



RAJA MUDA CELEBRATES 25 YEARS



IMAGES: GUY NOWELL/RMSIR

FROM rain squalls to glassy calms, blazing sunshine to intense rain, the 25th Raja Muda Selangor International Regatta (RMSIR) in Malaysia had it all. Held annually since 1990 on Malaysia's west coast, the RMSIR—or more simply the "Raja Muda"—has an almost unique format mixing passage and inshore racing over four different venues.

A solid fleet of 40 yachts in seven classes assemble each year at the Royal Selangor Yacht Club (RSYC) in Kuala Lumpur's Port Klang. For the silver anniversary, the typically diverse fleet included Dato' Richard Curtis' 100 year old classic *Eveline*, a spectacular new 143' super yacht called *Escapade*, competitive racing yachts like *Foxy Lady 6* and Neil Pryde's *Hi Fi*, plus the stalwart Dr John Wardill and his IOR yacht *Australian Maid* from Darwin.

Leg one is a passage race of approximately 74nm to Pangkor Island. In the RMSIR, the passage races start late to give time for the sea breeze to fill in. There was an 8-10 knot breeze from the west which slowly went left as the afternoon wore on, allowing the yachts to crack sheets as they headed north. For us on *Hi Fi* in IRC Class 1 we were out on our own, as the next fastest yacht *Island Fling* is ten feet shorter. However we enjoyed a close race with Geoff Hill's *Antipodes*, which was racing in Premier Cruising and started five minutes ahead of us. We took a first in that race on corrected and in all the other classes the bigger boats won, including *Antipodes* in

Class 2, Gordon Ketelby's *Fujin* in Class 3 and Jeff Harris' *Nijinsky* in Class 4.

The stopover at Pangkor Island is absolutely magic. Crews can choose to stay either at the rustic Sea View Resort or at the world famous Pangkor Laut which is a five star resort with all the trimmings. Breakfast at dawn with the hornbills and the owner of the Sea View Resort Tan Yee Khan (a World Badminton Hall of Famer) is a special treat.

Leg Two is another passage race, this time of 65nm to the south end of the island of Penang. Again a very light sea breeze had filled in by the start of the race and after negotiating the tricky currents on the west side of Pangkor Laut Island it was cracked sheets to head towards the finish. The enormous dark storm clouds built up quickly and they brought some big winds and lots of rain. It only lasted for about 30 minutes before we were left with scarcely any breeze. By the time of the finish, after almost 15 hours on the course, we were only nine minutes ahead of *Island Fling*, nowhere near enough to get our time on them or on other boats such as *Foxy Lady*. In the other classes it was a similar story.

A long motor of about 30nm up to the north end of Penang and the World Heritage listed historic trading port of Georgetown and all crews were ready for some rest. The traditional rickshaw races in the afternoon provided a chance to catch up and swap stories about the difficult leg



and debate whether it really was a small boat race. Penang is well known as the best state in Malaysia for food and there is plenty of time to take it all in.

On Wednesday it was time for some shorter races. In Penang it can be difficult to get races underway due to the lack of breeze. But the race committee did a great job getting two races away for most classes and one for the more cruising orientated classes. *Foxy Lady* led class 1 from *Island Fling* and *Hi Fi*, while *Antipodes* led Andrew Cocks' new *Starlight* and *Australian Maid* in Class 2. In Class 3 *Fujin* hadn't lost a race yet, while in Class 4 the former Sydney Hobart winner *Piccolo* (Mike Downard) led *Nijinsky* and *Skybird* in a close battle. In the Cruising Class Philip Auger and Astrid Graha's *Sophia* continued to lead with their third win. In Classic Class there was a surprise win by *Eveline* but the class continued to be led by Barry Wickett's *Kay Sira*.

The last of the passage races is a shorter leg of 55nm from Penang to Langkawi. Again starting late in the day, this time the breeze is usually off the shore and true to form there was a very light easterly at start time. Spinnakers and code zeros were up for a short time before the breeze went more northerly and a change to jibs was called for. The second half of the leg was gruelling stuff with a strong seaway and breeze building to about 20 knots. As always this leg was pretty quick and there was time for a few beers in



FROM OPPOSITE PAGE CLOCK WISE:
Racing was a mix of passage and inshore racing in four different venues.

LEFT: The presentation in Penang was spectacular and included a breathtaking Chinese lion dance.

the spectacular Royal Langkawi Yacht Club (RLYC) in preparation for the last two days of racing on Bass Harbour.

The Bass in Langkawi is a little different to the more famous Bass Strait in Australia. The calm waters, shifty breeze and picturesque mountains make for a fantastic sailing venue.

With a later start to allow everyone to recover from the rigours of the leg from Langkawi, the race committee managed to get one race in for all classes. Windward leeward courses for the racing boats and island courses for the cruisers.

On *Hi Fi* we managed a first place in the extremely light shifty wind and strong currents, but we were still well behind both *Foxy Lady* and *Island Fling* on corrected time. In the other classes the leaders at this stage were *Antipodes*, *Fujin*, *Piccolo*, *Sophia* and *Kay Sira*.

On the last day of this long regatta, Bass Harbour proved again to be very tricky. The two races for the racing classes were sailed in completely different conditions as a storm cell rolled in from the south. The final race of

the series was held in over 20 knots and there was some drama as *Starlight* did a "chase boat drop" of their spinnaker and other boats broached left, right and centre but everyone made it back to the finish line safely.

After the rain squall passed, it continued to rain solidly all night through the presentation. However the prize winners and the competitors didn't mind as they were too busy reliving the classic, enjoyable and unique event that is the Raja Muda regatta. The winners of the impressive silver Raja Muda trophy were *Foxy Lady* for the second consecutive year and the historic Jugra Cup for Class 2 Premier Cruising went to *Antipodes*. Class 3 was taken in dominant fashion by *Fujin*, while Class 4 was a more closely fought affair being narrowly won by *Piccolo* over *Nijinsky*. *Sophia* won Cruising Class and the Royal Langkawi Yacht Club Cup at a canter with six wins. In Classic Class *Eveline* couldn't quite do enough to overtake *Kay Sira* who also took home the Eveline Trophy. *

- Sam Hunt/*HiFi*