



Edgartown Yacht Club's Edgartown Race Weekend

Let the Sailing (and Good Times) Begin

EDGARTOWN, MASS., MARTHA'S VINEYARD (July 22, 2014) — It's time again for Edgartown Yacht Club to host its annual Edgartown Race Weekend on Martha's Vineyard. The event, for IRC, PHRF (racing spinnaker, cruising non-spinnaker) and Double-Handed sailboats, takes place this Thursday through Saturday (July 24-26), and by the looks of the entry list and schedule there will be no shortage of talent participating or fun to be had.



The 'Round-the-Island Race is now a 77-year-old tradition. (Photo Credit Michael Berwind)

The first two days are devoted to Big Boat Buoy Races (BBBR), which currently have 34 entries and were inaugurated in 2012 as a one-day partner event to the club's renowned and now 77-year-old 'Round-the-Island Race, which has 66 entries to date. Last year, the BBBR expanded to two days, and there has been no looking back. While a growing group of the nation's hottest grand prix circuit sailors join the action, race organizers remain committed to keeping things charmingly "down home" and accessible to racing sailors of all levels. The whole spectrum can enjoy the Friday night Mount Gay "jump-up" party, a Welcome Reception on Wednesday, and Awards Ceremonies on both Friday and Sunday, all at Edgartown Yacht Club's 1927 clubhouse that sits famously at the foot of Main Street, perched out over the waters of Edgartown Harbor.

Hal Findlay is one of those sail-for-fun kind of guys who lives in Cos Cob in the winter and in Edgartown during the summer. He first competed in Edgartown Race Weekend two years ago, skipped last year, and will be on the starting line this year with his 32-foot Aphrodite 101 named *Arrow*, which he will sail double-handed with his old college buddy Bart Partington (Cos Cob, Conn./Edgartown) on all three days.



Fleet racing at last year's Big Boat Buoy Races. (Photo Credit Michael Berwind)

"We sail a lot together, but we don't race, with the exception of this," said Findlay. "Our typical Saturday afternoon is to sail out of Edgartown Harbor and beat or run back; we would never think of sailing 56 miles around the island, so the 'Round-the-Island Race is an opportunity to spread our wings a little." As for the around-the-buoys racing, where Findlay and Bench will be up against BBBR defending champion Richard Egan (Osterville, Mass.) aboard his J/46 *Wings*, Findlay joked that with just the two of them, things "might get messy," but they would be sure to take it lightly. "Now *Vesper* vs. *Sled*, that's where it gets serious!"

Jim Swartz's (Salt Lake City, Utah/Edgartown) IRC 52 *Vesper* and Takashi Okura's (Alpine N.J./Tokyo, Japan) IRC 52 *Sled* are two of nine boats signed up in the ultra-competitive IRC class. They have just competed in the New York Yacht Club's Race Week at Newport, where *Vesper* won IRC overall and *Sled* took third in class. Also coming straight from Newport is Steve and Heidi Benjamin's Carkeek 40 *Spookie*, another proven thoroughbred that won its IRC class in Newport as well.

Gunther Buerman (Newport, R.I.), who will skipper his 12 Metre here later this summer at the annual Edgartown Yacht Club-hosted 12 Metre Regatta, has added a second boat – the IRC 52 *Hooligan* – to his stable and hopes to make an impressive showing at Edgartown Race Weekend, but he is still getting used to the change of pace that one feels after trading a classic chariot for a fast car.

"It has been great fun," said Buerman about sailing *Hooligan* at Key West Race Week, the IRC Super Series in Miami, and then Race Week at Newport last week, "but I feel like I'm in my second semester of kindergarten. We've learned quickly that the boat is unique and modern in terms of how it has to be sailed."



Edgartown Yacht Club on Edgartown Harbor (Photo Credit Michael Berwind)

For Bermuda Race veteran and Edgartown Race Weekend Chairman Charles Hodge (Edgartown) it took three tries for his team to take home a trophy (for third place among Edgartown boats) in the 'Round-the-Island Race, and they'll be back at it this year, sailing his Little Harbor 44 *Surprise* in the next-to-largest (22 entries) PHRF non-spinnaker class. "It's a fun race, and we don't take it terribly serious, but it felt good to take home the silver. It has been a learning experience, and we enjoy improving our sailing each time." He added that sometimes crews have to "let it all hang out," especially in 15-20 knots, which were the conditions for last year, but that's what Hodge's boat, a heavy-displacement design, likes best. "Some of the lighter displacement boats will beat us if it's blowing 10-12 knots; if it's 20-25, they won't."

Wednesday, July 23 is the entry deadline for Thursday and Friday's Big Boat Buoy Races, which are sailed just beyond the mouth of Edgartown Harbor and sanctioned as part of the prestigious U.S. IRC Gulf Stream Series. Friday, July 25 is the entry deadline for Saturday's Round-the-Island Race, part of the New England Lighthouse Series for PHRF yachts. The Big Boat Buoy Races and the 'Round-the-Island Race are scored separately and each have their own Notices of Race and entry forms; however, there is no additional entry fee to compete in the buoy races.

For more information, go to <http://www.rtirace.org> or contact raceadministrator@edgartownyc.org. Follow on the Edgartown Yacht Club Racing [facebook page](#).

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