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Nauti Lady



R-Six winners. PHOTO: JESUS RENEDO

MIGHTY OAKS FROM LITTLE ACORNS GROW

IN April 1945 Cruising Yacht Club of Australia (CYCA) member Jack Earl was at anchor in Sydney Harbour quietly planning a Christmas cruise to Hobart Tasmania with his family. Two experienced Tasmanian yachtsmen, Bert and Russ Walker, were anchored nearby so Jack rowed over to take a look at their charts. The Walkers politely asked if they could join the cruise. CYCA Co-Founder Peter Luke got wind of the idea and said he would also come along.

In May 1945 British Royal Navy Officer and ocean-racing yachtsman, Captain John Illingworth, addressed a meeting at the CYCA and, when hearing about the fes-

tive cruise said, "Why don't we make a race of it?". And so it happened that on 26 December a fleet of nine yachts took the starter's gun and the famous Sydney Hobart Yacht Race was born. Cunning Captain Illingworth won.

Fast forward 70 years and the 2015 edition of the Rolex-sponsored Race boasted 108 yachts at the start line. Proof indeed that mighty oaks from little acorns grow.

Another little acorn is the inaugural MultihullCup which, after a false start in 2015, cruised into action in Majorca's Port Adriano last weekend. Raced over three days, Friday 16 to Sunday 18 September, the Cup attracted six entrants and proved that it has legs (or should we say 'hulls') to grow and develop in years to come.

Organiser Andrea Grimm, said, "The MultihullCup is born from a paucity of suitable regattas in the Mediterranean for larger performance multihulls. While races such as Les Voiles de Saint Barth have a multihull class, there has been no such regatta in the Med dedicated solely to these popular yachts."

California-based yacht designers Morrelli & Melvin laid claim to four of the Cup's entrants: two 66ft Gunboats *Coco de Mer* (2008) and *Outnumbered*, a third 66ft Gun-

boat *Slim* (2012) finished by Cape Town's Jaz Marine, and the brand new HH66 *R-Six* (2016) built in China by HH Catamarans. Next was the smallest MultihullCup entrant 60ft *Dragon* (2013) from the drawing board of Brittany-based bañuls design and built by Australian-owned McConaghy Boats. And, rounding off the line-up, the largest in the fleet, 78ft *Allegra* (2014) designed by renowned naval architect Nigel Irens and built by Southampton-based Green Marine.

Day one heralded light-to-medium north-westerly winds, ideal for blowing the cobwebs away and getting crew in the mood for racing. The start line was placed off El Toro, with the uninhabited island of Dragonera, Majorca's westernmost point, the upwind mark. And a stunning turning mark it was with some yachts passing within a boat length of the towering cliffs. Positions changed regularly but *Allegra* performed well in challenging conditions between Dragonera and mainland Majorca and went on to take line honours at the end of the 21 nautical mile race. *Slim* and *R-Six* crossed the line within a minute of each other. On corrected time, *R-Six* was declared the day's winner followed by *Slim*, *Allegra*, *Coco de Mer* and *Dragon*. *Outnumbered* (it seems by name

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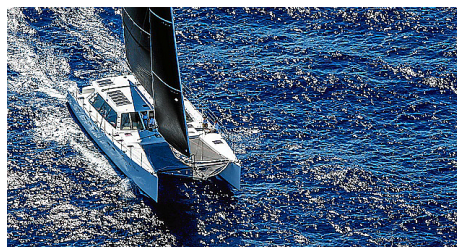




All the entries first day. PHOTO: JESUS RENEDO



R-Six winners. PHOTO: JESUS RENEDO



Coco de Mer 2nd. PHOTO: JESUS RENEDO



Slim 3rd. PHOTO: JESUS RENEDO



Allegra 4th. PHOTO: JESUS RENEDO



Dragon 5th. PHOTO: JESUS RENEDO



Owners. PHOTO: JESUS RENEDO



and by nature on this occasion) did not finish. Thanks to a forecast for stronger north-westerlies up to 22 knots, Saturday was described as an 'epic day'. Starting once more at El Toro, the course wove upwind to a turning mark at Puerto Andratx back down to a marker two miles off lighthouse-clad Cap de Cala Figuera and then back to El Toro. All yachts got away cleanly except for *Allegra* who had to re-cross the start line leaving her with a six minute deficit to make up. And, thanks to her length and sail plan, make it up she did taking line honours for the second day running. Others were less fortunate with *Dragon* losing its main halyard and *Slim* shredding a spinnaker, although spectators were more than happy with the action which included some impressive high-speed hull flying. Having crossed the line in second place, *Coco de Mer* took the win on corrected time with *R-Six* in second. This left *R-Six* in pole position after two days' racing. Lighter winds forced the committee to opt for a shorter course on day three with lots of corners to keep crew busy with constant sail changes. Although no more than 12 knots was expected, yachts sparred for position and *R-Six* made up a five minute shortfall on *Allegra* to beat her across the line - denying her three consecutive line honours and, more importantly, handing *R-Six* the trophy. *Coco de Mer* finished a measly second ahead of *Slim* with *Dragon* coming home soon after. Final results gave the MultihullCup to *R-Six*, with *Coco de Mer* second, *Slim* in third, *Allegra* fourth and *Dragon* fifth. *Outnumbered* enjoyed the sailing and camaraderie but was unable to race hard having arrived at Port Adriano direct from a punishing transatlantic crossing. "It was an inspired decision to choose Port Adriano to host the MultihullCup," said Andrea. "Each and every member of the Marina's team from mariners to office staff, cleaning personnel to restaurant workers, had

smiling faces and made the entire event a complete pleasure and success from beginning to end. First-time visitors to Port Adriano were overwhelmed with the location and atmosphere and we're already talking about 2017."

The second edition of the MultihullCup will take place in Port Adriano from 1 to 3 September 2017 - www.multihullcup.com.

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