

# Jib Sheet

## Mt Gay/Boatyard Regatta 2010

Barbados ... Barbados - Land of Flying Fish and Potatoes. Well we did not see any flying fish nor potatoes but I presume the Merry-men were talking about a time long gone. And this seemed to reflect the present state of sailing in Bim since I last raced here in the mid 90's. Almost gone is the Racing Class which ten years ago was a fiercely competitive affair with half a dozen Beneteau First Class 10m's with a supporting cast of few Henderson 30s and the odd Soverel 42. With all the big names in Southern Caribbean Racing duking it out in classic Barbados conditions – big breeze and ocean swell, names like Andrew Burke, Dougie Meyers, Ralph Johnson, Jackie Hoad, Michael Rostant featuring prominently in the standings. In this the 25th anniversary of the Mt Gay Regatta now partnered with the Boatyard for the last ten years, the racing class was a small affair with a very professional Blackberry Enzyme showing that their steady diet of Northern regattas (St Maarten, Rolex and BVI) had them as sharp as an ice pick on Carnival Monday morning, finishing the regatta with five bullets. The balance of the Racing Class consisted of Paul Johnson's Bruggadung II which had not really raced in almost a year (since the passing away of Andrew Burke in April 2009) and the J-105 Whistler which has shown steady improvement over the last couple of years.

The Cruising Class had also a field of veteran boats, the Vander Stat 22 Jump Up, Burke 10m Fancy Sailor and



Racing Class Champions - Blackberry Enzyme L-R Peter Baille, Paul Solomon, Kevin See Tai, Paul Charles, Simone Brown, Pierre la Borde, Jay Alvi, Reggie Amour, Bruce Martin and missing Alison Thomas

the J30 Jaystar which I can remember racing against in Antigua in the mid 80's, this class was dominated by Ralph 'Brugga' Johnson's Beneteau 53f5 'Rapajam' sailing so far ahead of 'Jump Up' they were practically in another time zone. In the past this was also a fleet that used to get a lot of support from the Trini boats, no sign of Kevin Kenny's 'Sea Wyf' Brenda Farfan's 'Business Machine' or Joe Brown's 'Mayumi' but it is a true reflection of the general slump that Trini sailing is going through at the moment as we cannot even get some of these boats to the starting line at our local Sunday races.





*Ambushe crew- L-R Philip Archie, Andrew Affoo, Jacob De Camps, Stephen Bushe and Adrian Afoo*



*Tim Kimpton of Crash Test 3 receiving Day Two, Second Prize*



*Wasabi crew ready to enjoy their Day Two, Third Prize. L-R Gregory Loe, Jeffery Chen, Bastien Pouthier and Ricky Macintosh*

The good news for the sailing scene in Barbados is in the J-24 one design fleet which had 18 boats on the start line every day. The hard work and dedication of a few J-24 enthusiasts has become a phenomenon, which has generated regional momentum. At the Mt Gay/Boatyard Regatta this year there were two teams from Trinidad, led by Stephen Bushe and Donald Stollmeyer respectively, three teams from St Lucia, and one team each from Bequia, Grenada and St Vincent plus all the local teams from Barbados. At the end of the regatta, it was the locals that prevailed with debutant 'Undercover' pulling out the win over Phillip Barnard's team 'Saltfish' from St Vincent with 'Esperanza' taking third. The Trini teams were in the next five places with 'Jabulani' in seventh and 'Ambushe' in tenth. The competition was fierce and the starts and the mark roundings contentious, Pierre la Borde on Enzyme told me that looking back from the windward rail at a leeward mark rounding, there were so many J-24's trying to douse and go around that it looked like ants on a gum drop. The best news of all was that in this fleet were two youth teams one from St Lucia and one from Bequia so maybe a J-24 world champion from the southern Caribbean could become a reality.

As for us Melges 24 sailors, well, we went as an exhibition class to show that there is also potential for a 24ft sport boat one design class. The Barbados Tourism Authority, facilitated by the Honorable Peter Gilkes, kindly sponsored the shipping of the five Trini boats to Barbados on the Admiral Bay II, a Roll-on Roll-off ferry from Bequia. Three

Trini teams went, Tim Kimpton's Crash Test 3, Marc de Vertieul's Mojo and us on Wasabi. We had a full on battle with Chris Martin's Budget Marine team from St Maarten and Dave West's Jurakan team from Tortola. Day One saw the two northern teams come out of the blocks with pace seeming to revel in the 16 to 18 knot conditions, leaving the Trininis to face the reality that racing in the Gulf is a liability. Wasabi was up into the double digits after the first two races and we were wondering how we could be so slow, the boys made up for it by killing off the bottle of Mt Gay that we got in the skipper's bag. Day Two saw the wind lighten to 12 to 14 knts and move more to the South. The Budget Marine boys were even faster in the lighter stuff and pulled out to five point lead going into the last day. Those guys were starting make us look bad, I mean worse. Wasabi had its only redeeming race where we managed to claw back into a second place in the Carlisle Bay race. Day Three was blowing 18 to 20 knts and the sea was running, two poor races by Budget Marine opened the door for Tim Kimpton in Crash Test 3 who had two bullets on the last day to take first overall. Dave West and his Jurakan team also had a good day and ended their regatta with a respectable third.

My return to Barbados was bittersweet, good to be back racing in those fantastic conditions amongst friends old and new, and where the racing is as hard as the partying. The memory of recently departed friends was still fresh and poignant and the admiration for our embattled and larger-than-life friend is immense.

*J-24 One Design Fleet*

*Chris Martin's Budget Marine team from St Maarten*

*Trini Teams left -Wasabi and right- Crash Test 3*

*Bajan team- Undercover*

*Tim Kimpton- Crash Test 3*

