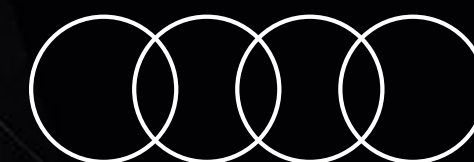


THE MAGAZINE OF THE CRUISING YACHT CLUB OF AUSTRALIA

OFFSHORE



SUMMER 2025/2026 #308



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Borderline at the Start of the ACSBWPS Bird Island Raace Race. Photo: CYCA | Ashley Dart

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COMMODORE DR. SAM HAYNES

At the helm



Welcome to the Summer edition of *Offshore*.

It's always a pleasure to address our Members and community in *Offshore* and the summer edition is always a favourite.

As activity across the Club and Marina reaches its peak, there's a shared sense of focus and purpose. Our collective attention turns to one extraordinary event: the Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race. After a year of preparation, we're now in full execution mode — and that brings a rewarding rhythm to this exhilarating time.

This year's fleet is one to celebrate, representing every Australian state and an impressive international contingent. Among the entries are five past Overall Winners, *Celestial V70*, *Love & War*, *Unicoi*, *Palm Beach XI* and *Wild Oats*, reflecting the history, passion and competitiveness that define the Great Race South.

Around the Club, the Sydney Race Village is taking shape once again, the heart of the event where Members, competitors, families and visitors come together. This year's program balances much-loved traditions with new experiences, many open to all. Bring your family, friends and anyone who's yet to experience the CYCA at its best.

Beyond the Hobart, the season ahead remains packed with opportunity. The Audi Centre Sydney Blue Water Pointscore Cabbage Tree Island Race, Australian Maxi Championship, SOLAS Big Boat Challenge, and the inaugural Southern Cross Series will all showcase the best of our racing and Club spirit.

We're also excited to introduce the inaugural Trans-Tasman Yacht Race, starting between 27 February and 1 March 2026, just ahead of the SailGP event on Sydney Harbour. The race will feature a compressed finish with boats arriving into Auckland's vibrant Viaduct district to join the festivities, a fitting celebration of our shared ocean racing heritage and friendship across the Tasman. Entries are still open so make sure to jump on board for this historic inaugural event.

I'll be racing South again this year, with Vice Commodore David Jacobs kindly taking on my Commodore duties during the race period. My thanks to him and to our Board for their ongoing support and for enabling me to take part in this milestone edition of our flagship event.

Whether you're racing, spectating, or following from afar, you can share in the excitement through Channel Nine, 9Now, CYCATV and our social channels. For the latest updates, visit cyca.com.au or join our CYCA WhatsApp Community.

I look forward to seeing you at the Club and to celebrating another remarkable chapter in our Great Race South.

Fair winds,

Dr Sam Haynes

Commodore ⚓



Photo: ROLEX | Andrea Francolini

**The 2025 Club Marine Sydney
Hobart Classic Yacht Regatta
will run from 12 -14 December.**

Photo: CYCA | Andrea Francolini.



At the turning mark: the Audi Centre Sydney Blue Water Pointscore Battle

Photos: CYCA | Ashley Dart

It's not just a collection of offshore races—it's a season-long test of performance and strategy.

The Audi Centre Sydney Blue Water Pointscore is the Australia's ultimate offshore sailing championship, where consistency counts double, and every mile sailed can be the difference between happiness and heartbreak.

Spanning six of Australia's most challenging ocean races, the Pointscore takes competitors from the 384-nautical-mile Noakes Sydney Gold Coast Yacht Race right through to the legendary Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race, a 628-nautical-mile battle that defines champions and cements reputations.

Unlike standalone races, this is a cumulative campaign. Points are tallied across the season, place high, score low and stay sharp. A single tactical slip can undo months of effort, while a standout performance in the Hobart can rewrite the leaderboard overnight.

Each competitor is allowed to drop their worst result of the season, excluding the Rolex Sydney Hobart.

With silverware on the line, including the Jack Halliday Perpetual Trophy for the IRC winner, the Wild Rose Pointscore championing female participation, and the Malcolm Halliday Perpetual Trophy for the PHS winner, there's no shortage of motivation to push harder, race smarter and dig deeper.

The ocean has a way of humbling even the most seasoned sailors. One moment you're charging down the coast in perfect breeze; the next, you're parked in a windless hole watching your rivals sail away. That unpredictability is what makes the Blue Water Pointscore so addictive and so respected.



Since 1957, this series has been the proving ground of champions. Legends like Syd Fischer, with a record nine Blue Water titles, set the benchmark. But every season brings fresh faces and new ambitions, as crews line up to chase their own piece of CYCA history.

Now, as the series passes its midpoint, the battlelines are drawn and the scoreboard is tightening. Who's leading the charge in the race for blue water glory?

Noakes Sydney Gold Coast Yacht Race

The Noakes Sydney Gold Coast Yacht Race once again proved why it's the ultimate season-opener in the Audi Centre Sydney Blue Water Pointscore — fast, tactical, and brutally exposing of early-season form.

Reigning Blue Water champion Smuggler came out swinging, storming north with a decisive offshore strategy that left rivals in her wake. Skipper Tim Davis and his crew didn't just defend their title ambitions — they made a statement. Their execution was near flawless, carving out an early lead that no one could reel in.

Right behind, the American entry Bacchanal impressed with a bold tactical move off Seal Rocks, jumping lanes to join the offshore pack and climbing from ninth to second on IRC. Hong Kong's Antipodes, a Santa Cruz 72, rounded out the podium after gambling on the wide lane to chase pressure offshore — a call that paid off in the end.

It was a race that rewarded risk-takers, punished hesitation, and set the tone for a fiercely competitive Blue Water season ahead.



Flinders Islet Race

If you blinked you missed it. The Flinders Islet Race is one of the shorter legs in the Audi Centre Sydney Blue Water Pointscore, yet it often proves one of the most challenging. This year, it delivered in spectacular style, serving up record-breaking runs, tight battles and a dramatic shuffle in the early series standings.

With a solid 15–30 knots of south-westerly breeze, the fleet tore down the coast and back, surfing through whitecaps at full throttle. URM Group smashed her own race record by nearly two hours, crossing the line in just over six hours, a blistering pace that left spray and wake in equal measure.

But it was Rob Appleyard’s Moneypenny that stole the IRC honours, holding off URM Group on corrected time after a perfectly executed start and a great downwind return. For Appleyard and crew, it was the comeback they wanted after their Gold Coast disappointment, fast and clean.

Rounding out the top three was Smuggler, proving her Gold Coast victory was no fluke. The defending Blue Water Champion continues to look sharp, stacking consistent results that could once again put her in the hunt for the season crown.

Two races down, four to go.

Tollgate Islands Race

If the Flinders Islet Race hinted at Moneypenny’s potential, the Tollgate Islands Race confirmed it. Over 260 nautical miles of shifting breeze, heavy seas and tactical decision-making, Rob Appleyard’s Reichel/Pugh 69 proved again she’s a weapon offshore, fast, finely tuned.

Starting under stormy skies, after a short postponement, Moneypenny and URM Group went head-to-head from the first tack out of Sydney Heads, leading the fleet into the night. A wild southerly battered the boats early, gusting to 40 knots before easing into more forgiving downwind conditions on the run back north.

By the finish, URM Group had once again claimed Line Honours, her second in a row, but Moneypenny’s precision on handicap sealed the IRC overall victory, adding another trophy to her growing collection and strengthening her position in the Blue Water standings.

In third came Bacchanal, bouncing back from a lively start and showing impressive consistency after her Gold Coast and Flinders Islet performances. The American-flagged JPK 11.80 continues to punch well above her size, proving herself a genuine contender in this season’s international mix.

Three races in and we could safely say: Moneypenny has momentum, URM Group has speed, and the chase pack, led by Smuggler and Bacchanal, weren’t backing off anytime soon.

Bird Island

Despite a slow start, the Bird Island Race on Saturday 15 November was anything but boring.

The fleet completed the 83-nautical-mile course to Bird Island (which sits off Norah Head) and back in northeasterly winds.

In its first Audi Centre Sydney Blue Water Pointscore race of the season, Matt Allen and James Mayo’s Master Lock Comanche delivered. The 100-footer not only took Line Honours but also claimed the win on PHS and finished second Overall.

Anthony and David Johnston’s URM Group placed second to Moneypenny in both the Flinders Islet and Tollgate Islands races. This time, however, the Reichel/Pugh Maxi 72 secured its first Overall win of the season.

Meanwhile, a surprise storm cell cost Appleyard and the Moneypenny crew a valuable 15-minutes. The yacht placed third on Line Honours and seventh Overall.

“What a race!” Appleyard shared. “We copped a huge storm cell that no other boat near us saw. We were wiped out and laid flat for around 15 minutes, causing a massive loss of time.

“But the crew came out of it safe and the boat with only minimal damage. That’s ocean racing.”

JPK 10.30 Min River co-skippers Jiang Lin and Matteo Brignoli had to contend with a broken speedo, but that didn’t stop the duo from winning on IRC in the Double Handed Division.

US entry Bacchanal continued its strong season. Ronald Epstein’s JPK 11.80 topped IRC Division 2. The yacht holds onto its Overall lead in the 2025/26 Audi Centre Sydney Blue Water Pointscore on 21-points. Four-points back on 25 is Seb Bohm’s JV TP52 Smuggler, followed by Moneypenny and URM Group tied for third on 35-points.

Note: Race results don’t always reflect the Pointscore standings. Some yachts may place on the podium in individual races but may not have entered the Pointscore or only participated in specific races. Their results will not be counted in the Pointscore standings.



*Results as of 18 November 2025

IRC Top 5 Standings

- 1. URM Group – Anthony and David Johnston - 5 points
- 2. Smuggler – Sebastian Bohm - 7 points
- 3. Moneypenny – Rob Appelyard - 8 points
- 4. Highly Sprung – Mark Spring - 11 points
- 5. Bacchanal – Ronald Epstein - 13 points

PHS Top 5 Standings

- 1. Le Tiroflan – Chris Taylor - 8 points
- 2. URM Group – Anthony and David Johnston - 16 points
- 3. Moneypenny – Rob Appelyard - 17 points
- 4. Wot’s Next – Charles Cupit - 21 points
- =. Highly Sprung – Mark Spring - 21 points

Photos: CYCA | Ashley Dart

Money Penny claims Overall Tollgate Islands Win



Photo: CYCA | Bow Caddy Media.

The perfect offshore training run - the Tollgate Islands Race was another epic race start for another Audi Centre Sydney Blue Water Pointscore race.

The third race in the pointscore kicked off in spectacular fashion on Friday 17 October at 1900 hours after a two-hour postponement due to forecasted thunderstorms.

Anthony and David Johnston's Reichel/Pugh Maxi 72 URM Group and Rob Appleyard's Reichel/Pugh 69 Money Penny led the fleet of 22 out of Sydney Heads at a cracking pace.

Conditions

The fleet dealt with a feisty southerly in the early hours of the race, with gusts of up to 40-knots. The wind calmed down and shifted to the south east by 2200 hours later that night. At 0600 hours on Saturday 19 October, the breeze further dropped to 7-10 knots.

The top end of the fleet was lucky to experience south-south east conditions for most of the ride home from Tollgate Islands off the coast of Bateman's Bay. URM Group and Money Penny recorded speeds of around 9-12 knots on the way back up the coast. Meanwhile, the middle and back-end of the fleet experienced upwind conditions in a nor'easter en route to the finish.

URM Group claims Line Honours... again!

The URM Group crew backed up their Flinders Islet Race Line Honours win in September to cross the finish line at 2217 hours on Saturday 18 October after one day, three hours 17 minutes and 56 seconds at sea.

Money Penny arrived 20-minutes later, while Mark Spring's TP52 Highly Sprung crossed the line in third on Sunday 19 October at 0650 hours.

The Double Handed yacht Blue Planet (Chris O'Neill) was the final boat across the line at 01:52 hours Monday 20 October.

Overall winner - Money Penny is in it to win it

The Money Penny crew proved their Flinders Islet Race Overall win was more than beginner's luck. The crew, who mostly hail from Western Australia, have caused a stir with impressive results so far this season. The Reichel/Pugh 69 claimed two titles, the Overall win on IRC and Overall win on PHS.

Photo: CYCA | Ashley Dart



Divisional winners

IRC Division 2

The JPK 11.80 Bacchanal (owned by Ronald Epstein, who was not on board for the race) had a wobbly start after the crew hoisted a spinnaker in gusts well above 25 knots.

Boat captain Kieran Searle shared the outcome of the kite hoist.

"Ron [the owner] told me to try to win the race, so we put the kite up in the Harbour," Searle said with a laugh. "As we were dropping it, we broached and tore it in a gust, we should have dropped it 10 seconds earlier."

Bacchanal recovered to claim the win on IRC Division 2.

PHS Division 2

Double Handed yacht Verite, co-skippered by Paul Beath and Massimiliano Fonzo, beat out its fully-crewed competitors to claim the win on PHS Division 2.

The J99 had a faultless race. The co-skippers also claimed the Overall win on IRC and PHS in the Double Handed Division following a tight tussle with fellow Double Handed competitors Blue Planet, Jupiter and The Gaffer.

IRC Corinthian & Wild Rose

Michael Rowe and Ben Martin's Cookson 12 Kanreki finished at around 1500 hours on Sunday afternoon, in time for the crew to enjoy beverages at the Club to celebrate their win on IRC Corinthian. They also won on Wild Rose IRC (the crew is comprised of a minimum 25 percent women crew).🍷





2025/26 AUDI CENTRE SYDNEY BLUE WATER POINTSCORE

26 JUL	NOAKES SYDNEY GOLD COAST YACHT RACE
20 SEP	FLINDERS ISLET RACE + SUNDAY SESSION
17 OCT	TOLLGATE ISLANDS RACE + SUNDAY SESSION
15 NOV	BIRD ISLAND RACE + SUNDAY SESSION
05 DEC	CABBAGE TREE ISLAND RACE + SUNDAY SESSION
26 DEC	ROLEX SYDNEY HOBART YACHT RACE

SIX OCEAN CHALLENGES. ONE OFFSHORE CHAMPION.

Audi Centre Sydney Blue Water Pointscore

URM Group claims Overall Bird Island Win



Photos: CYCA | Ashley Dart

From a slow sail out of the harbour to fast, spinnaker-powered finishes, the Audi Centre Sydney Blue Water Pointscore Bird Island Race fleet experienced it all.

In its first Audi Centre Sydney Blue Water Pointscore race of the season, Master Lock Comanche unsurprisingly led from start to finish. The 100-footer completed the 83-nautical-mile course in 5 hours, 43 minutes and 52 seconds.

The red-and-black speed machine, co-skipped by Matt Allen and James Mayo, also claimed victory on PHS Overall.

Mark Ayto's Western Morning was the final yacht home. The S&S 34 crossed the line just after 0646 hours on Sunday, after 20 hours, 26 minutes and 57 seconds at sea.

Two hours after Master Lock Comanche finished, Anthony and David Johnston's URM Group blasted into the harbour under spinnaker. After placing second to Robert Appleyard's Reichel/Pugh 69 Moneypenny in both the Flinders Islet and Tollgate Islands races, the Reichel/Pugh Maxi 72 finally secured the Overall win the crew had been chasing. Olympian Olivia Price and Olympian/SailGP athlete Jason Waterhouse were on board for the race.

Master Lock Comanche placed second on IRC Overall, with Mark Spring's TP52 Highly Sprung in third. Highly Sprung's crew included a strong contingent of former and current CYCA Youth Sailing Academy sailors: Nick Drummond, Nathan Gulliksen, Campbell Geeves, Mark Murray, Hamish Vass and Max Brennan.

The US entry Bacchanal continued its strong season. Ronald Epstein's JPK 11.80 claimed the top spot on IRC Division 2.

"The Bird Island Race was very special for us as it marked the one year anniversary of Bacchanal's first outing," Epstein said. "The competition was outstanding, as it has been for each of the Blue Water Pointscore races, and we're quite excited about our performance in some challenging conditions.

"A great tune up for the 80th Rolex Sydney Hobart coming up next month."

Peter Wrigley and Andrew Kearnan's TP52 KOA placed first on IRC Corinthian, followed by Richard Hudson's IC 45 MOD Pretty Woman in second and Ron Forster and Phil Damp's Beneteau First 40 Ariel in third.



Pretty Woman also placed first in the Wild Rose Pointscore (minimum 25 percent women crew across the ACSBWPS season), ahead of Jiang Lin's JPK 10.30 Min River (DH) and Michael Rowe and Ben Martin's Cookson 12 Kanreki.

Toucan, Min River, Crux, Borderline and Verite put on a great show in the Double Handed Division.

Min River co-skippers Jiang Lin and Matteo Brignoli had to contend with a broken speedo, but that didn't stop the duo from winning on IRC in the Double Handed Division. Lin and Brignoli also opted to sail a more conservative and direct route back to Sydney, influenced by the "unfriendly clouds and strong wind forecast".

Andy Offord and Andrew Downing finished second on board the Sun Fast 3300 Borderline, with Edward Curry-Hyde and Lincoln Dews' sistership Toucan in third.

Meanwhile, Paul Beath's J/99 Verite, last month's Tollgate Islands Race IRC DH winner, took out PHS Double Handed, with Min River second and Toucan third.

Up next is the 172-nautical-mile Cabbage Tree Island Race, starting Friday, 5 December. ⚓



Photos: CYCA | Ashley Dart



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**BLUE WATER
POINTSCORE**

25 / 26



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Sydney Hobart veteran shares downwind heavy-air sailing knowledge



A 500-plus audience (in-person and online) hung off every gem of wisdom offered by three “rockstar” offshore sailors at the CYCA’s Downwind Sailing in Heavy Air Information Evening on Thursday 10 July.

The event was held in response to recommendations from the 2024 Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race Incident Report.

In addition to having competed in an impressive array of international offshore races, the panelists Adam “Brownie” Brown, Jack Macartney and Mike “Greenie” Green, have collectively started in 80 Rolex Sydney Hobarts.

CYCA Commodore Sam Haynes moderated the 90 minute event where the panelists shared their knowledge of and opinions on a range of offshore-sailing focused topics and answered questions from audience members.

Meet Brownie

Brownie is an offshore racing specialist, with three Overall Sydney Hobart victories (1992 – Ragamuffin, 2008 – Quest and 2015 – Balance). He crewed on board Geoffrey Hill’s Santa Cruz 72 Antipodes in the 2024 Rolex Sydney Hobart.

He was on board the Reichel Pugh 44 Sword on Orion in the 1998 Sydney Hobart which underwent a 360-degree roll and, as a result, dismasted en route to Eden. One crew member, Glyn Charles, tragically died.

Offshore magazine has noted the highlights (and there were many) from Brownie’s conversation with Sam Haynes this July.

Feedback loop between crew members

Sam Haynes: What does the feedback loop look like on a boat in strong wind conditions?

Brownie: Constant feedback. There should always be communication between the helmsperson and the trimmers. The trimmers will, by default, always feel the pressure before the helmsperson does because they are on the end of the sheet, so they can talk to the helmsperson. But if the boat’s overpowered, it is up to the helmsperson to communicate that back to the trimmers.



Physics of sailing and how to recover from a broach**

One of the things we forget in sailing is the fundamentals of the physics of what we are trying to achieve. We are trying to achieve foils [sails] and aquatic foils [rudder] to work in harmony with each other to balance out the high and the low-pressure cells within that configuration. So, if sailing is hard, well then it shouldn't be.

The automatic response is to turn the helm against that low pressure, which means you are exacerbating another low pressure in the aquatic sense with the rudder turning hard. Suddenly, you are fighting the situation.

Try and sail the boat as if it is on railway tracks where everything is parallel. I see so many people with the helm hard over trying to get themselves out of a broach. But if you straighten up the rudder, let the water flow over the rudder equally on both sides, the boat will speed up and you can pick your time to bear away.

How to prevent a death roll*

The reason for a death roll in boats with symmetrical spinnakers, is that the air travels faster around the outside of the sail than on the inside of the sail. By flattening the spinnaker out, it slows the speed of the air away from the outside of the sail and makes it more balanced with the inside of the sail.

The best way to try and reduce that roll is with tweakers. Tweakers down [on], spinnaker sheet on, pole back will flatten that sail and all a sudden you will end up with some control.

How do you ensure a safe and successful gybe?

- 1) If you have just changed watches, it takes a while for crew to settle into a trim and steering zone before they feel comfortable. On the 52 footers, there is upwards of seven or eight people that change watches at a time. I would suggest that a proper handover is completed.
- 2) There is a tendency for everyone to start talking and it breeds complete confusion. There should be straightforward processes that the boat follows on a regular basis. For example, if you are going to pull a spinnaker down, it should be done the same way each time, do not reinvent the wheel.
- 3) Make sure crew are in their roles. The higher the risk, the more I encourage people to go back to what I call starting positions. Own those roles because that is your area of expertise. I would also make sure that your lead helmsperson is steering the boat through the gybe.
- 4) There are lots of things to consider outside of sail trim, like torches on deck and to check that crew are tethered on.

Now for the gybe itself:

- 1. Pick the appropriate wave. If you pick a wave and you surf down it, you have decreased the power and apparent wind* in the sail, therefore the boat should be unloaded.
- 2. Bring the mainsheet in. Quite often there are two winches on a mainsheet. There is no reason you cannot use two mainsheet winches so that the main sail comes in at twice the speed.

The most dangerous section of the gybe is when the mainsheet is only a quarter of the way in, and you have not got enough helm grip to hold the boat, and she gets a bit unstable. So, when you go to decide to gybe, the mainsheet must come on.

- 3. Make sure the traveller is centred and locked off. It is all very well to centre the mainsheet, but then suddenly, the traveller swings across.
- 4. Through the gybe. Refer to the Windex [wind indicator on the mast], let the leach [back edge of the sail] fall through/ come across and then let the mainsheet out [after the gybe].

How do you stop unexpected gybes?

I recommend to scull* the waves. To go straight down a wave is to go into the mine. To go straight up a wave, you are potentially going to launch the boat straight through it.

To scull the waves is to put the bow down to increase your apparent wind speed. That will help balance the boat out and you won't fight the rudder as much. It's all about feel.

In the 1998 Sydney Hobart, we [Sword of Orion] were small in our sail area. Eventually we just had a storm jib up. What we found was there was no wind at the bottom of the waves. We did not have enough horsepower to go up the wave and then scull the boat off the top of the wave. I am not telling you what sail to have up, but it is that fine balance between the horsepower to get up the wave and then being able to peel off the back of the wave. And small, displacement boats are quite characteristic of those issues.

Boom preventers*

If the preventer is coming in at mid-boom and you have a boom that's designed for end boom sheeting, you have doubled the load on the boom and run the risk of breaking it. Just be aware of that.

There was at least one Double Handed yacht which retired from the 2024 Rolex Sydney Hobart due to fatigue. Have you ever gotten to a stage where you thought - maybe we should not keep racing?

This is a subject that's very dear to my heart because in the 1998 Sydney Hobart, this is exactly what happened.

We had over 120 years of Hobart experience on the boat [Sword of Orion]. A very talented crew. We were doing well. But the crew was fatigued, and in some cases, seasickness had crept in.

We looked at the weather for a considerable amount of time and tried to work out what the best solution was. We had only just entered Bass Strait and knew that in those conditions we were up for another couple of days of this. And that was the telling point of why we made the decision [to retire].

We went through the process. We spoke to the owner. We consulted the whole crew to make sure that everybody was on the same page. We went through a formal briefing process as to how we would turn around - engine on, sails ready, all crew up on deck, ready to go.

We started to sail towards Eden on NSW's South Coast. There was a fair bit of stress relief on board - humour, laughter, lots of talks about smokes and beers at the Eden Hotel.

We will never know, but it [retiring] was probably one of the worst decisions we could have made because we took our eyes off the ball.

The crew members who were fatigued and seasick helmed because they wanted to feel better.

Sure enough, through a combination of fatigue, unluckiness and probably lack of planning, we got sideways on a wave and rolled the boat...

So, when you make those decisions - sail back to port just as you would sail in a race. Do not go into cruise mode. Do not worry about the kettle until you are back at port. You are not out of trouble until you close the heads.

The reflections shared by Brownie are based on extensive personal experience and insights. Ultimately, safety decisions should be made by the owner or skipper, considering the specific circumstances of each yacht. ⚓

**Glossary

- **Death roll** - during a death roll, the boat rolls from side to side, becoming gradually more unstable until either it capsizes or the skipper reacts correctly to prevent it.
- **Broach** - an abrupt, involuntary change in a vessel's course, towards the wind, resulting from loss of directional control, when the vessel's rudder becomes ineffective.
- **Apparent wind** - the wind you feel when the boat is moving.
- **Sculling** - sailing more of a scalloped horizontal course that matches the vertical shape of the seas.
- **Boom preventer** - a device that limits the boom's ability to swing unexpectedly across the boat due to an accidental gybe.



Photos: ROLEX | Kurt Arrigo



Photos: CYCA | Andrea Francolini

The 2025 Australian Maxi Championship

Get ready for five days of pure adrenaline on Sydney Harbour, as the 2025 Australian Maxi Championship returns, featuring the fiercest fleet of Maxi and Mini Maxi yachts in the Southern Hemisphere. This year, the championship will again deliver an epic mix of one offshore race, tactical passage races, and the crowning spectacle of the SOLAS Big Boat Challenge.

The championship kicks off 5 December at 1700hrs with the legendary Cabbage Tree Island Race. This 172-nautical-mile offshore challenge takes crews to Cabbage Tree Island, just north of Port Stephens, and offers the final opportunity to fine-tune overnight sailing ahead of the Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race. As one of the CYCA's most iconic blue water races, it's the perfect warm-up, testing teams under true night-time conditions.

After conquering the offshore challenge, the fleet heads offshore again for two days of intense passage racing, where tactical precision and navigational prowess separate the winners from the rest. Expect close racing, and the intense competition that only the best Maxi crews can deliver.

The climax arrives on Tuesday 9 December with the SOLAS Big Boat Challenge, a Sydney Harbour highlight and one of the most spectacular days of racing all year. This ultimate showdown delivers incredible action, as the championship's top yachts go head-to-head in a breathtaking display of skill and speed in a windward leeward race.

With the Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race just weeks away, the Australian Maxi Championship is the ultimate proving ground for crews. Many familiar faces return this year, though some yachts have new ownership or upgrades, adding fresh intrigue to the competition.



This year’s Australian Maxi Championship and SOLAS Big Boat Challenge invitees include:



LawConnect

Christian Beck’s 100-footer designed by Juan Kouyoumdjian is back for more high-speed action. While Beck has definitely lost his underdog status after winning Line Honours in the past two Rolex Sydney Hobarts, the team is ready to take on the competition.

LawConnect achieved stellar results in last year’s Australian Maxi Championship, narrowly missing out on the Line Honours top spot to Master Lock Comanche.



Master Lock Comanche

Now in its second year under stewardship of James Mayo and Matt Allen, Master Lock Comanche is aiming to defend their picket fence of Line Honours finishes for all four races in the 2024 Australian Maxi Championship.

Originally scheduled to leave Australia in early 2024, following the end of her charter with the Winning family, co-skippers Matt Allen and James Mayo made the decisive call to keep the yacht in Australian waters.

Widely regarded as the fastest racing 100-footer in the world, Master Lock Comanche, is set for another run in Australian Maxi Championship and the SOLAS Big Boat Challenge, before wrapping the season up with the 80th Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race, aiming to reclaim the prestigious Line Honours title.



Moneypenny

Acquired last year by Rob Appleyard, Moneypenny will compete in the Australian Maxi Championship and SOLAS Big Boat Challenge for its second time under Appleyard. Moneypenny, has had a blistering start to this year’s Audi Centre Sydney Blue Water Pointscore and proves to be a seriously competitive boat after finishing third across the AMC in 2024.



No Limit

David Gotze’s Reichel/Pugh 62 No Limit is an all-round boat, closely resembling the 2011 Hobart winner, Loki. The yacht competes all year round, in major regattas. In his program are the Audi Centre Sydney Blue Water Pointscore, Australian Maxi Championship, including the SOLAS Big Boat Challenge.

After modifications made last winter, which included a new water ballast system and hydraulic winches, the team could be in top form this year.



Photos: CYCA | Andrea Francolini and Ashley Dart



Palm Beach XI

The legendary Wild Oats XI, recently acquired by Palm Beach Motor Yachts, will race under a new name, ownership and will feature an innovative performance package.

With Mark Richards at the helm and ownership table, the boat has undergone a major refit, modifying the keel fin, updating daggerboards and fitting C-shaped foils to improve reaching and downwind performance.

The Australian Maxi Championship could be the first real test for this ocean racing icon.



SHK Scallywag

This 100-foot maxi makes its return to Sydney Harbour after leaving its mark on the European circuit over the past two years. After she claimed her largest victory in 2024, winning Line Honours in the Rolex Middle Sea Race, team management decided it was time to return Down Under to seek redemption after her retirement in the 2023 Hobart.

Under the management of Skipper David Witt, the yacht has refined its systems, crew and made drastic improvements to the boat’s overall strength.



URM Group

Anthony and David Johnston’s URM Group returns as a strong contender for the Australia Maxi Championship, the SOLAS Big Boat Challenge and the 2024 Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race. Taking both crowns on IRC in 2023, the team will be back in 2025.

The Reichel/Pugh 72 is sporting a new rig and sail wardrobe after it dismasted in the 2024 Rolex Sydney Hobart.



Wild Thing 100

Grant Wharington and Adrian Seiffert’s Wild Thing 100 made its debut as a 100 footer in the 2023 Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race, having been delivered straight from the Gold Coast to Sydney with a few finishing touches still being added on the way. Formerly an 80-footer, the boat raced with its original rig which has been replaced by a full-sized 100 foot rig.

This edition of the Australian Maxi Championship it will be the first time she goes head-to-head with other 100-footers since she has upgraded her rig

Follow all the action at the CYCA from Friday 5 to Tuesday 9 December! 📍

Forgive the staff, they're new every night.

As maître d's go, Caroline Kininmonth is an odd one. She keeps no waiters on rotation. Nor chefs or sommeliers. She doesn't even have a menu. That's where you come in. Among the vibrant walls and bold artworks of The Boathouse restaurant, you set the menu from whatever tickles your fancy on King Island. You bring what you want and make it how you like.

So if you've got a complaint about the food, take it up with yourself.

→ discovertasmania.com.au

COME DOWN FOR AIR

TASMANIA



Celebrating the historic 80th Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race

The Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race is honouring a historic milestone in 2025 - the 80th edition of the Great Race South. The 628 nautical mile challenge draws competitors from around Australia and the globe, and this year is no different. Over 130 yachts are set to descend on Sydney Harbour on Boxing Day, including six hundred foot maxis, twenty Double Handers, and eighteen international entrants. To read on about who might claim the prestigious Tattersall Cup, head over to the 2025 Rolex Sydney Hobart Official Program.

Not sailing south? Turn the page for all the fun ways you can follow the fleet and celebrate this historic event.

Photos: ROLEX | Kurt Arrigo, Salty Dingo





We get it, not everyone landed a ride south for the 80th Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race, but luckily, we can all still be part of the action.

Take a look at the many ways you can join the in on the fun and feel part of the Great Race South.

On The Big Day

In Sydney

If you're in the harbour city, join the tens of thousands of spectators on the water or lining the shores of Sydney Harbour.

If you plan on being out on the water amongst the spectacular array of boats boats (or ferries, kayaks, pontoons or even water taxis) that complement the racing fleet, plan ahead, be aware of the waterway restrictions in place and check out the exclusion zone map.

If you're only watching the start at 1300hrs and won't follow the fleet, position yourself on the western side of the harbour. Great vantage points for spectator boats include:

- Western side: Taylors Bay, Chowder Bay, Obelisk Bay, and North Head.
- Eastern side: Rose Bay, Nielsen Park, Watsons Bay, Camp Cove, and South Head.



If being on land is more your style, here's a bunch of amazing spots to get amongst it:

- South Head
- South Head Heritage Trail
- North Head
- Christison Park (Vaucluse)
- Watsons Bay
- Any other of the headlands in the Eastern Suburbs (e.g: North Clovelly, Maroubra, etc)

Don't forget the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia either, where you can catch the race start live inside the Club, or from the Sydney Race Village on our Big Screen, while enjoying a cold drink and the culinary delights on offer.

On TV or Online

If you can't be close by, join millions of viewers in Australia and overseas tuning into the action on television and online.

In Australia, our expert commentary team of Gordon Bray, Peter Shipway, Olympic medallists Lisa Darmanin and Olivia Price, and sailing megastar Jimmy Spithill, will bring you all the action LIVE on the Nine Network from 1230hrs (AEDT).

If you're overseas or can't get to a TV here, checkout the livestream on 9Now or for international viewers on CYCATV via YouTube.



Photos: ROLEX | Carlo Borlenghi, Salty Dingo



Keeping Up After The Start

The action doesn't stop when the fleet leaves the Heads and nor should you!

There are plenty of ways to keep up with the race and check in on where each and every boat is positioned on the charge to Hobart.

Live Race Tracker and rolling updates

The best place to be – check out rolexsydneyhobart.com.

Live Shows

Stay updated via the website and CYCATV via YouTube with live shows direct from Hobart airing at 1000hrs and 1600hrs (AEDT) on CYCATV from 27-31 December.

We'll also have separate Line Honours and Overall Winner coverage. Make sure to subscribe to the YouTube channel to receive notifications of upcoming shows on Youtube. [com/@CYCATV](https://www.youtube.com/@CYCATV).

Race Highlights and On-Demand Content

9Now will host a rich archive of race content, including pre-race interviews, live updates, in-race highlights, and post-race analysis.

Social Media Updates

For real-time updates and interactive content, follow the Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race on Instagram, Facebook, and X (formerly Twitter).

- Facebook: @Rolex Sydney Hobart
- Instagram: @officialrolexsydneyhobart
- X: @rshyr

Before The Big Show

The Sydney Race Village returns this December to the CYCA and is THE place to be for a host of curated events.

From long-held fan-favourites and vibrant celebrations to honour the race's 80 year history, to new events to appeal to everyone.

The lively village offers the chance for competitors and spectators alike to engage in the exciting Sydney sailing community and feel part of the crew. The Sydney Race Village is also home to the Helly Hansen Race Merchandise Shop, Media Centre and Information Centre.

One event not to be missed is the massive 80th Clubhouse Crew Party. Get to know other sailors from around Australia and the world for a fun night with Harbourside views. Celebrating the race's 80 year history, the 2025 Crew Party will expand across the Sydney Race Village and Clubhouse, complete with live music from the Baker Boy's Band, DJs and food trucks. Members, families and friends are all welcome to attend sailing's best crew party.

On the Apple Isle

Going to Hobart? There's plenty to do while you wait for your special sailor to make the 628nm journey or even better, once they arrive ready to party.

Hobart Race Village

The Hobart Race Village takes pride of place on the marina and is becoming an institution.

This year will be no different with the Devil's Corner Bar stocked with world class wines and Carlton & United's finest brews.

The Hobart Race Village will feature great food options, live music nightly, DJ acts, on stage Q&A's, our Live Shows on the big screen and plenty of entertainment for the kids, including face painting.

For crews, don't forget our daily (two hour) Happy Hour and free bottle of sparkling.

Hobart traditions

If you've done the Village and are looking for your next stop, check out local post-race icons like the Shipwright Arms and Customs House, enjoy the cool vibes at In the Hanging Garden on Murray St, or take a stroll through the Taste of Tasmania at nearby Salamanca Place.

Every year, the Rolex Sydney Hobart brings lasting memories and stories that last a lifetime, and this year will be no different, whether you're in Sydney, Hobart or anywhere else around the world. Enjoy! 🍷



Photos: Ashley Dart, Salty Dingo

SAVE THE DATE

SYDNEY RACE VILLAGE EVENTS

11
DEC

QUIET LITTLE DRINK

The QLD (Quiet Little Drink) makes its comeback to the Sydney Race Village, celebrating Sydney Hobart first-timers, YSA alumni participating in their first race, women sailors reaching their 10-race milestone, and crew members marking their 25th race.

12
DEC

NEW MEMBER MEET & GREET | MEMBERS ONLY

The Board and Management Team are pleased to invite new Members and a guest to the New Member Meet and Greet Cocktail Party.

14
DEC

SYDNEY HOBART CLASSIC YACHT BBQ

This is a unique regatta that recognises the contribution of classic yachts to the traditions and history of the bluewater classic. Join us for a great BBQ and Presentation.

17
DEC

WOMEN IN SAILING NIGHT

Let's celebrate women in all areas of the sport. Olympian and Rolex Sydney Hobart commentator Lisa Darmanin moderates a panel of accomplished local and international women sailors.

20
DEC

RSHYR VIP & SKIPPER'S LAUNCH | BY INVITE

Rolex Sydney Hobart VIP and Skippers will be invited to the Village for an exclusive cocktail event. Mix and mingle with your fellow competitors and major race partners.

21
DEC

LONG LUNCH

A Long Lunch will be held in the Sydney Race Village on the weekend before the race, allowing current and past crews to gather, reminisce, and explore the docks to view this year's fleet.

22
DEC

80TH CLUBHOUSE CREW PARTY

Gather up your crew and head over to the CYCA for the best crew party in sailing. Get to know other sailors from around New South Wales and the world.

26
DEC

FAMILY DAY

Join us for Family Day in the Sydney Race Village following the Boxing Day Start. Watch the highlights of the Boxing Day broadcast and follow the live tracker.





The Hobart Race Village is open from 27 December to 1 January - bring your friends & family down to enjoy the best Tasmania has to offer! Open all day and welcome to all!

FOLLOW THE RACE

WATCH THE LIVE TRACKER
rolexsydneyhobart.com

LIVE RACE UPDATES
[Youtube.com/CYCATV](https://www.youtube.com/CYCATV)

STAY TUNED FOR UPDATES
@officialrolexsydneyhobart
@Rolex Sydney Hobart

BOXING DAY TRADITIONS

LINDSAY MAY REFLECTS ON 50+ YEARS OF THE SYDNEY HOBART

During a post-Fastnet Race celebratory lunch for the Kialoa II crew in Cherbourg, France, in August, co-owner Paddy Broughton raised a glass to the navigator, offshore sailing legend Lindsay May OAM.

Kialoa II was the 88th monohull (from a fleet of 404) over the finish line and placed 10th in IRC 1A and 19th in IRC 1.

Significantly, it was the 100th anniversary of the 695 nautical mile race, and May's last offshore race.

Emotions ran high as the Kialoa II crew honoured a man whose extraordinary offshore sailing career has spanned more than half a century.

May began his sailing career in 1973 aged 23. His first Sydney Hobart that year was on board Peter Rysdyk's Onya of Gosford.

That race was just the start for May, it sparked a remarkable 50-year run (excluding 2020 when the race was cancelled) — a feat other aspiring Sydney Hobart tragics can only dream about.

May has experienced every high and low of the iconic race over the years.

He has won the race once on Line Honours and three Overall wins. He famously played a key role in the 1993 rescue of man overboard John Quinn.

May's 50th and final Rolex Sydney Hobart was in 2023 on board Geoffrey Hill's Antipodes.

Sun damage and the realities of ageing gracefully prompted May's retirement from offshore racing.

Offshore Magazine caught up with May who shared his more memorable Sydney Hobart achievements and advice for those preparing to take on the 628-nautical-mile challenge on Boxing Day.

OFFSHORE: In July you competed on board Kialoa II in your fourth Rolex Fastnet Race. How was that experience?

LINDSAY: My eight years sailing on Kialoa II has certainly been a highlight. Paddy and Keith Broughton [the owners of Kialoa II] and Mel [Paddy's wife] run a very well-organised program and attract a group of like-minded, talented people. We enjoy our company both on and off the water, a dynamic mix of young and old crew.

How does the Fastnet Race compare to the Sydney Hobart?

The first response you receive when referring to the Rolex Fastnet Race is, "Isn't that the race where all those people died?" Yes, sadly it is, but that occurred 46 years ago [in 1979, 21 people died]. It is amazing how these tragedies never fade. Much was learned from that race, and especially by the CYCA.

So, just like the Rolex Sydney Hobart, bad weather and safety are always on our minds. The Fastnet differs in that tides have a big impact, whereas for Hobart you're trying to maximise the benefit of the East Australian Current.

The Fastnet has you in close proximity to the beautiful South-East coast of England and then a 160 nautical mile leg out to the iconic Fastnet Rock. Just to see that lighthouse is a moment to remember.

The 360 nautical mile leg home usually results in fast downwind sailing and then the final 100 miles is significantly impacted by tide, which can be favourable or make for slow going. It's a little bit like the last 50 miles in the Hobart race from Tasman Island to the finish. This can be a nice run in a sea breeze or a frustrating long night and morning with no breeze.

What personality traits are desirable to compete in offshore racing for more than five decades?

You need to turn up and pitch in. In the early days, the crew did most of the maintenance and the work required to go to sea. Paid professionals do the boat work on programs today, meanwhile the professional crew arrive, race and depart.

As far as the Hobart race is concerned, you need to be race-fit on Boxing Day. This was not my case in 2024. Surgery and a skin graft meant I was unable to compete.



You have written a guide, *How to get to Hobart - ASAP*. Can you share with us some of the advice in this guide that would help sailors who are relatively new to offshore racing?

The most important topics covered are to look after your gear, keep the boat tidy, look after your crew and to look after yourself.

The biggest detriment to an ocean racing yacht is seasickness. It can be managed. But if it can't, it should never have occurred in the first place. This is why lead-up races are so important.

Having competed in fifty consecutive Sydney Hobart races, what motivated you to participate year after year?

I have been incredibly fortunate to sail on some wonderful yachts with fantastic crew but none of this would have happened without generous owners. I'm grateful to the likes of Peter Kurts [Once More Dear Friends, Madeline's Daughter and Love & War], George Snow [the Farr 65 and Jutson 80 both named Brindabella], Jim Cooney [Brindabella], Geoffrey Hill [Swan Song, Stewth and Antipodes] and Paddy Broughton.

People ask me, 'Do I own a yacht?' And my response is, "No, I can't afford the yachts I sail on."

Across 50 years, I've sailed on 20 yachts and with 18 owners. Without these people who fund and make these opportunities available, we would not have this magnificent sport.

There are so many outstanding sailors and characters that I will get myself into trouble by omission, only to say thank you to all of them for their friendship and acceptance. When we end up in the same location, we all love to meet up and reminisce. When we get together, we say, "Crikey we were good!"



What are your highlights from the Sydney Hobart over the years?

My best Sydney Hobart race was one of the 10 races that I failed to finish.

In 1993 on the Irish yacht Atara we pulled off a Hobart miracle [just 38 of 104 starters made it to Hobart that year]. John Quinn (Mem) had been overboard for five hours, at night. [The stitching on his safety harness came apart when the boat was hit by a huge wave].

We had lost our mast [on Atara] and navigated back some 22 nautical miles to where I figured John would be. We were assisted by a tanker that spotted him with its searchlight, which was incredible. About 10 minutes later we almost ran him over.

John was in surprisingly good condition when retrieved, although he suggested he probably had “about 30 minutes left”.

Atara had considerable damage to the hull. We asked John: “Whilst you were being dragged along the hull, did you notice the delamination?”

Quick as a flash, he replied: “When the ambulance arrives, you don’t check out the condition of the paintwork.” I’ve dined out on this often.

What are some of the challenges that you have faced throughout your Sydney Hobart career?

Ocean racing is a hostile environment – equipment breaks and technology fails. Once you leave the dock you can’t go to the shop. You need to be properly prepared.

I live by checklists but there’s always a last-minute rush, so be well-organised. With a competent crew and a mix of skills, many challenges can be solved.

Among some Love & War crew I have the nickname ‘Kenny’ [Kenny is a mockumentary about a Melbourne plumber called Kenny] after disassembling and repairing the head [the toilet] in 2006. Whilst the head isn’t critical to boat speed, if it’s blocked it can take your mind off the main aim of racing. Mind you it was more rudimentary in the early days.

Paddy Broughton [Kialoa II] is a master at repairs and workarounds. It’s amazing what you can do with an angle grinder, vacuum cleaner and gaffer tape.

You have three Overall Sydney Hobart wins and one Line Honours to your name. How do you look back on those achievements?

My Overall wins were unexpected.

1984 on Indian Pacific [owned by J Eyles and Gunter Heuchmer], ‘the making leg’, Peter Kurts’ golden rule [to sail the closest angle to the mark and that was the best course or leg to make], took us 115 miles off Eden. Seas were horrendous and sky obscured. I was unable to take sights and the satellite navigation was intermittent. Our position put us abeam of maxis on the shore. The race director kept moving our position back 60 miles north. We finished fourth over the line and won on handicap. Yes, good boat and a great crew, but not a favourite.

1991 was different, representing Ireland with Harold Cudmore and Gordon Maguire on board Atara. We sailed a very good race and beat Lou Abrahams’ Ultimate Challenge by one minute 50 seconds.

2006 on Love & War I was convinced, as was Peter Kurts, that the ‘old girl’ could win a third time. There is no reason she couldn’t win a fourth. With an unprecedented four-knot current and magical wind shifts, plus morning breeze in the Derwent, we won by 58 minutes. That win demonstrated to owners across the globe, that old boats still had race winning potential.

Line Honours win:

Brindabella was the gunboat on the sailing scene in the mid-90s. We held almost every race record on the East Coast, but the Sydney Hobart was the race the top overseas maxis wanted to win on Line Honours. In the nine years I navigated her south, we had four seconds, two DNFs, until she became outclassed from 2000.

1997 was Brindabella’s best chance against the well sailed but slightly smaller Exile from Hong Kong. Off the north-east Tassie coast, we were sailing alongside Exile at midnight with the crew exchanging ‘commentary’.

We entered the Derwent ahead of Exile and made for the western shore while she went up the traditional eastern shore and hooked into some sea breeze. It looked like the bridesmaid dress would come out again but Exile fell into a hole. We both subsequently raced to the finish in a building sea breeze and Brindabella managed to finally take Line Honours by mere minutes.



How did you develop an interest in navigation, and what aspects of it do you find most rewarding?

In the mid-70s I completed a celestial navigation course run by Gordon Marshall at the CYCA.

Without a boat for the 1975 race, I contacted Gordon suggesting I could sail as navigator. A week later he came back with two invitations and some fatherly advice, “If I were you, I’d take the first offer you get.” That I did. And so, I joined Cliff McGarry on board Middle Harbour Yacht Club’s Dancing Mouse.

1975 was fast. In the area off Maria Island, Tasmania, I managed to get one sun sight that indicated we were probably 40 nautical miles south of the DR [dead reckoning] position. This sight cross-referenced with radio direction fixes from Hobart confirmed our location and the decision was made to gybe. The first piece of Tasmania we saw was Cape Raoul. Many yachts overstood and some even beat back 40 nautical miles to Storm Bay.

My first race as navigator had a very pleasing outcome and decades of fabulous invitations followed.

In the early days pre-GPS, a competent navigator was highly sought after. Even into the days of GPS, experience and expertise were recognised, but today just about anybody with an iPhone can analyse the weather, data and run course optimisation and do an extremely good job. It’s when everything turns to custard that a compass, paper chart and pencil come into their own.

Photos: Salty Dingo, ROLEX



What will your Christmas and Boxing Day look like this year?

In the past when asked whether I was racing to Hobart, my response has always been, “What else do you do on Boxing Day?”

Missing the 2024 race was tough, but there was no way I could do the lead up races. So sadly, I had to step off the wonderful Love & War program.

On Boxing Day 2025, you will find me somewhere on the water watching the race start.

What’s next for you?

My son Andrew owns Nirvana, a 72-footer that competed in two Hobart’s in the 1950s. She’s been getting a refit in the shed for the last few months, and we plan to compete in the Sydney Hobart Classic Yacht Regatta in December. We will spend some time on the harbour and short coastal cruising. Although she’s sailed extensively on either side of the Pacific, I don’t think Andrew has intentions to go well offshore.

Any final words of wisdom that you’d like to pass on to the sailors in this year’s Rolex Sydney Hobart?

Ocean racing brings out the best in people. In so many ways your life depends on others – strong bonds are developed that extend way beyond the finish line.

I wish all competitors safe sailing and a successful arrival in Hobart and that they celebrate in true Sydney Hobart style.

As Peter Kurts said, “If you have something to celebrate, throw a party”. And that’s what we did in Hobart in 2023 to celebrate my 50-consecutive Sydney Hobarts, along with so many who were part of the story. ⚓





2025/2026 SOUTHERN CROSS SERIES

05 CABBAGE TREE
DEC. ISLAND RACE

26 ROLEX SYDNEY
DEC. HOBART YACHT RACE

27 TRANS-TASMAN
FEB. YACHT RACE

cyca.com.au/southern-cross-series-2



RACE ACROSS THE DITCH

THREE STAGGERED STARTS. ONE ICONIC FINISH.
ENTRIES OPEN FOR THE TRANS-TASMAN YACHT RACE
27 FEBRUARY - MARCH 2026

trans-tasman.cycaracing.com



The all-women crew of The Famous Project CIC, all dressed up and ready to go!



Considered one of the toughest ocean challenges in the world, the Jules Verne Trophy remains unconquered by an all-women crew. The prestigious prize is awarded for the fastest non-stop circumnavigation of the planet under sail. The trophy takes its name from the 1872 Jules Verne novel *Around the World in Eighty Days*, in which the fictional adventurer Phileas Fogg attempts to travel around the globe in just 80 days using railroads, steamboats and even an elephant as a mode of transport.

In 1998, Tracy Edwards MBE led a groundbreaking attempt to win the Trophy with an all-women crew, including decorated Sydney Hobart yachtswoman Adrienne Cahalan, aboard the 92-foot catamaran *Royal & Sun Alliance*. The team was making excellent progress and was on track for a potential record when, after 43 days at sea, disaster struck. A broken mast in the treacherous Southern Ocean forced the crew to abandon their quest — a heartbreaking end to an otherwise extraordinary effort.

Now, 27 years on, a new all-women challenge is on the horizon — The Famous Project CIC. Beginning in October 2025, the team will embark on a timed circumnavigation of the globe aboard the 100-foot Ultime trimaran *IDEC Sport*. Led by French offshore sailor Alexia Barrier and British co-skipper Dee Caffari, the multinational crew will take on one of the greatest challenges in ocean racing history.

They'll aim to beat the current record — 40 days, 23 hours, 30 minutes, and 30 seconds — last broken in 2017 by Francis Joyon on the very same boat. The course begins and ends between the Créac'h Lighthouse off Brittany, France, and Lizard Point in Cornwall, United Kingdom.

Among the nine-strong international crew is Australia's own Stacey Jackson. A Rolex Sydney Hobart veteran, Jackson is no stranger to circumnavigations. She competed in two editions of the Volvo Ocean Race, in 2014/15 with Team SCA and 2017/18 with Vestas 11th Hour Racing. In 2018, she also skippered an all-women crew on board *Wild Oats X* to second Overall in the Rolex Sydney Hobart.

Jackson shared her excitement, "The chance for a third lap couldn't be refused. I am stoked to be joining The Famous Project CIC and a bunch of legend women for a fast lap around the world."

Other crew members include Deborah Blair (GBR), Rebecca Gmür Hornell (NZL-SUI), Annemieke Bes (NED), Molly LaPointe (USA-ITA), Támara Echegoyen (ESP) and Marie Tabarly (FRA).

Good luck Stacey and team! 🍀

Podium positions for CYCA team at Open and Youth Match Racing Championships

Ben Crafoord, Chelsea Williams, Nick Drummond and Seb Cheng, placed second at the Australian Open Match Racing Championship and third at the Australian Youth Match Racing Championship hosted by the Royal Yacht Club of Tasmania from 23 - 26 October.

The CYCA crew competed against eight other teams that hailed from New South Wales, South Australia, Tasmania and New Zealand, in conditions that ranged from no wind to 30-plus knots. The duel National Championship event saw all teams compete in a single round robin before being split into their respective divisions for the knockout stages.

The opening day saw strong winds between 18 - 30 knots with racing momentarily postponed during the day with teams brought ashore. It was a good start for the team, winning all three of their matches of the day.

Day Two saw frustrating conditions with the breeze failing to cooperate for more than 20 minutes and only one race sailed. Day Three was a mixed bag for the team as they finished off the qualifying stage of the regatta. The team went 8 - 0 during the round robin phase to top both the youth and open divisions. However a tough youth semi-finals, saw the team fail to qualify for the Finals, whilst it was a different story for the open semi-finals.



The final day saw another day of mixed conditions. The team sailed well to podium in both divisions, ultimately losing the open Finals to place second overall, but winning their youth petit-final to finish third, making the CYCA the only Club to podium across both divisions.

During the week the team took in some 'local culture', visiting some of Hobart's famous establishments during the Sydney-Hobart period. The opening night saw the team enjoy a lovely dinner at the refurbished Shipwrights Arms, followed by dinner at another Hobart institution - Customs House Hotel on Friday night and wrapped up the week with dinner at The Drunken Admiral on Saturday at Constitution Dock.

A special thanks to CYCA Partner DoubleTree by Hilton Hobart for accommodating the team over the Championship and their continued support for the Club as momentum builds towards our milestone 80th Rolex Sydney Hobart in December. ⚓





Eden Marine High sails at the CYCA

Each year the CYCA hosts students and teachers from Eden Marine High School for a week of sailing on the Club's fleet of Elliott 7m keelboats.

Now in its 32nd year, the course is a way for the Club to give back and thank the Eden community for their continued involvement with the Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race.

This year we were joined by 16 students and two teachers who travelled to Sydney on Monday 27 October for their four-day course.

Whilst the weather wasn't very cooperative on Tuesday and Wednesday, the students managed to get in a number of hours on the water, returning to the CYCA each day a little wet!

However, the week took a turn for the better, with superb conditions on Thursday and Friday as the students covered over 40nm around the harbour. With stop-over lunches in Watsons Bay and Rose Bay, movie and shopping nights in the city and Bondi Junction, the week is a fun mixture of practical & theory sessions of our sport, balanced by fond memories and experiences around Sydney.

On Wednesday evening, the students enjoyed a ride on board Member yachts for the Wednesday Twilight Series, with many also taking part in RANSA's Friday twilight to end the week. We'd like to thank the following members who made positions available on their yacht for the twilight races:

- Foreign Affair – Matt & Lisa Wilkinson
- Charlotte – Allan Vidor
- Outlaw – Tom & Alan Quick
- Solymar – Jason & Mary King
- Koa – Andrew Kearnan & Peter Wrigley
- SHAPE – Jonnie Vigar
- Scarlett O'Hara- Robert & Grainne Skol

Finally, we'd like to thank all Members who generously provided their yachts as accommodation for the week for the students and teachers. This year, we'd like to especially thank the following owners:

- Indi – Former Commodore Noel Cornish
- Applejack – Rogerio Blanc-Ramos & Derek McDonnell
- Into the Mystic – Arthur Psaltis & Nicola Wakefield-Evans
- Baltic Lady – Niel Burling
- SHAPE – Jonnie Vigar

YSA sailors on top at J/70 Events

J/70 World Championship – Yacht Club Argentino (ARG)

After 10 races over five days, the 2025 J/70 World Championship came to a dramatic close at Yacht Club Argentino on 1 November 2025 with YSA Alumni Ted Hackney claiming back-to-back World Titles.

Laura Grondin and her team on Dark Energy (USA) including Hackney, Taylor Canfield and Ian Liberty made history, becoming the first helmswoman to win it.

A testament to the deep level of competition, a different team won each race. Olympic medallists, past J/70 World Champions, America's Cup legends, SailGP athletes, TP52 champions, and a stacked field of Corinthian talent made up the deep fleet of 71 teams from 16 countries.

Congratulations to Ted on this remarkable achievement of back-to-back World Championships.

Photos: Sprott Media.

J/70 NSW State Championship – Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron (NSW)

Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron hosted a highly competitive fleet of 14 boats for the 2025 J/70 NSW State Championship over 1 - 3 November, with CYCA's Tim Ryan's Vamos taking overall victory.

Ryan's crew — Rob Greenhalgh and YSA Alumni Jess Grimes and Charlie Gundy — returned to form after a year apart, sailing consistently across variable conditions to secure the championship title.

Despite delays early in the regatta due to unstable winds, the race committee delivered a full schedule, with the final day producing ideal 11-20 knot easterly conditions and planing speeds of up to 14 knots — a fitting finale for the growing Australian J/70 fleet.

Jedi with YSA sailors Max Brennan, Sam Ezra and Tom Quinlan claimed the Young Crew division (Under 30) with a total of 13 YSA sailors across the fleet including:

1st – Vamos – Jess Grimes, Charlie Gundy

5th – Anemology – Murray Jones

7th – Jedi – Max Brennan, Sam Ezra and Tom Quinlan

10th – Firefox – Cole Tapper

12th – Slingshot – Chelsea Williams, Nick Drummond, Nathan Gulliksen, Hamish Vass and Charlie Watts

13th – Jet – Garth Bickford



From the Harbour to Hobart: How the CYCA's newest offshore series can get you Cat 1 ready

The Network Marine Insurance Summer Short Offshore Series (NMI SSOS) was introduced to the CYCA's racing calendar for the 2025/26 season and according to one of the competitors committed to the program, Ragtime's Steve Watson, the results go far beyond wins and losses.

The series consists of 11 races held fortnightly from September to March with both Spinnaker and Non-Spinnaker boats contesting a mix of five coastal windward/leeward races and six passage races.

Watson sees the NMI SSOS as a great avenue for skippers and crews to gain valuable offshore experience as they forge the pathway from inshore racing to the Audi Centre Sydney Blue Water Pointscore and eventually on to the 628 nautical mile epic that is the Rolex Sydney Hobart.

"It's definitely a stepping stone," Watson said.

"The Summer Short Offshore Series is really good for building experience for all of the manoeuvres, kite up, kite down, jib down, all that sort of stuff," Watson said.

"I think things like your headsail changes, reefing, all of these things, and it's not just a question of speed efficiency, but it's also looking after the boat. The better you know what you're doing, the more likely you are to look after the boat.

"We did OPS (the former Ocean Pointscore) in 2019. We did it as much as we could in 2021 and we did it in '22. We've done it every year since, but it wasn't until sort of '22 we started to think, 'hang on a minute, we've done a bit of this, now maybe we can have a look at Blue Water and kicking it up a little bit more'.

"I think if we'd gone straight to Blue Water, we would have been learning things that we've learned in a safer and more boat friendly context by doing the short offshore stuff.



Photos: CYCA | Ashley Dart

"I think you just don't want to be out there when it's really blowing and you're not going to get back to the marina that night, and you're at it and it is nighttime. You just want to have some solid experience of daytime offshore sailing outside the Heads when you can come back in before it gets dark.

"For us, that was invaluable, and it gave us the confidence then to be tackling Blue Water and ultimately tackling Hobart."

Watson and Ragtime are part of the 130+ boat fleet entered in the 80th Rolex Sydney Hobart and he says the NMI SSOS has been an integral part of their training and preparation for this year's 'Great Race South'.

"We see that as being fundamental for getting all of our combinations right for Blue Water and ultimately for Hobart," Watson said.

"That's how we get to Hobart and hopefully, by the time we get to Hobart, I've got people that know what they need to do, when they need to do it."

Ragtime isn't the only yacht taking part in this year's Sydney Hobart that's raced in the inaugural NMI SSOS, with Mazu Denali's Little Helper, Smuggler, Minerva, Rum Rebellion, Jupiter and Chancellor all taking part at various stages.

Reigning Overall Rolex Sydney Hobart winning skipper and CYCA Commodore Sam Haynes has raced in the NMI SSOS too, sailing his Cape 31, Celestial C31.

Head to the Network Marine Insurance Summer Short Offshore Series page on the CYCA website for more details.



On Board Content

Maxing out your GoPro

Whether you're racing offshore or a short race in-harbour, nothing beats the thrill of capturing those epic sailing moments. GoPro cameras, with their rugged design and high-quality video features, are the go-to tool for recording the action. To truly make your footage stand out, it's important to optimise your camera settings. Nothing's worse than getting back on dry land and realising all your footage while triple headed is blown-out, salt crusted, and over exposed. Think strategically about your camera angles and mounts around the boat. Here's how to take your GoPro game to the next level, ensuring you capture the best of your offshore racing experience.

Experiment with Angles

The beauty of sailing is that every race, every moment, offers something different, and experimenting with different camera angles can make the world of a difference in telling the full story. Like thinking about what sails to use in each breeze condition, think about what mounts to use in each condition. For instance, if you're running downwind in a big breeze, mount the GoPro astern on the windward rail. This setup will give you a dynamic shot of the boat slicing with through the waves, with the wind filling the sails.

On the other hand, if you're in light air, drifting slowly with little wind, opt for a handheld mount. This allows you to get more interactive content with the crew, capturing the personalities and small, intimate moments that make offshore racing or cruising so special. If the breeze shifts and your crew is scrambling for sail changes, try strapping the GoPro to a chest harness on the bowman. You'll get an up-close, action-packed view of the crew in motion, handling the headsail or adjusting the spinnaker.

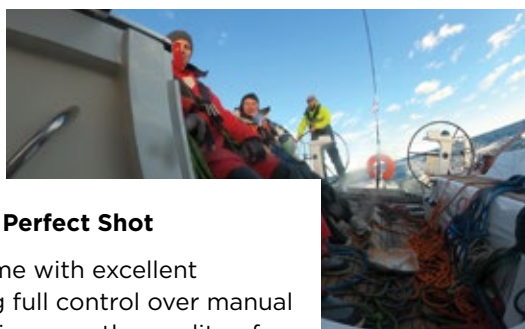
Don't forget to try different modes on your GoPro, such as time-lapse or 360-degree capture, depending on the action. These modes can add variety and depth to your footage, providing a creative perspective on your journey. If you're sailing through choppy waters or need to move across the boat in heavy breeze, turning on the stabilization mode is a must to keep the footage smooth and steady.

Manual Settings: Get the Perfect Shot

While GoPro cameras come with excellent automatic settings, taking full control over manual settings can significantly improve the quality of your footage. For high-action shots, like sailing in heavy wind, it's ideal to shoot at a higher frames-per-second (FPS) rate, such as 60fps or even 120fps. This helps to capture the fast-paced motion of the boat cutting through the water with crisp detail.

If you're shooting in standard conditions, 27-30fps is the ideal frame rate for general footage. For those late-afternoon shots or low-light conditions, consider slowing your frame rate to 27fps and increasing the ISO (light sensitivity) to around 1600. Be cautious not to push the ISO higher, as it can introduce grain to your footage. A wide field of view (FOV) can help in low-light conditions by allowing the camera to gather more light, making your shots more vibrant.

GoPro models like the Hero 10 and Hero 11 also feature a Night Mode, which is useful for capturing those twilight moments at sea. For a high-quality image, switch your camera to 4K resolution and select an appropriate ISO (100 for bright conditions, 400 for cloudy weather). Additionally, the 16:9 aspect ratio is excellent for stabilising handheld shots in windy conditions.



The Right Gear for the Job

Optimising your GoPro isn't just about the camera settings – the gear you use to mount it can have a huge impact on the quality of your shots. There are various mounts designed specifically for offshore sailing, allowing you to position the camera in ways that are both safe and effective.

For starters, a hand and wrist strap is perfect for keeping your GoPro accessible, allowing you to quickly capture moments as they happen. If you want to focus on crew members working hard on the boat, a chest mount is ideal for capturing their movements in the thick of the action. For a more dynamic view, consider a boom or bar mount to extend the camera out over the rail, giving a wider shot of the boat in motion.

A floating handheld grip (like the Handler) is another great option. It allows you to hold the GoPro at any angle, creating a personal narrative and allowing you to move around the boat while still capturing steady footage. For even more flexibility, a gooseneck mount can connect to any base, acting as a flexible monopod arm that lets you adjust the angle without needing to reposition the entire mount.

Sticky adhesive mounts are also a lifesaver for creating multiple mounting points around the yacht. These can be placed on various parts of the boat, such as from the windward rail to the boom, ensuring you have the right angle for every situation, whether you're capturing close-ups of the crew or wide-angle shots of the boat in full flight.

Plan Your Shots and Avoid Common Pitfalls

While spontaneity is key to good footage, it's also important to plan ahead. The most action-packed moments during an offshore race or cruise often happen at the start, during sail changes, or when rounding turning marks. Think about where the camera will be positioned during these moments so you can capture the full intensity of the action.

Check in with your other crew members and ask them to provide a piece-to-camera race update. What is the wind doing? Where are your fellow competitors? Have you seen any wildlife? Get comfortable in front of the camera and tell the full story of the race.

Don't forget to wipe your lens! Salt spray is inevitable, especially when you're sailing in big breeze. A dirty lens can ruin an otherwise great shot, so keep a microfiber towel or dry gear handy to ensure your footage stays crystal clear.

One final tip: remember to lock your exposure. It's easy to get carried away in the heat of the moment and forget about the settings, but exposure can be easily blown out when a wave crashes over the boat. A quick tap on the rear display will lock in your exposure and prevent the ocean from changing your settings mid-shot.



Backup Essentials

Lastly, make sure you're fully prepared for an offshore adventure. Carry extra batteries and SD cards to avoid running out of storage or power. A 64GB SD card should be sufficient for a full day of filming, but it's wise to bring a spare, especially for long offshore races. GoPro batteries drain quickly in cold or active conditions, so having at least one spare is essential, but the more you bring, the better.

If you're keen to share your adventure with family, friends or the CYCA Media Team, use the Quik app to download the footage directly from your GoPro to your phone. This is especially useful when you're competing in a long offshore race with Starlink connectivity, as you can share your footage in real time. Make sure to send your footage to the media team in real-time using the instructions below..

Are you interested in trying out a GoPro before you make the purchase yourself? Reach out to the CYCA Media Team (media@cyca.com.au) to borrow one of the CYCA cameras ahead of your next training session or offshore race.

By thinking ahead, experimenting with different mounts and settings, and preparing for any situation, you'll be able to maximise the potential of your GoPro and create truly memorable content while sailing. So get out there, capture the action, and let your GoPro tell the story of your adventure. 📶

Sharing On-Board Content

Follow these 7 steps to share your on-board content:

1. Visit the dedicated WeTransfer login page before the race.
2. Create a free WeTransfer account (takes about 2 minutes)
3. Navigate to our Racing Content Platform: cycaracing.wetransfer.com
4. Ensure your device has a stable internet connection
5. Upload content straight from your device onto the platform during the race
6. Press send
7. Keep on racing!

At the end of each race, competitors can deliver media in person to the CYCA Media Team. Contact Ashley Dart (content.creator@cyca.com.au) to arrange your on-board footage download.

ONBOARD CONTENT CONTEST



SHARE YOUR ONBOARD
CONTENT FROM 26
DECEMBER - 3 JANUARY
FOR THE CHANCE TO
WIN A \$400 HELLY
HANSEN VOUCHER
cycaracing.wetransfer.com



Leaders in Marine Lifestyles on our doorstep

When the CYCA needed to get their hands on a RIB to transport media covering the 80th Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race, the first people they called were the team at Marine Lifestyles.

Based a stone's throw from the CYCA, Marine Lifestyles aren't just another boat dealer — they're a full-spectrum "marine lifestyle" provider, blending RIB hire and sales, floating event platforms and water-sports experiences into a seamless offering.

RIB Hire & Sales

On the RIB front, their hire and sales side is built around agile, fun, high-performance craft that make time on the water both accessible and high impact.

Whether you're looking to hire a RIB for a day out on Sydney Harbour, head into coastal waters, or simply anchor for swimming or water-sports, Marine Lifestyles have a fun and accessible option for you.

Another option for hiring — or even purchasing — one of Marine Lifestyles' range of RIBs is as a chase boat from your racing yacht.

Events & Pontoon Platforms

Beyond the RIBs, Marine Lifestyles offers a floating event platform (pontoons) and charter-capable vessels that transform a day on the water into a social or corporate occasion.

Their "Events & Experiences" division highlights the capacity to host gatherings, team-building events, floating meetings or social celebrations.

Their pontoon platforms become the venue. In an event context you're hiring the water, the setting, the equipment and the vibe — not just the boat.

Water-Sports Experiences & Hire

Tying everything together, Marine Lifestyles' water-sports experiences and equipment hire venture, Water Sports Central, allows guests to shore up the "marine lifestyle" with Water Bikes, E Foils, Jet Surfboards, Underwater Scooters, Supmarans, Inflatables, Paddle Boards and guided experiences.

Marine Lifestyles emphasises sustainability — their overall mission includes "the shift to electric boating" and "ensuring the marine environment is protected and nurtured".

In short: Whether you're simply renting a slick RIB for a half-day on the harbour, hosting a floating event on a pontoon with views and vibe, or stepping into ownership of your own agile vessel, Marine Lifestyles has crafted a unified marine offering. Their competence across vessels, events and experiences positions them as a one-stop for modern boating in Sydney.

As well as being a valued service provider of the CYCA and our Rolex Sydney Hobart race coverage, Marine Lifestyles are offering CYCA Members and Partners a discount* on all of their services, with 5% of the booking value also being donated to the CYCA's Youth Sailing Academy.

***Discount for CYCA Members and Partners is 10% during peak season (Oct-Mar) and 15% during off season (Apr-Sep).**

For more information:

www.marinelifestyles.com.au

<https://www.watersportscentral.com.au/>

Contact - Grant Dwyer (0409 882 779)

Cruising

Cruising the Med.



CYCA Members Hector (John) and Sarah Crawford embarked upon the adventure of a lifetime earlier this year when they headed to France to board their new yacht, Aquaroo. It marked the start of a journey they will never forget — one filled with breathtaking cruising moments and countless challenges, the biggest of which came after they were struck by lightning in Spain. In her own words, Sarah offers a rare glimpse into life on board Aquaroo — sharing the highs and the lows, plans for 2026, and top tips for anyone who dreams about a similar cruising adventure.

We are 'Hector' (John) and Sarah Crawford cruising on board our new yacht Aquaroo, a Jeanneau Sun Odyssey 410. We've been together for 23 years and married since 2010. We have a son/stepson called Bodhi who is currently in his final year at the University of Tasmania studying Geology and Chemistry.

John is best known to anyone in the sailing world as Hector, a nickname he was given whilst in the Australian Defence Force. Hector joined the Navy at 16 and spent the next 28 years serving Australia. During this time, he sailed the world, completing many missions including in the Iran / Iraq war and gained a phenomenal number of qualifications including, but not limited to diving, mechanics and celestial navigation. As a child, Hector grew up in Adelaide. He first started sailing on a Heron, and from here his love of the water was born.

I was born in England, more specifically, Derbyshire (the Midlands). I grew up on a farm (by Australian standards very small in size, however my parents were one of the largest poultry growers in the UK). My sister and I were tom boys some days and absolute princesses' on others. Activity and adventure were always part of our family's life. I was put on skis at the age of three and given golf clubs at 10. Dinghy sailing was a past time my Mum and Dad enjoyed on an inland lake at weekends and on occasion a trip across the Channel to France on a friend's yacht. The nearest I got to sailing was waterskiing off the back of our powerboat.

During my childhood there wasn't a sport available to me that I would not and did not try to compete in. It was not until I left university to work in London for the department store John Lewis that I took up sailing. I competed at Cowes on one of the company yachts as bow, I fell in love with the sport and all its trimmings. The company John Lewis paid for me to learn to sail and obtain various RYA qualifications.

Plan A and plan B

I think it would be fair to say it's been a lifelong dream of Hector's to cruise around the world. I know we both shared a dream (at different points in our lives and indeed a long time ago) to compete in a round-the-world yacht race such as the Volvo Ocean Race (as it used to be called). Alas, the latter remained a dream and the former became reality.

As a couple our life Plan A was to stop working in 2022, buy a yacht and sail it around the world whilst we were still physically and mentally in a great place to enjoy the journey. I'm 51 and Hector is 62, and we both felt it very important to do this journey whilst we still had some 'oomph' in us. Also on a more serious note, it was important to me especially, that I was strong enough physically to manage/handle Hector, a 95kg bloke, should the worst occur.

Yes, you got it - Plan A was thwarted by Covid! Instead, we resorted to Plan B. Plan B was a two-year 4WD around Australia trying to stay off the grey stuff and do as many of the tracks as we were able. We did this all whilst waiting for the world to open again and make our plan A possible.



Choosing the yacht

Once the world reopened, we decided not to rush into things. We had been advised Jeanneau boat production had been scaled back dramatically and, as such, lead times and cost were playing a factor in our decision as to when to hit the 'go' button.

To our advantage was our many years of constant exposure to the boat industry, attending boat shows whilst looking constantly at new and improved boats. Financially, not only repurchase price but also resell value, we knew we would be sensible to choose a production boat. After owning a Jeanneau Sun Odyssey 349 (one third share previously) and having had a fantastic experience with it, it became hard to steer away from the brand and all it could offer in the 40-42-foot bracket.

When the 410 was launched we knew this was the boat for us unless, of course, something popped up in the meantime. Poor Lee (Condell) at Performance Boating in Pittwater - we spent roughly two-and-a-half years talking to him about this. I'm sure at times he thought we were just tyre kickers. After a lot of guidance and support from him we placed an order, paid the deposit and the rest, as they say, is history.

One of the main reasons we chose a 40-footer was so that in a worst-case scenario we felt we could physically handle the boat, whether as a team or as one. Whilst a larger boat was more luxurious, we stuck to practicalities. We chose a production boat as we felt it was best value for money and resale value. We choose the brand model a) because it was known to us and we had been beyond happy with our prior experience and b) in the 410 there is a chaise-longue, which means we can sail double handed with one of us kitted up down below in comfort and within ear shot.

Ten-months on from our purchase, we do not regret our decision and reasons behind it. What a delightful boat to sail and live on — I haven't banged my head once going forward and aft.

Having now experienced some of Mediterranean life we can honestly say we are VERY happy with our decision.

The early days

In March we headed to Les Sables d’Olonne, France, where our new boat was commissioned and we would, the following month, receive our handover from Lee in France. During this time, Lee organised a Jeanneau factory visit in Cholet. This was a standout for many reasons, not only because we learned about the way in which our boat had been built but it gave us the opportunity to see what lies underneath the inner shell, e.g. the wiring layout and exit holes for plumbing.

From Les Sable d’Olonne we did a couple of weeks sea trials. Once we were happy, we began our journey to the Mediterranean with the intent of doing our first Med Season (July and August) cruising the French Riviera, Ibiza, Mallorca and the western side of Italy.

To get to the Med, we travelled south along the French coastline into Spain. From here we followed the Spanish coastline into Portugal, before popping back into Spain. From the southern tip of Spain, we began heading east, through ‘Orca Alley’ (as we now refer to it) with our first week-long stop in Gibraltar where we distressed from the anxiety of sailing in the threatening orca waters.

An unexpected turn for the worse

We then headed east before we left mainland Spain for Ibiza. After Ibiza, we hopped to Formentera and then to Mallorca where things would take a VERY unexpected turn for the worse. We got struck by lightning!

In short, it was a long and painful event which all began at 0630 one day. As we lay in bed and listened to the thunderstorm around us getting nearer, Hector had the foresight to jump out and turn all our breakers off. Just as he was getting back into bed in the dark.... BANG, FLASH! We both sat up bolt right and said, ‘That was us!’ We immediately went into battle mode. Our first priority after confirming our worst fear (we had been hit – visible by the broken VHF antenna which was limp at the top of the mast) was to check we weren’t sinking.

Floorboard after floorboard came up, each time a sigh of relief as we saw nothing untoward, then the engine – you guessed it – NO engine. The ensuing few minutes determined we were literally powerless.

There was not much we could do until the working day began in Spain. But as soon as it did, we frantically started to contact companies to try and get assistance. Through luck, persistence, a LOT of patience, my Spanish, Sydney sailing mates, frustration and a few cervezas (beers) we got back on the water seven weeks later.

We undertook our second round of sea trials once we relaunched in mid-August to ensure we were confident that all was well on Aquaroo.

Take two

This thwarted our plans and we finally set sail with a new Med season plan. We sailed back to mainland Spain, Barcelona, where we spent a week recharging our mental health whilst we caught up with one of my cousins. From Barcelona we went a little further east before heading to Corsica. A couple of weeks were spent circumnavigating Corsica where we experienced our first Mistral [a strong, cold north-westerly wind that blows from Southern France into the northern Mediterranean] – the first of many to come.

We slid over to Sardinia, Italy, and intended doing a little touring there. However, the Mistral had other ideas. So, we took the safe route and returned to Corsica to ride out the worst of it – 54 knots over the deck in a sheltered marina. The seas were angry and the noise deafening, but we were thankful to be bunkered down and cosy.

Highlights of cruising the Med

The highlights? Where do you begin? The Jeanneau factory tour, visiting old and new places in Europe whilst I attempted to regain my grasp of French and Spanish, and brushing up on my old (rarely used whilst racing in Australia) sailing skills such as navigation. For Hector it has been the opportunity to explore Europe and, to put it simply, mess about on the water.

The challenges

Our biggest and persistent challenge is logistics. This was felt from the onset. We have a lot of valuable gear in Australia that we had hoped to bring with us (e.g. tools, clothing, technology). However, this was not to be due to flight baggage restrictions and the exorbitant cost of sending bags and boxes independently. Can you believe you can put a sailing knife in your hold-all bag on a plane, but you can’t send one in a box via a courier?

Our latest challenge is getting a barbecue. I’ve ordered it five times and had to request a refund four times. On one occasion it was because the Spanish courier company would not enter the marina to drop it off at the Marina Office.



Also important to note are two other challenges. One is the lack of physical movement when cruising. As active people we’ve become conscious of the sedentary nature of life on board. We make specific efforts to be active whenever the opportunity arises, such as pulling up the halyard and not using the electric winch, going for bike rides and walks whenever possible, and by doing squats on deck. The second is socialising. It almost feels like the Covid-19 days where we spent days not meeting other people. We’ve learned that life in the Med has been significantly impacted by Brexit, so there’s a distinct lack of British boats as well as sailors doing similar things to us.

The current itinerary

As I write this, we are snug as a bug in a rug at Baie des Anges, a marina on the French Riviera. Antibes is four kilometres west and Nice is 18km east of us. The marina has so far been incredibly welcoming and accommodating. It has good facilities close by and plenty to do in the surrounding area. We will stay here for winter and plan to leave in March to take on Italy, Greece and more during our second Med season.

We intend to make the most of being so close to both sides of our families. Hector’s uncles live in Denmark, so we will most likely spend Christmas there.

I have family in England, Spain and France, so I look forward to the opportunity to see my family more often than I would in Australia. And I am BUSTING to get the skis on, so hoping with the Alps being soo close that is possible I can already feel the chill in the air of snow coming.



Words of wisdom for cruisers

Oh crikey, there’s a long list, but I’ll call out preparations and keeping things manual.

Preparation:

Prior preparation is key. We started to prepare a year before we planned to leave Australia.

- We researched visas (particularly IMPORTANT to manage Schengen in Europe – we took out a one-year French visa).
- We drafted a budget for living expenses, maintenance, etc. based upon what we knew.
- We drew up a list of gear we wanted. We identified what we had and what we were going to be able to take, and how much new gear would cost and where we would purchase it when overseas (e.g. it’s a LOT cheaper to buy AIS/PLBs in Australia).

We have found things more expensive in Europe because of the exchange rate. Within the countries we have visited in Europe, Spain seems to be the cheapest closely followed by Portugal then France.

Keep things manual.

We have deliberately, where possible, kept things manual so that should, God forbid, something happen we have a chance at fixing it ourselves and or are not restricted by lack of power, e.g. we have one electric winch while the rest are manual. The lightning strike was a great example of where this approach paid off. We lived on board with no power for the best part of a week. Thankfully, we were able to get by due to a manual toilet and manual water foot pump.

Retired life

Hector retired two years ago after our first year on the road in Australia. Meanwhile, I could not help myself, going back to Macquarie Bank in 2024 for a year whilst preparations were underway – I loved working there. However, the adventure was a priority, and I said adieu to the bank and my working life (never say never!)

We have both worked incredibly hard to achieve all we have. A home, we live a good life and now we are able to enjoy the adventures of our choice.⚓



Take the quiz to find out what Race Series you should compete in!



Fridays are for Family



For one CYCA family, the club's brand new, six race Night Harbour Racing Series is the perfect opportunity to get together and share some time on the water at the end of the working week.

On a Friday nights, once a month between September and November, and again between January and March, the evening Sydney Harbour passage races provide a great training ground for overnight offshore passages.

For the Evans family, it's a great mix of both fun and a chance to improve their sailing.

"The night races are really, really fun because Sydney Harbor at twilight is probably the most beautiful place you could find in this country," says Riley Evans, who is competing on Seaquest RP36 Whistling Kite this Night Harbour Racing Series with his dad Kym, mum Nicola and brother Mitch.

"On the other hand, it's a very different sort of challenge, having to not being able to navigate using your vision. Having to use your chart plotter is very good practice for offshore.

"It's also good to make sure you know how your technology works, you never know what's going to go wrong.

"So it's a nice practice. It's also really nice to be out there. You can really sort of get your own track, compared to, say, a twilight race on Wednesdays with 100 boats and it's a lot more tactical and strategic.

"It's just a lovely way to spend your Friday, to be out there in the night, it is great, but bloody challenging."

So, who has what role on Whistling Kite?

"Mum and dad Skipper. They alternate, and then me and Mitch are usually at the front, as it's quite dark, it can be quite challenging to deal with the bow," Riley explains.

"It's a non Spinnaker race, so it's quite easy just pulling out and making sure the jibes work and then whoever else is coming on board, they'll be the ones trimming, which is good.

"Mum's learning a lot about steering, which is fantastic. She's gotten back into it because she learned to sail when she was 16, and then she stopped for about 30 years, so it is great to see her back into it."

And are there any heated moments?

"It's a real treat, sailing with your family," Riley laughs.

"You know you bicker, of course. You know dad will say, 'don't stand in front of the instruments, I can't see it', and then we'll bicker back.

But it's all in good fun and it's a great night on the water."

While there might be some cheeky banter on board, the Evans' and crew are enjoying the racing aspect of the series too.

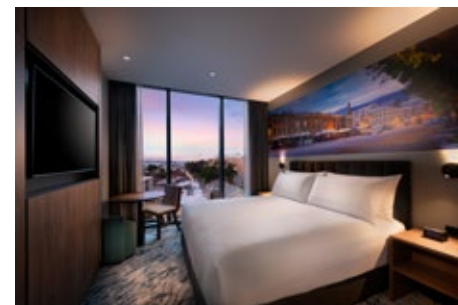
"Wild West (Paul Billingham & Pete McGee) is the one we normally fight with as they're quite a similar boat to us," he said.

"Hector (Bertrand Philippe) really nailed the second race. Good for them.

"But it's mainly us and Wild West up the front battling it out which is always fun.

"They're quite lovely guys, the owners of Wild West, it's a cool friendly rivalry, which is quite good stuff."

With the Night Harbour Series and Network Marine Insurance Summer Short Offshore Series, Skippers and crew have a growing list of opportunities to practice and refine the skills required before they dive into the Audi Centre Sydney Blue Water Pointscore or the holy grail, the Rolex Sydney Hobart.🚢



IN HOBART, THERE'S ONLY ONE PLACE TO STAY

Next time you're in beautiful Hobart, whether it's for the 80th Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race or not, DoubleTree by Hilton Hobart is the place to stay.

Offering 206 premium rooms and the exceptional service with which Hilton has become synonymous all over the world, the DoubleTree by Hilton Hobart also features a restaurant, a 15 metre indoor pool, sauna and gym, and three contemporary event spaces.

And the best part, the DoubleTree by Hilton Hobart, it's just a pleasant stroll down to Salamanca Place and Constitution Dock.

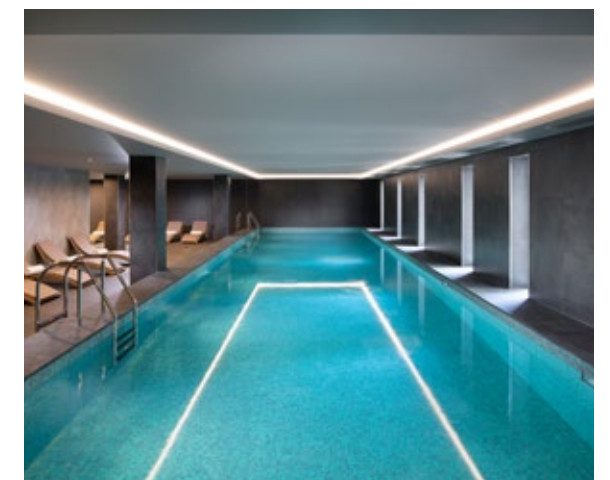
Hobart has plenty of great restaurants within a stone's throw, but right on site at DoubleTree by Hilton Hobart is the Leatherwood Bar & Kitchen, serving up modern Australian cuisine for breakfast, lunch and dinner, while also providing a room service offering for guests.

Executive chef Nathan Chilcott is inspired by native flavours and seasonal produce, with signature dishes highlighting local seafood, meat, poultry, vegetables and botanicals. It's a treat good enough to sail to Hobart for!

And speaking of treats, the iconic warm, DoubleTree chocolate chip cookie is offered to every guest on arrival. Originally made in the 1980s for hotel VIPs, the cookies are now served to all DoubleTree guests all over the world.

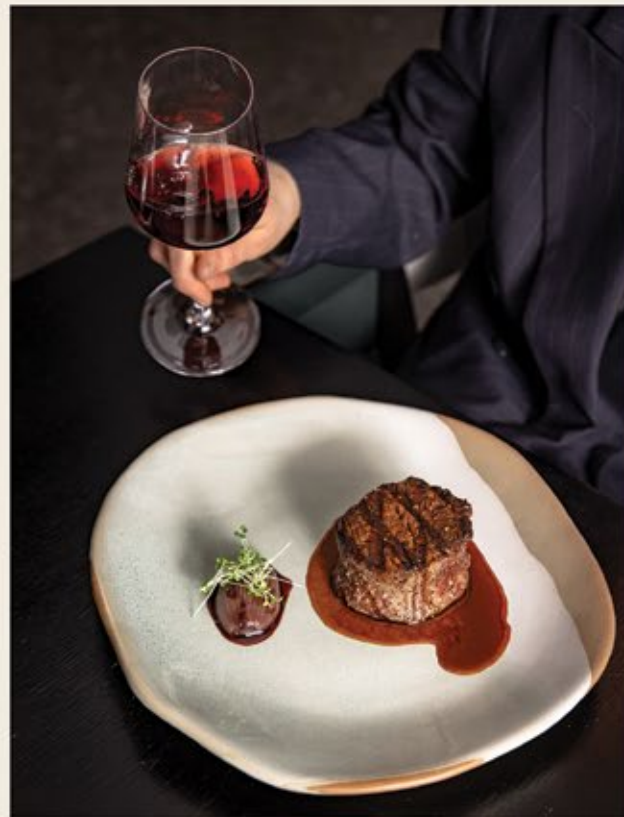
In October, the CYCA's Youth Sailing Academy team stayed at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hobart during their campaign at the Australian Sailing Open and Youth Match Racing Championships.

For bookings and more info: www.doubletree.com/hobart



LEATHERWOOD

Bar & Kitchen



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Located within DoubleTree by Hilton in the heart of Hobart, Leatherwood Bar & Kitchen delivers a relaxed all-day dining experience, blending brasserie-style comfort with the best of Tasmanian produce.



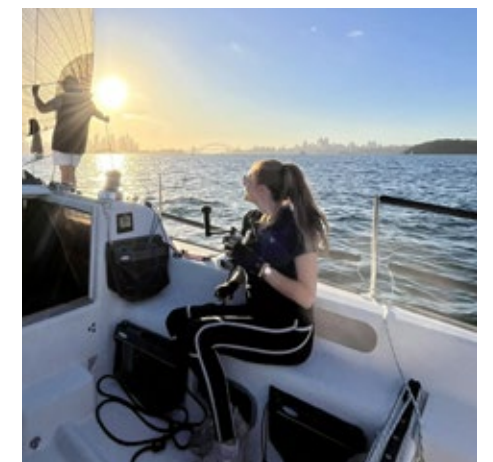
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SERIES AND
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TWILIGHTS RETURN
FOR THE 2025/26
SUMMER SEASON



From the Archive

Celebrating eight decades of racing, countless stories and a few favourites
Want to read the stories behind the photos? Head over to the 2025 Rolex
Sydney Hobart Official Program!



Start of the 1945 Sydney Hobart Yacht Race, the first ever Great Race South.



Margaret Rintoul ahead of her first race record in 1951.



Freya racing down the Tasman in 1963 ahead of her historic hat-trick.



The crew of Freya in 1964.



Gretel ahead of the Start in 1978.



Start of the 1994 Sydney Hobart, the 50th Great Race South.



Skandia at the start in 2003 - ahead of her 628 nautical mile match race against Zana



The crew of Loki after their Tattersall Cup win in 2011.



Boy Messenger ahead of his 20th Sydney Hobart during the 50th anniversary race.



Skandia racing down the Tasman in 2003.



Ichi Ban approaching Hobart ahead of her first win in 2017



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Photos: ROLEX | Carlo Borlenghi

How to Join the fun in the CYCA sun

Imagine a harbour-side club near the Sydney CBD where soaring masts, city skyline views, spirited on-water competition and relaxed social events all converge. That's exactly the appeal of the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia — a place where sailing passion meets lifestyle, connection and prestige.

If you're reading this and you're already a Member, you know what we offer. If not, here's a reminder.

Why membership matters

By joining the CYCA you become part of a tradition steeped in history and sailing excellence. The Club offers members access to the full depth of its sailing program, from twilight harbour races through weekend events to short and long offshore challenges.

One of the most compelling draws: membership means an up-close-and-personal view of the world-famous Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race, known globally as the 'Everest of ocean racing'.

But the value doesn't stop with our plethora of sailing program. Our members enjoy stunning club facilities, a world-renowned marina, social events, discounted services and global reciprocal rights at some the most prestigious yacht clubs on the planet.

Here are some of the headline benefits:

- **Sailing & competition access** – Members can participate in a comprehensive sailing calendar, enjoy discounted race entry fees, access our large and active Cruising Club, and tap into the Youth Sailing Academy for 12-24 year olds.
- **Marina & berthing privileges** – For full members there is access to the Club's 213-berth marina, up to 45% discount on casual berthing, and up to 52 complimentary casual berthing nights each year.
- **Clubhouse, events & networking** – The clubhouse offers bars, dining overlooking the marina and skyline, function rooms, indoor/outdoor spaces and social opportunities. Members receive discounts: e.g., 25% off function room hire, 20% off official merchandise, 10% off food and beverage purchases.
- **Extras and global access** – Membership includes the official club magazine and newsletter, access to reciprocal rights at affiliated yacht clubs globally, on-site car parks (for Full and Regional members), wireless internet on site, and the ability to sign in guests.

For someone who values both the competitive sailing world and the social, networking lifestyle that comes with harbour-front club life, or if you're just after one of those offerings, you'll be welcome at the CYCA.



How to join

If you're considering membership, or have a friend that you're encouraging to join, here's the gist of the process and categories:

- CYCA membership comprises a number of types: Full Member (standard category), Pathway Member (for those 30+ with no prior full membership), plus categories such as Crew (ages 18-29), Associate (partner or child of a voting member), Regional (living outside 150 km from the Club), and Junior (ages 5-17 who participate in racing).
- The application is made via the "Join Now" link on the Club's website, and membership is pro-rated to the end of the membership year (31 March).
- Once accepted, you activate not only the benefits but the community: the sailing crews, social calendar, marina life and the club network.

A smart choice for your next move

Whether you already skipper or crew, or simply wish to embrace harbour-front lifestyle and connection, joining CYCA puts you in the centre of something dynamic. From the thrill of offshore races to twilight sails, and from yacht-club dinners to business-and-pleasure networking, the environment is rich.

Being a member means your "anchor point" is not just a berth or a meal, it's a community anchored in one of Sydney's great water-side locations, the city skyline as a backdrop, and a club that understands both performance sailing and lifestyle aspirations.

In essence: joining the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia is more than buying a membership, it's investing in a way of life! ⚓

Photos: CYCA | Ashley Dart, Darcie Colilington, Andrea Francolini











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WATERSIDE EVENTS AT THE CYCA

Planning a wedding, celebration or corporate event? Our dedicated event spaces on the upper level of the Club are perfect for any style of event. Enjoy spectacular waterfront views overlooking the marina. Inhouse AV facilities are available, with modern interiors and a premium location only a 10 minute drive from Sydney's CBD. Members receive exclusive discounts on Functions, including 25% off on room hire.



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1 New Beach Rd, Darling Point NSW 2027

Navigating towards Safety: the 2025 SOLAS Trusts Dinner

The annual SOLAS Trusts Dinner rounded out a wonderful spring evening on Friday 24 October. Australian Sailing CEO Malcolm Page spoke alongside David Kellett, sharing stories from his Olympic sailing days. The sit-down dinner raised money for the SOLAS Trusts, whose objectives are to provide assistance in search and rescue operations, foster research in safety techniques and equipment use at sea, as well as to support families of those lost at sea during Australian Sailing sanctioned races. ⚓



Photos: CYCA | Ashley Dart.





CYCA Members Free Insurance Health Check



Network Marine are offering a free Insurance health check to all CYCA Members.

What is an Insurance Health Check?

We'll review your existing insurance policies against your current needs and provide you with a clear, easy-to-read report. This will highlight any gaps or uninsured exposures, as well as benchmark the competitiveness of your premiums.

How much does it cost?

There is no cost – it's completely **FREE** for CYCA members.

How do I arrange my Insurance Health Check?

Contact Network Marine today to book your free Insurance Health Check. Our team will guide you through the process and confirm the information we need, which may include a copy of last year's insurance invoices and some details about your current cover.

Once we have this, we'll carefully review your policies - including sub-limits, exclusions, and special conditions – and provide you with your personalised Insurance Health Check report.

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Associates

Club Social Lunch



Thank you to the Associates for organising another fun and festival lunch this November!

CYCA sailors to represent Australia at Youth Sailing World Championships

Congratulations to CYCA sailors Jacob Marks and Seb Cheng, who have been selected to represent Australia at the 2025 Youth Sailing World Championships (YSWC) in Vilamoura, Portugal, from 12 – 20 December 2025.

The pair will compete in the 29er class. The pair cemented their place in the 2025 Australian Youth Sailing Team at the Zhik YouthSail Regatta, winning their division.



Double Handed Offshore World Championship

CYCA Member James Whelan and well-known offshore sailor Stacey Jackson were up against some of the best sailors in the world at the 2025 Offshore Double Handed World Championship in Cowes, Isle of Wight (22 September – 1 October 2025).

The duo narrowly missed making the finals after they placed second in the repechage.

“We really felt like we sailed better than our results,” Jackson said. “Offshore double handed sailing requires skill, fatigue management, safety, endurance, logistic

management, patience and more importantly some luck. We need more practice in some areas, but we were nailing it in others.”

What an achievement to represent Australia on the world stage – well done team.



Olivia Price joins Australian Sailing Board of Directors

YSA Alumni, Dual Olympian and London 2012 silver medallist Olivia Price OLY has been elected to join Australian Sailing’s Board of Directors at Australian Sailing’s Annual General Meeting.

Price, who made history as Australia’s youngest female Olympic sailing medallist when she won Silver at the London 2012 Olympic Games in the Women’s Match Racing event, brings a wealth of elite sailing and communications experience, leadership, and a passion for athlete development to the organisation’s governance team.

On the water she has been member of multiple national teams across Olympic cycles, was Australia’s first Women’s America’s Cup Skipper and the 2012 Australian Sailing Female Sailor of the Year Award winner.

Beyond her achievements on the water, Price has also contributed to the sport as a mentor and coach, supporting the next generation of sailors through youth, school and women’s development programs. She has experience in sports and digital media and has spent time working with the Australian Olympic Committee and Australian Sports Commission.

The election brings her Olympic sailing career to a close, but she will continue to compete in other classes into the future.

Photos: Australian Sailing / World Sailing



Sydney Harbour Women’s Keelboat Series kicks off

CYCA competitors have had a strong start to the 2025/26 Sydney Harbour Women’s Keelboat Series. After two races, hosted by the CYCA and MHYC respectively, the CYCA’s Beneteau First 40 Blink (Ashleigh Larkin) leads Division 1, with fellow CYCA yacht It Happens (Payne 38, Bridget Canham and Nicole Savage Godresse) in second place.

In Division 1 PHS – Full-Female Crew, the CYCA’s Farr 30 Bandit (Katie O’Mara) is tied for first with Georgia Express (Farr Mumm 36, India Gilbert).



CYCA Members compete in Rolex Middle Sea Race.

A round of applause must go to CYCA yachts Whisper, Zen, and Grace of Sydney, recent competitors in the 606nm Rolex Middle Sea Race. David Griffith’s Judel Vrolijk 62 Whisper finished fourth over the line and second in IRC Class 1. Gordon Ketelbey’s TP52 Botin Zen placed fourth in IRC Class 2. Malcolm Roe’s Swan 48 CR Grace of Sydney finished eighth in IRC Class 5 despite battling with light winds in the latter half of the race.

Photo: ROLEX | Kurt Arrigo

Matt Allen AM awarded Australian Sailing President’s Award.

Congratulations to CYCA Life Member and former Commodore Matt Allen AM, who received the President’s Award at the 2025 Australian Sailing Awards on Friday, 14 November. This prestigious honour is presented annually to an individual who has made outstanding, long-term contributions to the Australian sailing community.

Photo: Australian Sailing



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AND CYCA'S TWILIGHT SERIES.



ALL KINDS *of* DIFFERENT



WHAT'S ON AT THE CYCA

**5
DEC**

ACSBWPS | CABBAGE TREE ISLAND

The 172 nautical mile race is a popular qualifier for the Sydney Hobart and offers competitors a great opportunity to improve their night-time racing.

**7
DEC**

BLUE WATER SUNDAY SESSION

The Best Part of Sailing? Celebrating it Together. Following the Cabbage Tree Island Race, keep the energy going with this get together for the whole Club! All Members and guests are welcome.

**7
DEC**

CYCA CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PARTY 2025

Bring the magic of Christmas to life at CYCA's annual Children's Christmas Party! Members are invited to share the joy with their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren (under 10 years old) for an afternoon full of festive fun.

**5-9
DEC**

2025 AUSTRALIAN MAXI CHAMPIONSHIP

The Cruising Yacht Club of Australia will host the Australian Maxi Championship from 5-9 December 2025. Starting with the Cabbage Tree Race and ending in the SOLAS Big Boat Challenge.

**12-14
DEC**

SYDNEY HOBART CLASSIC YACHT REGATTA

This is a unique regatta that recognises the contribution of classic yachts to the traditions and history of the bluewater classic.

**17
DEC**

SYDNEY VILLAGE EVENT | WOMEN IN SAILING

Let's celebrate women in all areas of the sport at Women in Sailing. Olympian and Rolex Sydney Hobart commentator Lisa Darmanin will moderate a panel of accomplished local and international women sailors, sharing their stories, insights, and experiences.

**19
DEC**

SYDNEY HOBART TRIVIA NAUTICAL FUN NIGHT

Join us at the CYCA for the inaugural Sydney Hobart Trivia Nautical Fun Night. It's set to be a fun-filled evening of laughter, camaraderie, and friendly competition — with plenty of prizes up for grabs.

**22
DEC**

80TH CLUBHOUSE CREW PARTY

Celebrate the 80th RSHYR with friends and family at sailing's best crew party! When the crew uniforms are ironed and the race prep is (mostly) done, there's only one place to be: the CYCA 80th Clubhouse Crew Party.

**25
DEC**

CYCA CHRISTMAS LUNCH

Celebrate the festive season with us at the CYCA. Bring your family and friends, soak up the holiday cheer, and enjoy the perfect blend of great company, delicious food, and a stunning harbour backdrop.

LIVE MUSIC

AT THE CYCA

6
DEC

NOEMME

1500-1800 hours

7
DEC

**JIMMY BRESLIN | BLUE WATER
SUNDAY SESSION**

1600-1900 hours

13
DEC

KALENA

1500-1800 hours

20
DEC

DANIEL MARCH

1500-1800 hours

27
DEC

JIMMY BRESLIN

1500-1800 hours



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ROLEX MIDDLE SEA RACE



ROLEX SYDNEY
HOBART YACHT RACE



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