



## Audi Hamilton Island Race Week 2007

It was an exhilarating week, breaking all previous entry records with plenty of action both on and off the water.

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Audi, in its first year of full sponsorship of Hamilton Island Race Week, propelled the series into an exciting new era, clearly showing this event is only going to get bigger and better in the years to come. In a record fleet that totalled 217 boats, the Dent Passage starts were spectacular as they included all the competitors spread across eight divisions, ranging from the highly competitive IRC classes and Performance Racing to the more relaxed Cruising Divisions (including the recently formed Non Spinnaker Division, now in its second year).

However, there was more to Race Week than just sailing. The whole island was transformed so the entire regatta experience was something to remember. This included the opening of the six star Qualia Resort, which was the ideal venue to host the Collette Dinnigan fashion extravaganza. Mumm Champagne flowed all night and sparkled alongside the fabulous sequins on Collette's cocktail dresses. If this opportunity to see Qualia was missed, there was a chance on the first lay day to enjoy a Moet luncheon that continued well into the afternoon.

The vibrant atmosphere on the Island all week was very addictive. How often do you get a tennis lesson from Todd Woodbridge? Many sailors' partners signed up for this women's onshore event. Mr. Woodbridge had the entire group of woman swooning on the court

prior to the clinking of Champagne glasses over a delectable lunch. The following lay day, the sailors had their chance to put Todd through his paces on the court.

If the pace was not fast enough on the court, Audi held a driving challenge with two of their Audi TT's and professional training driver Brad Jones, with the ultimate prize for the week an A4 Avant. What an adrenalin rush, (especially with an Audi A4 Avant at stake) and all involved pushed it to the limit. In true Audi style, one crew member from each competing yacht had the chance to test their land skills in a drive challenge on the tarmac of Hamilton Island airport. There was just one catch, only the winners of each division were eligible to win the A4 Avant, so the pressure was on to perform well throughout the series.

Keeping with this fast pace luxury lifestyle, there was the buzz of helicopters and seaplanes above all week. Photographers, onlookers and Whitehaven beach day-trippers indulged in the ultimate view of the races and to escape to their private getaways. The buzz was not only in the air; Front Street was filled with life and live music every night. The band and beer kept those that had the energy dancing under the stars. Front Street was also offering a selection of cuisine for everyone's palate, but if you wanted to experience the best chefs Australia has to offer you made sure to attend the guest chef events. Geoff Lindsay, the owner/chef of



Pearl Restaurant and Bar in Melbourne and Hong Kong, held a master class situated on the beach in the afternoon overlooking the sailing races, revealing his famous oysters twelve different ways. The following evening Luke Mangan, the owner/chef of Salt restaurant in Sydney enlightened us with his presence and a tantalisingly tasteful dinner. With everything moving at such a fast pace, it was hard for most to find time to squeeze in a visit to the resort spa or a laze around the pool. By the look of everyone's tan and smile at the end of the week it was undoubtedly an enjoyable experience that will bring people back next year.

The racing kicked off in less than tropical conditions, with strong southeast breezes and no sun in sight. The forecast for the rest of the week was looking even more menacing. The only ones smiling were the crews of the big boats, as they relish rough conditions. Thankfully the forecasted doom failed to materialise and sun started to shine midway through the series, much to the delight of the competitors and spectators.

### IRC RACING

All eyes were on the IRC Racing Division to witness the anticipated battle between Wild Oats X and Wild Joe, but the first day of racing ended in bitter disappointment for Geoff Boettcher and the crew onboard Hardys Secret Men's Business (HSMB). They were on the receiving end of a tussle between Ginger and Wild Joe during the pre-start which forced them to retire from the race.

Boettcher said the accident occurred when Steven David's Wild Joe hooked Leslie Green's Swan 60 Ginger, causing the Swan to slew into Hardys Secret Men's Business resulting in a tear down the port side.





As a result of the collision, HSMB then collided with Stephen Mackay's Cabernet Sauvignon and sustained another tear down their starboard side. Back at the dock the faces of the crew told a telling tale as the Reichel Pugh 46 had sustained major damage and were now out of the series. Both HSMB and Ginger protested Wild Joe resulting in them being disqualified from the race.

Wild Oats X, owned by Bob Oatley, stormed home to claim the double, winning both the Line Honours and handicap race records for the new altered course of the Lindeman Island Race.

The conditions freshened for day two with plenty of action on the windward/leeward courses. In a constant 18-20 southeast breeze Wild Oats X comfortably led Steven David's Wild Joe and Geoff Ross' Yendys around the course in the first race to claim line honours. However it was Quantum Racing, owned by Ray Roberts, who scored their first handicap win of the series. It was same result across the line next time around, with Wild Oats X proving to be very hard to beat in these conditions.

The sun finally arrived for the start of the Club Marine Edward Island Race. Traditionally this is the long race of the series, but with the strong breeze it didn't turn out that way, with Wild Oats X crossing the finish line with an elapsed time of just over 5 hours, 11 minutes. Quantum Racing claimed handicap honours, followed by Wild Joe and Wild Oats X.

In a short race around the islands Bob Oatley's Wild Oats X added another win to its consecutive string of line honours victories, but this time they were seriously challenged by Steven David's Wild Joe, with just one minute separating the pair in the closest finish of the regatta. However the day went to Yendys who claimed their first handicap race win. The race to Whitehaven Beach saw the ongoing battle continue between the crews of Yendys, Wild Oats X and Wild Joe. While Wild Oats X claimed yet another Line Honours win, Yendys, who were on a high from the previous day, scored another win to lead the overall point score. Their good fortune continued, winning the first windward/leeward race the next day, which was contested in perfect racing conditions. There was a close tussle between Bob Steel's Quest, the New Zealand Bakewell-White 52, Wired and Graeme Wood's TP52 Wot Yacht as they all converged on the top mark within seconds of each other for a fast and furious rounding.

The breeze, which was forecasted to strengthen, lightened in the afternoon and shifted to the east forcing the Race Committee to shorten the course for the second race of the day. Wild Joe sailed to a handicap win ahead of Wild Oats X, who was not giving up the handicap point score just yet. Yendys luck ran out in the second race and she scored her worst result of the series, finishing in seventh place.

Going into the final day of racing, the IRC Racing Division point score was tight with Yendys, Wild Oats X and Wild Joe all within points of each other. The fluky breezes and strong current certainly tested everyone for

the UBS South Molle/Daydream Island race as the tide turned to bring all of the small boats home. Limit, owned by Alan Brierty, claimed victory but Yendys beat Wild Oats X by four points to claim the Audi Hamilton Race Week title, with Wild Joe very happy with their efforts in maintaining third place. Steven David commented. "We've had an absolute ball. Audi Hamilton Island Race Week set new standards this year, the competition was tougher than ever, so we'll certainly be back next year."

#### PREMIER IRC

In a stellar line up which included Andrew Short Marine's Brindabella (Andrew Short), Espresso Forte (Laurence Freedman), the striking Marten 49 Carrera (John Meadowcraft), the Sydney 47CR Balance (Paul Clitheroe) and a plethora of Beneteaus, ensured there was plenty of competition in this division.

The Beneteau First 47.7 Eagle Rock, owned by Ross Wilson, scored the first handicap win in the Lindeman Island Race. On the second day the Beneteaus struck again – this time it was Colin and Gladys Woods's Pretty Fly II that finished happily in the top spot after placing third in the Lindeman Island Race. Eagle Rock finished in second place.

In the Club Marine Edward Island Race, Espresso Forte entered the fray and upset the Beneteaus by winning this race on handicap from Pretty Fly II and Eagle Rock. Carrera, who got off to a shaky start in the Lindeman Race, had found their groove in Race 4, winning their first race on handicap. They then consolidated their overall placing with another handicap win in Race 5. Balance, who had been performing well with consistent results just outside the top placings, finally came good in the UBS South/Molle Daydream Island Race with a victory on handicap. There were smiles all round from the crew as they had now secured third place for the overall point score. Andrew Short Marine's Brindabella, while not scoring well on handicap, were happy with their string of consecutive Line Honours wins for the entire series. However, the happiest of them all had to be the team onboard Espresso Forte, who finished strong with two seconds in the last two races to claim the overall title of the Premier IRC Division. A jubilant Freedman said: "This is our sixth year here. We've had two third places here and now a win – we're obviously getting better!"

#### CRUISER RACER IRC

This was the largest IRC fleet competing at Race Week, in a highly competitive field, ranging from the Bull 9000 Raging Bull (Mark Griffith) to the latest generation of Cruiser Racers from Sydney Yachts. Add to the mix an Archambault 35, Arajilla (Geoff Pearson), a couple of Northshore Yachts and a field of Beneteaus and it was certain to be an interesting week.

The fresh conditions for the Lindeman Island Race saw the

Archambault 35, Arajilla claim victory ahead of Toy Box the X-442 owned by MHYC Commodore Ian Box and the Sydney 36CR Equinox owned by Anthony Dunn. On day two the experienced team on Raging Bull pipped Anthony Dunn's Equinox in their second top three placing. The competition was hotting up for the Club Marine Edward Island Race, with Arajilla claiming victory over Equinox. By this time it became apparent that the struggle for the overall title was going to be a battle between the crews onboard Equinox, Raging Bull and Arajilla. Hussy (John Bacon), who were backing up from their success at the Airlie Beach Race, scored consistently within the top ten but couldn't manage a podium placing. FKP Mean Machine (C. Rabbige/I. Uther) put in a valiant effort to try and force an upset in the top three and finished the UBS South Molle Daydream Race in third, their best result for the series. However, the top three were just too good and Raging Bull (Mark Griffith) sailed well, with two wins in the last two races to claim victory overall.

#### PERFORMANCE RACING

The Lindeman Island Race proved successful for Dehler Magic (G. Tobin/C. Preen) beating Zutem (Stephen Hunter) and Wallop (Peter Hewson). The wet and blustery conditions on the second day of racing saw a spinnaker start in Dent passage, which tested the crews, resulting in plenty of action and mayhem. Some struggled with the fast downwind conditions before the gun had fired. Geoff Lavis' UBS Wild Thing was one of three boats that were a little too eager at the start and were called OCS, losing close to 10 minutes while they struggled to drop their spinnaker before returning to the start line.

Geoff Fogarty's Team Avalon went on to win, beating Peter Goldsworthy's Volvo 60, George Gregan Foundation and John McConaghy's self designed cruiser racer, Second Time Around.

As expected the larger boats performed well on the longer course of the Club Marine Edward Island Race. George Gregan Foundation blasted home an hour ahead of UBS Wild Thing, and this result did not change when the handicap scores were calculated. The Sydney 41, Wallop, sailed well to finish in third position.

Racing on the windward/leeward courses certainly suited the smaller boats in the division with the Mumm 30, Rumbo (G&C Holbert), scoring wins in both races, followed closely by her sister ship Synergy (Alex Douglas). Zutem claimed victory in the Whitehaven Beach Race, which saw the fleet distracted by two female humpback whales and their calves as they swam alongside the passing yachts. Second Time Around and Wallop enjoyed a close tactical battle on approach to the finish line under spinnaker. Second Time Around held their nerve, coming from behind to narrowly beat Wallop across the line. This must have inspired the crew onboard Second Time Around, because they won the next day's race in a short race around the Whitsunday

Islands. Dream Lover (Rick Morgan) scored a win in the last race but it was George Gregan Foundation who claimed overall victory in the Performance Racing Division followed by Second Time Around (John McConaghy) and Wallop (Peter Hewson).

#### CRUISING DIVISIONS 1,2,3 & NON-SPINNAKER

Altogether the Cruising Divisions formed the bulk of the fleet competing at Hamilton Island with 118 boats entered. It certainly was a colourful display on the Dent Passage start line with some boats experiencing a quick learning curve in dealing with the strong tidal conditions. Club Marine Cruising Division 1 was the largest of the cruising fleet with 41 entries. Magic, a Farr 1104 owned by Doug Ryan, won the Lindeman Island race on the first day of racing. Scaramouche (Graham Smith) finished in second place and was followed by Sandstone (Mike Davies) who was competing in his tenth Hamilton Island Race Week. The competition in this division saw a battle royale develop between Magic, Scaramouche, Escapade (Graham Jones), The Oceanic Hustler (Bruce Finlay) and Ishtar (Edward Earl). The crew on Scaramouche were just too consistent in this large fleet and claimed victory overall. They were also awarded the Best Queensland Yacht of the series.

Viva La Vita owned by Tony Bates had a terrific time Cruising Division 2 with three handicap wins to claim victory overall. Happiness turned to jubilation when it was announced that they had been the declared winner of the Audi Avant 4 at the official presentation dinner. On winning, Tony Bates beamed. "I'm delighted to win the A4 Avant. I'm thrilled. I'd like to thank everyone for a great Race Week; Audi, the Oatley family and all the competitors. It's been a fantastic regatta" Magnolia (Peter Higgins) and Farrago (T&E McCutcheon) sailed well, with top three results through the week to finish second and third respectively. While there was a tussle in Cruising Division 3 between the crews of Morning Mist (Paul Welling), Interlude (Tim Lewis), Nessie (William McMillan) and Escapade (David Berry), Escapade (David Berry) scored a second in the last race to claim a well-deserved series win.

In the Non Spinnaker Division, True Colours (Terence Herbert) dominated the series with four wins on his Bavaria 44 to win the overall title. The crew onboard Pro-beat Passion (Dave Short) had a moment of glory winning the second race of the series. While the two Catalina's, Catalyst (Brian Hudson) and Mim (Mike Walter) sailed well, they could not shift True Colours from the top spot.

At the conclusion of the regatta, Island owner Bob Oatley was all smiles. "What a week we've had. Congratulations to Joerg Hofmann and his Audi team; what a job they've done. Their contribution at Hamilton Island has been great; they've put new life into yachting." It seems the successful partnership of Hamilton Island and Audi is destined to raise the enjoyment level even higher next year.

For full results visit: [www.hiyc.org.au](http://www.hiyc.org.au)