



Race Week News

ACURA KEY WEST 2006 • Presented by Nautica • Volume XIX, Number 1 • Monday, January 16, 2006



Tim Wilkes / TimWilkes.com

Rockets, Rock Stars and Rockin' Competition

Staff Writers

Anyone who's been to 'Key West Race Week' knows that there's no such thing as an ordinary year. A quick look at the scratch sheet tells you that this edition of *Acura Key West 2006*, presented by Nautica, will be extra-ordinary.

Combine new rocket ship designs with sailing's rock stars and sprinkle them liberally across four racing divisions and you know things are going to rock all week long.

Racing sailors from a record breaking 37 states and 14 countries are converging on the Southernmost point in

the Continental US.

These 3,000 plus sailors all have their own hometown claims to fame — and many of them are already sailing legends and hall-of-famers.

And there are those whose names you won't find in the headlines, but are here because they love to race — especially in Key West during the third week of January.

Let's preview each of 19 classes and learn a little more about the boats, the players and the intense competition that's about to unfold... *Continued on next page.*



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Monday is Nautica Day

NAUTICA



Photo Caption here

DIVISION 1

Classes: Swan 45, Farr 40, Mumm 30
PRO: Peter “Luigi” Reggio

Swan 45 Gold Cup

16 Swans 45's will compete for their second Gold Cup and their first official World Championship.

Mintaka, owned by Stefano Polti with tactician Francesco Bruni will be the Swan 45 to beat. The Gold Cup defender and current Italian National Champion leads a tough group of Italian entries which include brothers Massimo and Leonardo Massimo, owners of *Bellicosa* and *Cour di Leone* respectively.

Craig Speck's *Vim* from Newport, RI with Ed Adams onboard, is a contender, but the feeling is that last year's Key West class champion *Better Than* might be the dark horse entry. Andrzej Rojek's local Eastern Connecticut entry may have fewer household names aboard, but will be one of the most practiced boats on the course.

Farr 40

The Farr 40 that prevails this week will clearly be in the mix for the *Acura Trophy* — the ultimate prize at Key

West — presented to the regatta's 'Boat of the Week'. The tacticians in this owner-driver class reads like a who's who in Olympic and America's Cup sailing. First there are three past world champions to contend with — Jim Richardson's *Barking Mad* with Vince Brun, Steve Philips's *Le Renard*, with Mark Reynolds and Massimo Mezzaroma's *Nerone*.

Then there is two-time Key West Boat-of-the-Week winner George Andreadis' *Atalanti XII* with Andy Horton calling shots. Vincenzo Onorato is back with his *Mascalzone Latino* team that includes Russell Coutts while Fred and Steve Howe's *Warpath* will feature John Kostecky in the afterguard.

Robert L. Hughes (*Heartbreaker*), two-time Farr 40 North American Champion and 2000 Key West Boat of the Week, shares some of the secrets of past success on Page 3.

Mumm 30

Deneen Demourkas is back in her Mumm 30 *Groovederci* with Kiwi star Hamish Pepper as tactician. Deneen's Santa Barbara, California crew will defend their 2005 Key West title against Class President Nelson Stephenson (*Team Bold*) and the 2001 and 2004 class winners Bodo and Nick von der Wense (*Turbo Duck*).

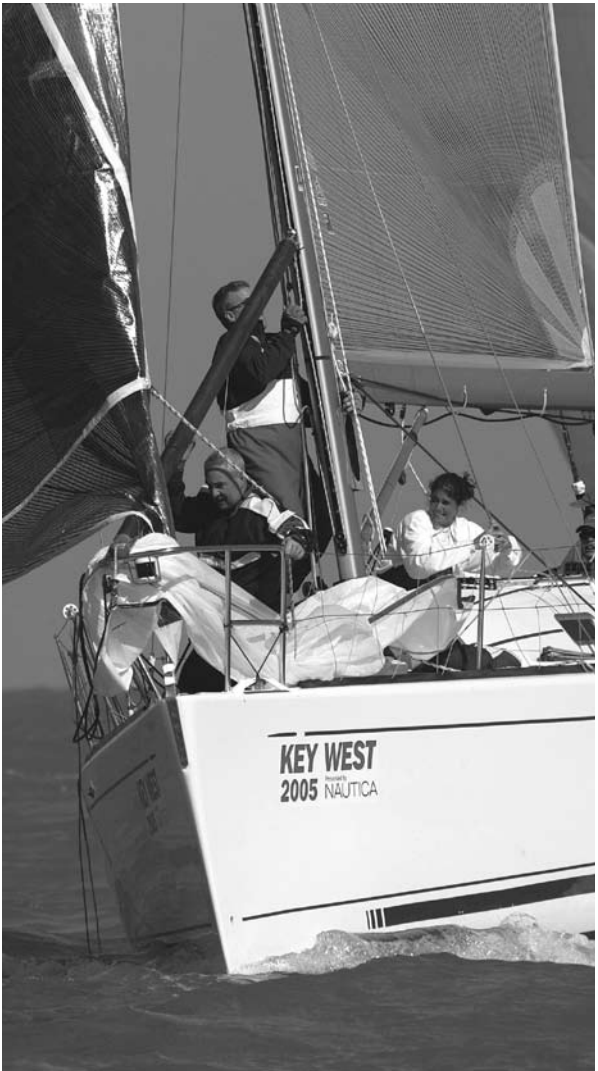


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All top 5 finishers from 2005 return along with Key West veteran sailors Bruce Lockwood (*One More Time*) and long time partners John Chick, Miles Allen and Jeff Diemand (*ACED Partners*).

International flavor comes in the form of Maxim Logutenko from Vladivostok, Russia. He and his Russian Sailing Federation crew are chartering *USA 39*. Canada is represented by Geoff Brown from Toronto, Ontario.

DIVISION 2

Classes: TP52, IRC1, IRC 2, Melges 32, PHRF 2, PHRF 3
PRO: Bruce Golison

TP52

With their inaugural Global Championship later this winter at *Acura Miami Race Week*, the high performance TP52 class will be exciting to watch from start to finish.

The new *Rush* with Tom Stark and tactician Ed Baird is one of the favorites for class honors. Stark's team won the Swan 45 class two years ago and they've had a busy fall working up for the 2006 winter circuit. *Bambakou* (the former *Esmeralda*), owned by John Coumantaros, will be a player for sure as will Michael Brennan's *Sjambok*. *Sjambok* finished last year's Ft. Lauderdale-Key West in under 12 hours, arriving in Key West before the bars closed.

The US boats face some tough competition from the overseas contingent. Ireland's Eamon Conneely's TP52 *Patches* has Ian Walker as tactician. Stuart Robinson's UK entry *Stay Calm II* has Olympian Adrian Stead calling tactics — fresh off his Sydney-Hobart run on the super maxi *Alfa Romeo*.

Continued on page 4.

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IRC 1

IRC handicap racing is making its Key West debut this week with two classes. The 17 boats in the IRC1 and IRC 2 classes will be competing for the inaugural US-IRC National Championship Trophy which will be awarded at week's end to the top boat in the combined IRC fleet.

It's a disparate group of high profile boats featured in the big-boat IRC 1 class. It will be interesting to see how these grand prix boats measure up in the wide range of conditions that Key West routinely presents over 5 days of racing.

Two of Nautor's new Swan 601s will share a starting line with a pair of ocean going Open 60s, a turbo sled, two Farr 60s, a swing keel 66, and custom built IRC and IMS designs. Now that line up represents quite a challenge to any single number handicap rule!

Jim Swartz's Swan 601 *Money Penny* and Peter Ogden's UK *Spirit of Jethou* are coming off impressive performances at the Rolex Swan American and Rolex Swan European Regattas respectively.

Melges 32

The new high performance Melges 32 class will have their first one design competition this week. They've built their numbers to one design status in just one year. Last year's PHRF class winner Jeff Ecklund, with Harry Melges aboard, has 7 other Melges 32s to contend with before contemplating another Key West class win.

Mike Carroll's latest *New Wave* is a Melges 32 and both he and champion Marty Kullman will be tough challengers. Sailing legend Buddy Melges, always one to be reckoned with, is back racing with Beck Swanson on *XSNRG*. Add in another four experienced helmsmen from both US coasts, the UK and Trinidad and there are all the ingredients for some great one design racing.

IRC 2

The second IRC class presents a mix of Key West regulars and first timers. Jim Bishop and his Key West 2005 Boat of the Day *Gold Digger* will challenge newcomers Tapio Saavalainen's Grand Soleil 37 *Kalevala II* and Peter Rogers UK Ker 11.3 *Highlife*.

Ian Maclean made his Key West debut last year in the Ker 11.3 *Blue Belle* and returns this year with a Ker 36, *Software Mistress*. Rod Johnstone, a consistent winner over the years, is debuting the J/124 *Wild Blue*, the latest exciting design from J/Boats.

PHRF 2

The lighter displacement boats in PHRF 2 include 4 conventional sport boats — if there is such a thing as conventional these days. Marblehead's Wayne Colahan and Tom McManus — no strangers to Key West — are back in town with their modified Farr 36 *Boys are Back in Town*.

Pete Hunter and his Thomson 30 *Wairere* will be looking to improve on their 3rd place finish from 2005. The scratch boat in class is the new shroudless, cat-rigged Wyliecat 44, a head turner sporting an oversized asymmetrical and no jibs.

PHRF 3

The 15-boat PHRF 3 class could be one of the toughest to win this year. This group of 38-40 footers has a relatively narrow rating band of 18 secs/mile.

The scratch boat in class is Greg Manning's Beneteau 40.7 *Sarah*. Five J/120's — including 2005 class winner Avra — will be racing for one design sub class trophies in addition to PHRF honors.

Three Beneteau 40.7 designs and a pair of the new C&C 115 designs (Sailing World's 2006 Boat of the Year overall winner) round out the class.

Continued on page 13.



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For Key West 2006, we're pleased to unveil the new 41' J/124. Please stop by and see the J/124 at the Conch Republic during the week and be sure to visit the J Boats hospitality tent in the industry village adjacent to the main party tent.



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DIVISION 3

Classes: Melges 24, J/105, J/80
PRO: Dave Brennan

110 boats with 9 races scheduled over 5 days? No problem for Dave Brennan and his experienced Miami based team.

Melges 24

With 60 Melges 24s entered — many fresh off their World Championship in Key Largo last month — there's no shortage of sub plots in the largest of all Key West classes. Here's a run down on some of the pre-regatta favorites:

Blu Moon with Christ Rast helming for Franco Rossini. Rossini won the 2001 Melges 24 Worlds (held at Key West 2002).

Courage 8 with Alba Batzill helming for Eddy Eich. They are the reigning Corinthian European Melges 24 Champions and Alba & Eddy are also reigning 6m World Champions. Both are very highly regarded with Alba being one of the top FD sailors of the 60s.

John Pollard's *Excellent* is one of the top British crews. The sailmaker from Torquay was second at the last North American Championship.

Gill has Stuart Rix helming for Quentin Strauss. This is another top British crew — the reigning UK Champions holding the 2004 French and Italian Championships as well. They were runners up at the 2005 M24 Europeans this past September.

Partner & Partners with Francois Brenac helming for Philippe Ligot. This team (with Sebastian Col as helm) won the 2004 M24 Worlds. The P&P team has been one of the top Melges 24 programs for a number of years.

J/105

J/Boats will again be a very prominent player this week with over 70 of their designs spread over three of the four divisions. The J/105 class features the second largest class in Key West.

Jim Doane's *Flame* (last years' second place finisher) and Richard Bergmann's *Zuni Bear* (Key West 2004 winner) are ready to wrest the championship from defending champion Tom Coates' grasp. The US Naval Academy joins the fray with Midshipman Greg Nanning leading his *Allegiance* team.

J/80

The J/80 class might have tougher competition at the top this year than in any of the previous 6 years of one design racing here at Key West.

Last year's winner *C'est Nasty* with Rick Schaffer from Ft. Worth will have to contend with past winner Jay Lutz and his *Synergy* team from Houston, TX. Unfortunately, former class winner Kerry Klinger (*Lifted*) broke his arm and is a late scratch from the competition.

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DIVISION 4

Classes: Corsair 28R, J/109, C&C 99, PHRF 4, 5, 6 & 7
PRO: Wayne Bretsch

Corsair 28R

The Corsair Trimaran class is back for their fifth year with the usual cast of multi-hull giants. Todd Hudgins returns to defend his 2005 title, this year on Steven Marsh's *Dealer's Choice*. Also aboard is Tornado legend Keith Notary.

Bob and Doug Harkriders' *Bad Boys*, winners in both 2003 and 2004, are looking to get back on top this year. Bob Gleason and his *Condor* crew have never finished out of the top 5 in their previous 4 years racing at Key West.

J/109

Bill Sweetser's Annapolis based *Rush* is back to defend their class win in 2005. At first glance, he looks to have the edge in Key West experience. New to the J/109 class, though not to Key West, are Jon Halbert (*Vitesse*) and Alice Martin (*Ecclesiastes*).

Ken Grant is making the trip all the way from Glasgow, Scotland and the guess is he's left room in his luggage to take home some silver.



Sue Bodycomb / Yachtshots.com

For the first time, J/Boats versatile 35 foot racer-cruiser will get their own J/109 start in Key West.

C&C 99

This is the third consecutive year that the C&C 99 class has raced one design in Key West. Bob Wilson's two time Key West winner *Trumpeter* from Toronto, Ontario will have their work cut out for them. Last year's runner up Tom Sawchuk and the *Breakaway* crew from Lake Lanier, Georgia are ready for the 2006 rematch.

The class has made special arrangements for Allen Borne and his New Orleans, Louisiana crew to take a break from their hurricane recovery and join the fleet on *Tam*. Hurricane Katrina put Borne's C&C 99 on the bottom of Lake Ponchartrain.

PHRF 4

This lighter displacement class, which features a pair of Evelyns and Olsons, should feature close racing. The Halletts (Evelyn 32 *The Wagon*) almost won their class in 2002. Fred McConnell (Olson 29 *Kokopelli*), and John Dybas (Olson 30 *Jack a Roe*) are among the boats that bring considerable Key West experience to the line.

The SR 33 *Temptress*, Cheetah 30 *Bottle Rocket*, Hobie 33 *Hot Stuff* and another Evelyn 32 *Tsunami* will guarantee a competitive week.

PHRF 5

Another PHRF class loaded with Key West experience and past podium finishes. Bruce Gardner's Beneteau 1st 10M *L'Outrage* was PHRF Boat of the Week. Gerald Taylor's Cape Fear 38 *Tangent* placed third in her Key West debut last year, as did Jeff and Brian Gastrau's N/M 30 *Invincible* in a different class.

This heavier displacement class includes Greg Petrat's venerable Swan 48 *Constellation* and Phil Eastman's Quest 30 *Vela*.

PHRF 6

The 12-boat PHRF class also features Key West experience and previous champions. Linda and John Edwards have won J/29 class honors in *Rhumb Punch*, Doug Davies and Eileen Eppig's J/27 *Amethyst* took PHRF 7 honors last year, and Bert Carp in his Donovan 27 *Remedy* has proved to be a tough competitor in past years.

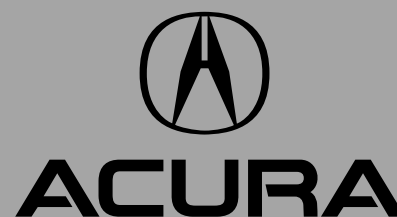
Can Chuck Simon and Bill Buckles' T-10 *Liquor Box* be beat? The three Chicago boats (*Maverick*, *Temerity* and *Terminal Velocity*) and the Lehnert's *Lunatic Fringe* are all potential T-10 sub class winners.

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Continued from page 17.

PHRF 7

Never under estimate the competitiveness of the smallest class on Division 4. Experience and racing savvy will make for a hard fought week in this 12-boat class. The J/30s, S2 7.9s and J/24s have been a big part of race week for years.

Sam Vasquez took third place honors last year in his Wavelength 24 *Outtasight*. This year the Gulfport, Mississippi sailor is racing *OuttaShock* — the name perhaps influenced by his recent Katrina experiences.

CONCLUSION

There's no question that the hallmarks of Key West Race Week — great racing action and close competition — will be very much in evidence this week.

Katrina, Rita and Wilma — three of the six strongest hurricanes on record — tested the Gulf region and the Florida Keys like never before this past year. Many sailors and Keys residents have stories of great courage and sacrifice.

"Perhaps more than others, racing sailors are attuned to both the beauty and power of the forces of nature," said Event Director Peter Craig. "We recognize and admire the strength and resiliency the people of the Florida Keys displayed during an incredibly trying hurricane season. They've made our annual reunion in this Key West paradise even more special this year."

Your Premiere Racing team welcomes you and makes their sincere commitment to making this an enjoyable and memorable week for all.

A special thank you to Ken Legler and contributing writers: Brooke Babineau, Rebecca Burg, Fiona Brown, Bruce Golison, and Steve Washburn.



Sue Bodycomb / Yachtshots.com

Last year, the Melges 32 made its Key West debut in a 12-boat sport boat class with Jeff Ecklund's *Star* (to weather) prevailing and earning PHRF Boat of the Week honors. This year it will be one design racing for the Melges 32s.

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Photo by Bruce Cooper

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