

## Raja Muda regatta

This year's Raja Muda International Regatta held from the 21st to the 29th of November attracted 40 entries (although only 36 boats started), compared with last year's 78. The fall in numbers was blamed on the haze which prompted many round the world sailors and cruising yachtsman to sail directly to Phuket or Langkawi. Another possible factor may have been that there was no world cruising events passing through the region at this time.

The prestigious Raja Muda of Selangor Trophy is only open to the Racing Class and here all eyes were on Ricky Sandoval's new Sydney 46 *Subic Centennial* to see if it could rival sistership *Cutty Sark's* string of victories in Europe.

The first race of the five-race series was the 60-mile overnight race from Port Klang to Lumut. It started in a light northwesterly of around 7 to 8 knots, which then veered northerly. During the night the northeasterly eventually kicked in at around 0200 and allowed the smaller boats to make their handicaps. *Subic Centennial* won on corrected time by an hour and 40 minutes from the Malaysian yacht *Chilli Padi* with another Malaysian yacht *Gotcha!* 3rd. Local knowledge helped Gee Boon Kee in *Second Serenade* to win the Cruising Class, *Simba* from Singapore was 2nd and the German boat *Master Blaster* 3rd. Some people were rather surprised at all five Classic Class boats finishing because of the light breezes early in the race, but they all used their engines (under the rules) for periods ranging between four and 11 hours.

Race two was another overnighter from Lumut to Penang which started in a 12-knot southwesterly. It was definitely the day of the Bashfords/Sydneys, as apart from *Vida San Miguel*, Ray Ordoveza's Beneteau 51, the defending Raja Muda champion, these boats took the first five places. *Subic Centennial* was 1st, the 36 from Australia *QBE Club Marine* 2nd and the two Singapore 41s *Millenium* and *Jenny III*, 3rd and 5th. These five boats escaped from the rest of the fleet which was caught when the wind died.

It was a similar story in the Cruising Class, but here only four boats got away. 1st place going to *Master Blaster*, the Commodore of the Royal Selangor Yacht Club, Hijjas Kasturi was 2nd in his new maxi *Mia* and

*Simba* 3rd. 4th was one of the smallest boats in the fleet, *Thunderflash* skippered by Joop van Zantvoort and crewed by three Malaysian teenagers. *Thunderflash* took nearly 19 hours to complete the course, as opposed to the leaders 12 and a half!

Race three was the Penang Triangle sailed over an Olympic course in a light to occasionally moderate breeze. Being quite a short race of around one and a half hours, this produced one of the closest finishes in the regatta. The first four boats in Racing Class were all within one minute and 42 seconds of one another on corrected time; the order being *QBE Club Marine*, *Chilli Padi*, *Gotcha!* and *Subic Centennial*. The Cruising Class also scooted around the course, only a little slower than their racing cousins. 1st was *Master Blaster*, 2nd *Second Serenade* and the teenagers in *Thunderflash* 3rd. Sailing around 'the cans' is obviously not to the Classic Class's liking, as they all recorded a DNS!

The fourth leg is normally the one with the strongest winds as the boats start to meet the northeasterly monsoon along the Kedan Coast on their way from Penang to Langkawi. But this year the race started in a gentle northwesterly and initial progress was slow. After dark the breeze swung left then died but returned in strengths of up to 20 knots and blasted the boats through to the finish line. 1st again in the Racing Class was



*Subic Centennial*, winner of the grand trophy

*Subic Centennial*, *QBE Club Marine* 2nd and *Jenny III* 3rd. The Cruising Class was won by the local heroes in *Second Serenade*, Yussof Ahmad in *Mas Ayu II* taking an excellent 2nd in the breezy conditions and *Master Blaster* collecting 3rd.

The final race was the Langkawi Triangle held in an initially 10-knot easterly, but this died quickly and swung to the left. *Subic Centennial* won decisively by taking line honours over 20 minutes ahead of *QBE Club Marine* which corrected to 12 minutes, with *Vida San Miguel* in 3rd. Thus the overall result for the Racing Class was *Subic Centennial* 1st, followed by *QBE Club Marine* and *Chilli Padi* in a creditable 3rd.

In the Cruising Class only nine boats started the last race (I didn't win a prize, so I won't go to the party?) but unfortunately the wind died for the others and no boat made the finish. The final result therefore was *Master Blaster* 1st, *Second Serenade* 2nd and *Simba* 3rd. In the Classic Class, which again opted to avoid the triangle course, the overall winner was *Upshot* from Great Britain, with the American *Topaz* 2nd and *Biana* from Australia 3rd.