

Edgartown Race Weekend

Team Spotlight & Race Insights

Gus Carlson, owner and skipper of the R/P 66 Aurora

Aurora's History at ERW

The Edgartown Yacht Club's 'Round the Island Race is a "must" on Aurora's summer calendar. We have done several RTIs since 2012, and the experience gets better every year. The beautiful setting, great competition, wonderful camaraderie, and extraordinary hospitality of the EYC members and staff make the entire ERW a premiere event in Northeast sailing. Special kudos to Commodore Giordano and his Flags for finding a way to run the 2020 RTI safely and efficiently amid the pandemic. We look forward to the 2021 edition!



Race Preparation

At 55 miles, the RTI is the perfect day race for Aurora. But it is no picnic. Preparation is key. Our navigator and tactician need to be up-to-date on currents, tides and the ever-shifting shoals around the island. And if fog rolls in and the breeze dies, things get really interesting. We like to have some "local knowledge" aboard, which is helpful but no guarantee of success! Also on the typical RTI menu are multiple sail changes, so our pre-race sail selection needs to be thoughtful and our crew properly briefed on the changing conditions we expect to encounter on the course. Among our 15-person crew, we always carry seasoned hands, but we also use this race as an opportunity to rotate in some new blood, including non-racers. We've hooked more than a few newbies on sailboat racing while reaching across the southern shore of the island in 15 knots of breeze on sun-drenched Saturday afternoons. Best days ever!

Race Insights

The great challenge of the RTI is it is really several races is one. Each leg requires its own strategic thinking and tactical precision – from threading through the shoals on the east side of the island past Wasque Point to the turning mark, to deciding how far in to chase breeze along the southern shore to Gay Head, to the "inside or outside" call on Middle Ground, to dodging ferries and cruisers from West Chop to the finish. The swirling currents, sweeping tides, shifting shoals and often fickle winds put enormous pressure on navigators and tacticians to make smart decisions, and on crews to execute sail changes and other maneuvers smartly. Racing sailors of all stripes would be hard pressed to find a more demanding 55 miles of racing anywhere.

