

The Raja Muda Selangor International Regatta is special. It comprises three passage races over approximately 200nm along the west coast of Peninsula Malaysia between Port Klang and Langkawi, with harbour racing in Penang and Langkawi.

The passage races are especially challenging with the first leg (74nm) from Port Klang to Pangkor, the second (65nm) from Pangkor to Penang and the third (53nm), Penang to Langkawi.

It is a real test of seamanship with prior experience and local knowledge paying dividends.

Shallows, tidal waters, fishnets, unmarked and uncharted obstacles and unpredictable conditions are just some of the challenges facing skippers and crews. Yet still they come back for more, year after year.

What made the 27th RMSIR special were the conditions. On most occasions, at least in recent years, the race officer has been obliged to move the starts of the passage races up the course.

Not this year. All passage race starts got off pretty much on schedule. Boats were also able to keep moving . . . even if it was backwards!

Unfortunately the regatta was not without casualties. Ray Roberts' TP 52, *Team Hollywood*, hit an underwater object and retired. He was not the only one. Several others others glanced rocks in Langkawi. Likewise, during the deliveries after the Raja Muda to the Phuket King's Cup, but that's another story!

The island races around Bass Harbour are scenically spectacular but can be equally treacherous as the trimaran, *Tantrum Too*, almost found to its cost. The absence of rain, except during the first leg and again briefly during the final leg to Langkawi, made for a pleasant change over past years.

Numbers were somewhat down with 26 of 28 entries (2015 : 31) starting from Port Klang with two, Kevin Whitcraft's TP52, *THA72*, and *Tantrum Too*, joining in Penang. Hong Kong seemed under represented compared with past years with just four entries — *Antipodes*, *EFG Mandrake III*, *Black Baza* and *Outlaw*.

The fleet was initially split into seven classes but two — Class 0 (TP52s) and Class 7 (Multihulls) — comprised just one entry each. Class 0 for the TP 52s was supposed to start in Penang but, with *Team Hollywood* starting from Port Klang, it was also entered in Class 1 for IRC 1 yachts. By the time Class 0 was due to start it was down to just one entry with *Team Hollywood* having already retired from the regatta.

Surprisingly, Robert van Paridon's *Tantrum Too*, was the only multihull to join in Penang.

As always, there was a warm welcome at the Royal Selangor Yacht Club for the skippers and crews attending the skippers' briefing and opening dinner. Also present was the Deputy General of Tourism Malaysia, Dato' Rashidi. No belly dancers this year but the nautically-dressed performers were a popular attraction.

FH had the pleasure of joining Rama Menon's 1989 Dehler 38, *VG Offshore*, in Class 5, Non-IRC Cruising, for the regatta where the spirit of competition was as equally keen as in the IRC classes.

Saturday, 19th November 2016 **Port Klang to Pangkor**

It was an ominous departure from RSYC when Rama realised there was a problem with *VG Offshore's* engine. However, an underwater inspection revealed a large plastic sheet entwined around the prop and shaft, which took some time to remove.

Conditions were bright with a 6- to 8-knot westerly and an outgoing tide that would assist the fleet for an hour or two.

First off at 1300 was Class 6 — the Classic Cruising Class, intended for yachts over 30 years of age. In the end,

after some juggling of classes by the RO, Jerry Rollin and the organizers, out of the five in class, only the 1902 Bristol Channel Pilot Cutter, *Eveline*, the 1979 Slipper, *Kay Sira*, and the 1978 Impala 28, *Old Pulteney The Blue Angel* met this criteria competing against the 1990

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Beneteau Oceanis 350, *Aeolus* XC, and the 2006 Harmony 38, *Sade 2*.

Class 5 followed five minutes later with *VG Offshore* being squeezed at the committee boat end by Arne Hayn's Dehler 34, *Delite*. A brief encounter with *Delite's* stern saw *VG Offshore* exonerate itself with a penalty turn yet still in the lead at the windward mark. To say it never looked back would be a

— continued overleaf

Continued from previous page — mis-statement as it kept a close eye on Chris Mitchell’s 1997 Adams Naut 40, *Lady Bubbly*.

Both experimented with kites, with varying degrees of success, going for speed rather than direction. However, with the wind easing and shallows approaching, it was time to head further out.

During the evening, the wind switched to a land breeze before conditions deteriorated considerably. Around 0200, a tropical storm moved in, impacting heavily on those still out on the course.

At 0330 on Sunday, in driving rain and a shifting breeze, it was difficult to see the finish line set some distance off Pangkor Island, particularly when the pin-end light was malfunctioning. However, *VG Offshore* had much to celebrate, taking class line honours after 14 hours 27 minutes and 50 seconds and handicap honours, followed home by *Lady Bubbly* some 32 minutes later. It took another eight hours before the last in class, *Millennium 2*, finished.

The storm continued throughout most of the night. After 23 hours and 12 seconds, *Eveline*, skippered by Trevor Richards, was the last to cross the line but still corrected out in 2nd place on handicap in Class 6, just six minutes behind the winner, *Aeolus XC*.

Jeremy Camps’ *Old Pulteney The Blue Angel*, relishing the flat water, had got off to a great start leading the Class 6 fleet but, during the storm, was hit by lightening, knocking out its instruments, and forcing it to retire.

Naturally, the boats in these two classes had been overtaken by the IRC yachts. David Fuller’s chartered Beneteau First 44.7, *Fujin*, (now owned by Gary Baguley) finishing before midnight after 10 hours 19 minutes to take line and handicap honours in IRC Class 3.

It was a tight race for line honours in IRC Class 1 between defending champion Sarab Singh’s Welbourn 52, *Windsikher II* (ex-*Hi Fi*) and Ray Robert’s TP 52, *Team Hollywood* (ex-*Kodo & Team Origin*) with *Team Hollywood* claiming line honours by 1 minute and 11 seconds in 8 hours 20 minutes and 11 seconds for the 74nm race, although *Windsikher II* took handicap honours.



The Ker 42 Custom, *Black Baza*, finished eight minutes ahead of the GTS 43, *EFG Mandrake III*, but lost out for 3rd place on handicap.

It was later learned that, during the race, *Team Hollywood* had hit a recently sunken, unlit and

unmarked, semi-submerged steel and concrete barge, bringing it to a complete standstill. The TP52 still managed to finish.

Slotting in between the two at the line, just 48 seconds behind *Team Hollywood*, was Geoff Hill’s Smith 72 Custom, *Antipodes*, capturing Class 2 line and handicap honours ahead of the Malaysian Armed Forces Farr 520, *Zuhal*.

After a relaxing day, the evening’s prizegiving party at the rustic Sea View Resort, was a raucous affair with a wide variety of talented (and less talented) race participants demonstrating their karaoke skills (or lack of them). Star of the evening, it must be said, was *Mandrake*’s Fred Kinmonth!

Monday, 21st November 2016 **Pangkor to Penang**

At the start of the second 65nm leg from Pangkor to Penang, there was just enough breeze to get the fleet away on time, with the slower classes away first.

Eveline struggled from the start and, sadly, retired with only two of the class making it to the finish line. After 20 hours 14 minutes and 28 seconds, *The Blue Angel* took the honours ahead of *Sade 2*.

Aeolus XC was credited with 3rd based on its time at *Gate 2* ahead of *Kay Sira*.

The breeze fluctuated throughout the race but, as dawn broke, was easing considerably in the approaches to Penang. *Lady Bubbly* was leading *VG Offshore* and clinched both line and handicap honours.

Some four hours later, Jerry Lau’s Bavaria 37 Cruiser, *WYSIWYG* II* crossed the line four minutes behind the Dufour 350, *Zoo Too*, but good enough for 3rd place. As Lau later recounted, “What I like most about the Raja Muda is the camaraderie. If you win a prize, well that’s a bonus.”

Fujin made it two in a row with line and handicap honours in Class 3 with John Kara’s Beneteau First 45, *Insanity*, 2nd and RSYC commodore and RMSIR chairman Jeff Harris’ J-92S, *Nijinsky*, 3rd.

It was a close finish in Class 2 with *Zuhal*, *Antipodes* and Andrew Cock’s Simonis Voogd 56, *Starlight*, finishing within 14 minutes of each other. *Zuhal* won line and handicap honours.

In Class 1, *Windsikher II* crossed the line 1st but was relegated to 4th on handicap having been chased down by the trailing fleet after being parked up just 5nm from the finish. The Welbourn 52 was comfortably beaten on handicap by *Mandrake III* which crossed the line just 12 seconds ahead of the Malaysian Armed Forces dk 47, *Uranus*. It was considered one of the slowest races on this leg for Class 1.

Meanwhile, *Team Hollywood* had opted instead to head straight for Langkawi to inspect the damage after its earlier collision.

Some of the luckier boats were able to moor in the Straits Quay Marina, where ex-GM of RSYC and former organizer of the RMSIR, John Fergusson, gave a warm welcome. The majority of the fleet anchored outside.

The traditional rickshaw race, which has replaced the original tricycle race, was again held with some wayward and reckless driving. Surprising, as it is the passengers that down the beer, not the drivers. That evening everyone was left to their own devices.

Wednesday, 23rd November 2016 **Penang Harbour Races**

Conditions were looking promising when the RO set up the start for the first Penang Harbour Race. Usually, it is light but the land breeze was holding . . . but not for long. The AP flag was raised until the wind swung around, the sea breeze developed, and the courses were relaid.

The Racing classes — 1 and 3 — were given a windward / leeward while the cruisers were given a geometric.

There was some concern onboard *Antipodes* whilst searching for one of the marks which had accidentally been lifted and was in the process of being relaid in approximately the original position in time for the others. However, having rounded the co-ordinates where it should have been and still won the race, Hill withdrew his request for redress. Meanwhile, *Starlight* had spectacularly blown its spinnaker at the same mark, allowing *Zuhal* to finish ahead in 2nd place.

Although the sole contestant in its class, the TP 52 *THA72* joined a combined start with Class 1, pitching its skills against *Windsikher II*.

Windsikher held the lead at the top mark but as *THA72* rounded it snared the mark and, unknowingly, dragged it some 366 metres down the course. The rest of the fleet, therefore, rounded the mark at a considerable advantage. *Black Baza* was initially credited with the win but, during the hearing for redress, the RMSIR international jury, chaired by Bryan Willis made detailed calculations and allowed *Windsikher II* 2 minutes 29 seconds off its elapsed time. This was the estimated time *Black Baza* saved by not rounding the original mark. There was a reversal of positions with *Windsikher II* taking the honours and Jonathan Mahony’s Humphreys 42R, *Zanzibar*, finishing in 3rd.

In a second windward / leeward race, *THA72* established a commanding lead but in Class 1 it was again *Windsikher II* that came out on top ahead of *Mandrake III* and *Black Baza*.



Meanwhile, *Fujin* added two further bullets to its tally with its second race shortened after the first lap. Craig Douglas’ *Popeye* finished with two 2nd places and, *Insanity*, two 3rds.

Lady Bubbly made it the daily double in Class 5 with *Delite* slotting into 2nd place and *VG Offshore* 3rd.

In Class 6, *The Blue Angel* added another bullet ahead of *Eveline* and *Sade 2*.

The evening’s function was held downtown, next door to the former, and now closed, Tanjung City Marina . . . fortunately under cover when the heavens opened. Dance and drumming performances kept everyone entertained.

Thursday, 24th November 2016 **Penang to Langkawi**

FH was back onboard *VG Offshore* for the final passage race to Langkawi joining Rama and crew, including brothers Amir and Izham Rahim, winners of the 1999 Raja Muda Cup.

It was a bright but slightly hazy morning with barely a zephyr rippling the water until a 6-knot westerly developed, allowing racing to get underway on schedule.

After Class 6 were sent on their way, it was the turn of Class 5 with *VG Offshore* off to a good start but after allowing *WYSIWYG II* room at the committee boat end. Meanwhile, *Lady Bubbly* seemed to have found more speed and had raced ahead.

Making six knots, *VG Offshore* hauled in the Class 6 boats, overtaking both *Eveline* and *Kay Sira* but at the same time being overtaken by the IRC boats, including the shorthanded *Outlaw* and the Sleeker 13.89, *Pasaya*, sporting a black spinnaker.

Several overtaking boats had gone further inshore hoping to pick up the transitioning land breeze.

By 1530, the breeze had eased and boat speed was down to 4.5 knots. An experiment with the kite brought no benefit and *VG Offshore* reverted back to its genoa as the wind swung further west.

Overland, dark clouds were forming. The occasional rumble of thunder didn’t bode well.

The sea breeze was still blowing but barely making 3 knots, it was up again with the colourful kite with speed rising to 5 knots.

Fortunately it was a quick kite drop just prior to the arrival of the land breeze as *VG Offshore* accelerated away with a new lease of life but with a further 20nm still to travel. Apart from a few drops the rain held off.

Meanwhile, as night fell, squid fishing boats lit up the horizon.

Once again *Lady Bubbly* took line and handicap honours in Class 5. Arne Hayn’s *Delite*, having taken the opposite route, heading further offshore, slotted into 2nd place on handicap and relegating *VG Offshore* to 3rd.

Only *Eveline* and *Kay Sira*, in Class 6, were out after midnight with *Kay Sira* finishing just before one o’clock and *Eveline* at 01:10:03 giving *Eveline* handicap victory ahead of *The Blue Angel* and *Aeolus XC*.

Apparently whilst in the process of contemplating putting a reef in the main sail, *Eveline* took off as the breeze strengthened and the storm hit. With it all happening so quickly it was “real scary” according to skipper, Trevor Richards.

In Class 3, *Fujin* made it five bullets in a row finishing ahead of *Popeye* with *Nijinsky* 3rd.

In an elapsed time of 7 hours 13 minutes and 30 seconds, *Zuhal* took Class 2 line and handicap honours, finishing just one minute ahead of *Antipodes*, which had gone further inshore expecting to benefit from the early wind transition. In the end, it also lost out on handicap to *Starlight* for 2nd place.

In Class 1, covering the 53nm in 6 hours 36 minutes and 42 seconds, *Windsikher II* took line honours but lost out on handicap, only good enough for 3rd place. *Black Baza* was top of the podium.

Friday, 25th November 2016 **Langkawi Harbour Races**

Having arrived relatively early, all but the short-handed *Outlaw* made it for the 1400 scheduled start for Class 2, followed by Classes 5 and 6 on the scenic island courses.

The northeasterly then eased and shifted more to the south and there was a considerable interval before Classes 3 and 1 got away at 1505 and 1510 respectively after the RO relocated the windward / leeward course.

Windsikher II again took the honours, whilst *Black Baza* was unable to open a sufficient lead over *Mandrake III* and conceded 2nd place on handicap.

Fujin continued to dominate Class 3 ahead of *Popeye* with *Insanity* 3rd.

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The only multi in the Raja Muda

Tantrum Too was weighed on my loadcell in April this year after

arriving by ship from France. The next meeting I had with this 40-foot carbonfibre trimaran was at the Multihull Solutions Regatta (16-17.Jul.16), and later at the Phuket Raceweek (20-24.Jul.16). It was here Robert van Paridon and crew discovered they had a snapped centreboard which had to be repaired in time for the Raja Muda Selangor International Regatta (19-26.Nov.16).

Built by Auriga Yachts in France, *Tantrum Too* joined the regatta in Penang and pretty well did its own thing, even though they were started in Class 5. It's a real pity a few other Phuket-based multihulls didn't pop down to make up numbers as they have done over the past three or so years. But *Tantrum's* crew were pleased to get in some practice before the King's Cup.

For the final race of the Raja Muda, I was fortunate to be invited aboard . . . more as ballast moving around to help keep the transom higher out of the water. I was asked to go as far forward as possible and, during the day, got better at moving my 108kg from one side to the other, whilst the others reacted like a well-greased crew throughout the many manoeuvres. As a builder of multihulls, I had the pleasure of observing the boat's performance — all appeared to be faultless apart from one rope wrap and a solid bump hitting that infamous — and *unmarked* — rock whilst tacking towards the finish line. One of these days the authorities might be forced to put a marker on it. (I arrived in Langkawi from Sumatra in 1994 and only just missed it myself.)

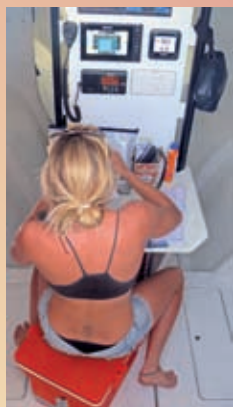
Robert's intention is to try and develop passage racing among multihulls in Asia. It is early days but, with a number of well-appointed multis in the region capable of doing longer races, Robert remains hopeful.

The plan is to campaign *Tantrum Too* (left) in all the west coast of Malaysia regattas, the Neptune Regatta, then east to do the China and Philippine races, later swinging back for the Top of the Gulf and Samui Regattas.

If other multihull sailors are interested in racing against *Tantrum Too* they

should contact Robert at robert.vanparidon@gmail.com.

— by Bob Mott



Continued from previous page — As the wind eased, the courses for the cruising classes were all cut short with *Antipodes* taking the honours in Class 2.

Again, competition was keen between *VG Offshore* and *Lady Bubbly* with both off to good starts. *VG Offshore* chose to tack first and work its way up to the windward mark whilst *Lady Bubbly* continued on before gybing to bear down on to the mark. Fortunately *VG Offshore's* tactic paid dividends as it rounded slightly ahead. A close duel continued before *Lady Bubbly* eased ahead, benefitting mostly from its new large asymmetrical.

Conditions were very different at the bottom mark where the passage was in the wind shadow of the islands, although momentum was still just maintained. Despite the shortened course, a 1700 cut-off meant only *Lady Bubbly* reached the gate on time. Further, despite being given a finishing horn, none of the rest in Class 5 was awarded a finish.

The Blue Angel, with an advantage in the light airs and flat water, and *Sade 2* were the only boats to finish before the cut-off in Class 6. There were no dropped results so those that finished had a significant scoring advantage.

Saturday, 26th November 2016 **Langkawi Harbour Races**

A 10-knot northeasterly made conditions ideal for the start of the final day. Classes 5 and 6 were again sent on island courses whilst Classes 1, 2 and 3 fought it out on windward / leewards.

VG Offshore again had a good start but *Lady Bubbly* again moved ahead and took a commanding lead into the finish to also take the Class 5 series title. *Delite* had kept in touch and took 2nd place on handicap in the race and 3rd place overall, while *VG Offshore* hung on to 2nd place in overall.

With four bullets, *The Blue Angel* clinched the Class 6 series ahead of *Sade 2* and *Aeolus XC*.

Fujin, with Olympians Jamie Wilmot and his son Nathan onboard, made it a clean sheet with eight bullets to take Class 3 overall ahead of *Popeye* and *Insanity*. Tied on points, *Popeye* claimed 2nd place with four against three 2nd places.

Just one point separated *Zuhal* and *Antipodes*, so there was everything to play for with the latter defending the Jugra Cup. A win by *Zuhal* in the first race and 3rd place for *Antipodes* tipped the balance in favour of *Zuhal*, which it cemented taking 2nd against *Antipodes's* 1st place in the final. There was much celebration by the Malaysian Armed Forces team after winning the Cup for the first time by an all Malaysian team. *Starlight* finished 3rd overall.

Windsikher II added two further bullets to take the series and retain the Raja Muda Cup, supporting Sarab Singh's theory that whoever wins the first leg, Port Klang to Pangkor, will go on to win the series. *Mandrake III* and *Black Baza* swapped 2nd and 3rd places in their two races with *Mandrake III* claiming overall 2nd and *Black Baza* 3rd.

The closing function was briefly interrupted by a downpour and the buffet was relocated under cover. When the rain stopped, the party got into full swing as sailors relaxed after eight hard days of challenging conditions and testing seamanship. The planning and logistics for this regatta are huge and all involved, especially the RO and RSYC, deserve much credit for a job well done.

There are few better ways to hone the skills of crews in preparation for the following event — the Phuket King's Cup. Hopefully more yachts will take on the challenge next year. The Raja Muda Selangor International Regatta deserves it.

* WYSIWYG — What You See Is What You Get