



Edgartown Race Weekend Attracting a Good Mix

EDGARTOWN, MARTHA'S VINEYARD, MASS. (April 23, 2024) –A strong return of past participants and an energetic influx of new teams (30% as of press time) says a lot about [Edgartown Race Weekend](#) on Martha's Vineyard, coming up June 20-22. The event endears itself to veterans and newcomers alike with varied distance racing, including Saturday's 'Round-the-Island Race ('RTI) – one of the oldest distance races in this country – and the preceding Thursday/Friday's 'Round-the-Sound Races ('RTS), which are separately scored and a keen tune-up for Saturday, not to mention the rest of the summer sailing season.



Ed Dailey's *Raptor* will return to defend The Venona Trophy at Edgartown Yacht Club's 2024 Edgartown Race Weekend in Martha's Vineyard. (team supplied photo)

An Illustrious History – 'Round-the-Island

Now 87 years old, the 'RTI originated in 1938 and was styled after the 1851 race around the Isle of Wight in England, which was the course that launched the America's Cup. The distance around Martha's Vineyard is but a few miles longer, and both courses have views of cliffs,

headlands, villages, and open water. Although no “Hundred Guinea Cup” is up for grabs in Martha’s Vineyard, there is the prestigious [VENONA TROPHY](#) at stake for the overall winner of the ‘RTI, a prize that has been won by some of the biggest names in sailing.

“The ‘RTI is a ‘go to’ race for us because of the challenges presented over the 55-mile course around the Vineyard,” said Ed Dailey (Newton, Mass.), who returns this year with his J/109 *Raptor* and represents a significant turnout of 10 J/Boats in PHRF Spinnaker Class. “We have competed many times, chalked up a number of wins, some near misses, and the Venona Trophy in 2023, thanks to a smart switch to our Code Zero sail!” *Raptor*’s crew of men and women are mostly teachers, largely from Tabor Academy, and have been racing together for more than 20 years.

Robert Reifeiss’ (Plymouth, Mass.) team aboard the J/120 *Murmur* won’t be as tried-and-true as *Raptor*’s, but that doesn’t seem to matter when it comes to the pervasive enthusiasm Reifeiss shows for competing here. “This will be our third year doing ‘Round-the-Island; never with the same crew,” said Reifeiss. “Though we don’t win our division, we don’t come in last either!”



David and Anne Fox Lund’s (Kirkland, Wash.) Holland Opus 73 *Valor* will sail its very first Edgartown Race Weekend competition in 2024. (Photo credit: Billy Black)

Among the new entries registered for the 'RTI is David Lund's (Kirkland, Wash.) Holland Opus 73 *Valor*. "Other than some Caribbean bucket races logged by the prior owners, this is *Valor*'s first race," said Lund, adding that the simplified deck plan, self-tacking jib and mostly automated running rig allows short-handed sailing - and maybe a few regattas. "To move this 39-tonner, we'd be best off with 30 knots of wind and a heavy sea state to plow to the front."

In addition to *Valor*, other first timers entered exclusively in the 'RTI race include Jack Denker's (Hingham, Mass.) J/105 *Idaho*, William Kelley's (Wareham, Mass.) Beneteau First 45 *Ohana*, Dudley Johnson's (Westerly, R.I.) Marten 49 *Pugilist*, Brian Johnson's (Staatsburg, N.Y.) Hinckley Sou'wester 42 *Serena*, Henry Sesselberg's (Cape Elizabeth, Maine) J/105 *Ubuntu*, and Ken Boyle's (Sayville, N.Y.) Tartan 37 *Akimbo*.

A Run for the Money - 'Round-the-Sound

The 'RTS races consist of coastal sprints of between 13 and 22 miles around government buoys in Vineyard and Nantucket Sounds where, like in the 'RTI, cunning and skill is needed to navigate the challenges of tidal currents and wind effects.

Gerhard Wittich (Kyle, Texas), owner of the Saga 43 *Figaro2*, will see for himself when he competes in the 'RTS races (as well as the 'RTI race) for the first time. "The crew is getting excited," said Wittich, explaining that *Figaro2* is a speedy cruising boat and will sail in PHRF Spinnaker Class. "We have won a few trophies, mostly racing in the Gulf of Mexico and Galveston Bay (distance races). Our last race was the Michael Mentuck Regatta in 2021, which replaced the Marblehead - Halifax Race that year thanks to Covid. We did well in the PHRF Spinnaker class but will now show up a bit rusty."

Also sailing for the first time in both the 'RTS and the 'RTI races, so far, are Moritz Hilf's (New York, N.Y.) Pogo 50 *Max*; David Schwartz's (Bristol, R.I.) Lyman-Morse 40 *Mischief*; Tom Rich's (Portsmouth, R.I.) GP 42 *Settler*; and Chris Sheehan's (Larchmont, N.Y.) Cape 31 *Warrior Won*.

With impressive sailing resumes, these teams promise to give veteran Edgartown Race Weekend competitors a run for their money.

What More Can a Sailor Ask For?

Excellence is assured both on the water for competition and shoreside for [social gatherings](#) thanks to the Edgartown Yacht Club's veteran race management team and friendly, helpful staff who pride themselves in personalizing communication and making sure every team's needs are met. Also making life easier, the first 50 paid registrants for 'RTI are provided two nights of free mooring, while entry fees for 'RTS include a night of mooring for each day of participation. The event offers discounted [entry](#) until May 6th, a crew finder for teams needing a spare hand racing, and mitigation plans to allow more participants to meet safety regulations.

Both the 'RTS and 'RTI races are open to PHRF-NE (including Spinnaker, Non-Spinnaker, and Doublehanded classes) and Multihulls. Sponsors of Edgartown Race Weekend are [Mount Gay Rum](#) and [J Boats](#), and [Martha's Vineyard Coffee Co.](#)

For more information, including the NOR, go to www.rtirace.org or contact Margaret Passafiume, raceadministrator@edgartownyc.org, (508) 627-4364 x18.

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