating band. The base of the 11-boat class is composed of four new J/92s designs, an SR33, Soverel 33, Tripp 33 and Olson 30. Miami based Scott Piper is back from a lengthy cruise with his Tripp 33 *Pipe Dream XIV*. Bruce Gardner's Beneteau 10M *L'Outrage* (Annapolis, MD), a class winner in 2006, will have a new Esse 850 design to contend with. The J/92s will be eligible for 'Sub Class' trophies.

PHRF 5

Chuck Simon and Bill Buckles are regular Key West win-

Continued on page 16.

ADVENTURE

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Continued from page 3.

ners with their T-10 *Liquor Box*, winning their class last year with 5 bullets. They make the annual pilgrimage from Ohio, and are one of three boats with Key West as their listed homeport in the 2007 fleet. This 9-boat class will be very competitive with the Chesapeake Bay winners J/29 *Rhumb Punch* and Donovan 27 *Remedy* expected to challenge. The class, with a rating band of 27 sec/mile, features Dan Ledbetter's Abbott 36 *Unvanquished* at the top of class (105).

PHRF 6

The small boat PHRF class will include five J/24's and a pair of S2 7.9's. The 11 boats will present a rating band of 30 sec/mile with Dan Romano's *Mariah 27 Jazzy Jr.* the scratch boat. *Jazzy* was sitting in 4th place last year when she dropped her rig during Tuesday's second race. Local legend Evalena Worthington of Schooner Wharf Bar fame returns on her J/24 *Freya*. Key West bragging rights are on the line with Peter Goldsmith's J/24 entry *Blah Blah Blah* also lined up in PHRF 6. The five J/24s will be eligible for 'Sub Class' trophies.

ONE DESIGNS

The trend with one design racing in this country has often times been reflected in the Key West regatta over the past 20 years. Back in 1988 there were no one design classes with racing taking place under three handicap rules – IMS, IOR and PHRF. Two decades later, two thirds of the fleet is represented in 8 one design classes.

A number of one design classes have come and gone over the years, reflecting the trends with level racing across the country and in some instances around the world. Many will remember one design starts for the Mumm 36, Corel 45, 1D48, 1D35, J/29 and J/27 classes. While the Swan 45, TP52 and C&C 99 classes are not back from 2006, the C&C 99s are making plans for 2008 and it is likely that new classes next year will include the Club Swan/NYYC 42, Beneteau 10R, and J/92s.

In addition to a Key West class wins, many of the 2007 classes will be vying for National or Mid Winter Championship titles.

DIVISION 1

Ken Legler is back as PRO on Division 1 after a one year hiatus. The 20-boat Melges 32 class replaces the Swan 45's who held their World Championship in Key West last year. The Farr 40 and Mumm 30 classes are long time players on Division 1.

Farr 40

In recent years the Farr 40 class has presented some of the fiercest racing in Key West. This week, with a plethora of international talent, it will be no different. Two thirds of the fleet carries a foreign flag, with entries representing eight different nations. Italy leads the way with four, including the 2006 World Champion, *Mascalzone Latino*,



Superb heavy air boat handling by Franco Rossini and his *Blu Moon* crew (SUI) translated into a second place finish in the Melges 24 class last year, a mere 4 points behind winner Dave Ullman.

skipped by Vincenzo Onorato. Other past Key West winners include *Atalanti XII* with George Andreadis from Greece and *Barking Mad* with Class President Jim Richardson from Newport, RI.

There will be no shortage of America's Cup talent in this class, especially aboard *Alinghi*, with Ernesto Bertarelli, Grant Simmer and Brad Butterworth. Three of last year's top four finishers return including Fred and Steve Howe's *Warpath* with tactician Ed Adams. John Thompson's three *Infinitys* reflect the 20-year history of racing in Key West with his IOR 50 (1988), IMS 49 (1997) and Farr 40 (2007) marking the 1st, 10th and 20th years. The former Boat of the Week winner will be joined by long-time tactician Tom Whidden. Royalty will be part of the 2007 Farr 40 storyline with the Danish entry *Nanoq*, skippered by HRH Prince Frederik.

Melges 32

The Melges 32 class is making some noise this week. The 8-boat class in 2006 has ballooned to 20 entries one year later. The class will also have a very strong turnout at Premiere Racing's Acura Miami Grand Prix in March. There is no shortage of talent in this exciting sportboat class with any number of programs capable of a podium finish. Last year's top 2 performers, Mike Carroll and Marty Kullman's *New Wave* and Jeff Ecklund's *Star* are back in 2007. *New Wave* and *Star* feature high profile tacticians Mark Mendelblatt and Harry Melges, respectively. Simon Williams' *Fresh Guidance* with Steve Benjamin aboard, Glenn Darden's *Hoss* with Max Skelley calling the shots, and Claudio Recchi's *Let's Roll* from YC Italiano all bear watching. The Melges 32 class will be competing for their 2007 Mid Winter Championship.

Mumm 30

The Mumm 30 class is coming off their 2006 World Championship in Miami last month. Key West entries will renew their Miami battle with past Key West win-

ner Peter de Ridder's *Mean Machine* from Monaco (4th Worlds) one of the early favorites. Key West veteran Deneen Demourkas' *Groovederci* (6th Worlds) hopes to improve on her 4th place finish here last year. Last year's top two Key West finishers, Nelson Stephenson (*Team Bold*) and Bodo and Nick von der Wense (*Turbo Duck*) are pre-race favorites as well.

DIVISION 3

PRO Dave Brennan reports that his Division 3 Race Committee has been gearing up for Key West with some high profile regattas in recent months - the Snipe Western Hemisphere and Orient Championship, the Mumm 30 World Championship, and the first two regattas of the Etchells Jaguar Series. This Miami based team will be fully tuned up and ready for racing this week!

Melges 24

The Melges 24s will once again be the largest class (one design or handicap) in Key West. This class will display its usual international flair with 8 different countries represented among the 13 international entries. The quality of racing routinely matches the quantity and 2007 will be no different. A notable 5 of last year's top 6 finishers returns this week (Dave Ullman – US, Franco Rossini – SUI, John Pollard – UK, Riccardo Simoneschi – ITA, Philippe Ligot – FRA). Perennial top-3 finisher Brian Porter (Lake Geneva, WI) and his *Full Throttle* team will be back in the fray after a rare one year hiatus. The Melges 24 class will be competing for their 2007 Mid Winter Championship.

J/105

This class gets more competitive every year. With last year's 29-boat fleet growing to 33 entries and the top 6 finishers (and 8 of the top 10) returning, a 2007 class win will be well deserved. Tom Coates (*Masquerade*, San Francisco, CA) had his way in 2006 but will have

his hands full with a host of potential winners to contend with. Two Bermuda entries, Jon Corless' *Another Hazard* and James Macdonald's *Passion*, are part of the second largest class at Acura Key West 2007. The J/105 class will be competing for their 2007 Mid Winter Championship.

J/80

Close finishes are not unusual with the J/80 class — a mere 6 points separated the top three finishers last year. 2005 class winner Kerry Klingler (*Lifted*, Larchmont, NY) returns after missing last year and 2006 champion Jay Lutz will be helmsman for fellow Texan Doug Strebel (*Synergy*). Last year John Storck Jr. and his *Rumor* team (Huntington, NY) was a mere 3 points behind Lutz. The J/80 class will be competing for their 2007 Mid Winter Championship.

DIVISION 4

Wayne Bretsch has been the PRO on Division 4 years now. He and his team routinely have the most class starts in Key West and 2007 being no exception (6 starts). Division composition this year includes four PHRF and 2 one design classes.

Corsair 28R

The only multi-hull class in Key West — the Corsair 28R's — are back for their 6th year. This class again will start first on Division 4 this year. Key West regular Steve Marsh (*Dealer's Choice*), a mere 5 points out of first in 2006, is considered one of the favorites this week. The class stalwarts will share their boat speed tips with their fellow competitors at the Tuning & Trimming panel



John & Linda Edward's J/29 *Rhumb Punch* (leeward boat) and Bert Carp's Donovan 27 *Remedy* (weather boat) are Key West regulars. They will renew their rivalry in PHRF 5 racing this week.

discussion Monday afternoon under the race week Big Top. The 14-boat Corsair 28R class will be competing for their 2007 National Championship.

J/109

The J/109 class, making its Key West one design debut in 2006, featured some very close racing. Steve Rhyne's *Mojo* (Seabrook, TX) is back to defend his class win. John Halbert's *Vitesse*, fourth in 2006 and a mere 2 points out of second, will be looking for a podium finish this week. The 10-boat class has owners hailing from

7 different states and one entry from Crosshaven, Ireland (Anthony O'Leary, *Mariners Antix*). The J/109 class will be competing for their 2007 Mid Winter Championship.

World Class Racing Starts Monday

Check out the scratch sheets and pick your favorites for the podium. *Acura Key West 2007, presented by Nautica* is sure to make history as we celebrate 20 years with an action packed week of competition.

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