

Offshore



THE MAGAZINE OF THE CRUISING YACHT CLUB OF AUSTRALIA

Yachting

OCT/NOV 1998
AUST. \$4.95*
(NZ \$6.50 inc GST)
PP297537/00113

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All the Races North

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XXXXSydney -
Gold
Coast
Race

Liked the boat, bought the company

The Sydney 60, Sydney, took out the rare double of line and IMS corrected time honours in the XXXX Sydney - Gold Coast Race, but it was the slowest on record.

Remember the television advertisement about the American businessman who liked the Remington electric shaver so much that he bought the company? Yachting has the equivalent in prominent Sydney businessman and investor Charles Curran.

When Curran, a successful offshore sailor in the 1970s, decided to return to active ocean racing, he placed the first order for a Sydney 60, a fast but comfortable pilothouse IMS/CHS racer/cruiser designed by America's Cup skipper and designer Iain Murray and his associates, Ian Burns and Andy Dovell, and built by Bashford International at Nowra, south of Sydney.

Curran was delighted with the product and impressed with the production and marketing expertise of Bashfords. Sadly, the founder of the building company, successful yachtsman Ian Bashford, died suddenly a couple of years



back leaving the future of the company in some doubt, despite their successful export market for Etchells, J24s, Hobie catamarans and the popular Bashford/Howison 41 cruiser/racers.

Curran, along with Iain Murray and the marketing and promotion company, Kookaburra, joined Ian Bashford's young widow, Louise, in continuing and expanding Bashford International.

Curran became chairman of the board.

Under his leadership, Bashford has continued and expanded its international market, the most notable success being the selection by the Royal Ocean Racing Club of the Sydney 40 One Design as the "middle yacht" for teams for the 1999 Admiral's Cup at Cowes.

The first of up to 15 yachts to be built and in the UK by the end of June, 1999, made its debut in the 386 nautical mile race north to Southport. Unfortunately, rudder damage forced the retirement of this yacht, Sledgeham-

Left: Queensland-owned Mumm 36, Theiss Processing Engineering (Bill Wild) got one of the best starts in the Sydney - Gold Coast Race and led early from Fudge (P1 Lease Future Shock from Melbourne, Zoe and Secret Men's Business. (Pic Peter Campbell)



Honour Roll

IMS Division 1: 1. Sydney, Sydney 60 (Charles Curran, CYCA); 2. Kingtide, Sydney 36 (Kevin Pearce, RSAYS, SA); 3. Zoe, Sydney 41 (Ivan When, RSYS)

IMS Division 2: 1. Adria, J44 (Chris Gorman, CYCA); 2. Indian Pacific (Richard Hudson, RPAVC); 3. King Billy, Jarkan 38 (Phillip Bennett, RPAVC)

IMS Division 3: 1. Time Out, Farr 1020 (Colin Boyle, MHYC) Only finisher

PHS Division A: 1. Marchioness, Lavranos maxi (Marchioness Syndicate, CYCA); 2. Fudge, Elliott 55 (Peter Hansen, Sandringham YC, Vic); 3. Icefire, Mummery 55 (Richard & Pat Goldstiver, CYCA)

PHS Division B: 1. Razors Edge, Mount Gay 30 (Ray Stone, MHYC); 2. Cuckoos Nest, Mount Gay 30 (Nigel Holman, MYC); 3. Wild Bull, Bull 9000 (Rod Skellet, CYCA); Line Honours: Sydney (Charles Curran, CYCA) 2 days 12 hours 37 minutes 15 seconds.

But first the good news...

Curran got his first major dividend on the water when he sailed his Sydney 60, aptly named *Sydney*, to its first major ocean racing victory in the Sydney - Gold Coast Race, taking line honours after a slow and demanding duel northwards with the Lavranos-designed/Steinmann optimised maxi yacht, *Marchioness*.

Sydney's elapsed time, 2 days 12 hours 37 minutes 15 seconds proved to be the slowest yet for the race, first held in 1986 with the opening of the Gold Coast Seaway. As the rest of the fleet - cut from 76 starters to just 40 finishers - slowly followed her to the Southport Yacht Club, the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia confirmed that *Sydney* had won a rare double - line honours and first overall on IMS corrected time as well as first in IMS Division 1 against a strong IMS line-up.

To cap off a good result for Bashford International and chairman Curran, the Sydney 36 *Kingtide*, skippered by Kevan Pearce from Adelaide, placed second behind the Sydney 60 in IMS Division 1, with the Sydney 41, *Zoe*, owned by Sydney yachtsman Ivan When, third.

"The boat performed exceedingly well in a testing race," Curran said later. "The Sydney 60, even with an extensive cruising layout, including three double cabins and 10 additional crew berths, two heads with showers, microwave, deep freeze, watermaker and mahogany veneer interior finish is a potent racing force. She offers the ideal combination of fast cruising comfort and the capability to win major

races," he added.

While *Sydney's* win was the first in the Gold Coast Race for Curran, it was the third line honours victory for sailing master David Kellett, having won previously with *Sovereign* and *Condor of Currabubula*.

The one downside of the Sydney-Gold Coast Race for Bashfords was the forced retirement of the brand new Sydney AC 40, *Sledgehammer*, on the second day of the race north. Owner/skipper Ron Jones put into Port Macquarie after reporting steering problems, with the yacht taking water through the bearings.

However, it seems to have been only a minor glitch and after hours on the slips the yacht continued north for the major regattas in Queensland.

Another Sydney yachtsman and well known businessman, Chris Gorman, also achieved one of his best results with his American-built J44, *Adria*, winning IMS Division 2 and placing third overall under the Performance Curve Scoring.

Gorman, CEO of stockbrokers Ord Minnett, who sponsor Middle Harbour Yacht Club's popular short ocean racing regatta in late November, sails this boat well and was the second cruiser/racer to finish behind Geoffrey's Ross' Farr-designed Beneteau 50, *Yendys*. *Adria* won Division 2 comfortably from the Farr 40, *Indian Pacific*, which won the galeswept 1984 Sydney to Hobart. *Indian Pacific* is now owned by Royal Prince Alfred Yacht Club past commodore Richard Hudson who is steadily bringing the 15-year-old sloop back to winning form.



Pittwater yachtsman Ron Jones aboard his newly launched Sydney AC 40 one-design, *Sledgehammer*, before the yacht's first race - the Sydney - Gold Coast. Unfortunately, *Sledgehammer* had to withdraw with steering problems. (Peter Campbell)

Middle Harbour yachtsman Colin Boyle proved that last is not least with *Time Out*, the John King-designed Jarkan 38. *Time Out* was last to finish and the only IMS Division 3 boat to complete the course within the time limit. On corrected time, she placed fifth overall as well as winning the division.

The strong-partying *Marchioness*, after losing line honours, had something to celebrate when it became clear that the maxi had won PHS Division A on corrected time, beating *Fudge*, Peter Hansen's Elliott 55 which is better known as *Future Shock*.

PHS Division B was a battle all the way north between the Sports 30 boats, with just over half an hour between the Bull 9000, *Wild Bull*, the Mount Gay 30s, *Razor's Edge* and *Cuckoos Nest*, and the Victorian Bull 9000, *Full as a Bull*. On corrected time *Razor's Edge* (Ray Stone) won from *Cuckoos Nest* (Nigel Holman) and *Wild Bull* (Rod Skellet).

... and from a young perspective

Cruising Yacht Club of Australia Youth Sailing Academy students sailed on several yachts in the-1998 Sydney - Gold Coast Race. For Renee Deerness, it was her first offshore race.

As part of a 12-week sailing program organised by the Cruising Yacht Club, five Youth Sailing Academy students were fortunate enough to gain crew positions aboard *Morning Mist III* for this year's race to Southport.

Of the five, Ben Croucher, Renee Deerness, Brooke Hardy, Bradley Owen and Lucy Scanlan, four of us were embarking on our first offshore race. Two weeks before the race, we were introduced to the mechanics and the surrounds of *Morning Mist III*. As safety procedures were explained, and gear displayed, we were very excited, yet nervous.

Saturday, August 1 arrived and we met the rest of the crew for the long race and, after good-byes to families and friends, we headed out to the start on Sydney Harbour.

Morning Mist III got a good start and had the honour of being the first boat out through the Heads. With the south-westerly breeze blowing at 5 to 8 knots, we thought we would be lucky enough to reach along the coast.

However, our luck - and the breeze - soon changed, resulting in continuous tacks to make the most of the north-easterly breeze and at the same time, avoid the south-running East Australian Current. This made our off-watch relatively uncomfortable at first, having to swap bunks from one side to the other mid-sleep to keep weight to windward. However, we soon got used to the routine.

As the first night passed we were able to get to know the fantastic crew on board. Who could forget John Oliver's desperate attempts to recreate Gold Coast nightlife through the establishment of "Club Bow", open to those members of the bow with coordinated off-watch times.

Then there were Fraser's geography lessons, and subsequent tests of the New South Wales and Queensland coasts; Julie's progress reports each morning and afternoon which gave us some comfort that the Southport Yacht Club and bar were getting closer; and, eventually, Craig Nichols' and Ian Polkinghorne's continuous jokes.

Another adjustment we needed to make was that of not showering for four days. We soon learnt that everyone smells more or less the same. Also, to maintain body temperature between four and five in the morning, you must wear every bit of clothing you brought with you - so no-one changed clothes!

Our result, fifth across the finish line, was an indication of the testing conditions, yet we all enjoyed ourselves immensely. Thanks must go to our sponsors, the CYCA and Thakral Property Management, to Dayne Sharp, Euan McNicol, and all the memorable crew on board *Morning Mist III*. - Renee Deerness, YSA Student.



Morning Mist III and her young crew sail past the maxi yacht Marchioness to lead the fleet out through the Heads in the XXXX Sydney - Gold Coast Race. (Pic - Peter Campbell)

Slow boat to Southport

Denise Richards, navigator on the Lyons 43, *Atara*, not only kept the CYCA informed on what was happening at sea, filing daily e-mail reports through Satcom-C, but also wrote this report for OFFSHORE.

DAY ONE:

The race starts as predicted with light winds, and although we get a good start, the very light fluky breeze is difficult to predict in the Harbour. Some breeze filters in behind the fleet which caused a fair number of boats to compress at the Heads. The light breeze continues offshore, we tack close to the coast for a time, then find a little of 060 just offshore. However, 5 1/2 hours later *Atara* (and many other boats) have not passed Broken Bay.

We remain offshore overnight and the breeze swings between 330 to 360 and at times 040-060. At 0130 hours we see some small WNW generated waves, giving us some cause for concern as it may have meant that inshore the land breeze is stronger. Out here, the breeze overnight remains between 4 to 8 knots.

DAY TWO:

Just before sunrise on Sunday we see many navigation lights, and eagerly await sun-up to see who they were. When the sun does rise we are quite dismayed, we had lost a lot of ground overnight. Just before the sked at 0835 hours we are 10 miles south of Sugarloaf. As I sit listening to the sked our worst fears are confirmed. The leading yachts in the 40 to 48 footer group are 15 to 18 miles ahead.

With the forecast for a light sea breeze we have a major job on our hands to play the game of catch-up.

About midday we are about one mile off the coast and some 13 miles south of Crowdy Head, with a drifter up. Finally, the sea breeze begins to kick in and we changed to a No 1 light. Very quickly the breeze increases to 18 knots. With the No 1 medium hoisted, the crew on the rail, we are off for some sailing!

The sea breeze continues until early evening then backs to 330 and drops to 5 knots. We are not going offshore again and work hard to keep the boat moving, waiting for the land breeze. The land breeze keeps us moving along overnight.

DAY THREE:

At 0300 *Atara* tacks close to shore, about one mile off Smoky Cape. Then the breeze clocks back again to 240 and wind speed increases to 8 knots. The sea state is bumpy due to the 18 knots sea breeze the preceding day. Hey, we are moving!!

Later on in the morning, heading for Coffs Harbour, we are enjoying a glorious, sunny day with a little sea breeze. Then comes the decision - step out offshore or stay close to the coast? We elect to remain inshore and out of the set.

During the afternoon we enjoy some decent wind direction and speed. By mid afternoon *Atara* is north of Woolgoolga, working the shoreline in a NW to NNW breeze blowing between 8 to 15 knots with calm seas. *Maglieri Wines* and *Rapscallion* are behind us, and we believe that *Secret Mens Business* and *Sword of Orion* went offshore where a ridge of clouds have been all day. Maybe there is a stronger NE sea breeze out there?

Atara has made up some ground but there is still a long way to go. *Zoe*

and *Industrial Quest* still have a strong lead, as did *Sledgehammer*, but she retires with rudder problems and headed to Port Macquarie.

DAY FOUR:

As expected, the breeze lightens overnight, and once again we are

“Funny out here tonight, the seas are calm with a clear sky, lots of stars, and a few shooting stars out to sea. Perfect if we were cruising!”

waiting for the land breeze. At 0010 hours the wind is light from the NW and easing. We still have about 75 miles to the finish. At this speed, 5 knots, we have an ETA at Southport of 1400 hrs today. But I'm not giving much credence to the ETA, the fore-

It's official, sail battens are not mentioned in the bible

That's right, and neither is pizza, basketball, the Fremantle Doctor or Rupert Murdoch (we don't think so anyway).

Despite the fact that sailors the world over believe that the yacht is divine and therefore favoured greatly by the Creator, it doesn't get a guernsey in the good book.

But when you're far from hearth, home and a warm bed and the weather turns ugly, while you may pray to God to deliver you from the storm, what you really count on is the quality and reliability of your gear to get you through.

Bluestreak battens are made tough for tough conditions. It's good to know that when things blow up, the years we spent worrying about getting the design and the materials right mean that you don't have to worry at all.

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Denise Richards, navigator aboard *Atara*, before setting sail on her slowest race to Southport. (Pic - Peter Campbell)

cast is still for light and variable NE to NW winds later on today.

The crew has turned their minds to their booked air flights out of the Gold Coast today, as it is quite clear none of us will make it over the finish line in time. In preparing for the race I had thought that by this time we would have been at Southport. Our food supplies are running low, but I pack away a reserve of hot dogs and the boys are all suddenly eager to cook. I wonder why?

Funny out here tonight, the seas are calm with a clear sky, lots of stars, and a few shooting stars out to sea. Perfect if we were cruising!

At 0630 hours after a slow overnight passage we spot many yachts up ahead. Through binoculars we identify *Ninety Seven*, *Industrial Quest*, *Terra Firma* and presume they sailed into a calm patch, one of many on this voyage.

We sail up inside of them with a magnificent speed of 2.1 knots. The drifter is certainly getting a lot of work this trip. We gain ground sailing inshore and catch up with them about five miles south of Ballina, then the wind eases again.

With so many yachts all com-

pressed again it's like starting the race over again from here. We are a happy bunch on *Atara* this morning, the breeze is from 230 at 3.6 knots with a drifter up, just 57 miles to sail as the crow flies.

Later that Tuesday morning the breeze kicks in from the NE 036 at 12 knots but eases back as we approach Cape Byron. Sailing around the Cape is hard work, we are very close inshore with little breeze. Roger comments that the spectators lining the foreshore and waving to us are out-pacing us.

Passing Cape Byron we again hug the shoreline with the NW breeze at 8 knots. Just ahead of us are *Ninety Seven*, *Zoe* and *Secret Mens Business* and about one mile further ahead is *Terra Firma*. *Industrial Quest*, *Sword of Orion* and *Maglieri Wines* are now about 15 minutes behind.

As we give *Zoe* time we need desperately to get ahead of her. However, it is still a way to go, and with these fickle breezes you never know your luck. It's never over till the Fat Lady Sings!!

As we continue northward toward Cudgen Headland in a 2 to 3 knot northerly I go below for a sleep. The crew call as we approach Cudgen and I find *Terra Firma*, *Zoe* and *Ninety Seven* still ahead. We sail around Cudgen with *Zoe* and *Ninety Seven* in close company. *Terra Firma* appears to be taking the inside route through Danger Reef. We decide to sail through on the outside of Cook Island.

The breeze picks up from the SW

and we get some good speed on approaching the island under kite. Suddenly, the breeze backs and we are forced to bear away sharply, what a time to have a major wind change. Once through Danger Reef we keep slightly offshore. *Terra Firma* remains inshore, with *Zoe* and *Ninety Seven* astern of us.

It is about 1940 hours when we pass Point Danger and I radio in with an ETA of 2100 hours. We have good wind strength and with a spinnaker hoisted on a shy reach we believe we can make it.

Half way across the bay to the finish line, the breeze stops, then backs to the NW. Spinnaker comes down, headsail goes up and then a rain storm sweeps through. It has been a dry race until this point. We all stand on deck drenched. We approach the finish line near to the inner distance mark and finally cross the line at 2135 hours. It has certainly been a long and arduous race, frustrating and very difficult to predict.

Once ashore I head for the shower (man's greatest invention) as I stand there reflecting this, being the longest Sydney - Gold Coast I had ever sailed.

But hey, *Atara* is blessed with a great skipper and crew. What more can a person ask for? ▲

For the record: *Atara*, skippered by Roger Hickman, was seventh yacht across the line, with an elapsed time of 3 days, 08 hours, 35 minutes 59 seconds. She also placed seventh overall under IMS handicap and fifth in IMS Division 1.

