

offshore

YACHTING

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AUDI SYDNEY GOLD COAST YACHT RACE

Ed Psaltis and Bob Thomas's modified Farr 40 *AFR Midnight Rambler* was declared the IRC Overall Winner of the 24th Audi Sydney Gold Coast Yacht Race. After a long tough and hard race, but one that was strangely emotional, for owner Ed Psaltis.

"This IRC overall win means a lot to us – it has been the only east coast ocean race that we hadn't won overall – and now we have so it's truly outstanding," said Ed.

Co-owner Bob Thomas said, "Ed and the crew put a lot of work into the boat, so that she was ready to perform to her best. Ed was the key driver of all the boat modifications and with her new sail wardrobe she performed to her best. I think this race was one of the hardest races I've done in a long time – harder than the last five Hobarts and probably the hardest the boat has done since our overall win in the 1998 Hobart.

"The boat didn't have its fair share of luck, but she survived the whole race without a crack in the paintwork, all due to the diligent work of our crew. I thank the crew for all their efforts in this race, and look forward to working with them over the season."

For Ed and Bob this also marks the commencement of their campaign in the CYCA's Blue Water Championship, which the duo won in 2006/07. They are looking forward to a strong performance this series and a possible second title.

Cruising Yacht Club of Australia Commodore Matt Allen said, "*AFR Midnight Rambler* is a well sailed boat and as a modified Farr 40 she performs wells in light to moderate airs. Ed Psaltis and Bob Thomas have been tireless campaigners of the CYCA's Blue Water Pointscore series and sailing program as well as achieving some good results in most east coast ocean races including Rolex Sydney Hobart, Mooloolaba and Gosford Lord Howe Island."

The 384-nautical-mile race, which began at 1pm on Saturday 25 July from Sydney Harbour, had everything – a light start with different wind conditions at either end of the start line, tacking and gybing across the harbour to get to the Heads with yachts becalmed as they tried to exit Sydney Harbour; hard on the nose wind conditions during the day with a calm but cold first evening; inshore nor'westerlies and offshore conditions that were very tough forcing make or break decisions by the tacticians; and lastly, a fresh south to south sou'west breeze which picked up the remainder of the fleet and helped them to Southport.

Whales, dolphins and flying fish provided momentary distractions from racing but the big decision all skippers and navigators had to make was whether to go offshore or stay inside the rhumbline. Those who took the offshore decision got some gains but also rough conditions on the second night. Those

who stayed inside benefited from the land breezes in the evenings.

The original fleet of 80 representing Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, New South Wales and New Zealand set off with light air spinnakers hoisted in a blaze of colour on Saturday 25 July and just over 80 hours later 69 boats had finished. Five boats retired due to damage sustained on the first day and night.

A further six boats retired from the race due to minor damage and conditions.

Robert Oatley's *Wild Oats X*, skippered by Mark Richards claimed another line honours win, crossing the finish line at 2:29pm on Monday 27 July in a race time of 2 days, 1 hr, 29 mins and 23 seconds.

After a very rough Sunday night, skipper Mark Richards was glad to dock at Southport Yacht Club. "The boat was fantastic but it was a pretty rough trip. There was quite a lot of breeze there for a while and we were on the wind the whole way up. The seas last night were very unpleasant – gnarly seas and short, sharp choppy conditions," said Richards.

"The conditions were a good test for the crew and the boat performed beautifully in the conditions. We were just a little bit unlucky where we got parked up at Byron Bay but that's yacht racing.

"We got a surprise this morning from *Loki* when she came up on our inside, as we had stayed inshore most of the evening and *Loki* had been had been offshore. When *Loki* came in, they were very close but we toughed it out. The last three to four hours of the race were where the race was won." – Jennifer Crooks

For further information visit www.goldcoast.cyca.com.au



Wild Oats X won line honours, crossing at 2:29pm.