



BEQUIA SAILING CLUB, P.O.BOX 220BQ, BEQUIA, ST. VINCENT & THE GRENADINES

BEQUIA EASTER REGATTA 2009: The biggest Regatta in the Southern Caribbean!

Easter weekend saw a remarkable achievement for the Grenadine island of Bequia and its all-volunteer Sailing Club. A record-smashing 50 yachts, together with 30 local double-enders, turned out to take part in the weekend's racing. The yacht attendance marked an increase of over 10% from last year's record, which not only makes Bequia's Regatta the biggest meet for yachts in the entire southern Caribbean, but also the only regatta in the region to have seen an increase in their attendance over 2008 figures. Bequia Regatta clearly has a winning formula with wide appeal!

The local double-enders that raced for three days the Easter weekend came from Bequia, Canouan and Carriacou and the 30- boat fleet, ranging from 12ft to 28ft in size, enjoyed a huge following as the fortunes of not one but three new boats were closely observed. *Bequia Pride*, built and skippered by Arnold Hazell, was amongst the favourites after her strong showing in Tobago's regatta earlier in February, but breakdowns and light winds on Monday challenged not only *Bequia Pride*, but many of the other boats in the double ender fleet. Overall winner in the 28 ft class was *Lightning*, another new boat built in Carriacou for Petit Martinique-born Bequia resident Boysie Decouteau, with hotly favoured *Confusion* coming a close second. *Irie*, the new boat in the 18ft Class, built by Orbin Ollivierre and owned and skippered by David Taylor, took Overall First in that class, but the result might have been even closer if *Tornado* had been able to complete the race on Saturday!

Brisk winds on Saturday brought difficulties to some in the double-ender fleet, whilst the near dead condition on Monday brought a whole new set of challenges. Some, like 83 year- old sailor and fisherman Delacey Leslie, racing in his 18ft *Devine*, which was built by him in 1969, relished the lack of wind. Others were unused to the conditions and struggled for long gruelling hours to complete the Monday race – but all who started completed safely, just in time for the Grand Prize Giving at Gingerbread Hotel where Sir James Mitchell and Dr. Godwin Friday gave opening addresses and were on hand to award the prizes.

On the yacht side of the Regatta, the fifty entries were this year divided into five Classes, with a new one-design class for the small "Surprise" boats coming from Martinique being created to join the existing one-design class for J24s and the other three classes.

The 13-boat entry for the J24 Class was another record turnout for Bequia, with Trinidad, Grenada, Barbados, St. Lucia and Dominica all represented. The highly competitive *Esperanza* and *Fadeaway* from Barbados came with a mission to take Bequia by storm, but they did not have it all their own way by any means, with strong competition in all six races and sometimes only 100ths of a second separating the first

three boats. Esperanza proved unbeatable though with four wins out of six giving them overall fist by a wide margin.

Virtually no wind on a rainy, airless Easter Monday threw the form book out of the window for the yachts too, giving unfavoured boats a chance to get lucky in rare pockets of wind. But nothing could stop the super-fast Melges 24 *Caraibes Greement* in Racing Class running away with three wins to take Overall First. In Cruising I Class, Bequia Regatta newcomer *Acadia*, a Frers 48 from the USA beat out longstanding Bequia champion *Petit Careme* into overall Second. Cruising II overall honours went to the Canadian Sun Odyssey 40 *Appleseeds*, returning for a second year determined to improve on his overall Second placing in Bequia in 2008.

Seven Martiniquan “Surprise” boats- no bigger than 25 feet, but fast, fast fast - made up the new “Surprise” Class especially created for them by the Bequia Sailing Club. If you are looking for a demonstration of skill, commitment and enthusiasm you need to look no further than to these dedicated French sailors. Not only did they compete fiercely within their own class, all seven Surprises also elected to have one of their crew compete in the challenging “Around Bequia” single-handed race on Sunday. To no-one’s surprise, it was rising French star Nicolas Gillet - who first raced in Bequia as a teenager 10 years ago – that emerged as the winner skippering the beautiful pink and black Surprise *ONLY*.

In the weekend’s three-race series for the Surprises, *Padig*, skippered by Vianney Saintenoy was the Class Overall winner in the Regatta, with only one point separating him from second-placed *ONLY* and third placed *Clipper’s Ship*.

Yachts came from near and far in the Caribbean, and from the USA, Canada, Germany and the UK to be in Bequia for Regatta. And it wasn’t only competing boats that thronged the harbour in Admiralty Bay. An estimated one hundred additional yachts came to Bequia to see the legendary local boat races, follow the yachts races or simply enjoy being in Bequia at Easter. The Regatta also attracted a record number of visitors to the island with virtually all of the accommodation fully booked. Everyone declared it was the best Regatta ever, with eager spectators lining the race starts and finishes, and fun for all the family at the ever-popular Sandcastle Competition and Crazy Craft Race on Easter Sunday in Friendship Bay. The all-volunteer Bequia Sailing Club came in for universally high praise for its organization and smooth running of the Regatta, and received many promises to return in 2010 in even greater numbers.

The Bequia Sailing Club would like to thanks their main sponsors Heineken (St. Vincent Brewery), Mount Gay and Pepsi (Bottlers Ltd.), The SVG Ministry of Tourism, Mountain Top Water, Tradewinds Cruise Club, the Frangipani Hotel, Windward Island Plantation and C. K. Greaves for their exceptionally generous and loyal support of this prestigious sporting and tourism event. Thanks must also go to all business and private donors and all the volunteers within the Sailing Club who worked so hard to make Regatta 2009 another huge success.

Click here for overall results:

BEQUIA EASTER REGATTA 2009

OVERALL RESULTS YACHTS

CRUISING CLASS 1

POSITION	NAME OF BOAT	BOAT TYPE	SKIPPER	COUNTRY
1st	Acadia	Frers 48	Burt Keenan	USA
2nd	Petit Careme	Beneteau 38	Rawle Barrow	Trinidad
3rd	Nirvana	San Juan 34	Lloyd DeRoche	Trinidad

CRUISING CLASS II

1st	Appleseeds	Sun Odyssey 40	Peter Asselstine	Canada
2nd	Carina	J 37	Dave Baker	USA
3rd	Dionysus	Hall. Rassy 39	Jack Burns	USA

RACING CLASS

1st	Caraibes Greement	Melges 24	Phillipe Leconte	France
2nd	Category 5	Hobie 35	Richard Szyjan	Grenada
3rd	Sonadio III	A 40	Eric Baray	France

J24 CLASS

1st	Esperanza	J24	Ian Mayers	Barbados
2nd	Fadeaway	J24	Charlie Gloumeau	Barbados
3rd	Die Hard	J24	Robbie Yearwood	Grenada

SURPRISE CLASS

1st	Padig	Surprise	Vianney Saintenoy	France
2nd	Only	Surprise	Nicolas Gillet	France
3rd	Clippers Ship	Surprise	Manu Velasquez	France

SINGLE HANDED CSA RATED

1st	Only	Surprise	Nicolas Poix	France
2nd	Clippers Ship	Surprise	Nicolas Gillet	France
3rd	Jabulani	J24	Peter Hoad	Barbados

FISHING BOAT OVERALL WINNERS 2009

Class	Name of boat	Skipper	Island
1	Knowledge	Ryan Marks	Bequia
2	My Love	Stanley Harry	Bequia
4	Liberty	Jamien Bess	Canouan
5A	Irie	David Taylor	Bequia
5B	More Worries	Andy Mitchell	Bequia
(tied)	Shamu	Ekron Bunyan	Bequia
6	Limbo	Allick Daniel	Bequia
7	Lightning	Benson Patrice	Bequia