

Last Sunday, July 31st, Jolly Harbour Yacht Club (JHYC) sailors competed in the first edition of “The Annual Miramar Sailing Really Huge Bottle of Cheap, Pre-Owned Red Wine Pursuit Race”!

JHYC are probably the only yacht club in the Caribbean that stages a keelboat sailing event on almost every weekend of the year and, as there was a scheduled break in their Summer Series calendar, Miramar Sailing stepped up with this pursuit race.

The original plan was to give away a 1,5L bottle of red wine that had graced “Miramar’s” drinks locker for years destined to never be consumed. Heady stuff this red wine and space was needed for the more palatable Rum & Vodka!

As soon as the Notice of Race went out, Angie, the proprietor Jolly Harbour’s Foredeck Bar and the Home of JHYC, offered to include the 2 bottles of “Rum Ration” that are presented every week to the winners of the Series races. So now there were prizes for 1st, 2nd and 3rd, and, quite naturally, the winning skipper got the choice of which bottle he would walk with.

Start times were calculated for each of the 30 boats that have, at one time or another, competed in a JHYC Series Race, the times being based on the Club’s Handicap System that has evolved over 2 years of racing. 10 yachts “strutted their stuff”!

JHYC have 4 courses that are sailed according to wind conditions on the day. For this new event Miramar Sailing created a completely different course based on the same fixed Club marks that would give competitors variety and something to think about. Regrettably “Sultan of Timbwane”, last week’s winner of the Club Handicap “Rum Ration”, had not recovered from the effects of that prize because she didn’t know the course and assumed it was a standard Club Course! Being first to start she had no other yachts to follow and by the time the rest of the fleet sailed out of the harbour following the correct course, it was too late to recover so off she went for a leisurely afternoon cruise!

The remaining 9 yachts all set off in hot pursuit of each other with a start time spread of 28 minutes between first and last. The conditions were perfect with around 15 knots of breeze in flat water with a gorgeous sun to illuminate the spectacle. All points of sail were involved, and by the time the last yacht crossed the finishing line after about 1 1/2 hours of “Hare & Tortoise”, the time spread had come down to 12 minutes and a lot of overhauling had taken place.

The award ceremony afterwards in The Foredeck Bar was the usual gathering of skippers and crews with the usual excuses of “what went wrong” and “why we didn’t do so well” flying in all directions. It’s all great stuff and you have never heard so much talk of “dirty bottoms” in one place at one time! In the end the result was a mixture of irony and poetry!

“Cydia”, driven in her usual impeccable style by owner Colin Jones, came first from a start position 10 minutes behind the lead boat. Colin opted for a “Rum Ration”.

In second place was "Gypsy", skippered by that titan of Antigua Sailing, Tommy Patterson, who made up most of his $8\frac{1}{2}$ minute handicap on "Cydia" to finish 2 minutes behind her. Tommy opted for the other "Rum Ration".

That left the "Really Huge Bottle of Cheap Pre-Owned Red Wine" to go to the 3rd place yacht.

By now you have probably guessed it! The wine went to "Miramar" in 3rd place, who actually lost ground on her original 27 second handicap to "Cydia" to finish $3\frac{1}{2}$ minutes behind her. That is the irony, the poetry is that this result has guaranteed a 2nd edition of this fun Pursuit Race on a date to be advised but it will not be the same bottle of wine. So determined were "Miramar's" owners Brian & Pippa to rid themselves of this "Anchor in the Drinks Locker" that plastic cups were handed out to the bar customers and the wine went with it!! Apologies to Angie for a short break in The Foredeck's liquor sales but it just had to be done!!

The other competitors in finishing order (start position and skipper) were – 4th "Biwi Magic" (8, Geoff Pidduck); 5th "Watercress" (2, George Kersenhout); 6th "Blue Peter" (9, Iain Mellows); 7th "Augustine" (10, Tony Sayer); 8th "Chardonnay" (7, Festus Isaac); 9th "Cigana" (3, Dave "Old Bob" Buller); 10th "Sultan of Timbwane" (1, Phil "Got Lost" Jones!)

JHYC Series Racing is open to all comers irrespective of boat type. The Club's Handicap System has been designed to give anyone who feels disadvantaged by the CSA Rating System a chance of success, among an enthusiastic and sociable group of like minded sailors. Contact Series organiser Brian Turton on +1 268 721 3456 for more information. The current Summer Series ends on August 28th with trophy awards at the Al Porto restaurant, Jolly Harbour, at the beginning of the JHYC Dinghy Programme Fund Raising Dinner/Dance.