

# TAITTINGER

## Royal Solent Regatta 2014

The weekend 25<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> July 2014 saw the seventh edition of the Taittinger Royal Solent Regatta and once again the support and goodwill of our two sponsors, Taittinger and Charles Stanley, also with our neighbour John Caulcutt, helped make the weekend possible. We were delighted to see so many entries and whilst many competitors return year after year it was great to be joined by a big fleet of J24s. Perfect weather conditions enabled over 800 guests to watch a stunning display from Yarmouth's RNLI Lifeboat and the Coastguard Helicopter at the Taittinger Champagne Reception.

Dick Dawson reports.



Mike Liwall from Charles Stanley



Mark Calver from Taittinger



RSYC Commodore, Mark Hall

Main Photo: Light Conditions prevailed. IRC Class 4 winner 'Whooper' built in 1939 (sail no. GBR363R). Photo by Keith Allso



An enthusiastic crew. Photo by Jake Sugden



Enjoying Royal Solent Yacht Club hospitality. Photo by Jake Sugden



Relaxing aboard a classic. Photo by Jake Sugden



## Taittinger Regatta

Total entries again exceeded 170. IRC entries remained strong and continued support from the Solent IRC Owners' Association (SIRCOA), meant that again, four IRC divisions were required. This year's event saw the largest Classic IRC entry yet and the RYA National Handicap for Cruisers (NHC) system was again used to create a level playing field for the unrated and cruising entries. The new fleet of J24s chose our regatta to run the qualifiers for the World Championships in Germany in 2015.

Saturday dawned bright and clear, but with a light and faltering breeze. Because of the numbers and different classes of yachts two separate start lines were employed and racing started at 10 o'clock. The 14 classes of yachts ranged from over 60 very competitive modern racers in the IRC divisions, through just as competitive activity in the 30 strong XOD to the smaller Gaffer Class. Amongst the big Classic fleet some enjoyed more Corinthian sailing, but there was plenty of competition here, too.

In the late morning the breeze died completely and many competitors anchored or drifted, in blistering heat, awaiting the promised sea breeze. It turned up as expected, but not quite enough to enable all classes to enjoy the promised two races.

In Black Group, two races were completed only for IRC Divisions 1, 2 and 3 and the Contessas. Most of the fleet passed an idle hour or so kedge off Yarmouth Common. The XODs, sailing in White Group, spent the windless and sweltering middle of the day drifting gently, to be brought back by the sea breeze as it filled in from the west. There was no time to run a second race.

Racing was over by mid-afternoon with competitors returning to the clubhouse for a well-earned drink, followed by a sailing supper. Many then went on to the annual Towers Party where the aim is to raise money for charity; this year the recipient charity was the Saturday Club for Deaf Children.

On Sunday the weather was light overcast and refreshingly cooler. The light breeze held and it was possible for most of the classes who had only one race on Saturday to catch up with two on Sunday. In Black Group IRC Division 4, Classic IRC and Swan Classics completed their delayed second race first. The start then moved quickly over to the mainland shore as the breeze on the Yarmouth side was dying and the whole group completed their second race.

On return to the clubhouse, hungry competitors descended on the hog roast whilst anticipating the prize giving. With so many classes, this took a little time, but nobody minded the wait as the winner of each class received a Magnum of Taittinger Champagne.



Above: Busy at the mark. Photo by Jake Sugden.



Right: Strega. Photo by Jake Sugden.



Above: Beeleigh built in 1913. Photo by Keith Allso.



Top Middle: Time for a drink. Photo by Jake Sugden.



Left: J24s amongst the mornings. Photo by Jake Sugden.



Sunset over Pennington. Photo by Jake Sugden.



Overall winner Salvo. Photo by Jake Sugden.



Action amongst the XOD Class. Photo by Jake Sugden.



Far Left: IRC Class in light conditions. Photo by Jake Sugden.



Left: Cheers! Photo by Jake Sugden.

Main Photo from left to right: Gaffer class Furstin, Simba and Windflower. Photo by Keith Allso.



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Bob Fisher, whose diminutive 1898 Fife-designed *Mignon* came fresh from success at the Cowes Classics Week to win the Classic IRC class, said: "What a super weekend the Taittinger Regatta turned out to be. Blunted by the sponsors' generosity on the Friday evening, it demanded quick thinking by the crews on both days. Light and often fickle winds require constantly changing decisions to meet the new challenges of both breeze and tidal streams. Those who race regularly in the western Solent had some advantage, as the result sheets showed".

Chris & Hannah Neve's *No Chance* was once again winner of IRC Division 2, continuing an almost uninterrupted series of IRC wins at the Taittinger Regatta. Said Hannah: "Once again the Royal Solent YC laid on a superb event both on the race course and at the club house. They were not helped at all by the weather gods, who while threatening thunder and lightning, which never materialised, still managed to produce some fluky, up-and-down winds with massive wind shifts which made the racing very tricky at times. It is a credit to the race team that they managed to get nearly all the races in for all the classes and on *No Chance* we enjoyed some great, close racing".

Praise is always welcome, but the Regatta's success is no accident. Office, bar and catering staff are stretched to the limit with days that start before 06.00 and finish well after midnight. Race management teams commence briefings shortly after 06.00 and are joined on the water by over 40 volunteers in Club boats and motorboats and RIBs lent by members. It is this cheerful cooperation that makes it all work and it is notable that participants refer to it as the friendliest Regatta in the Solent.

Other notable winners included Ed Donald's *Madelaine*, who not only won the Folkboat class in our Regatta, but also the Gold Roman Bowl in the Round the Island Race. Just as notable was Christine and Giovanni Belgrano's *Whooper*, a 1939 Laurent Giles one-off sloop. Not content with winning the Panerai British Classic Week Overall Trophy the previous week, rather than entering our Classic IRC class, they won IRC Division 4, against stiff competition from much more modern boats.

Commodore Mark Hall said: "This year's Taittinger Regatta was the best ever. Huge entries, blue skies and challenging racing. The RSYC had wonderful support from their sponsors Taittinger and Charles Stanley and the 800 competitors partied on Champagne, the Towers party and glorious weather. We are already preparing for the 2015 regatta on the 25th and 26th of July."

Perhaps the final word should go to Peter Morton, who was overall winner in his JND35 *Salvo*: "Thanks for an outstanding weekend of racing in quite trying conditions. The team on *Salvo* really enjoyed the regatta (it always helps to win!); we really should race in the west more often".

The Club is greatly indebted to our two sponsors, Champagne Taittinger and Charles Stanley, who brought style to the event and to John Caulcutt, whose Towers Party gave great entertainment to all.



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*Vitalie Taittinger is an active member  
of the family Champagne House.*