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Challenges Met and Champions Crowned at Acura Key West 2008 --- Wrapping Up a Memorable 21st Edition

Key West, Fla. 'Chamber of Commerce' conditions on Friday made for a spectacular three-race finale at *Acura Key West 2008, presented by Nautica*. "This was a classic Key West day. It was breeze on with warm weather and sunshine. You couldn't have asked for a better final day," Melges 24 winner Dave Ullman said.

Thanks to a little cooperation from Mother Nature and patience and careful judgment on the part of the Race Chairman and his four race committees, sixteen classes in 4 divisions all completed 8 races by the end of the week.

"I think the race committee did an amazing job this week. To hold eight races in three days is really quite amazing," said Thomas Coates, winner of J/105 class aboard *Masquerade*. "It was a tough situation with too much wind on one day and too little wind on others. Peter Craig and his (Premiere Racing) team made the right decisions all week as far as when to send us out and when to keep us ashore, when to race and when not to race."

A true national and international gathering, the southernmost city in the continental US welcomed over 2,500 sailors on boats hailing from 18 different countries and over 35 states. A record 60 foreign boats participated.

Class Highlights

Farr 40 owner Jim Richardson used the word "ecstatic" to describe his feelings on winning the Farr 40 class for the first time in 11 trips to Key West. The Boston resident and crew of *Barking Mad* accomplished that feat in dramatic fashion, winning the eighth and final race to capture a tiebreaker with *Mascalzone Latino*. Because the Farr 40 class proved to be the most competitive and closely contested class this week, *Barking Mad* also earned the prestigious **Acura Trophy** for Boat of the Week honors. "It's hard to win any regatta in this class and it has been especially difficult for us to win this particular regatta," said Richardson, who has been second in Key West on several occasions.

The **M30** competition was tougher than ever with a renewed 15 boat class. Deneen Demourkas' *Groovederci* did, however, lead the M30 class from start to finish, winning Key West for the second time in four years. Scott Nixon of the Quantum loft in Annapolis called tactics. "We were doing it the hard way all week. We had to work our way up from the back of the fleet in a bunch of races, but we kept fighting. The team did an excellent job," she said.

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Challenges Met and Champions Crowned at Acura Key West 2008 (continued)

Competition was also extremely close in the **Melges 32** class, which saw a significant increase in fleet size (27 entries) and the caliber of competition at Acura Key West 2008. *Star*, skippered by Jeff Ecklund of Ft. Lauderdale, FL, finished fifth or better in six of seven races that counted in edging *New Wave* by two points and capturing the Midwinter Championship. "This class is getting better and better all the time and this was probably the most competitive regatta we've ever had," said Ecklund, who had boat builder and champion sailor Harry Melges aboard a tactician.

California sailmaker Dave Ullman put together a tremendous final day of racing to go from fourth to first in the **Melges 24** class, largest of the regatta with 46 boats. Ullman steered *Pegasus 505* to a stellar line of 1-2-1 on Friday to finish three points clear of week-long leader *Blu Moon* (Franco Rossini, Switzerland). "Our team really likes sailing in the breeze. We are happy whenever it gets above 15 knots," said Ullman, who has won the Melges 24 class five times in Key West. "Obviously we had a great all-around day."

Swan 42s made their debut as a one design class, with 12 boats vying for the top spot. Andrew Fisher's *Bandit* topped the field, just 5 points ahead of Mark Watson's *Tiburón*. The Swan 42 class races with no discard. "It's fantastic to win in Key West. It's always great conditions and superb racing," Fisher said. "I think the key for our team was that we never gave up. We battled back from adversity on several races."

J/Boats featured very impressive **J/105** and **J/80** fleets. J/105's were 34 strong this year, with entrants hailing from 12 different states, Bermuda and Canada. J/80 numbers were also up, with 19 boats. Tom Coates' *Masquerade* crew successfully defended their J/105 championship. "This regatta always attracts the top programs in our class so we certainly are very pleased to have won here four years in a row," Coates said. John Storck Jr. in his J/80 *Rumor* defeated past Key West and National Champion Kerry Klingler in *Lifted*. "We're really fast upwind, especially in the breeze," said Storck's daughter Kaity, sharing secrets of *Rumor's* success. "My dad tunes the rig and sets it up really well." 18 other J-designed and built boats competed in 5 of the handicap classes.

Corsair 28Rs, the only multi-hull class in Key West had a very tight battle between Tom Reese's *Flight Simulator* and Peter Katcha's *Relentless*. Despite taking three firsts on Friday, *Relentless* lost to the Youngstown, NY boat by a mere ½ point.

The **IRC 1** class was comprised of the 10 largest boats in the regatta and Dan Meyers' new Judel/Vrolijk 66 *Numbers* proved the most consistent of them all. America's Cup veteran Hamish Pepper called tactics for Meyers, who won five of eight races in compiling a low score of 10 points – four better than runner-up *Flash Glove*, a J/V 52 owned by Colm Barrington of Ireland. John Kilroy's IRC optimized TP52 *Samba Pa Ti* finished 3rd and also took home TP52 sub-class honors. "This result had very little to do with me. It's a credit to the guys who put so much time into designing, building and preparing the boat," said Meyers, who won IRC 1 last year aboard his previous *Numbers* (Farr 60).

IRC 2 also featured 10 boats on the line. *Murka 2* (Hamble UK) sailed a consistent series with only one 4th place, which was discarded. Key West regular Jim Bishop's J/44 *Gold Digger* finished 2nd.

PHRF 1 honors went to Jim Madden racing his J/122 *Stark Raving Mad* for the first time in Key West. He led the class from start to finish, defeating 2007 champion Pete Hunter's Thompson 30 *Wairere*.

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Challenges Met and Champions Crowned at Acura Key West 2008 (continued)

PHRF 2 was won handily by a well sailed *Emocean*. Will Hanckel's J/120 Key West experience and strong tactical calls kept them on top all week. J/109 sub-class honors went to Don and Nick Filippelli's *Caminos*. "We got off the line real well in every race, grabbed the lead going up the first beat and were able to cover and control the fleet," Hanckel said.

PHRF 3 champion Robert Hibdon's 9 point week earned his SR-33 *Tempress* top honors in this 8 boat light-displacement class. Bill Berges in the Evelyn 32-2 *Bluto's* consistent top 3 finishes got him on the podium in 2nd place.

PHRF 4 produced the 2008 PHRF National Champion, with Robert Armstrong's St Croix based J/100 *Bad Girl* taking top honors. Gerry Taylor's Cape Fear 38 *Tangent* was second. "There's a lot of good crew communication," Armstrong said. "We all sail together and this is the farthest we've gone to do a race."

PHRF 5 saw Ken Schram's T-10 *Britsar* proving that these boats are as competitive as ever. Going into the last race with just a 3 point lead over John Cooper's J/29 *Cool Breeze*, Schram won the last race to secure the top spot.

PHRF 6 came down to Friday. Lincoln Schoenberger's Wyliecat 30 *One Up* made the last day a thriller with three firsts to clinch the overall win. Bob Fleck's S27.9 *Horizon* was just one point behind going into the last day of racing. "Sailing with people I enjoy is even more important than winning," said Schoenberger. "Winning is icing on the cake."

Special Awards

Boats in 6 PHRF classes competed for class honors and the second **PHRF National Championship**. Competition was Key West tough with 5 of the 6 classes featuring single digit winning margins. Robert Armstrong's J/100 *Bad Girl* (PHRF 4) prevailed in the objective criteria established for the National Championship, winning by one tenth of a point over Will Hanckel's J/120 *Emocean* (PHRF 2), with Linc Schoenberger's Wyliecat 30 *One Up* (PHRF 6) in 3rd. All three received beautiful Chelsea Clocks.

Team France won its first ever **Nautica Watches Trophy** in the International Team Competition. A slim 4 point margin separated the team of *Twins* (Erik Maris), *New Wave* (Mike Carroll) and *Trevalles.com* (Benoit Charon) from *Team USA West Coast*. Eleven teams competed in what has become a special and highly competitive Key West tradition.

Each **Boat of the Day** winner received a *Nautica Yacht Timer Watch* and a unique Latitude Kinsale *3D Nautical Chart* by Artist Bobby Nash. Using nautical charts, each special framed work has pieces hand cut and assembled to create a 3D Nautical Chart™. Winners were: Farr 40 *Mascalzone Latino* - Sperry Top-Sider Day, J/122 *Teamwork* (IRC 2) - Lewmar Day, and Swan 42 *Interlodge* - Acura Day.

On the third week of January racing sailors from around the world converge on Key West for a variety of different reasons – superb competition, ideal conditions, professional race management are just three. "Good breeze, competitive racing, and a good blend of pros and true lovers of the sport. Mix all that together with a few beers (or rums) and a tropical climate and what you have is a great time," said Paul Cayard. "Premiere Racing has been doing a fantastic job of organizing this event for many years and has made it the best winter sailing event in the world."

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Challenges Met and Champions Crowned at Acura Key West 2008 (continued)

Acura Key West 2008 on TV

Emmy award winner Gary Jobson and his crack team were filming throughout the week. Daily video broadcasts were posted on ESPN.com and JobsonSailing.com. A ½ hour special will be televised on Sunday March 23 on ESPN2 (2:30 to 3:00 PM ET).

Title Sponsor **Acura** is the Official Vehicle. **Nautica** is the Presenting Sponsor and **Nautica Watches** is the Official Timekeeper. Day Sponsors are **Mount Gay® Rum** (Official Rum), **Lewmar** (Official Marine Hardware) and **Sperry Top-Sider** (Official Footwear and Footwear Retailer). Supporting sponsors are **B&G** (Official Marine Electronics), **Ceasar Marine** (Official RIB), **Keys Caribbean** (Resort Community), **New England Ropes** (Official Rope), and **SLAM** (Official Technical Gear). **Spaten** is the Official Beer.

Acura Key West is also supported by **The Florida Keys & Key West Tourism Council**. *The Historic Seaport at the Key West Bight* is the Official Site.

Thirty-five Industry Partners bring their support through a program that is now in its 7th year. [Learn more about the Industry Partners and the Program on the event web site.](#)

Acura Key West 2008 and the *2008 Acura Miami Grand Prix* are **US Sailing** sanctioned events and are included in the **US-IRC Gulf Stream Series**.

About Acura

Acura offers a full line of technologically advanced luxury performance vehicles through a nationwide network of more than 260 dealers throughout the United States. The 2008 Acura lineup features five distinctive models, the RL luxury performance sedan, the TL premium performance sedan, the TSX premium sport sedan, the turbo-charged RDX premium sport CUV and the award-winning MDX premium performance CUV. For more information about Acura vehicles, please visit www.acura.com. For media inquiries, please go to www.acuranews.com.



- RL luxury performance sedan
- TL premium performance sedan
- TSX premium sport sedan
- MDX premium performance CUV
- RDX premium sport CUV

Acura Key West 2008, presented by Nautica Final Series Results after 8 Races – January 25, 2008

Swan 42 (no discard)

1. *Bandit*, Andy Fisher, Newport, RI, USA, 1-5-5-3-2-1-12-3, 32
2. *Tiburón*, Mark Watson, Newport, RI, USA, 3-2-3-6-12-5-1-5, 37
3. *Amelia*, Alex Jackson, Riverside, CT, USA, 5-9-4-1-1-9-2-8, 39

Farr 40 (no discard)

1. *Barking Mad*, James Richardson, Newport, RI, USA, 3-3-4-6-1-7-4-1, 29
2. *Mascalzone Latino*, Vincenzo Onorato, Napoli, ITA, 2-2-3-2-12-5-1-2, 29
3. *Twins*, Erik Maris, Paris, FRA, 6-5-8-1-3-1-8-5, 37

Continued...

Acura Key West 2008, presented by Nautica
Final Series Results after 8 Races – January 25, 2008 - continued

J/105 (no discard) – Mid-Winter Championship

1. *Masquerade*, Thomas Coates, Newport, RI, USA, 1-3-1-2-1-1-1-3, 13
2. *eclipse*, Damian Emery, Mt. Sinai, NY, USA, 9-2-16-4-10-6-7-1, 55
3. *Kincsem*, J Esdorn/D Hennes, Rye, NY, USA, 4-4-p20 20- 3-7-10-2-7, 57

Melges 32 - Mid-Winter Championship

1. *Star*, Jeff Ecklund, Ft. Lauderdale, FL, USA, 5-2-4-3-1-2-(12)-8, 25
2. *New Wave*, M Carroll/M Kullman, Clearwater, FL, USA, 3-4-3-5-3-5-(8)-4, 27
3. *RED*, Joe Woods, Torquay, GBR, 4-1-1-8-(10)-3-9-6, 32

M 30 (no discard)

1. *Groovederci*, Deneen Demourkas, Santa Barbara, CA, USA, 3-1-2-4-1-2-4-1, 18
2. *Turbo Duck*, Bodo and Nick von der Wense, Annapolis, MD, USA, 2-2-11-1-2-1-1-4, 24
3. *TeamBold*, Nelson Stephenson, Southport, CT, USA, 5-5-5-3-4-3-2-2, 29

Corsair 28R - Mid-Winter Championship

1. *Flight Simulator*, Tom Reese, Youngstown, NY, USA, 1-2-2-1-avg 1.5-(7)-2-2, 11.5
2. *Relentless*, Peter Katcha, St. Petersburg, FL, USA, 4-1-1-3-(ocs 10)-1-1-1, 12
3. *Evolution*, Kathryn Garlick, Terra Ceia, CAN, 3-3-(5)-5-1-2-4-4, 22

J/80 - Mid-Winter Championship

1. *Rumor*, John Storck, Jr., Huntington, NY, USA, (3)-1-1-1-2-1-1-1, 8
2. *Lifted*, Kerry Klingler, Larchmont, NY, USA, 1-2-3-(7)-6-3-2-2, 19
3. *Painkiller Jane*, Magnus Tyreman, Stockholm, SWE, 2-3-(7)-5-5-4-3-5, 27

Melges 24 - Mid-Winter Championship

1. *Pegasus 505*, David Ullman, Newport Beach, CA, USA, 3-5-6-3-(17)-1-2-1, 21
2. *Blu Moon*, Franco Rossini, Lugano, SUI, 1-1-2-(18)-1-4-6-9, 24
3. *WTF*, Alan Field, Marina Del Rey, CA, USA, 6-4-8-5-5-(24)-5-3, 36

IRC 1

1. *Numbers*, Daniel Meyers, Newport, RI, USA, 2-1-1-1-(9)-3-1-1, 10
2. *Flash Glove*, Colm Barrington, Dun Laoghaire, IRL, 1-2-(p40 7)-3-1-1-3-3, 14
3. *Samba Pa Ti*, John Kilroy, Jr., Dover, DE, USA, (3)-3-2-2-3-2-2-2, 16

IRC 2

1. *Murka 2*, Mikhail Mouratov, Douglas, UK, 2-2-3-3-(4)-1-2-1, 14
2. *Gold Digger*, James Bishop, Jamestown, RI, USA, 5-1-(6)-5-1-2-4-2, 20
3. *Christopher Dragon*, Andrew Weiss, Greenwich, CT, USA, (6)-3-1-2-2-4-6-4, 22

PHRF 1

1. *Stark Raving Mad*, James Madden, Newport Beach, CA, USA, 1-2-1-2-2-2-(4)-1, 11
2. *Wairere*, Pete Hunter, Kill Devil Hill, NC, USA, (4)-1-4-1-3-1-1-2, 13
3. *Spaceman Spiff*, Abigail Ruhlman, Cleveland, OH, USA, 2-(3)-3-3-1-3-3-3, 18

PHRF 2

1. *Emocean*, Will Hanckel, Charleston, SC, USA, (3)-1-1-1-1-1-1-1, 7
2. *Primal Scream*, Steven Stollman, Key Biscayne, FL, USA, 4-2-5-2-2-3-(8)-2, 20
3. *Overlap*, Michael Williamson, London, UK, 2-4-(7)-7-4-4-2-3, 26

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Acura Key West 2008, presented by Nautica
Final Series Results after 8 Races – January 25, 2008 - *continued*

PHRF 3

1. *Temptress*, Robert Hibdon, Charleston, SC, USA, 1-1-1-3-1-(dnf 9)-1-1, 9
2. *Bluto*, Bill Berges, Bokeelia, FL, USA, 3-2-2-2-2-1-2-(dns 9), 14
3. *Jack-A-Roe*, John Dybas, Chicago, IL, USA, 2-3-(4)-4-4-3-3-2, 21

PHRF 4 – PHRF National Champion

1. *Bad Girl*, Robert Armstrong, St. Croix, USVI, 1-2-1-1-(3)-1-1-1, 8
2. *Tangent*, Gerry Taylor, Annapolis, MD, USA, 2-(5)-5-2-2-2-2-2, 17
3. *Leading Edge*, Tom Sutton, Seabrook, TX, USA, (5)-4-3-4-4-5-3-3, 26

PHRF 5

1. *Britsar*, Ken Schram, Bay View YC, MI, USA, 1-(2)-1-2-2-2-1-1, 10
2. *Cool Breeze*, John Cooper, Cane Hill, MO, USA, (6)-3-3-1-1-1-3-2, 14
3. *Seefest*, Ira Perry, Padanaram, MA, USA, 4-1-2-(6)-6-3-4-3, 23

PHRF 6

1. *One Up*, Lincoln Schoenberger, Bridgeport, CT, USA, 1-2-(3)-2-2-1-1-1, 10
2. *Horizon*, Bob Fleck, Alexandria, VA, USA, 3-(4)-2-1-1-3-3-2, 15
3. *Lucky Ducky*, Hall Palmer, San Francisco, CA, USA, 2-6-1-3-3-2-(7)-4, 21

Event details, scratch sheet and results are available at www.Premiere-Racing.com

For more information on Premiere Racing,
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