



## Edgartown Race Weekend Going Back to its Roots

EDGARTOWN, MARTHA'S VINEYARD, MASS. (February 26, 2025) – For 2025, [Edgartown Race Weekend](#) will say goodbye to its two-day, 'Round-the-Sound Races of recent years and hello to a fresh new focus on its centerpiece 'Round-the-Island Race ('RTI), which will be 88 years old when it begins on Saturday, June 21. Although it's one of yacht racing's oldest distance events, the 55-mile circumnavigation of Martha's Vineyard is anything but staid, thanks to host Edgartown Yacht Club (EYC). Lively shoreside parties and an early morning start with a same-day early evening finish mean the experience is not only festive but also manageable in terms of crew logistics.



The ocean racing yacht *Venona*, namesake of the 'Round-the-Island Race's coveted Venona Trophy, first awarded in 1938 (supplied photo)

“The ‘RTI is picturesque, challenging, and of a length that keeps veteran racing sailors intrigued while presenting first-timers with a perfect opportunity to try on offshore sailing for size,” said Event Chair Hal Findlay, adding that racing divisions are for PHRF Spinnaker, PHRF Non-Spinnaker, PHRF Doublehanded and Multi-Hull. “Sailors compete for many overall trophies, including one for best corrected time in Spinnaker division: the prestigious Venona Trophy, which dates back to the origins of the race in 1938.” (The Venona Trophy was first awarded by Edgartown Yacht Club’s Commodore E. Jared Bliss and named after Bliss’s ocean racing yacht, which won the Bermuda Race in 1908.)

New to the race, among others, will be the Dehler 30 *Styrka*, skippered by Ryan Scudder (Centerville, Mass.) in Spinnaker division; the J/145 *Sonnenschein*, skippered by Bill Waldron (Falmouth, Maine), also in Spinnaker; the J/130 *Jayhawk*, skippered by Nathan Ray (Greenville, R.I.) and Beneteau First 345 *Veronique*, skippered by Bert Rubindecervens (East Islip, N.Y.), both in Non-Spinnaker.

Thus far, two defending class champions have registered: the Tartan 3500 *Artful Dodger*, skippered by Michael Powers (Teaticket, Mass.) in Spinnaker division and the Sabre 362 *Ovation*, skippered by Kent Lenci (South Dartmouth, Mass.) in Non-Spinnaker.



From left: Kent Lenci’s entry *Ovation*; Lenci with son/crew member JD Lenci;. (Sailing photo by Daniel Forster)

“It’s an annual tradition that I wouldn’t dream of missing,” said Lenci, who has sailed the ‘RTI over 25 times aboard various boats (including *Resolute*, the late Edgartown Yacht Club Commodore Bob Snyder’s favored entry for many years) but started a new era when he acquired his Sabre 362 *Ovation* five years ago and began including his son JD in the crew. “*Ovation* is a cruising boat that we try to sail well. She is not equipped with racy sails, and no one is hanging over the rail. Still, we will tweak and fiddle our way around the island, trying to

coax all the speed out of her that we can coax. My main goal is always to stay safe and to pass on to my son, bit by bit, the sailing knowledge I've accumulated; you can learn a lot by sailing all the way around Martha's Vineyard."

As for what's to love about the 'RTI itself, Lenci said: "I love the energy of the harbor as boats stream in ahead of time from across southern New England. I enjoy trying to outwit the currents that wrap around Cape Poge and rip through Muskeget Channel. Now and then I catch a few winks during the long leg south of the island. Gay Head never gets old, and Vineyard Sound feels like a second home; I love the afternoon run along the north side of the island and the chaotic turn around West Chop, where you get squeezed between an island and a shallow place along with ferries and many other pleasure boats."

### **Destination (Regatta) Vacation**

Now that Edgartown Race Weekend is singularly focused on its 'RTI, racing teams and their families can utilize the day or days before and after to enjoy an adventurous (or relaxing, if preferred) getaway to Martha's Vineyard.

"Think of it as a destination vacation, built around a passion for sailing and the sea," said Findlay. "At the core is one of America's most historic distance races, circumnavigating one of America's most beloved vacation spots." Findlay added that the event also is held during the shoulder-season, which counts for less crowds and better pricing on accommodations.

Check-in begins Friday, June 20 at the [Club](#), which will host, that night, a short Skipper's Meeting at 1700, immediately prior to the 1720 Mount Gay Welcome Party and Dinner (for ticketed sailors and their guests). Saturday is the big day for the 'RTI, with Sunday morning, June 22 reserved for the Awards Ceremony at 0900.

"Plenty of book-end time to enjoy the island and its many restaurants, shops, beaches and activities," added Findlay.

Among the sponsors of Edgartown Race Weekend are [Mount Gay Rum](#) and [J Boats](#).

Early registration and payment is \$400 until May 5, 2025. Thereafter, regular registration is \$500, late registration \$600. For the first 50 paid entries, a free two-day mooring can be reserved. For more information on Edgartown Race Weekend, including the NOR, go to [www.rtirace.org](http://www.rtirace.org) or contact Margaret Passafiume, [raceadministrator@edgartownyc.org](mailto:raceadministrator@edgartownyc.org), (508) 627-4364 x18.

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