



ROYAL MALTA YACHT CLUB

# spinnaker

*The official Royal Malta Yacht Club publication*

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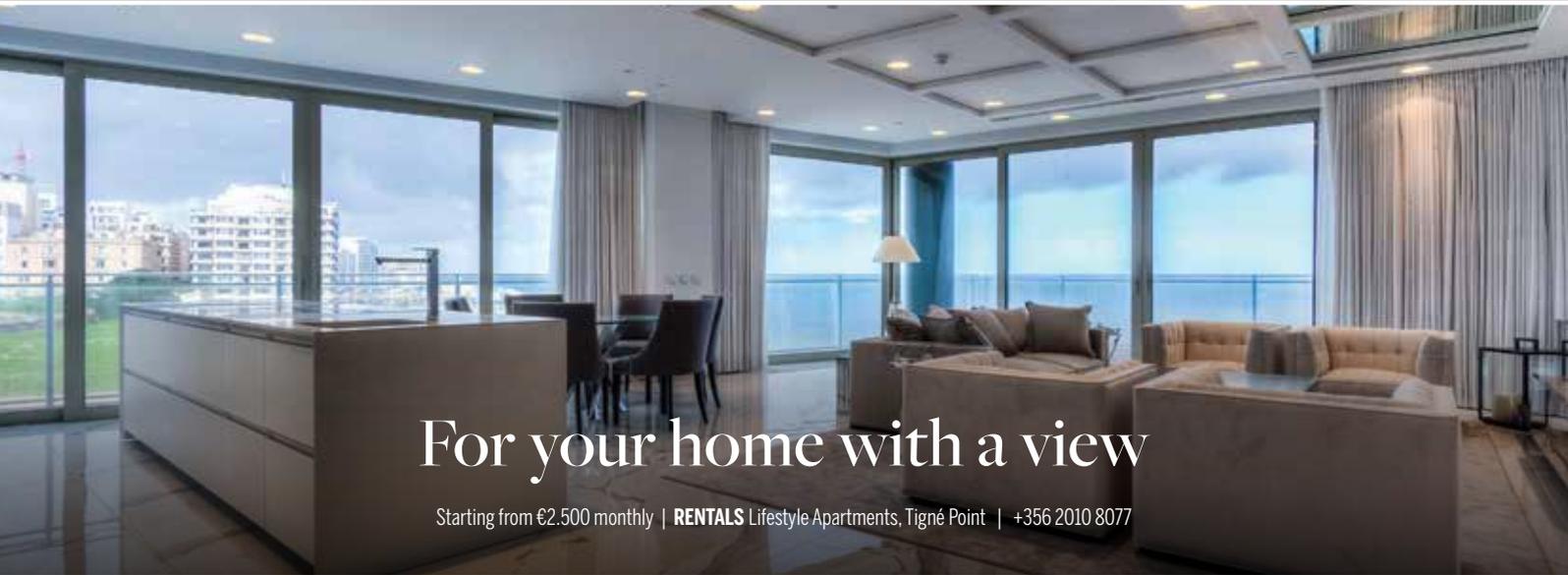
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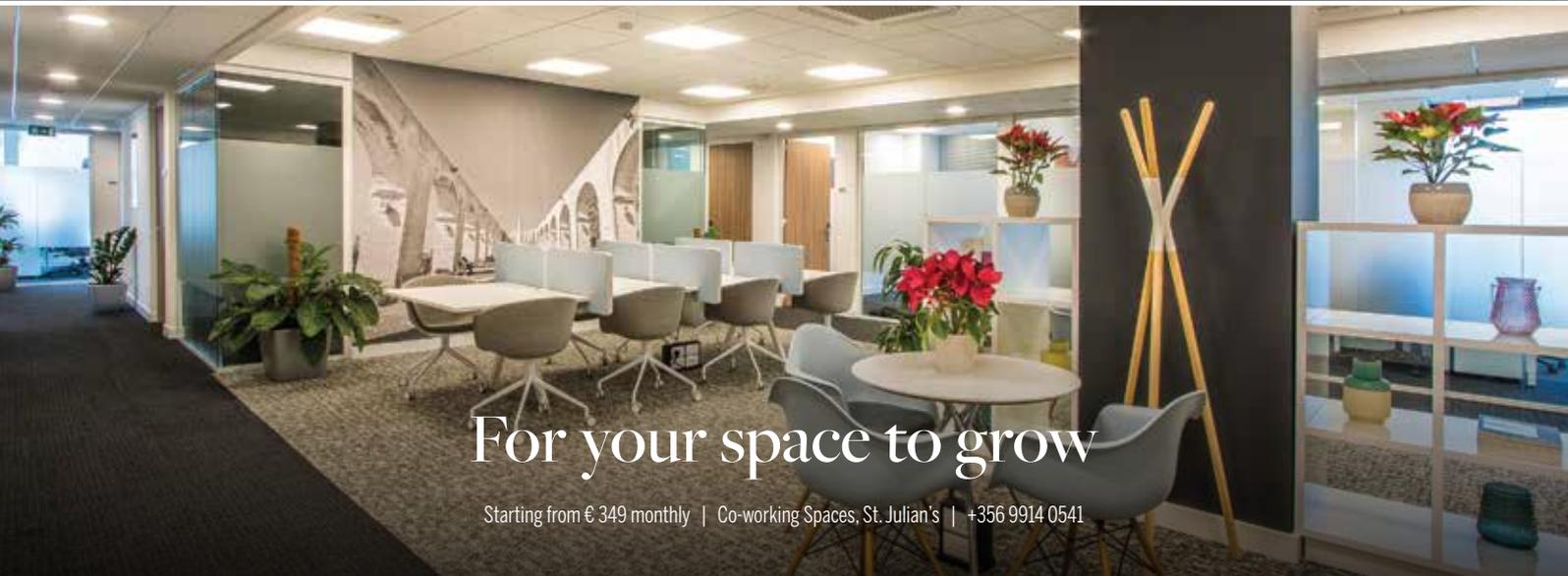
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# Welcome to



# SPINNAKER

As I sit down to write this message, it is almost the end of the year and — this year specifically — it's almost the end of the decade. As always this time of year gets many thinking and reflecting on the accomplishments, the highs and the lows of the past year. Yet it also signals a fresh start.

Without doubt one of the major highs in 2019 was Elusive 2, a Maltese boat, winning the Rolex Middle Sea Race. The Podesta name has been synonymous with the Race. Arthur Podesta was one of seven sailors on Josian, winning yacht of the very first edition. As a crew, Podesta would again experience success in 1970 with Tikka and in 1983 with Saudade. When he passed away in 2015, Podesta had competed in all 35 races held to that point. Carrying his baton proudly, his children have surely done the Podesta name proud when on the 24th October 2019 they were declared winners of the 40th Edition of the Rolex Middle Sea Race. Their win was a testament to their commitment, dedication, determination and sacrifice. The Elusive 2 team kept on their winning streak when they picked up the winners trophy for the BOV Weekend Regatta, the Raymarine Double Handed and the Medcomms Round Malta Race. There seems to be no stopping this team!

Another high is the increase of new blood on the sail racing scene. We have welcomed younger crews the likes of Vivace and the Jarhead Foundation yachts - Jarhead and Jan, who have consistently been competing in our races. Of course it would be nice to see some of the older faces return to the racing scene - we are sure there is still some competitive spirit in there!

The Royal Malta Yacht Club Sailing School facilities have produced a good number of sailors who are not only keen competitors but have also gained places on several podiums. The School is also home to a number of foreign sailors who regularly come to Malta for training. Some of these sailors have been training to qualify for the Olympics so we hope to see them represent their respective countries in Tokyo this summer! The results have already been showing, when late in summer, - Vishnu Saravanan from Colaba, Mumbai become the first Indian Laser sailor to ever finish in the top three at a World Championship, when in August he finished 3rd at the Under 21 Europeans.

In this edition of SPINNAKER we will be meeting some pretty inspirational yet very down to earth people who have undertaken a number of challenges and endeavours which they have shared with us. Peter Spiteri Gonzi's round the world trip is nothing short of awesome, whilst fitness in sailing is often underestimated - Nigel McCarthy, trainer to Olympic hopefuls shares some insight on the importance of fitness and strength training as part of their training programme.

The analogy between sailing and business leadership might feel like a bit of a cliché for some, yet the application of these philosophies have shown enhanced performance. This was an interesting discussion entered into with Catena Media's Chief Operating Officer Johannes Berg. This analogy has served the company well in its operations as can be seen from the growth it registered a short span of time.

Adieu 2019, Welcome 2020!

**Maria Vella-Galea | Editor**



# COMMODORE'S MESSAGE

We look back on 2019 as another good, if relatively uneventful year.

A full schedule of racing was held as in previous years. This included the popular weekend regattas to Gozo or Sicily, as well as local coastal races. To encourage sailors to race, this year three annual challenges based on a series of races were announced. Besides the usual Offshore Challenge Trophy which is now limited to the truly offshore events, challenge trophies were also awarded for a Short Handed Race Series and a Coastal Race Series.

Participation in racing however, generally remains lower than one would expect although some new boats with young crews are finally filling in as older sailors become less active. This, together with the growing crop of very young sailors at the Club Sailing School, brings a degree of optimism for the future. The Sailing School has been very successful in attracting good numbers of children to learn to sail who are now progressing to racing and taking part in local and international dinghy regattas.

After the racing in the Winter and Spring, the last race before the Summer break was the Syracuse Malta Race which this year was preceded by an additional race from Messina to Syracuse. During the Summer, some afternoon mid-week races were also held.

The Rolex Middle Sea Race was another successful event maintaining good numbers. This year's race was especially memorable with Elusive 2, sailed by the Podesta siblings and their crew, winning the overall trophy. A fitting tribute to their father's legacy.

Once the Rolex Middle Sea Race is over it is usually time for a trip to the sister island for the BOV Gozo Regatta. The weather this year had other ideas however, and racing had to be limited to the relatively sheltered area off Sliema where a series of short but enjoyable races were held around buoys. The Raymarine Figure of Eight race held soon after, brought to a close the Short Handed Series which had started in April, with the PV-IES Round Malta Race.

A number of social activities were held over the year with the Summer parties being the most popular. The festive season was heralded with the Christmas drinks in December at which the Annual Challenge Trophies and prizes for the last race of the year, the Medcomms Round Malta Race, were awarded. This was followed by the Boxing Day Charity Fun Race.

The Club's sailing calendar for the coming year is full and varied and we look forward to another good year of racing. Besides the usual events, this year the Club will be organizing a keelboat regatta followed by a dinghy regatta towards the end of May as part of a Malta Race Week being organised by Yachting Malta in conjunction with other maritime stakeholders. In July the Malta-Syracuse Race, which will celebrate its 60<sup>th</sup> year, will be sailed from Malta to Syracuse and will be followed by a race to Taormina.

Whilst thanking all our sponsors and helpers, I wish you all another great year of sailing.

Godwin

**Godwin Zammit | Commodore**

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# VICE COMMODORE'S MESSAGE



## Dear Members,

By the time you would be reading these few lines we would already have started the New Year and possibly also reflecting on the excessive amount of food we consumed over this past festive season. If not also negotiating our way through the first set of new year resolutions while also making plans of how best to shed the extra weight gained, all in good time for the coming summer months.

My last Spinnaker address dealt with some of the issues which, in my opinion, concern ongoing matters at the Royal Malta Yacht Club. Given the support shown by a number of Club members, today's contribution shall again attempt not to delude. Those who think that this part is not worth their time can always turn the page – literally.

Unfortunately, due to circumstances totally beyond our control, the Club had to abort the idea for the traditional New Year's Eve party. Following past criticism and suggestions, it was decided to do away with the formal sit down dinner and set the stage for the younger generation creating a much more relaxed ambience. However, the younger generation seemed to prefer elsewhere.

The previous two events could have been rated as average in terms of members' attendance. This year was destined to be a failure so much so that it had to be called off. This will definitely prompt us to go back to the formal dinner. In hindsight, I tend to subscribe to such a solution as this was generally very well attended and enjoyed by the regular members of our Club.

That the Club needs changes and improvements is not a secret. Nor is it a topic for mere consideration or tea time conversation. It is something real and necessary. However, change should only be – hopefully - for the better and not just "change" for the sake of change, as this may actually turn out to be regressive rather than progressive.

The Club needs people who can push the Club's agenda and not one's own so as to satisfy one's own self needs. The Club needs people who can make the RMYC a better place. People who can further build on the good there already is, people who can and are willing to sacrifice their time, people who can discuss and not argue, people who uplift others and

not try to look good by lowering and belittling others. The Club does not need people who are well past their sell by date. Of course, one may say that I, for one, might be of the latter sort, but that does not worry me at all as I am willing to make space for those who can improve our Club and truly make it our second home.

In my years as a Committee member I have witnessed quite a lot being done. Most notably is that we managed to steer the Club through turbulent times. Which had not only been the result of adverse actions by third parties but also the result of ill taken decisions by some we call our own. We are still fighting on and we shall keep fighting on for as long as it takes.

Unfortunately, not all Committee members agree to this and not all are ready to accept and shoulder responsibility for their actions.

I really hate breaking this piece of news, but unlike some might think, being a Committee member is not a God given right with which one gains access to enter an elitist space reserved for the untouchable few on Mount Olympus. On the contrary, it is a responsibility bestowed upon individuals by the Club members themselves. Such a responsibility entails a good deal of humility to enable one to fulfil ones obligations once elected to serve. Throwing a party, here and there is not the final scope of such election. Working in unison, for the growth of the Club is.

Essentially a Committee is a team and requires team players who do not do things under the self-praise light.

Undoubtedly, with the Annual General Meeting round the corner, it is already very evident that there is a degree of election fever but let us not get blindsided by this. We should know better. In reality and all honesty, we do not need to hold an Annual General Meeting for Club members to air their views, give constructive criticism and more importantly get involved..... Don't you think ?

**Robert Ciantar | Vice Commodore**



# From the **SECRETARIAT**

## To be or **NOT** to be!

### **Dear Members,**

As I write this piece, your Committee has just held a meeting with sailors to discuss the current Club racing scenario.

There are two sides to this subject, the race organisation and the racers. First of all, we have to acknowledge that the Club exists for the love of boats and we have to endeavour to encourage the sport from all aspects. The race organization on one hand is run on a voluntary basis mainly by a few diehards who offer their time so that others can enjoy the sport. The racers, have a choice of races, too big a choice some will argue. In our membership, we have several types of skippers, of varied ages, from the outright racing enthusiast to the laid-back cruising aficionado, sailing a variety of boats, from sports boats, racers, cruiser-racers to outright luxury cruising boats. It is not easy to unite the diverse interests and to create a programme to appeal to all. Something which I cannot accept is "doomsday" criticism and demeaning comments by people who are not even members of the Club, discouraging others to participate. These often are the first to jump on the bandwagon.

We often discuss these issues within Committee and with numerous members of overseas Clubs, with whom we have excellent relationships. We all know that there is no magic formula and what worked yesterday might not work today and vice versa. We have to keep trying and keep our ears open to suggestions.

On a brighter note, we also have our Sailing School, in which we have invested, to provide solid foundations for the Club's future, and it is hoped that we are breeding new members who will call the RMYC their home. We had another successful edition of the Rolex Middle Sea Race, and a deserved well done to all involved in making it happen.

The Club has also been very active internationally, where our lobbying and contacts are reaping results. In October 2020, we shall be hosting the World Sailing Double Handed Mixed Championship, where Malta's team will be chosen through a competition organised under the auspices of the Malta Sailing Federation. There are more international events in the pipeline in years to come.

It is that time of year when we need to renew our membership. To be or not to be!

Please do provide our Secretariat with your updated information, and any suggestions are welcome.

I am proud to belong to such a prestigious Club. Your participation makes us stronger.

**Mark Napier | Hon Secretary RMYC**



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# PRIMAVISTA-LAURIA win the 2019 Rolex Middle Sea Coastal Race



The Rolex Middle Sea Coastal Race was held on Wednesday 16 October. 35 Yachts took part, divided into six IRC Classes.

The Royal Malta Yacht Club Principal Race Officer, Peter Dimech, set a course of approximately 30 nautical miles from Marsamxett Harbour, around the Valletta Harbour Fairway Buoy, north west up to the island of Comino and the same course back to the finish, in sight of the Yacht Club.

The overall winner of the Rolex Middle Sea Coastal Race was the ICE52 PrimaVista-Lauria (IRC 3) skippered by Gabriele

Bruni. Second was the First 45 Elusive 2 (IRC 4) co-skippered by Christoph & Aaron Podesta. Third overall was the Pronavia 38 Seawolf (IRC 6, GBR), skippered by David Latham. The Davidson 69 Pendragon (HUN) skippered by Zsolt Kiraly was the winner in IRC 1. Peter Gustafsson's J/111 Blur (SWE) was the winner of IRC 5. TP52 Anafesto skippered by Spain's Ricardo Terrades was the winner of IRC 2.

*"We got a bit lucky to be honest,"* smiled Stefano Pelizza, navigator for PrimaVista-Lauria. *"Whilst most of the fleet went inshore after the start we went offshore and got a really good 45-degree wind shift, lifting us to Comino. After that it was a VMG reach back to Marsamxett Harbour."*



*"We are very happy with the result and the performance of the crew and the boat,"* commented Maya Podesta, navigator of Elusive 2. Elusive 2 has long been a strong performer in the Rolex Middle Sea Race, and Podesta continued: *"The boat had a new rig fitted before last year's race, and now we have had over a year to get the best out of the improvement. Looking at the weather, we are happy to see upwind conditions towards the end of the race, because it suits the potential of Elusive."*

*"The Coastal Race is always a good shakedown,"* commented Seawolf's David Latham who took part in his 12th consecutive Rolex Middle Sea Race with Seawolf, which is based in Gibraltar. *"The breeze built to over 15 knots*

*for much of the race, which is ideal for Seawolf. We have a multinational crew from Spain, Mauritius, UK, and the Netherlands. One of the top tips for the race, especially for first timers is that when it goes light, don't switch off because if you slow down the boat will. When the breeze is up the adrenalin is pumping so it is easier to keep active, it is more difficult to stay awake when the wind is light."*

The Rolex Middle Sea Race Owner's Reception & Coastal Race Prize Giving was held at the Verdala Palace and was co-hosted by Yachting Malta Ltd. Prizes to the winners were presented by Yachting Malta Chairman Mr. John Huber and Royal Malta Yacht Club Commodore Mr. Godwin Zammit.

# Legends TO THE FORE



ROYAL MALTA YACHT CLUB



The Rolex Middle Sea Race is one of the world's most compelling and challenging offshore races. Supported by title sponsor Rolex since 2002, this year's exploits by some of the event's most emblematic characters will ensure the 40th edition will retain a distinct place in the annals of the race.

Maltese yacht *Elusive 2*, skippered by the Podesta family, and the American Maxi *Rambler*, owned by the record-breaking George David, took the main plaudits in a race that required steadfast persistence and patience in conditions that veered from the mentally sapping benign to the physically punishing malign. Organised by the Royal Malta Yacht Club (RMYC), the Rolex Middle Sea Race is a captivating platform which demonstrates the appeal and demands of offshore sailing, a discipline with which Rolex has been proud to be associated throughout the past five decades.

## AN ELUSIVE TRIUMPH

The Podesta family have been part of the fabric of the race since its beginnings in 1968. Arthur Podesta was one of seven sailors on *Josian*, winner of the very first edition. As a crew, Podesta would again experience success in 1970 with *Tikka* and in 1983 with *Saudade*, before becoming Commodore of the RMYC in the 1990s. When he passed away in 2015, Podesta had competed in all 35 races held to that point.

Embarking on race campaigns as skipper of his own yacht from 2002, he made the point of including his then teenage children – Maya, Aaron and Christoph – in the crew. All three have inherited their father's passion and maintain the tradition of a Podesta always being on the start line of the Rolex Middle Sea Race. The trio have honed their skills and experiences year on year, frequently winning their class, often claiming top ten finishes, but never quite reaching the top ... until this year.

***"Preparations for next year always start immediately after the present race has finished,"*** admits Christoph who, despite the crew's detailed and rigorous preparation, was pessimistic ahead of this year's race. ***"The first half was going to be downwind and light which doesn't suit us. Our goal was to keep ourselves in the right position until we rounded Favignana."*** This they did with aplomb. Once the wind strength intensified at the northwest corner of Sicily, *Elusive 2* made the most of the upwind sailing to the finish, prevailing in the face of a seriously testing and uncomfortable sea state.

Confirmation that the Podestas and their crew fully deserved their success is evident throughout, but perhaps the need to beat defending champion *Courrier Recommandé*, which finished second overall, is the clearest affirmation.





*“The name Elusive has been associated with the race for 18 years and it is an unbelievable achievement to win against the best,”* remarked Aaron Podesta.

The 606-nautical mile race is the focus of the all-Corinthian, predominantly Maltese crew’s annual yacht racing calendar. The victory was born of intricate knowledge of a complex racecourse, built over many years. It also reflects the legacy of their father, who introduced them to the sport and passed on his enthusiasm. “Deep down it means a lot more than we may ever realise,” said Maya. “What we have done is thanks to him.”

### **FIVE IN A ROW FOR RAMBLER**

Line honours victor in all six of his Rolex Middle Sea Races – including in every one since 2015 – George David’s *Rambler*, at 27m (88-ft), was the largest yacht in the fleet and the emphatic favourite to finish first. The more tantalising ambition was to beat the race record David had set in 2007 with one of his previous boats.

*Rambler* had undergone significant optimisation over the past winter to improve performance in light wind conditions. The attention to detail was vindicated, when her exceptional crew secured line honours wins at this year’s Rolex Giraglia and Rolex Fastnet Race. The credentials for a record run were in place, if only the weather gods would be gracious.

They were not. The first half of the race, north towards the notorious Strait of Messina, on to the volcanic island of Stromboli and, then, to Favignana on the north-west corner of Sicily, was painfully slow. The *Rambler* crew performed admirably, avoiding wind holes and always moving.

Despite a herculean effort and unrelenting persistence, they were unable to better the race record of 47 hours, 55 minutes and three seconds which stands for another year.

*“This is a great race,”* said David. *“It is challenging to keep it all together and we take huge satisfaction in taking line honours for the fifth consecutive time”.*

The final prizegiving was attended by The Hon. Dr. George Vella, the President of Malta, together with the current and former Italian ambassadors and other dignitaries. In his speech, Dr. Vella expressed his great pleasure at being present, he took special care to congratulate the Royal Malta Yacht Club for their

untiring work and unwavering commitment to make the event possible. Dr. Vella also acknowledged that the attendance of yachts from 23 nations at the renowned race was a clear signal of its high standing internationally.

Commodore Godwin Zammit was quick to thank the RMYC team behind the race, all public bodies and authorities that had lent their support, the event sponsors and, most importantly, all the crews for their participation. While every race has its distinct character and many stories, according to Commodore Zammit, “2019 is for Elusive and for Arthur”.

Once the Podesta siblings and the *Elusive 2* crew had been awarded the Rolex Middle Sea Race Trophy in acknowledgement of their remarkable achievement, Christoph made an emotive and eloquent speech, ending with the following thought:

*“We used to think it was all about the race, but now we know that our father’s purpose was to bring the family together to share adventures and experiences. It continues to be a special experience”*

The unflinching pursuit of excellence and the perpetual passion for sailing exhibited, in this great race in particular, makes *Elusive 2* a truly worthy winner of the 2019 Rolex Middle Sea Race.

**The 41st edition of the race will start on Saturday, 17 October 2020.**







# Rolex Middle Sea Race PRIZES



## ROLEX MIDDLE SEA RACE TROPHY

Elusive 2 - Aaron, Maya,  
Christoph Podesta - **Malta**

## RLR LINE HONOURS TROPHY

Rambler 88 - George David - **USA**

## BOCCALE DEL MEDITERRANEO

*1st Overall in ORC*  
BeWild - Renzo Grottesi - **Italy**

## ARTHUR PODESTA TROPHY

*1st Maltese Boat in IRC*  
Elusive 2 - Aaron, Maya, Christoph Podesta - **Malta**

## TEDDY BORG TROPHY

*1st Maltese Boat in ORC*  
Elusive 2 - Aaron, Maya, Christoph Podesta - **Malta**

## ITALIAN AMBASSADOR'S TROPHY

*Awarded for outstanding act of seamanship or sportsmanship*  
Albator - Phillipe Franz - **France**

## FIV TROPHY

*First Italian Boat in ORC*  
BeWild - Renzo Grottesi - **Italy**

## JOHN ILLINGWORTH TROPHY

*First Double Handed Crew in IRC*  
Inteman - Daniel Martin & Didac Costa - **Spain**

## ANDREA VATTANI TROPHY

*Line Honours Double Handed Crew*  
Inteman - Daniel Martin & Didac Costa - **Spain**

## VISIT MALTA TROPHY

*Line Honours for Foreign Boat*  
Rambler 88 - George David - **USA**

## TRANSPORT MALTA TROPHY

*Line Honours for a Maltese Boat*  
Artie III - Lee Satariano - **Malta**

## SWAN MEDITERRANEAN CHALLENGE

*First Swan in IRC*  
Be Wild - Renzo Grottesi - **Italy**



# An **ELUSIVE** triumph

## **SPINNAKER MAGAZINE CAUGHT UP WITH MAYA PODESTA A FEW DAYS AFTER THEIR ROLEX MIDDLE SEA RACE VICTORY**

### **How have the past few days been? Have you recovered from all the excitement and emotion?**

I must admit, the first few days have been a little overwhelming, especially with the way we knew we had done so well once we finished, and that it was going to be relatively close between first and second place. We went to sleep that first night on a high, knowing we were ranked second, but also knowing that we had used up some precious minutes having stopped racing to render assistance the previous day. With that in mind, and as exhausted as we were, it just felt good to have done so well, making us feel like winners deep down. The following day was probably one of the biggest roller coaster days we have ever encountered. When Christoph walked out of the Jury room early on Wednesday afternoon, the reality of it all hit us; we were lost for words; all we could do was hug each other tight, crying tears of joy, relief and pure raw emotion. Only after that, it started to slowly sink in, just like we're still slowly catching up on our lack of sleep. However I'm sure that it will take a while for us to actually realise the meaning of the achievement.

### **You went in the 2019 Rolex Middle Sea Race to win. It is safe to say that the preparations vary from being a competitor just aiming to finish to those of a competitor aiming to win the race, especially when one considers the competition one expects in this Race?**

The competition gets stronger year on year; the available technologies keep advancing endlessly. As an amateur team without a big sponsor to back us, we knew that we needed to do the very best with what we had to be able to make it to the top. Twenty years of boat preparations for the race behind us gave us some very important lessons, yet the constant desire

to improve has led to preparations becoming more intense and more demanding. This year, particularly, our aim was to make sure that our systems on the boat ran as smoothly and 'perfectly' as possible. Our preparations mirrored that, so that once racing we could focus completely on the sailing. Apart from that, we also aimed to have all the 'bigger' preps ready at least a week in advance of the race, leaving the last week for the smaller stuff, the nitty gritty.

We also allocated the weekend prior to the start of the race for a training and crew bonding weekend, with an overnight in Gozo. We had perfect weather for this. It was also a great opportunity to bring everything together and make a snag list for the week before the race. Through all this, it might be safe to say that a proportion of the race was won thanks to the preparations before it even started. This is where I must thank all those who contributed in any way to help us get Elusive so ready for the race, including our sponsors – Strand Marine and Mastervolt, Seajet Yacht Paint and Manoel Island Yacht Yard who have stood behind us for a number of years, and Forestals.

### **Where there any moments when you felt that the dream of winning might be fading away?**

In Maltese we say 'it-tigrija sal-barkun'. This is very apt for a race like the Rolex Middle Sea Race, where the race can restart at so many times - 'The race isn't over till its over'. Having done the race so many times has definitely taught us to keep pushing, regardless of everything else, until the finish. Throughout the race we did not really look at how well or how badly we were doing, but rather focused on sailing the boat as fast as we could, to complete the course in the shortest possible time. We spent most of the race close to the XP44s



which were good to pace with; they are a constant that we know. The Swan 42 'Be Wild' sailed a brilliant first half of the race, but we knew they might not fare too great once the wind picked up, and therefore tried not to worry too much about them. Once we rounded Favignana we knew that we needed to make the most of the conditions Elusive likes, so we upped a gear there. The French JPK Courier Recommandé was hot on our heels almost all the race, keeping us well on our toes. Once we got mobile reception twenty or so miles from Comino we knew it was touch and go, at which point we just gave it all we had.

**Aaron was quoted as saying.... "The last 24 hours were hell. We were soaking wet with water".... sounds like a very miserable situation yet you keep on returning - before it was about the win, in future what will it be about?**

The last twenty four hours were rather uncomfortable, but wouldn't say they were miserable, especially after having experienced heavy upwinds in both races last year and the year before. Especially from Pantelleria onwards most of us did spend a long time sitting on the rail, which was quite wet and uncomfortable. If there was one good thing about it was that it was only one night of it. Everything is so much better in daylight!

**There have been little changes to the crew in the past years, though new elements have been brought in - Magnus Everskog, Adrian Stone, Tom Zammit Tabona - how were they chosen?**

The injection of new this year was very minimal in fact. Adrian has been a family friend ever since he did the race with us on Elusive (1) in 2008. Christoph, David and myself have sailed with him and against him numerous times along the way, and it was fantastic to have him aboard again, bringing with him the element of professionalism and 'work hard' ethic we needed to keep us tipping towards pushing hard. Having done two RMSRs with us in the earlier days of Elusive 2, neither is Tom a completely new element to the team. Tom helps to keep us all very young at heart! Magnus was the newest element to the team, having scouted the boat out himself after moving to Malta last year. He joined us for a few local races and training sessions throughout the year, as well as contributed to the work we did while Elusive was on the hard.

**Any win brings with it so many emotions, but for stating the obvious this win must be particularly poignant for you.....**

Achieving such a long standing dream has itself been almost unbelievable considering our family's story with the race. Considering the competition out there, in terms of both talent,



boats and their equipment, it did sometimes feel as if the odds were against us, but we believed enough to keep us fighting the whole way through. The most emotion comes when we think of how much this would mean to our father, teacher and mentor, despite his physical absence. He laid the foundations for this win back in October 1999 when he bought Elusive. That was the start of the incredible bond that has developed between Aaron, Christoph and I, and more recently David. The 'love affair' with the race, and the yearly appointment we have for the RMSR has now become so much more than that, uniting the family continuously.

**You have reached the pinnacle with your win in the Rolex Middle Sea Race - as Christoph said at the Rolex**

**Middle Sea Race prize giving, you are still discussing your return next year, but something says you will definitely come back - is that added pressure for you?**

When you want to do well, there is always an element of pressure. Although we may have been the underdogs this year, the amount of pressure we put on ourselves to make it to the top was probably more than we realise, but we did a good job of controlling it - simply by focusing on sailing the boat fast and nothing else. The pressure next year will not be something new, just different. Of course we will definitely give it our best shot once again, doing all we can to ensure we can ace all elements within our control, hoping the weather cooperates too! Who knows, we might use this to venture out into deeper waters.



**Kristine Podesta, mother to Aaron, Maya and Christoph, sits quietly in the background; supporting in any way she can; praying. She has been part of this race since the very start and saw her children grow into it. To say that she is immensely proud is an understatement. Kristine, shared some of the emotions she goes through during the race and, of course, in particular this one.**

The race is discussed for various reasons several times during the year, and it features very prominently in our calendar. I also feel the RMSR fever that my family

transmits. The run up to the race is always intense, and it's often that I would feel the pressure too. They all put so much of themselves into it, and its great to have so much action both on my door step and at home. I try to help however I can – even if its just for a chat. I do enjoy preparing lunch for the crew throughout the week before the race, allowing them to use all their time on the boat. I often get delegated other jobs like laundry but its all fun to be able to contribute to such a great cause.

On the morning of the race emotions start running high, and its hard to see my whole family leaving, not knowing what they may have to face out there. Having the tracker on my phone and iPad has definitely made it a whole lot easier, since phone calls are dependent on reception timings and shifts. Sometimes I keep pressing refresh on the tracker, willing them to go faster! This year has been a super special one, and seeing so much dedication coming from the children was emotional in itself. When I got the call telling me that they had made it and would win after redress was granted, it felt as if everything had fallen into place. I'm pretty certain that Arthur was guiding them the whole way! I have been waiting for this victory for a long time, and it has brought with it beaming smiles of joy and fulfillment all around.







# ARTIE III

## First Maltese Boat Home

**The first Maltese boat home is always a joyous occasion at the Royal Malta Yacht Club and Lee Satariano's HH42 Artie III was the one to take the honour at the 40th Rolex Middle Sea Race.**

A two-time winner of the race, Satariano's latest boat is a step up from previous projects based on production yachts. Artie III is an HH42 and as the crew reached the RMYC dock to the cheers of the assembled crowd, it was clear they had endured, as well as enjoyed, the race.

Satariano, on his 13th race, expressed real satisfaction with the boat, but admitted they have a long way to go to get her up to full speed. The fact that the boat hadn't been sailed much prior to the race, led to concerns that something could go wrong resulting in the possibility of Artie not finishing the race. Satariano was quick to admit that the team's objective was to finish the race and take on a learning curve that comes with a new boat.

Moving away from a production boat to a purely racing boat, it was evident that this time round the Artie crew missed out on some creature comforts, yet Lee was not missing any of the proverbial sleep on it as the boat's potential goes hand in hand with the crew's mindset of being up for any challenge. Upon arrival to shore, the crew were already discussing improvements and the way forward. The biggest learning curve was the need for three new sails, but the crew opted to postpone the decision for after the race, once they got to know her better. The list now seems to be coming endless!

Despite a number of crew changes prior to the start of the race, Satariano was very complimentary about his crew, which was a mix of experience, youth and skill. Some of crew were on the race for the first time. Amongst the crew was veteran sailor Christian Ripard, with whom Satariano has been sailing since 2002. Ripard was on his 30th Rolex Middle Sea Race. Satariano waxes lyrical about Ripard's experience and professionalism. Ripard's participation is instrumental in the results that have been achieved by Artie and its crew.

*"It's good to be back after a couple of years away. I'm really happy with the boat," said Satariano. "For a first race with this boat, part of long learning process, we have gained a lot. We can really work on improving her now. The crew have worked really hard, especially young ones and especially when it got really tough in the last part."*

The race saw the fleet get onto a slow start, yet it lived up to its expectations, where crews are given a true test of stamina and determination. Ripard explained that the tough part came after reaching Pantelleria. The boat being very fast is also brutal, allowing for little to no time when it came to cook. Ripard continued to explain that it was very hard to stay in one's bunk making it far more comfortable to sit on the rail. Such a system does wreak havoc on the watch system, but the team dynamics were such that a rotation solution could be found.

*"I can't really pinpoint any one part of the race that was the hardest tactically, but the first night was very hard," said Christian Ripard, "We suffered because we are lacking some of the right sails, but we picked the right moves. And, we were with the big boys to Capo San Vito, when the wind came."*

Amongst the crew was Lee's son, seventeen-year-old Jake. Despite having an impressive background in dinghy sailing, he was experiencing his first offshore race. Notwithstanding that the crew had three teenagers on board, they all gelled with the rest of the team and benefitted from the experience that Ripard, Sean Arrigo and Annemieke Bess could offer.

Going forward, apart from the in-depth discussions on the modifications required to be more competitive in the next Rolex Middle Sea Race, team Artie III has already planned a number of international regattas in the Mediterranean for 2020. These, of course, apart from the local regattas as well as looking at bringing onboard some other young blood to give them the experience of what a pure racing boat feels like.

The Rolex Middle Sea Race Artie III Crew was made up of Lee Satariano, Christian Ripard, Mathieu Almekinders, Sean Arrigo, Annemieke Bes, Justin Busuttill, Karl Miggiani, Jake Satariano, Eric Jan van de Zande. The Crew were presented with the **Transport Malta Trophy** for being the first Maltese boat to cross the line.

# JYS Jan - Breaking Barriers

**Being the first all-female crew attempting to finish the gruelling Rolex Middle Sea Race, the JYS Jan entry caused varying degrees of skepticism yet, the passion and determination to complete what they started proved many people wrong. Here's their story.**

In a day and age where the battle for equality is ongoing, the news of an all-female crew taking part in the gruelling Rolex Middle Sea Race, raised a few eyebrows and caught the attention of many.

The Jarhead Foundation J/109 JYS Jan was about to write its name in history. Their objective? To finish the Race and be the first all-female team to complete the gruelling 606-nautical mile course, notorious for its difficult conditions.

There were quite a few major hurdles that quite a few people on land, may one add, felt the girls had to overcome – one was the fact that some of the women on board, despite having years of experience in dinghy sailing, had never raced on a yacht, let alone taken on the challenges a 606 nautical mile offshore race offers. The second was the fact that an all female crew could potentially be a recipe for disaster. The third being that most of the crew had never met before this event.

To add to that pressure was the fact that another of the Foundation's yachts was taking part – the J/109 JYS Jarhead, skippered by an all-male crew, most of whom were far more experienced in offshore sailing. Despite some minor protestations, the girls acknowledge that there was a degree of rivalry. Yet, they still wanted each other to do well and were gutted when the boys had to retire near Favignana due to a torn mainsail.

Lacey Aquilina, Emilie Gregory and Gabriella Mifsud have three decades of sailing experience between them. However this experience was primarily obtained through sailing in Optimist and Laser Classes. Emilie had her first taste of offshore sailing when she competed, through the Jarhead Foundation, in the Rolex Fastnet earlier on in August. Gabriella took part in her first Rolex Middle Sea Race five years ago, at age 14!. For Lacey it was her first experience.



Meeting the three girls shortly after the race, it was evident that they were still bubbling with excitement. Finishing off each other's sentences showed that these girls had really gelled and really bonded together.

Let's face it, sometimes women are their own worst enemy. The girls agree that it that all female teams can potentially be particularly difficult to manage. Yet these girls, fuelled by a passion for the water and the drive to succeed, have shown that the exact opposite can happen!

So how did the girls manage that? Gabriella, is quick to reply by saying that it was all about mutual respect and having faith in each other's capabilities. For a week prior to the start of the race, the crew lived on Gabriella's family boat, which enabled them to connect and bond with each other better.

Racing on board with the girls were Nikki Henderson and Katy Campbell. Nikki is no stranger to such challenges – she made history after being selected, at age 24, as the youngest ever professional skipper to lead a team in the 40,000-nautical mile Clipper 2017-18 Round the World Yacht Race, whilst Katy is a fully qualified RYA instructor. Katy and Nikki shared the shifts to enable the girls to have a more experienced crew member with them at all times. Yet the girls were very much in charge of the decisions they took.

Would things have been different had Nikki and Katy not been on board? Lacey steps in by saying that whilst they think the team



would have gelled, it was with pride that they can say these two women were on board. Their ability to be easy going ensured that they fit in easily and complemented each other's characters. Nikki was more tactical whilst Katy would give explanations on how to do things more effectively.

Undeniably, such challenges provide those undertaking them with a broad range of lessons learnt. Good-humoredly, the girls start off by saying that somehow, someone had forgotten to pack Nutella and Coffee! Their laughter at this shortcoming in food supplies is followed by more serious observations. Whilst the first three days were more of a social sail due to the light conditions, the last three were the trickiest and most mentally challenging. Emilie explains that life skills very much came into play – the strong urge to cry superseded by the concentration to keep things together and keep on going. Lacey nods her agreement – jokingly pointing out again that food was a big motivation for her. Yet the bond that was being created ensured that the morale needed to remain high, was kept being fuelled, ensuring that everyone kept motivated.

So would they do it again? The answer was a resounding yes. They all agree that the Rolex Middle Sea Race was the best two weeks of their lives. The sacrificing of school and social lives, the demanding physical training and the race itself was certainly not enough to put these girls off and change their mind had they been able to turn back time.

In future, Lacey explains, that they hope to tackle the race with a different mindset – this time it was about getting the experience and finishing the race. Next time it will be to achieve a better result and possibly a podium. **[Editor's Note: The girls narrowly missed out on a podium in ORC Class 6 where they finished in 4th place].**

*"We are grateful towards the Jarhead Foundation for giving us this opportunity. The possibility to come out stronger, to give our all without holding back, to reach whatever goals we want to achieve and to share a million and one tales of this adrenaline pumping adventure"* Lacey Aquilina, Emilie Gregory, Gabriella Mifsud.

It would be safe to say that the JYS Jan crew proved quite a few people wrong. Gabriella, modestly gives credit to the mindset that the crew had. Whilst the boys are physically stronger, girls can be tougher mentally. This race was about breaking the proverbial glass ceiling and trying to remove the stigma that girls cannot do such a race without male help. The girls certainly took the challenge in their stride and proved many wrong.

The warm welcome awaiting them on their boat's pontoon, upon their return, was richly deserved.



# Two's Company

**Andrew Agius Delicata, part owner and skipper of the Reflex 38 yacht Vivace, gives a frank account of his relationship with sailing, his seafaring adventures - the most recent being the 40th edition of the Rolex Middle Sea Race where he competed with Matthew Gabriele in the double handed class.**



In 2019 Andrew and Matthew entered the Double Handed Division in the 40th Edition of the Rolex Middle Sea Race. Having experienced two double handed and four fully crewed editions of the Middle Sea Race **[Editor's Note: three of them under the tutelage of Arthur Podesta and the Elusive team]** Andrew does acknowledge that a fully crewed boat offers many advantages – source of motivation and encouragement being top on the list. But for a person who is not afraid to admit of being very particular about wanting things done right to a tee and perhaps a stickler for order, Double Handed racing does go down rather well for him.

## TEAM VIVACE

It is not easy going into a race with a boat that is not known to have sailed in the potentially treacherous conditions that the Rolex Middle Sea Race is known for. The idea of buying Vivace, the seventh Reflex 38 sailing yacht ever produced, started off as a joke as both Andrew and Matthew never imagined buying a big boat like that at a young age.

Andrew confides that buying a boat is a very personal choice - Andrew and Matthew's friendship goes a long way and their

close bond was important such that they would not let a boat or race come in the way of their friendship – should that be the case the decision was simple – the boat goes! Having supportive partners is a bonus – especially when one sees the costs involved. But both adapted to the lifestyle and are enjoying the fruits of Andrew and Matthew's labour. Andrew's fiancée Ruby also got her adventurous cat to join them on their sailing trips, and Misty (the cat) loves it.

Yet, the boys had to bring Vivace up to standard. Initially it was just about getting new sails – Andrew quips that Vivace was previously called Pussy Galore – the result of having hull number 007 and owned by two females who smothered the boat with everything pink – with such a background to it, the choice of bright pink A-sails was inevitable!

Subconsciously the Rolex Middle Sea Race was always in the back of their minds. One thing led to another. Week in, week out the boys worked on the boat. A labour of love which was also a costly exercise - here Andrew thanks Brown's for their invaluable support. Attention to detail was put in – *"The last thing we wanted was to have to retire because of some worn out rope!"* The end result would have to be a conviction of having a solid boat!

## THE ROLEX MIDDLE SEA RACE

The 2019 RMSR started off with a slow downwind getting to Capo Passero in second place. The wind died down even more after this point, as they saw other boats, who were better equipped with lighter sails, fly away. As the duo passed the Messina Strait the winds picked up getting them towards Stromboli only to get stuck again before Favignana. The wind then changed from downwind to upwind in a second. It was 20 – 35 knots on the nose from then on, reaching a maximum wind speed of 54 knots. Then the waves hit.

*"We never sailed the boat in that kind of weather, the boat for us is new. She is twenty years old and you wouldn't know 100% what was going to happen even though deep down we knew the boat was built for this kind of weather. Of course, all rigging had been checked and practically all gear was new"*



But, Vivace performed beautifully. The particular model, of which ten were made specifically for Vendee Globe training, were designed and built with a reason and purpose – everything in its proper place and of course being structurally extremely sound. Yet, when one experiences such conditions for the first time, the movement of the sea causing the boat to make eerie noises that made it feel like it was going to break in two pieces, then yes, a degree of fear does sink in – especially since pre-race training did not cover such weather conditions.

***“Why I am out here, risking my life? What is this all about? Constantly wet from head to toe for the last 3 days, shrivelled hands from water exposure – but then you know that you are in the hardest part of the race. If you manage to get through this, then you will get through anything.”***

The Rolex Middle Sea Race is a very mental game. Despite not having been the strongest of people taking part in this race, mentally we were fully prepared, adrenaline kept flowing and barring exceptional circumstances we would finish the race”.

Whilst some people do not subscribe to the idea of experimenting during a race and trying out new techniques should be done in training, Andrew and Matthew were not afraid to do so, particularly because they only had three proper on water training sessions before the race – when the sails arrived – a week before. Their full in trust each other coupled with their sailing experience played an important role. Knowing what to do and when to intervene without the other person saying a word was key.

***“It is about feeling the boat – if you get that feeling, then it is just about fine tuning”***

After Favignana, the heavy weather gear, was brought out – Andrew explained that one is never really ready for the wind. One normally doesn’t go out in that weather to train, particularly being double handed but they both knew that this was their chance to make a difference in the scoreboard.

Sailing upwind, in very rough conditions, standing to the side of the boat, the thought is that it could not get worse – no visibility except for the white water. The more time progressed the worse it got. Arriving near Pantalleria in pitch darkness, the boys felt dead – the shelter that land gave them for less than

an hour from the high waves gave them a breather to stand straight on the boat. Next was a quick look to ensure that everything inside the boat was fine, checking that all seacocks and hatches were closed and nibbling something to eat just to restore some energy.

The legs from Pantelleria to Lampedusa and back to Malta were just about survival. Between Pantelleria and Lampedusa the last weather report at Favignana had predicted calmer weather. That assumption was wrong. A massive lightning storm, a few feet away from the mast was perhaps one of the scariest parts of the race. As the wind dropped from 35 knots to practically zero, the boys still had to contend with a big surge and water coming in from the open back of the boat. The winds picked up back to 30 knots again after an hour and they made their way to Lampedusa.

As the day progressed, the fatigue took over. Both Matthew and Andrew nodded off when the winds dropped to zero and the lightning storm was still above their heads. Through the tracker – they calculated that this occurred for a bit less than an hour – there was no deep sleep because their senses were still alert, knowing that they are responsible for each other and still racing.

The last stretch home, from Lampedusa to Malta should have been plain sailing with a breeze of 15 knots. The phones were left in the oven to protect them from lightning strikes and thus none of the two could check the weather. The reports were wrong again as half-way in, yet another storm hit the fleet. There was no going back and the two roughed it out, not daunted by the exhaustion that was creeping into higher levels.

Whilst during the toughest moments of the race both said that it would be their last Middle Sea Race, by the time they crossed the finish line, five days after they started, both were already planning on improvements for 2020.

Competing against another fourteen boats, most of which had more experience than the Vivace crew and which also included 2017 Rolex Middle Sea Race overall Trophy winner Bogatyr, the boys modestly assumed that they would place in eight or ninth place.

It came as a very welcome surprise to finish in fourth place.



# ELUSIVE 2 retains BOV Regatta Trophy

**BOV**  
Bank of Valletta

## Strong winds and high seas force races to move to Malta

**Stefan Abela**

Elusive 2 retained the overall title for the BOV Regatta, for the fourth year in succession. The BOV Regatta was organised by the Royal Malta Yacht Club between the 15th and the 17th November 2019.

Race Officer Peter Dimech, in agreement with all the participating crews, decided to hold the races outside the Grand Harbour in Malta due to the inclement weather conditions especially at Mġarr Harbour where docking of the boats would have been dangerous and tricky.

Skipped by Maya Podesta, Elusive 2 took line honours and the lead on the first race on Friday. This was followed by an unbeaten run on Saturday when the Club organised two round-the-cans races. On Sunday they won the first race to ensure first place in both IRC Racer Class 1 and the overall win.

In IRC Racer Class 2, Andrew Agius Delicata's Vivace edged JYS Jan skippered by Zachary Zammit with three wins against two to lead the category. In the IRC Cruiser Class, Allegra, with owner Patrick Vassallo at the helm, had the better of Mario Debono's Janissah to win the Class.

Stefan Abela, Community Relations Officer at Bank of Valletta and Godwin Zammit, Commodore at the Royal Malta Yacht Club presented the BOV Gozo Regatta Trophy to the Elusive 2 crew, recent overall winners of the Rolex Middle Sea Race and now four times winners of this race.



'We are very proud of the decision taken by the Royal Malta Yacht Club and the racers who put safety first in the prevailing weather situation and moved the race to Malta, and also of the crews who honoured their commitment to race in the not so favourable conditions,' said Stefan Abela. 'The BOV Regatta as established itself as the first race following the gruelling Rolex Middle Sea Race where we are proud to have this year's winners of the prestigious race also winning the BOV Regatta.'

'It was an absolute pleasure watching the crews tackle the tricky conditions along the Maltese coast, and we are particularly delighted for the number of very young crew members participating in the race - they surely are the future of Maltese sailing,' said the RMYC Commodore, Godwin Zammit. 'Special thanks go to Race Officer Peter Dimech and RMYC Vice Commodore Robert Ciantar who braved the rough sea to organise and marshall the races throughout the weekend.'

## BOV WEEKEND REGATTA RESULTS

### Overall

|                       |           |  |
|-----------------------|-----------|--|
| <b>1<sup>st</sup></b> | Elusive 2 | (Aaron, Maya / Christoph Podesta)          |
| <b>2<sup>nd</sup></b> | Vivace    | (Andrew Agius Delicata / Matthew Gabriele) |
| <b>3<sup>rd</sup></b> | JYS Jan   | (Greg Nasmyth / Zachary Zammit)            |

### IRC 1

|                       |           |                                  |
|-----------------------|-----------|----------------------------------|
| <b>1<sup>st</sup></b> | Elusive 2 | (Aaron Podesta / David Anastasi) |
| <b>2<sup>nd</sup></b> | Xpresso   | (Sean Borg)                      |
| <b>3<sup>rd</sup></b> | Ton Ton   | (Jonathan Gambin)                |

### IRC 2

|                       |             |  |
|-----------------------|-------------|--|
| <b>1<sup>st</sup></b> | Vivace      | (Andrew Agius Delicata / Matthew Gabriele) |
| <b>2<sup>nd</sup></b> | JYS Jan     | (Greg Nasmyth / Zachary Zammit)            |
| <b>3<sup>rd</sup></b> | JYS Jarhead | (Greg Nasymth / Daniel Fenech)             |

### IRC Cruisers

|                       |         |                    |
|-----------------------|---------|--------------------|
| <b>1<sup>st</sup></b> | Allegra | (Patrick Vassallo) |
|-----------------------|---------|--------------------|





# ELUSIVE 2 MAINTAINS WINNING STREAK at Raymarine Double Handed Figure of Eight Race *Establishes Course Record*

**Raymarine**

Elusive 2, skippered by Aaron Podesta and David Anastasi continued on their winning streak when they etched their name on the Raymarine Double Handed Figure of Eight trophy following their clear win in this gruelling race.

The Raymarine Double Handed Figure of Eight race, one of the long standing races of the Royal Malta Yacht Club racing calendar saw Race Officer Peter Dimech sending the fleet on a 85 nautical mile course towards Comino, around Gozo and back via Filfla, and the South of Malta, to finish in Marsamxett Harbour.

The Race started with light winds from the North west. Making the leg to Comino and the west tip of Gozo a hard beat. Whilst the thick grey clouds that hovered above the fleet did not bode well, they soon cleared allowing the fleet to proceed without any downpours. As the race progressed the wind, keeping to the forecast North westerly, gradually increased to approximately 25 knots, with gusts well in excess. Despite some tricky downwind conditions close to Paradise Bay, crews were able to push the boats and make the most of the race.

Elusive 2 took the lead from the start, being the first to exit the harbour mouth. They were followed by Xpresso (Sean Borg/Paul Borg Cardona) and Vivace (Andrew Agius Delicata / Matthew Gabriele). The finish practically mirrored the start with Elusive 2 claiming line honours and overall win on corrected time. Her elapsed time was 9h 5m 16s which meant that the Elusive 2 duo registered a new course record.

The IRC Cruiser class boats sailed a shorter, approximately 50 mile, figure of eight around Comino and Gozo, before sailing back to Marsamxett to finish. Kontiki (Matthew Sultana/Joseph B. Muscat) was the first of these to finish and held on the first place on corrected time.

A Prize Giving evening, hosted by RLR Yachting, exclusive agents of Raymarine in Malta, took place at the Royal Malta Yacht Club.

*"No sailing race can be considered as being easy, but when it comes to Double Handed Racing then the going gets tough. There are little to no moments when one can take a breather and therefore makes racing far more challenging. Credit goes to these crews for taking on the challenge. Of course, our gratitude goes to the volunteers who undertake race management duties and last but not least the team at RLR Yachting who have been supporting this race for the past decade"*

**Godwin Zammit, Commodore, Royal Malta Yacht Club.**

## RAYMARINE DOUBLE HANDED FIGURE OF 8 RACE RESULTS

### IRC Racers Overall

|                       |           |  |
|-----------------------|-----------|--|
| <b>1<sup>st</sup></b> | Elusive 2 | (Aaron Podesta / David Anastasi)           |
| <b>2<sup>nd</sup></b> | Xpresso   | (Sean Borg / Paul Borg Cardona)            |
| <b>3<sup>rd</sup></b> | Vivace    | (Andrew Agius Delicata / Matthew Gabriele) |

### IRC Racer 1

|                       |           |                                  |
|-----------------------|-----------|----------------------------------|
| <b>1<sup>st</sup></b> | Elusive 2 | (Aaron Podesta / David Anastasi) |
|-----------------------|-----------|----------------------------------|

### IRC Racer 2

|                       |             |  |
|-----------------------|-------------|--|
| <b>1<sup>st</sup></b> | Vivace      | (Andrew Agius Delicata / Matthew Gabriele) |
| <b>2<sup>nd</sup></b> | JYS Jan     | (Daniel Fenech / Matthew Micallef)         |
| <b>3<sup>rd</sup></b> | JYS Jarhead | (Zachary Zammit / Saul Vassallo)           |

### IRC Cruisers Overall

|                       |         |                                      |
|-----------------------|---------|--------------------------------------|
| <b>1<sup>st</sup></b> | Kontiki | (Matthew Sultana / Joseph B. Muscat) |
|-----------------------|---------|--------------------------------------|

*"We couldn't have asked for better sailing conditions. We had a great upwind leg along Malta's north coast all the way to San Dimitri in Gozo and the a super down wind round the southern coast hitting 14 knots of boat speed by Filfla. This year must be amongst one of the fastest times to get round the course, it was great finishing before it got dark. Short handed racing is always fun especially after racing the whole year with a full team. We had to keep reminding ourselves that we were just 2 on board before each manoeuvre as it is easy to get carried away and push beyond your limit. Definitely one of the the top races of the year!!"*

**Aaron Podesta, Elusive 2**



*It is always a great feeling to be part of such a race. We started in line together but the bigger boats have better boat speed so we could not overtake them. At a point, we were close to overtaking Xpresso, however being too close to the reef out of the harbour we decided to stay behind them.*

**Andrew Agius Delicata, Vivace**

*"It was a really good race, we had some tricky downwind sailing next to Paradise Bay, but all in all great sailing conditions which allowed us to push the boat"*

**Daniel Fenech, JYS Jan**



*"We experienced all sorts of weather from 16 to 20 knots of wind up to Comino and gusts of 28knots with a big swell building up on rounding the NE side of Gozo, what you can call "a perfect and enjoyable sail" to the Cruisers division makes it more encouraging, next year we should experience more participants".*

**Joseph B. Muscat, Kontiki**



# MEDCOMMS Round Malta Race

As the Club Racing season came to an end with the Medcomms Round Malta race, SPINNAKER spoke to Aaron Podesta (Elusive 2) who shared the race experience and how the crew are still on a high after their Rolex Middle Sea Race win.

We had expected some strong north westerly winds for the fully crewed Medcomms Round Malta Race, expecting around 20 – 25 knots. Yet the wind took a bit longer to fill in than we had expected but eventually it did.

It was pretty much straight line sailing all around. We had a good beat up the Northern coast and once we rounded Cirkewwa we were met with big westerly waves alongside the cliffs of Malta. We were hitting an average of 14 – 15 knots of boat speeds on regular occasions and made it round the last bit to the finish on another beat.



The crew was pretty much the same as it is for the majority of the races we competed in this year. Our target was to finish this special year on a high and win the race overall – it was really about keeping the momentum we had picked up from the Rolex Middle Sea Race till the very end.

Of course competition was strong, we were glad to see Artie III on the water – this boat is a fantastic boat and is crewed by a very good team. It was good to see fellow crews from the Middle Sea Race – the likes of Xpresso (Sean Borg), Unica (Jamie Sammut), Ton Ton (Jonathan Gambin) and Seawolf (Dave Latham) racing as this of course ups the level of sailing and makes competition much harder!

As the racing calendar now came to a close, Elusive 2 will be put on the hard and there is a lot of work planned. Work which is necessary to ensure that the boat is kept to the level needed for racing – a lot of time and effort goes into keeping the boat reliable throughout the year.

Of course keeping the forthcoming Rolex Middle Sea Race in mind, this winter will be definitely a big one for our team.

### MEDCOMMS ROUND MALTA RACE RESULTS

IRC Overall

|                 |           |                                  |
|-----------------|-----------|----------------------------------|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> | Elusive 2 | (Aaron, Maya, Christoph Podesta) |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> | Artie III | (Lee Satariano)                  |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> | Xpresso   | (Sean Borg)                      |



# Locally trained sailor **VISHNU SARAVANAN** shines at U21 Laser Worlds

## **Vishnu Saravanan Breaks Record As First Indian Laser Sailor To Finish In The Top Three At A World Championship.**

Vishnu Saravanan from Colaba, Mumbai became the first Indian Laser sailor to ever finish in the top three at a World Championship, when in August he finished 3rd at the Under 21 Europeans rounding off an incredible season for the 20-year-old junior Indian army officer.

Saravanan presently trains with the SailCoach Foundation at the Royal Malta Yacht Club Sailing School. He has a bright future although the journey ahead of him will get tougher as he moves from the Under 21 level to Olympic competition. Nevertheless, Saravanan has made a name for himself in what is seen by many as the toughest Olympic sailing discipline.

Having gone through the usual progression of youth sailing classes such as Optimist, 420, Laser 4.7, Laser Radial, and now Laser Standard, the young Saravanan struggled to stay in any of these classes for too long, as he continued to outgrow them until he found the perfect boat for his body size in the Laser Standard.

The latest chapter in Saravanan's life commenced in December 2018 when he decided to become a full-time sailor in order to get to the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. Saravanan joined the team at SailCoach, coming into contact with his coach Alexandr Denisiuc and his mentor, Trevor Millar. Denisiuc is a two-time Laser class campaigner for both London and Rio Games. Millar, a veteran



coach of seven Olympic Games with four Olympic medals to his credit, took on the job of mentor to the young Saravanan.

Working as a team, they engineered the success of the 2019 season, finishing with two outstanding bronze medals at the Under 21 youth level. Saravanan's next goal is to qualify for the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games through the Asian qualifier in Abu Dhabi this coming March. However, with only two country spots available for Asia, this is going to be the toughest test for the young Saravanan.

Saravanan continues to train in Malta and plans to take part in two training camps with two times World Champion and London Silver medalist Pavlos Kontides from Cyprus. Kontides was also in Malta for training with the SailCoach team training out of the Royal Malta Yacht Club base as Malta continues to make a name for itself as an international sailing hub.

## **OVERALL RESULTS**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Juan Pablo Cardozo (ARG)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Clemente Seguel Lacamara (CHI)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Vishnu Saravanan (IND)





malta sailing federation

# NEWS

Michael Mifsud | President

In the past year the Malta Sailing Federation has been very active in preparing, through its affiliated Clubs and Associations, our sailors for top sailing competitions. It is very encouraging to see that Sailing is becoming a more mainstream sport and well recognised in the local sport circuit. Many members of the Malta Sailing Federation have distinguished themselves in international regattas. First on the list of top achievers is Richard Schultheis who is runner-up world champion in the Optimist Class, Antonia and Victoria Schultheis who have been very successful in the 29er circuit and the Optimist team in the European championships who all finished in the Gold Fleet in the European Championships. Furthermore, Saul Vassallo has been awarded runner up Young Sports Person of the Year in the National Sports Malta awards, Mr Jovin Rausi has been inducted in the Maltese Olympic Committee's Hall of Fame for his contribution to Sailing, whilst sailing team Elusive 2 were presented with a Gold Award at the annual Maltese Olympic Committee Sports

Awards for their success at the 40th Edition of the Rolex Middle Sea Race. All three were nominated by the Malta Sailing Federation.



## MALTA SAILING FEDERATION MEMBER CLUBS

### ROYAL MALTA YACHT CLUB

In 1975 the Royal Malta Yacht Club instigated the formation of the Malta Yachting Federation with a view to such body assuming the reception, at the time accorded to the Club by the Malta Government (National Sports Board), as the National Authority and Controlling Body for yachting in Malta. The RMYC is Malta's premier Sailing Club and usually hosts the meetings of the Malta Sailing Federation Council. Due to its position in the founding of the sport of sailing in Malta, the Commodore of the Royal Malta Yacht Club is also the statutory Vice President of the Malta Sailing Federation. The Royal Malta Yacht Club is the only current yacht Club that organises keel boat races in Malta. With a full racing Calendar, the Club promotes keelboat races both in local waters as well as to neighbouring Italy. The RMYC now also has a Sailing School that teaches children the fundamentals of sailing and is also an active participant in the Federation's Ranking Regattas. In 2019 apart from the Spring Regatta the RMYC hosted the National Dinghy Championships for the Federation.

### VIKINGS SAILING CLUB

A neighbouring Club of the RMYC is the Vikings Sailing Club, a dinghy sailing Club that focuses on teaching sailing to young children especially those that are recruited through the Skolasport programme of Sport Malta. This Club, after some challenging years due to having its premises taken away from them, is once again on the rise with an active fleet of Topper dinghies and Lasers. In addition to these, they Club makes use of Laser Sixteens which are used for introducing young children to the joys of sailing. A number

of sailors trained by the Vikings Sailing Club now sail on keelboats in local and offshore races. It is very encouraging to see the Vikings Sailing Club revive its sailing activities and having a large number of dinghies every weekend in Marsamxett harbour.

### BIRŻEBBUĠA SAILING CLUB

The south side of the island is catered for by the Birżebbuġa Sailing Club, a very active dinghy sailing Club that caters for all ages of sailors from young novice sailors to veteran Miracle class sailors. With two full time coaches and an extensive sailing programme the level of sailing of this Club has risen in recent years and are usually challengers at the Federation's ranking regattas. In the last two years this Club has participated in a number of foreign regattas that has helped to expose its young sailors to top international competition.

### MALTA YOUNG SAILORS CLUB

Based in St Paul's Bay, the Malta Young Sailors is one of Malta's youngest clubs but also one of the most active. Primarily focusing on Optimist and Laser classes, the Club devotes a lot of energy in preparing its sailors for foreign regatta participation and have produced most National Dinghy Champions in both Classes. The Club also organises a number of training clinics with top foreign coaches and also engages in a sailor exchange programme with the Circolo Velico Crotona. The MYSC is the organiser of Euromed International Regatta. Held annually in December, it attracts over 200 young sailors from around the globe for Malta's only highly level Optimist and Laser competition.

# ROYAL MALTA YACHT CLUB

## Racing Calendar Highlights

The Royal Malta Yacht Club's Racing Calendar for 2020 was launched early in January. The Calendar was designed to cater for as many varying interests Club members might have and followed input by a small working group lead by Rear Commodore (Sailing) Peter Dimech. The full race calendar can be found on the Club's website, however we have highlighted some of the races and changes that were implemented this year.

### WINTER COASTAL CRUISES

**Saturdays: 1st, 8th, 29th February, 7th, 14th March**

The main objective of these Cruises is to attract more Cruisers to Club events. With most of the racing boats on the hard, racer crews should be available to hop on board cruising boats as required. Courses are weather dependant and will generally be designed to last between two or three hours. The last event will take place on the 14th March and will be a Round Comino Day Race. New FREE Club Ratings will be used so all Cruisers are asked to contact the club to obtain their rating. A nominal fee of €10 per boat will be applied. Results will be made available at the Club after racing, when beers and a first prize will be given out. All Cruisers and Non-Members are invited to attend.

### ST. JOSEPH WEEKEND

**Thursday 19th March, Saturday 21st, Sunday 22nd March**

A new format to this long weekend was introduced, with Thursday, Public Holiday seeing a Figure of Eight Round Gozo Day Race, with a start and finish in Marsamxett Harbour. On the Saturday, Racers will race around marks laid off Sliema in the

morning, followed by a race to Gozo. For the Cruisers Class a long passage race to Gozo is planned. A similar format will take place on Sunday, with a race round marks off Gozo taking place in the morning followed by a race to Marsamxett for the Racers. Cruisers will enjoy a long passage race to Marsamxett. Naturally there will be the social aspect, with a possible social event at the Club on Thursday evening and beers on the pontoons in Gozo

### SICILY WEEKEND

**Friday 1st - Sunday 3rd May**

The first offshore race of the season. This year the Club will be seeking alternatives away from the usual Marzamemi, with crews having indicated preferences for Ragusa or Scoglitti. Location will be weather dependant. As usual passage races out and back will take place on Friday and Sunday, whilst for Saturday, the Club will make every effort to organise a series of inshore races for which cruiser crews will be encouraged to join the racing boats.

### TRIPLE HANDED RACE

**Saturday 16th May**

Previously this race was held at night, this year it was decided to host it as a day race, taking the fleet around Gozo. Those taking part will also garner points for the Short Handed Trophy.

### YACHTING MALTA RACE WEEK

**Wednesday 27th to Sunday 31st MAY**

As part of a power and sail showcase event being hosted by Yachting Malta, keelboats will have the opportunity to take part in two days of inshore racing, and finishing off with a longer offshore race.



## **MNARJA MELLIEĦA WEEKEND**

**27th - 29th June**

A new format of events taking place on the Mnjara weekend, where rather than sailing offshore, the Club will base its events in Mellieħa. Events will kick off on Saturday morning with a race to Mellieħa followed by a shore based meal at a restaurant in the area. Sunday's race format will consist of laid marks in/or around Mellieħa for the racers. Cruisers will enjoy a short offshore race. In the evening, all those taking part are encouraged to join again for a shore based meal. The weekend will wrap up on Monday (Public Holiday) with a race back to Marsamxett.

## **MALTA - SYRACUSE - TAORMINA**

**11th to 14th July**

2020 is a special year for the Malta-Syracuse Race which will celebrate its sixtieth edition. This year the race will leave from Malta and finish in Syracuse. Following that, a race from Syracuse to Taormina will take place the next day. The races are being held in conjunction with the Lega Navale Italiana (Sezione Siracusa). The Prize Giving for the Malta-Syracuse leg will take place on Sunday 12th July, whilst that for the Syracuse - Taormina Leg will take place on Tuesday 14th July. Whilst crews can opt to take part in just one of the two legs, the Club encourages participation in both.

## **LATE SUMMER TWILIGHT SERIES**

**26th August, 2nd, 9th, 23rd September, 7th October**

Last year's Twilight Series' formula - that of informal mid-week racing proved to be popular. Races are generally short coastal races up to Ġhallis or Munxar, starting and finishing in Marsamxett. Post racing one could regularly see crews congregate at the Club for drinks. Individual day race prizes will be presented after each race.

## **ROLEX MIDDLE SEA RACE SHAKEDOWN**

**Sunday 11th October**

An opportunity for crews to shakedown in preparation for the Rolex Middle Sea Race.

This will be a day race of about three to four hours in duration. Starting and finishing at Marsamxett.

## **ROLEX MIDDLESEA RACE COASTAL RACE**

**Wednesday 14th October**

Annual pre-Rolex Middle Sea Race Coastal Race aimed towards giving local participants a final opportunity to fine tune their boats and crews and those early arrivals to familiarise themselves with the local waters. Race will start and finish in Marsamxett.

## **ROLEX MIDDLE SEA RACE**

**Saturday 17th October**

The 41st Edition of the Rolex Middle Sea Race will start at the iconic Valletta Grand Harbour. With 2019 producing a Maltese winner, all eyes will be on Maltese fleet in the hope of keeping the coveted trophy home!

## **BOV GOZO WEEKEND REGATTA**

**13th - 15th November**

After the buzz of the Rolex Middle Sea Race it is time to bring local crews together for a weekend of sailing in Gozo. Starting on Friday afternoon with a passage race. Every attempt will be made to time the course so that all the fleet - Cruisers and Racers finish as close together as possible in time for the usual Happy Hour.

Saturday will host a series of Round the Cans races for Racers, whilst cruisers will be given a short offshore course. The evening will see crews coming together for a social event, whilst Sunday will have a similar format to Saturday with the weekend finishing in Marsamxett on Sunday afternoon.

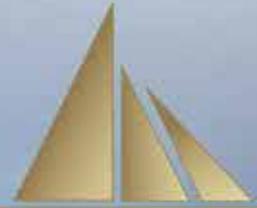
The Royal Malta Yacht Club would like to thank Sean Borg, Jonathan Camilleri Bowman, Charles Cronin, Mario Debono, Joseph Muscat and Christoph Podesta for their invaluable input in preparing this calendar.



# TWILIGHT Series

The Twilight Series took place over four early evenings during the months of August and September and were a perfect opportunity for some fun yet competitive mid-week sailing Andrew Agius Delicata, skipper of the Reflex 38 sailing yacht Vivace, a regular participant of the series, contributed a pictorial account from every race.





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# The Mapfre Middlesea Euromed Regatta Experience

Poyraz Fidanboy

**Eleven year old Poyraz Fidanboy, a young sailor currently training at the Royal Malta Yacht Club Sailing School under the tuition of Head Coach Rüya Çakmaklı, took part in the 20th Edition of the Euromed International Regatta, organised by Malta Young Sailors Club. Poyraz, who competed in the Optimist Novice Class shares the experience in his very own words.**

Euromed 2019 would be my first international regatta and I was very excited. The day before the race, we went to the beach and I was impressed and even more excited when I saw so many sailors from all around the world.

On the first day of Euromed it was the first time I saw the competition out on the water and what their strengths and weaknesses were. The first race was the race that we all used to get the feel of the area. The wind on the first day was quite light, which was not my favourite for racing.

On the second day the wind seemed to be similar to the first day but when we were out on the water the wind started picking up and by the second race, we had a 15+ knot breeze. With this new breeze my boat speed was rising and making me go up some positions in the races. By the end of the day the weather was challenging for most of the fleet.

On the third day, the wind was probably a consistent 20-25 knot breeze that really challenged the entire fleet. Our fleet launched with around eight boats and ended up with four finishing. After the first race of the day, the Committee sent all the fleet in, including the Lasers. When we all got back to land the Committee put up a postponement flag. Around half an hour to forty-five minutes later, the Committee launched the Bronze, Silver and Gold fleets. The Green fleet, the one I was racing in was left ashore.

When Gold fleet was launching, I was just finishing my lunch and my coach, Rüya, told us that we could watch the racing from the RIB. By the time Silver fleet had launched we were out on the

water and watching the Gold fleet. The Bronze, Silver and Gold fleets did two races and wrapped up the day like that.

The final day of Euromed, our fleet didn't sail any races, but Bronze, Silver and Gold fleets did two races. For one of those races once again our team was watching but then Ruya dropped us off at land for the second race. I watched them with binoculars from land. When the fleet came in, we helped them get their trailers and their boats up.

In the end, I finished in fourth place, unfortunately losing third place with one point. Still, I am very happy to have been part of this great international event and will be looking forward to Euromed in 2020.

*"Euromed was an amazing experience, I loved the atmosphere and the international vibe to it, Although I only raced for 2 days I learned so much and made some amazing friends who I will never forget"*

Molly Ross, Royal Malta Yacht Club Sailing School, Optimist Novice Class



# Gold Award for **Elusive 2**

The crew of Elusive 2 was feted at the Maltese Olympic Committee Sports Award Gala evening when they were presented with a Gold Award for their success at the 40th Edition of the Rolex Middle Sea Race.

The Gold Award, is presented to those teams or athletes that win a Gold Medal in the Games of the Small States of Europe, European and Mediterranean Games, Youth Olympic Games or major events of International standing. The Rolex Middle Sea Race falls within the latter criteria and the overall win by the crew of Elusive 2 meant that the crew were eligible for this coveted trophy.



# FAR HORIZONS....

## One man's trip around the world.



**For many, the notion of a trip at sea remains a mystery wrapped in a riddle shrouded in fear. The fear of feeling lonely, of not coping with technical problems that might crop up, of having to talk to strangers when on land or even the fear of not having the right clothes. Yet, all this was not on Peter Spiteri Gonzi's mind when he embarked on a round the world trip on his yacht Melipal in 2015. Now he is back in Malta and is sharing his experience and some amazing images with SPINNAKER.**



### **What made you embark on this epic journey?**

I always wished to spend a few years as a cruiser sailor sailing long distances to some remote places. Once I let go of the ropes with this thought in mind, there was no turning back. Indeed, having read this somewhere else, I felt like an animal which had just escaped from the zoo. I felt free ....

### **How long did it take you to prepare for such a journey?**

I bought Melipal in 2005 knowing that she would help me achieve my goal. After a few trips to Greece, Italy, Croatia, around Sicily and Sardegna over a number of years, 2014 was the year I felt comfortable to commit to the decision.

### **How did you tackle any negative thoughts that might have crossed your mind prior to the start of the journey?**

Well, such thoughts are understandable for obvious reasons. Many questions popped into mind – would I be happy undertaking this massive challenge? Would my health permit it? What about finances, technical issues? Weather?

I was also quitting a secure and stable job in the process, so yes the risks were high. The way I tackled negative thoughts was to have a huge map of the world as one of my main pictures on the wall at home. I looked at it every morning.

### **Were there any moments where you thought of heading back to Malta?**

No. I always felt comfortable doing what I was doing and therefore there were no thoughts of heading back to Malta, earlier than expected.



**Were there times when you felt lonely?**

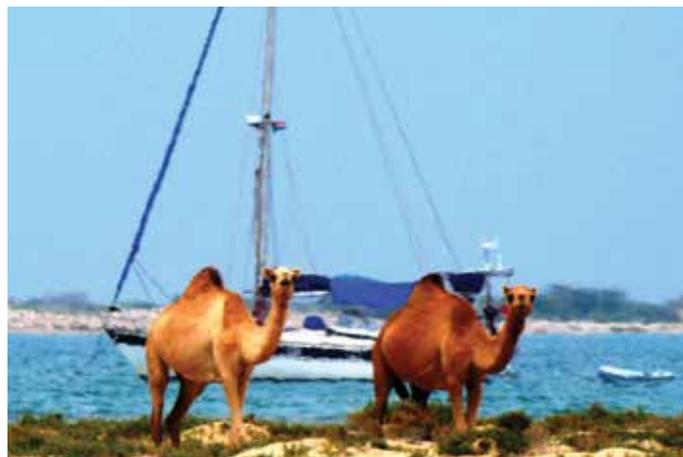
I would say that I felt lonesome on some occasions but no, I never felt lonely: even when I was thousands of miles out at sea in some places in the Pacific. Indeed, the feeling of being there on your own is very particular, very inspiring and in hindsight I can say a life changing experience. Besides that, I have had crew on various occasions and made many new friends en route. Loneliness was never an issue.

**Any part of the world where you stopped and visit that you would consider to be your favourite part of the world, and why?**

My favourite place was sailing out in the middle of the Pacific Ocean on my own. The feeling is spiritual. Other than that, I have many favourite places. I do tend to like places which have indigenous people and cultures and are not so influenced by developed countries and tourism. Based on that, this narrows places down to the South America, the Pacific Islands and the Indonesian archipelago.

**Most challenging time, when things were going wrong and frustration started to set in?**

Things going wrong is normal and yes, sometimes it can be frustrating. There have not, however been any particular times



when it was too much. If it does get frustrating, I tend to resign myself to accepting having a bad day and look forward to the next when things may and usually do get better.

**A trip like yours is hard to beat in terms of one’s bucket list...do you have anything left in your bucket now?**

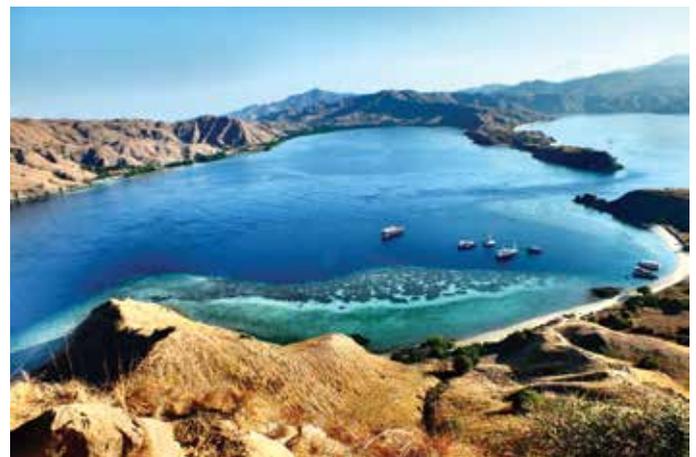
Plenty of things .... maybe a second time ... maybe some cold weather sailing, who knows the world is my oyster!

**What basic tips would you give to anyone considering undertaking such a journey?**

Plan it right, pick the right boat and know her very well before you make your move. You must also be committed to the sea and the elements for good and for bad.

**Now you are back in Malta, what are you up to?**

Well I do happen to be an experienced senior classification/statutory marine surveyor with my specialty being technical surveys on the bigger ships. Unfortunately, Malta does not any longer give me very good opportunities in this field so I will very likely relocate in the years to come. I also plan to do some cold weather sailing. In that case, I am sure I will not have any issues with parking lot anchorages which unfortunately are now common place here in the Mediterranean.



# Challenge Trophies

The Royal Malta Yacht Club recently announced the winners of the **2019 Short Handed Series Trophy**, the **Offshore Challenge Trophy** and the newly introduced **Coastal Challenge Trophy**.

These Trophies were awarded to the boat that performed best overall in the IRC Category in the designated RMYC races which counted towards these trophies. Points were awarded to each boat according to its overall position in each race which will vary with the number of starters and multiplied by the Points factor for the race.

## SHORT HANDED SERIES TROPHY

Round Malta Double Handed Race  
Single Handed Round Comino Race  
Triple Handed Round Gozo Race  
Double Handed Figure of Eight Round Malta Race

## OFFSHORE CHALLENGE TROPHY

Malta – Ragusa Race  
Ragusa – Malta Race  
Malta – Marzamemi Race  
Messina – Syracuse Race  
Syracuse - Malta Race  
Rolex Middle Sea Race

## COASTAL CHALLENGE TROPHY

Marsamxett – Mġarr (March Gozo Weekend)  
Easter Round Gozo Race  
Round Comino Coastal Series Race  
BOV Weekend Regatta  
Medcomms Round Malta Race



*Elusive 2 (Aaron, Maya and Christoph Podesta) were the winners of the Offshore and Coastal Challenge Trophies*



*Lartista (Anton Calleja & Renato Camilleri) were the winners of the Short Handed Trophy*



# EDWARDS LOWELL CONCEPT STORE



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**Edwards Lowell** hosted the official opening party for their brand-new **Concept Store** located in one of Malta's most luxurious postcodes, Portomaso Marina. With a legacy dating back almost 100 years, Edwards Lowell is a company that takes pride in preserving their heritage, which has kept loyal customers coming back over generations. The family business strives to uphold their traditions whilst continuing to innovate, and this is how the idea for their latest venture was formed.

To kick off the festive season, Edwards Lowell esteemed clients and friends were invited to the launch of The Concept Store and treated to a red-carpet experience from beginning to end. A welcome drink of chilled Ruinart champagne awaited, topped with extra sparkle in the form of 24k gold leaf lavishly added to each glass. Many guests flew in from around the world to mark this special occasion, including representatives from each of the luxury brands in store. There was even a chance to rub shoulders with special guest, legendary Andrew Cole, one of the finest goal scorers in premier league history.

Throughout the event, delicious Asian-fusion bites by Zest were served - from lobster tacos, prawn tempura summer rolls to a delectable chili-chocolate fondant accompanied by free-flowing bubbles from the Edwards Lowell signature Champagne Bar. The party went on all night whilst Top model DJ Tiffany Pisani set the mood with her trademark uptempo beats.

As the name suggests, The Concept Store is a new shopping experience, merging lifestyle, art, design, books, watches and jewellery all under one roof. The space is multi-functional, combining - an art gallery, champagne bar, high-end library and displays of the finest watches and jewellery on the market. The

310 square meter store spans over two open-plan floors with a large terrace overlooking the spectacular yacht marina below.

Vast marble flooring, ultramodern fixtures and bright natural light pours in from the sizeable apertures which play impeccable framework for the carefully-curated pieces within. A visit to The Concept Store is as much about enjoying the space as to view the products within. The specially-selected items in-store combine vintage and contemporary, emerging brands and established names, limited editions and rare pieces mixed with affordable gifts.

A variety of new brands to Edwards Lowell are available, including world-renowned art book publisher Taschen and the oldest established Champagne house since 1729, Ruinart. Art lovers and collectors are in for a treat, The Concept Store boasts a collection of works from pop art icon Andy Warhol. The new additions to the Edwards Lowell portfolio sit alongside brands that have been with the company for years including Hublot, Tudor, S.T. Dupont, Girard-Perregaux, Raymond Weil, Chopard and Pomellato.

It was important for Edwards Lowell to focus on the customer experience when it came to design this retail space. The project is the outcome of a great collaboration between local company DPM and Rome-based Alfa 81. The two companies worked closely throughout the project; a successful teamwork proven from their previous work together at the Edwards Lowell Rolex Boutique in Valletta. The bespoke and specialized apertures and furniture were manufactured in Rome with Alfa 81 whilst the finishing works were handled by DPM locally.

The essence of The Concept Store fuses contemporary design with timeless elegance, a playground for those who seek out impeccable taste and style.



# LEADING into the Unknown

**Nikki Henderson made history after being selected, at age 24, as the youngest ever professional skipper to lead a team in the 40,000-nautical mile Clipper 2017-18 Round the World Yacht Race. In doing so she took over the 'youngest Skipper' title from Vendee Globe runner up Alex Thomson who proved youth was no barrier to success when he won the Clipper 1997-98 Race aged 26. Confident Yet, she is not resting on her laurels either.**

A combination of things got Nikki into sailing – she highlighted the desire to travel; the love of sport that was introduced to her through family and friends; the freedom that comes with sailing and the sense of belonging that one gets once within the sailing community. Nicola feels at home when she is in what she describes as a nomadic community, where people are looking out for that something 'more'.

Undoubtedly, Nikki will forever be associated with the Clipper Round the World Race, which to Nikki has been the hardest yet most rewarding race she has undertaken so far. In her own words, she states that the opportunity to build and nurture a team from 60 strangers, with over half of them new to sailing was an intense, difficult but nonetheless incredible one.

*"The Clipper Race and indeed sailing helps to change people's lives - it helped them develop their characters and was truly an honour to see each of the crew members grow individually".*

## THE BATTLE FOR SELF CONFIDENCE

Contending with self confidence might not be a challenge one would have thought Nikki had to face, yet she is not afraid to admit that what scared her the most wasn't a course dotted with hurricanes, wind holes, 100 knot winds and towering seas – despite not having yet experienced the severity of such weather.

Yes, that was tough but the biggest personal challenge was the ability to dig deep; to find superhuman levels of self-esteem, empathy, kindness, and forgiveness – when she was otherwise drained and exhausted. Their longest leg took 35 days. It was a long time to stay strong.

All this stemmed from various factors. Leading a multi-national crew made up of 15 nationalities, the varying ages – between 21 and 70; she being younger than almost the entire crew (24 onboard at any one time) and perhaps most challenging was being female in a team which had a 60:40 male: female ratio.

## YOUNGEST SKIPPER TITLE

In doing the Clipper Race, Nicola earned herself the "Youngest Skipper" title, taking over from Alex Thomson **[Editor's Note] Alex Thomson raced in the 2017 Rolex Middle Sea Race, in the double handed class on the Imoca 60 Hugo Boss**. When asked if that title increased pressure, Nicola admitted that to be even mentioned in the same sentence as Alex Thomson initially blew her mind. But agreed that, yes, there was some added pressure with the label.



*“Initially many people were shocked that such a young person, and a woman (!), could be trusted with peoples’ lives in such an extreme environment. It brought home the huge responsibility that I faced. Thankfully, most pressure would have been better described as support.”*

Nikki felt that people wanted her to succeed, to follow in Alex’s footsteps and win. As the race progressed, the realisation hit. Nikki was fast becoming a role model for young people pushing boundaries in their field. Nikki also confessed that most of the pressure came from within. She acknowledges that her relentless and suffocating competitiveness and self-critique did pile on the pressure. For her it was a matter of living up to peoples’ hopes for her and to do her best.

When asked if she ever considers a solo sailing challenge, her answer is yes but the ocean being such a beautiful and immense place is best shared!

## **THE MALTESE CONNECTION**

Nikki’s love affair with Malta started when she was asked by UK sailing legend Tracy Edwards to join the Maiden Factor **[Editor’s Note: The Maiden Factor is the vision of Tracy Edwards to promote access to education for girls from all backgrounds and countries, and to raise funds to help young women realise their full potential]**

Edwards was looking for a female skipper to kick start the campaign and sail the first leg. For Nikki it was a natural progression, having realised during the Clipper Race the impact and the potential sailing has as a platform to send a message. The visit of Maiden Factor in Malta brought Nikki in contact with the Jarhead Young Sailors’ Foundation, which resulted in Nikki working for the Foundation to coach dinghy sailors in offshore

sailing and give them that first experience in big boat offshore racing in a safe, educational and supportive environment.

*"It has been fantastic to see how the young boys and girls have enjoyed the racing, but also it has been a privilege to watch how the sport has developed them, matured them and inspired them."*

Nikki feels that although having potential to achieve results, she feels that Maltese sailors lack the confidence, not the competence to become professional sailors. She continues to say that unfortunately there are not many role models for them to follow. Yet, she is confident that the Foundation has provided a degree of hope and hands on experience to show that that sailing is within their reach and capability if they so wish to pursue it.

## **ROLEX MIDDLE SEA RACE**

Nikki crewed the first ever all-female crew in the Rolex Middle Sea Race on the Jarhead Foundation's J/109 JYS Jan. Most of the crew, which were aged between 15 and 21, had never been on anything other than a dinghy in their life. Only one of the girls, Emilie Gregory had taken part in the Rolex Fastnet, earlier on in August. The Rolex Middle Sea Race conditions are notorious. Very mentally hard for any experienced sailor, let alone beginners. From light downwind onto heavy upwind. Yet the girls handled everything with aplomb, rising to the responsibility put in front of them. They raced competitively, they had fun and got that extra 0.1 knot where it really counted. Their result was well deserved. **[Editor's Note: JYS Jan came 6th in IRC/Class 6, 4th in ORC/Class 6]**

*"I had high expectations for the team. They were all good dinghy sailors and by the time Race start came they had bonded into a really truly tight knit group of friends. This always serves well offshore - a strong team produces strong results. In the 6 days we spent racing, I saw those girls grow up, mature and develop - it was amazing. I wish they had the perspective to see how well they did, and how much this experience will impact their lives"*

Nikki credits these results through the kind of training the Foundation gives such crews - building of confidence in such a way that they felt they could take on jobs on the boat that they otherwise might have been considered beyond their reach.

## **ONTO THE NEXT CHAPTER..**

When asked if Nikki feels the need settle down on terra ferma and just go out on the water every so often, she tells us that she has just completed the purchase of her first home - so to her that means she is a real 'settled' grown up now! Nikki finds that time on land is needed and her work as a motivational speaker supports her when she takes time away from the sea. Although the sea is her passion and happy place, she loves her family and friends and hopes to build a family one day too. Right now her target is to work towards a healthy balance!

When pushed for some more information about future projects Nikki shares her quest for sponsorship to bring together a team for the 2021 Ocean Race. The plan is to have a 50:50 male:female youth team and to use the race entry as a platform promote the idea of global cooperation - environmental, socially and politically. Interestingly, she concludes ... Malta has never had an Ocean Race entry - perhaps my work with Jarhead could be the start of a relationship here...

We look forward to see how this develops!



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# Sailors show their mettle at National Dinghy Championships

## Participation by international crews on the increase

The Royal Malta Yacht Club, under the auspices of the Malta Sailing Federation, welcomed over 55 sailors to compete in the National Dinghy Championships. The fleet competed in seven classes which included Optimist Senior, Optimist Cadet, Optimist Novice, Laser Standard, Laser Radial, Laser 4.7 and RS Feva.

The Championships have also attracted a number of foreign participants, including a Turkish contingent from the famed Galatasaray Sports Club.

The plan for the championships was to host up to four races a day over Saturday and Sunday, however the weather on Saturday thwarted all plans when large black clouds suddenly spread over the designated race course. This resulted in the Race Committee sending all the fleet back into harbour for safety, with instructions to wait it out for a while. With the wind suddenly picking up to speeds of up to 25 knots, the Committee and coaches agreed it would be best to cancel the races for the day.

Sunday morning's conditions were slightly better with shifty winds and a choppy swell resulting in the mark layers having a trying time to ensure that the race course was well, especially

due to the fact that the strong currents were wreaking havoc with the marks. Yet the fleet managed to compete in four races, wrapping up the event in the afternoon.

### OPTIMIST CLASS

Although four races were held throughout the course of the day, the first race was discarded having gone over the stipulated 60 minute time frame.





In the Optimist Cadet Division Ali Poyraz Ozdemir (Turkey) won the division. Ozdemir had equal points as second placed Eric Fenech Pace (MYSC), however Ozdemir had better placings. Nevertheless, Fenech Pace earned the Champion's title. In Third Place was Timmy Vassallo (MYSC).

The Royal Malta Yacht Club's recently setup Optimist fleet, saw good results being produced in the Novice Division, when First and Third places were won by the Club's students. First place went to Poyraz Fidanboy, followed by Jacob Azzopardi (MYSC) and Esmeralda Fusini Davison (RMYC).

The Senior Division saw MYSC Sailors Nico Drescher and Benjamin Vassallo take first and second, whilst BSC's Jake Mallia completed the Divisions' podium.



## LASER CLASS

Saul Vassallo (MYSC) dominated the Laser 4.7, winning all the four races of the day. Following him in second place was Gabriella Mifsud, fresh from her successful Rolex Middle Sea Race participation with the all-female crew of JYS Jan. In third place was Dorothy Matthews (KYC).

In the Laser Radial Division, it was Ranya Saravanan (YAI) who took the honours followed by MYSC Sailors Zachary Zammit and Matthew Micallef. The Standard Division saw only two competitors take part with Eriks Karlis Zvilna (RMYC) taking the honours with three straight wins.

The RS Feva Division was won by RMYC duo Dimitris Vertsonis and Flynn Mifsud.

A Prize Giving ceremony took place later on at the Royal Malta Yacht Club terrace. The winners were announced by Malta Sailing Federation President Michael Mifsud and prizes were presented by Royal Malta Yacht Club Rear Commodore (Sailing) Peter Dimech and Commodore Godwin Zammit, who thanked all those involved for their commitment and effort. President Michael Mifsud concluded by thanking Midi plc for supporting this event.



# SB20 - PROVIDING CHANNELS FOR INCLUSIVITY

The interest that the SB20 Malta Association has generated amongst the local sailing community has been massive.

In the very own words of the recently elected Class President, Catherine Halpin, the SB20 Association is fast becoming an important part of the Maltese sailing community, offering sailors somewhere to go to when coming through the Optimist and Laser Classes.

For those not in the know, the SB20 is a one design boat – meaning that the only varying factor is the weight of the crew and their abilities. Secondly, it only needs three crew members and thirdly, due to the weight and length of the boat, it is very easy to transport into the water. Whilst some people might argue that sailing is an expensive sport, the SB20 Class is slowly redefining this perception. Currently, a number of crews have been teaming up and purchasing a boat between them.

The SB20 Class, until September, had the full local eight boat complement regularly taking part in racing weekends. The unfortunate demise of John Hudson, saw four boats not being used. However this situation should change in the coming weeks and the Association is looking forward to the current eight boat fleet being back on the water.

Robert Ciantar, Class Secretary and RMYC Vice Commodore, emphasizes the importance of the inclusivity the Class offers.

Events are open to everyone interested in sailing – irrespective of their sailing capabilities and ages – in fact the Class has welcomed sailors as young as thirteen years of age and complete beginners taking part in their events. With racing taking place in various locations around the island – in conjunction with various sailing clubs, ensures that the SB experience becomes more widespread. Curiosity has also been stirred amongst foreign sailors – particularly those working on superyachts that visit Malta and who look forward to some sailing. This is a perfect way of integrating the sailing community and extending the SB20 network.

*“We are very competitive when out on the water, but we are having loads of fun! Sailors not in the SB20 Community are seeing this, and this will make the sport grow”* - Catherine Halpin, Class President

Class President Catherine Halpin enthused about Malta’s potential as a fantastic sailing destination – surrounded by water and great sailing conditions. The current community might be small when compared to others – such as Ireland which sees around sixty SB20s on the water. Yet Malta is still at inception stage so there is definitely a positive future for the Class to look forward to.

## NURTURING THE YOUNG

The Royal Malta Yacht Club Sailing School’s efforts to nurture the passion of sailing at a young age seem to be rubbing off well on the young crews who regularly take lessons at the



school – whilst most of them training on Bugs, Optimist and Laser Class boats due to their young age, one can still see them eye the SB20s longingly with an element of desire to eventually graduate to larger boats. Considering the close relationship the Class has with the Royal Malta Yacht Club and the wholehearted support the Club has given the Class, there is a strong belief that eventually these kids might move on to the SB20s.

*“As the Class works on its growth, its ultimate aspiration is to have sailors representing Malta on an international level - now as the Class is gaining more local recognition, this certainly seems to be an attainable target”* – Robert Ciantar.

### SB20 MALTA ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE

|                    |   |           |
|--------------------|---|-----------|
| Catherine Halpin   | - | President |
| Robert Ciantar     | - | Secretary |
| Nicolai Portelli   | - | Treasurer |
| Emma Cassar        | - | Member    |
| Adrian Gauci Borda | - | Member    |
| Brian Flahive      | - | Member    |



For further information visit the SB20 Malta Association page on Facebook.

### SB20 RACES FOR 2020

- Royal Malta Yacht Club 11th – 12th January
- Birzebbugia Sailing Club 15th – 16th February
- Malta Young Sailors Club 21st – 22nd March
- Grand Harbour Marina 4th – 5th April
- Malta Race Week Events 28th- 31st May
- Malta Young Sailors Club (National Championships) 6th – 7th June
- Birzebbugia Sailing Club 25th – 26th July
- Royal Malta Yacht Club 19th – 20th September
- Royal Malta Yacht Club 10th – 11th October
- BOV Gozo Weekend Regatta 14th – 15th November
- Mellieħa Bay 5th – 6th December

# JOHN HUDSON - Larger than Life

In November 2019, members of the Royal Malta Yacht Club and the sailing community – particularly the SB20 Class, were shocked to hear of the sudden passing of John Hudson. John was a Club member, one of the SB20 Malta Association's founders and an SB20 Association Committee member.

His passing was a shock to many.

His fun loving character and his passion for sailing was his trademark. He was instrumental in the introduction of the SB20 Class in Malta and was always encouraging newcomers to join in the fun and doing his utmost to keep the momentum of the local SB Class going.

A fond farewell in his memory, which took place at the Club, was a well attended affair with many memories shared. A befitting tribute for someone who was larger than life!

He will be sadly missed.





# The Rolex Middle Sea Race A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE

**Paul Ellul experienced the Rolex Middle Sea Race from a different angle. Here he shares his account, verbal and visual, of such a unique experience.**

The 2019 Rolex Middle Sea Race was captured from a never-before-attempted perspective, one that would take a small team of veteran ex-Middle Sea Race sailors to follow the fleet up to Messina Straits, and which would seek to portray an up close and personal perspective, of the yachts and of those on board.

Although the weather conditions for the first two days didn't provide the spectacular images that one would have hoped for, the story that was captured by the images added another dimension to all those who follow this event on a yearly basis. As with any project, my aim would be to succeed in its objective. From very early on, I sought to work with the best photographic equipment available on the planet. Coupled with this, in order to shoot the subject matter from as close as possible, was the best viable craft that would be up to anything the sea could and would throw at us, should the weather conditions decide to.

Money and resource are always a challenge for any project, and I cannot thank enough the persons and organisations who dug deep into their pockets, and who provided the lion's share of the what was required for this project to materialize. The craft, a BW700, was provided by Chris Grech. Cameras and lenses were made available by Avantech Ltd. These were instrumental in making the project a reality. I have to thank Chis Grech, Mike Agius and Antoine Spiteri who gave three full days of their lives to support this photographic mission.





Preparation started many months ahead of the start, and as the plans began to materialise, it was decided that in order to maximise the energy and stamina of the crew, the support boat would return to a port once the light was gone; heading to a marina close to where the fleet's estimated general location at sunrise would be.

Flexibility was therefore the key; decisions would have to be made in real time as the weather was going to be the determining factor of the fleet's progress.

Pavel Images Malta is the nom de plume to my photography, and to give a bit of background about this, photography caught my eye (pun intended) around the mid 80's, and with a modest array of glass and a couple of Canon T 70's, I established a basic understanding. Although progress was slow with film, the results could not be seen in the field as with digital camera technology which was not available at the time. It so happened

that I found less time to pursue this desire to shoot the world around me. But the seed had been planted.

Fast forward to 2016, at a time when I decided to take a sabbatical from offshore racing, mainly due to the fact that for sure the last 40 years were amazing, however nothing new was being achieved at that point. So I now had the time to take up photography once again, and the quest to shoot all that this Ocean Planet has to offer has become a great passion.

To find out more about Paul's work, feel free to follow Pavel Images Malta on Facebook. The full image bank can be viewed on <https://pavelimagesmalta.myportfolio.com>. All images can be printed on canvas, or high quality prints by Golden Gate Co. Ltd.



# Strength and Conditioning in Fitness Training.

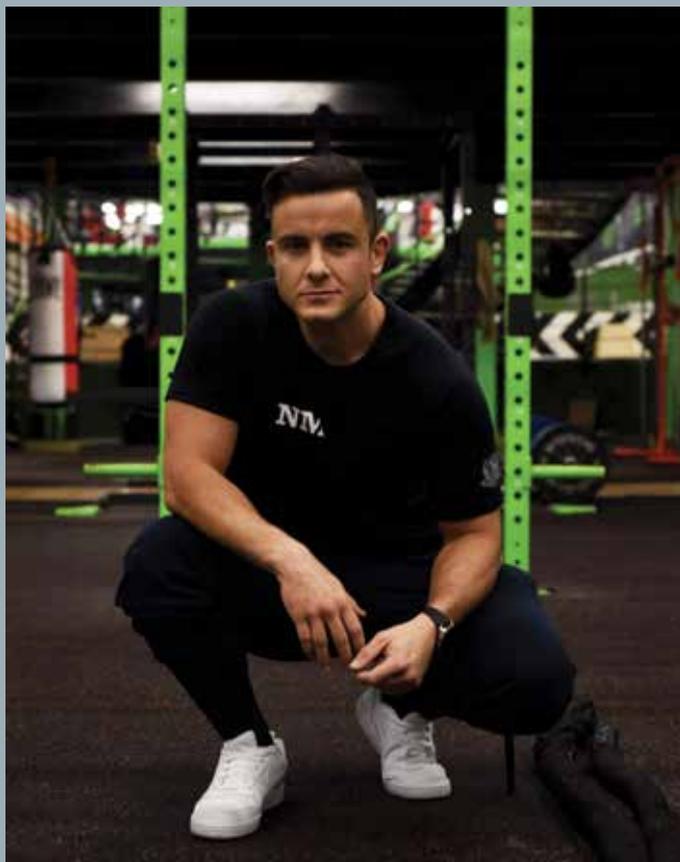
## The Big Dilemma discussed with the Experts

Many give little consideration to the final piece of the training puzzle which is strength training. Not because it is not important, but the actual training undertaken for a race tends to steal the focus of many training regimens. SPINNAKER spoke to Nigel McCarthy who has been working with a number of top-notch sailors to give them a holistic training plan as they prepare for high level competitions such as the Olympic Games.

Nigel started playing football for local football clubs - San Gwann FC at U/10 and with Melita FC till U/19 before moving on to athletics with St Aloysius and later on Pembroke Athleta. He also competed, for fun in his own words, in the 2017 Maltese Laser Sailing Nationals. Nigel graduated with a Master's degree in Sports Science from the University of St Mary's, London. He also won a scholarship to attend the renowned International Olympic Academy in the ancient city of Olympia, Greece and has also completed a number of other courses with the English Football Association, IAAF and UK Athletics, together with his Personal Trainer qualifications.

**What made you get into Sports and fitness? How long have you been in this line?**

Although actively involved in sports since the age of 13 and regardless of the fact that I was obsessed with sports, to my



disappointment coaches always used to tell me that I could not make it to a higher level due to my lack of coordination. Having accepted my personal predicament and the fact that Malta had the potential to obtain better sporting results in the international sphere I started my education in the field in an attempt to contribute towards a change in such a situation.

**Your biography states that you worked for St Mary's Richmond Athletics Club and through that experience you worked with a number of medaling athletes at the London Olympic Games. Can you tell us more about that experience?**

At St Mary's Richmond Athletics Club we had a great set up for intermediate aged athletics athletes (13-17yrs) wherein they would train in all track and field events throughout the week (Throws, Jumps, Short and Long distance running). This obviously required great dedication from the athletes with great co-ordination, effort and energy between the coaches. St Mary's University was selected as an official training camp for the London 2012 Olympic Games. This meant that Olympians such as Sir Mo Farah and Paralympians such as Toby Gold were Being surrounded by such individuals teaches you so much, their attitude and work ethic is something unique.

**What can you say was the most fulfilling experience in your career so far?**

Possibly competing at the BUCS 100m finals in London. This competition was set up as the test event for the London 2012 Olympic Games athletics stadium with an attendance of 30,000! As a coach back in 2015 I was responsible for the fitness program of Ahmed Ragab (EYG), Rodney Govinden (SEY) and Imene Imenou (ALG) in preparation for their Olympic qualifiers. This preparation proved to be successful, with the subsequently competing in the 2016 Rio Olympic Games. In 2019 through World Sailing I was given the responsibility to work on the fitness programme for Aly Badawy (EGY) and Daisy Nhaquile (MOZ) - these too had a successful campaign and will be heading to Tokyo for the 2020 Games. There are many other moments such as the Alex McGonigle's Maltese National

50m Breaststroke record but these three are definitely my most fulfilling experiences.

### **What is the most frustrating thing an athlete working with you can do?**

Inconsistency. Unfortunately we come across this especially when working with Maltese athletes. Exams, holidays, assignments, personal issues all tend to have an impact on these athletes, thus negatively impacting their consistency in training. Although holidays and time off is necessary, detraining still occurs.

### **You are now working with World Sailing and Sailcoach who run the Royal Malta Yacht Club Sailing School. What do you consider are the most important factors when it comes to fitness for sailing?**

Fitness for sailing is becoming more and more a determining factor at international regattas. Speaking about Laser sailing, we are looking at 45-minute races twice to three times daily for 4 to 6 days. This requires a high aerobic capacity base which will allow you to recover from day to day. It requires a high requirement of strength and mobility to deal with the forces and maneuvers on the day and a solid injury prevention program to deal with the repeated stresses over multiple days.

### **Can you highlight any sailing specific exercises that you incorporate in your programme?**

I recommend a number of exercises: Inverted rows are a great injury prevention for the upper body especially shoulders; Gymnastics rings create instability for more bullet proof shoulders; Isometric front squat holds having the sailor holding the bottom position of the squat for 15 seconds - This is one of our core exercises for great quadriceps performance. Palloff Press is the core exercise we use to activate those important rotational trunk muscles.

### **A lot of people might think that employing a Strength and Conditioning Coach is a luxury - how would you argue against that line of thought?**

Strength & Conditioning does two things for the athlete; one of which is injury prevention and second is the improvement of performance. Think about all the days missed from training due to injury and think about how competitive events are won by the slightest of margins.... then this question would be answered. Simply put, strength and conditioning gets the body of an athlete ready to meet the demands of the sport.

### **Supplements are often mentioned in the same breath of training programmes. What is your opinion on this matter? Do you feel that supplements should be included in one's training programme?**

When it comes to sports supplements one has to ask many questions before jumping onto the many bandwagons that come along from time to time. Firstly we start by asking about the lifestyle; is the individual sleeping enough?; Are they allowing enough rest time?; Secondly is the diet appropriate?; Is the calorie intake, free from preservatives, and additives, smoking, alcohol etc.... The next question would be how serious and consistent are they in their training? Once all these questions are asked, only then would I consider suggesting supplements to an athlete of mine. Good research about the brand would be the next home work to do. The most common and most effective supplements we make use of are BCAA's and Energy Gels for endurance sports athletes. On a small note, I always tend to refrain from recommending supplements to athletes under the age of 18. Whilst there is nothing essentially wrong about this, however if one starts a pill popping habit by the age of 15 to improve their performance what will they be having by the competitive age of 18+ ?

### **Doping is a reality. Do you feel that people in sport are well aware of the implications of doping and what do you think makes them take prohibited substances?**

Definitely not, it is in our nature to cloud our vision with short term situations and forget about the long term. For the past 8 years I have also formed part of The National Anti Doping Agency as a Doping Control Officer. A lot of first hand experience has thought me that individuals have no idea of the implications - these not only involve the reputation of that athlete and the denial of a clean athlete to win a deserved title but the implications also involve the actual health of that athlete. I think, a very important step is to encourage medical professionals to speak out about the complications they are faced with after such substances are used and abused of.

### **What is next for Nigel?**

Well all those in my circle know that my ultimate goal would be to aid a Maltese athlete to qualify to the Olympic Games. Qualifying means achieving the minimum qualifying standards and not a wild card. As soon as this dream is achieved I will stop coaching and move onto administration with the intention of giving my contribution to better local sport on a large scale.



# DO NOT TRY THIS AT HOME!

## The Making of an Adrenaline Junkie

**Larger than life, Royal Malta Yacht Club Committee member Jamie Sammut is a pure adrenaline junkie, with an adventurous temperament that has been fuelled since a very young age. Whilst most of us know him to race his Solaris One 42 Unica in a number of local and international offshore races, his love for adventure has not been limited to sailing. SPINNAKER gets to know more.**

Jamie Sammut is a thrill seeker. There is no doubting his passion for sports and challenging races – the Rolex Middle Sea Race double handed participation gives a bit of an indication of his tough challenges and some hair raising moments, which included opening a parachute on rollerblades and jumping off a bike at 100 miles per hour.

Contrary to what some people might think, sailing was not the first sport that gave thrill seeking Jamie his first taste of an adrenaline rush! At age six, Jamie started practising cycling on his BMX – to the uninitiated a BMX bike is an off-road sport bicycle used for racing and stunt riding. Competing at BMX events consists of a fast race, lasting 25 to 40 seconds. Races take place on a motocross modeled track of 900 to 1,100 feet in length with riders reaching speeds of 15 mph to 35 mph, - this of course depends on the conditions of the individual track and the skill levels of the riders. But you get the picture!

His interest in the sport saw him take the sport very seriously, with regular participation at international competitions. By thirteen years of age, Jamie had won several local championships. As he progressed into the adults class by age 16, he had performed several feats – one being a long jump jam which saw Jamie jump over eighteen bicycles without the use and help of a ramp – that is equivalent to approximately 20 children lying next to each other.

In addition to his BMX activities, when Jamie was eight years old, he start sailing. . Initially sailing Mirror 10s at the Birzebbugia

Sailing Club. Jamie raced from Malta to Pozzallo on the 10 feet Mirror dinghies with a number of young club members. Jamie finished fourth from a fleet of fourteen boats. Although the sailing bug had been caught, the thrill of BMX seemed to be more of a pull for Jamie, meaning this his attention was diverted to BMX, putting sailing a bit on the back burner.

As soon as he could get his license Jamie graduated to motorbikes. This sport won hands down when asked what was his favourite sport. Of course with it came a number of falls, but nothing really shook Jamie's confidence; he was always on the lookout to develop new stunts and records! In 1998, Jamie registered one of the fastest wheelies in the world – a wheelie is also a common motorcycle stunt, where the throttle and rear brakes are used to control the wheelie, whilst the rider uses body weight and the steering to control the direction of the spinning front wheel. At a registered speed of 168 miles an hour, in the quarter mile track in Hal-Far, Jamie once again put his name down in the record books. From 1997 until 2000 Jamie competed regularly on his Honda sponsored Fireblade – this led to enduro racing, with over 70 races on extended cross-country, off-road courses, most of which were in Pergusa, Sicily.

In 1998, Jamie managed to secure a sponsorship by motorcycle manufacturer Honda resulting him in travelling to the Isle of Man. Following 36 hours of non-stop driving – enough for anyone wanting to go straight to bed for a good sleep, Jamie instead headed straight to the track where he undertook a number of practice runs.

The Isle of Man TT is the ultimate 'must see it' event for motorsport fans across the globe. Every May and June, the Isle of Man, turns into motorcycle nirvana as the world's greatest road racers gather to test themselves against the incredible 'Mountain Course' - a 37.73 mile beast of a course, carved out of the island's public roads. Jamie admits that this was a crazy thing to do, as those runs are very fast, "miss a corner and you end up in someone's sitting room".





Jamie's vast portfolio of sports included him dabbling in hill climbs, racing in a single seater car chassis, specifically modified for such races, in an attempt to complete an uphill course against the clock. Since this race typically lasts around forty seconds, Jamie's career was short lived preferring to go to Racalmuto race track in Sicily where he would spend racing for half an hour rather than a few seconds.

In 2001 Jamie turned his attention to sailing once again and undertook his first Middle Sea Race, on board Tony Camilleri's Blue Diamond – this, admits Jamie, opened a Pandora's Box as he really never looked back. To date, Jamie has undertaken fifteen editions of this 606 nautical mile race. His first boat was bought in 2002 – a Carter 33, Argo. Throughout the years of competition he was fortunate to have competed on several good boats including Strait Dealer, Jaru and Horatio. The last seven races were undertaken with his own boat Unica. Whilst each race has a story to tell, the most fulfilling edition was undoubtedly in 2016 when he won the double handed category with his long time buddy John Cachia. Apart from the natural high achieved with their victory, Jamie looks back at the challenging conditions, particularly the long sleepless nights. Had they not won their category, he would still look at that race as being the most satisfying in his Middle Sea Race career so far.

At age forty three, there seems to be no stopping Jamie, and his penchant for doing adventurous activities still remains. Although he has stopped racing bikes, you will still find Jamie offroading on his mountain bike ever so often. Sailing remains his priority, not only does it give him the challenge he seeks but also enables him to spend time with the family, when they enjoy summers together sailing in the Mediterranean.

A father himself, he appreciates his very understanding parents, who supported him along the way. As they saying goes – The apple does not fall far from the tree and the thrill seeking and competitive gene is firmly embedded in his two young girls – eleven year old Jordan and eight year old Jodie. Jordan takes his competitive streak and will take on any challenge and is not one



to easily back down, whilst Jodie, who seems to be following in her fathers' footsteps, is fearless. This, he explains with a sense of fatherly pride. As a doting father, who has experienced his fair share of hair-raising moments he worries. Yet, he will not curb their enthusiasm to pursue adrenaline inducing activities as he perfectly understands where this is coming from.

***"There's nothing inherently wrong with being a risk-taker, especially if you are reasonably cautious. As long as basic safety precautions are taken - such listening to an instructor, wearing protective gear and knowing your limits well, then it can provide an essential tool for building character and developing persistence"***

Whilst his life story has built the capability for epic retelling, Jamie's word of advice? Do not try this at home!

# Sailing and Business Leadership: THE ULTIMATE METAPHOR

Catena Media needs no introduction within the local sailing community. Its bright branding cuts an imposing figure on the sails of Comanche Raider III, a regular feature on the Club's races, whilst the bright red sails gracing the Royal Malta Yacht Club Sailing School dinghy fleet are a regular feature on the Marsamxett Harbour landscape. SPINNAKER Magazine editor Maria Vella-Galea met up with Catena Media Deputy CEO Johannes Bergh to learn more about Catena Media and its partnership with the Royal Malta Yacht Club.



Mention the name Catena Media within the sailing community and people immediately show signs of brand recognition. However, digging a bit deeper results in some blank faces. Johannes explains that Catena Media is often confused for an igaming company. He is quick to point out that it is actually a performance marketing company (also called affiliate or lead generation). Using an 'old school' description, Catena Media is an online publishing company focusing on casinos, sports betting and financial brokerage, on the internet. The websites are targeted towards users looking for information and offers that will enable them to make well-informed decisions.

Johannes is an energetic, risk taking Swede whose expertise lies in managing the challenges that come with the growth experienced by young and fast growing companies. Catena Media was in that phase of operation when he became part of the team three years ago. With a degree of modest pride, he explains that Catena's operations have tripled in size during that time, and apart from Malta, its offices can now be found in Italy, Serbia, United Kingdom, United States, Japan as well as a small operation in Australia.

*"Great leaders build strong teams since they understand that they need strong teams to get leverage. Strong teams take ownership, strong teams are engaged, and strong teams have the potential to achieve fantastic things that a leader never would on their own."*

*Lead by Example* is firmly embedded in Catena Media's culture. Its team is carefully selected, not only on the basis of their expertise but also on having the right attitude, being eager to learn and actively engaged. Ultimately, they have to be team players who care more for the team than themselves. These are the core values within the company's culture.

Johannes has a firm conviction when it comes to making mistakes – *"If you don't make mistakes you will never learn. I actively talk about embracing failure with the team – Failing is a good thing. If you don't make mistakes you will never learn. Every learning outcome is a result of doing things right and yes, doing things wrong! Not making mistakes means that you never try! Get out of your comfort zone!"*

Failing without learning is counterproductive, and the teams at Catena Media subscribe to the principle of retrospective, meaning that the team sits down on a regular basis to have frank discussions on what went well, what could have worked better and what went wrong. Having an honest dialogue is important to get insights which are extremely important to the business' success.

## CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Corporate Social Responsibility is a big deal, especially when Gaming is often bracketed with alcohol, tobacco and other such industries which are seen to be detrimental to society. So, if companies operating in industries with relatively clean images such as technology and manufacturing view it as so vital, just how much effort should be going into gaming CSR? Johannes explains that the online gaming industry is young. The focus on CSR is very recent and driven by regulatory authorities and investors rather than the companies themselves. The key is not to have a functioning CSR programme although that is a good thing, but it is all about being a responsible business. This is achieved by creating a sustainable business model which sees customers playing in moderation on a long term basis rather than diving into an addictive behaviour which will inevitably lead to tragic effects for both customer and company.





*"This is achieved by building a sustainable business model which sees customers playing on a responsible, long-term basis rather than descending into addictive behaviour. The latter has tragic results for those customers and, ultimately, if they are no longer playing, the company will go out of business. Making money off other people's tragedies is not an ethical nor sustainable business model"*

## **MALTA AS A GREEN ISLAND**

*"In an ideal world, we would put a stop to global warming now. We are making such a terrible mess, which is very disturbing. No-one can do everything, but everyone can do something. You can spend a lot of time and effort explaining to people what they are doing wrong and try to change them. Or you can just do what you think is right for the climate. Doing something is always better than doing nothing."*

For someone who grew up in the great outdoors, the environment is close to Johannes' heart and Catena Media has supported a number of environmental initiatives. Despite lagging behind when it comes to the environment, Johannes is convinced that, with the effort from everyone, Malta can become a green island in a short span of time. One just has to look beyond the financial return on investment. Having three hundred days of sun and a small footprint, clean energy is something that can easily be adopted.

## **THE SAILING METAPHOR**

Johannes is a former Swedish J80 Class Champion. Yet the decision to support sailing initiatives was a pragmatic one. Comparing the alternatives, Johannes came to the conclusion that the sponsorships of Comanche Raider III and the Royal Malta Yacht Club Sailing School gave Catena Media the best exposure for the money.

*Speaking about the Sailing School sponsorship, he cannot hide his satisfaction on how the partnership developed. "Being centrally located, in an area which sees hundreds of pedestrians and motorists pass by on a daily basis, those tiny boats with red sails out on the water every day could not have brought better visibility for Catena Media in any other form of media!"*

The parallels between sailboat racing and business are often brought up in conversations, with both engaging in situational

tactics and long-term strategies. As a sailor and business leader, the question as to whether these parallels make sense was inevitable.

Johannes subscribes to this parallel wholeheartedly.

Both share common, fundamental elements: It's a team understanding macro perspective, using strategy, tactics, and resources to achieve a goal.

Environmental factors such as a wind shift or unexpected current can completely change the game. Same goes for business, where market growth can slow down and regulatory landscape can change. And the winner is the team that can navigate through these new circumstances.

*"You need to have the right people on board working as a team."*

You can have a crew with a good helmsman and the best trimmer around but if the tactician is not up to scratch then you will have a fast boat going in the wrong direction. Same goes for business: The whole team is critical. Having one or two-star players will not drive the business forward.

*"You don't know the quality of a sailor until you get into rough waters, and similarly in business"*

Equally important is the team's attitude when things don't go as planned.

*"It is easy to have a good attitude when you're ahead of the competition, when you are in the lead. The challenge arises when you are lagging behind and things start going wrong. That is when you need to have a super focused team, relentlessly working to improve every little detail. Keeping a good team spirit when you are behind is key to closing the gap to those in front of you. If not, you will just continue to fall further behind. But when you keep the team focused and fight your way to the front. That's when victory tastes the best!"*

The analogy between sailing and business leadership might feel like a bit of a cliché for some, yet the application of these philosophies have shown enhanced performance – as can be seen from the growth that Catena Media has registered in such a short span of time.

# YACHTING MALTA Race Week



Malta is fortunate to enjoy one of the best playgrounds for maritime activities. It is only befitting that such activity, which dates back to 2,500 years, is put under the spot light and becomes the focus of well deserved attention.

The inaugural Yachting Malta Race Week is scheduled to take place between the 27th and 31st May and promises to be a maritime bonanza that will see an array of events taking place around the island.

Yachting Malta has been collaborating with local power and sailing entities to host a variety of events, more than 20 of them, which range from keelboats to powerboats, from dinghies to the traditional regatta racing. The schedule aims to provide a selection of both fast paced action and more sedate activities for both competitors and spectators alike. Evenings will see participants enjoy a series of social events which include parties, jazz nights, BBQs and a Grand Final prize giving ceremony.

Yachting Malta is, however not just limiting the event to racing and sailing activities. The subject of sustainability and the role the regatta community must play in supporting the long-term ecological balance is a topic at heart. In fact, Yachting Malta will be driving a number of initiatives to highlight the importance of eliminating single use plastics from regattas.

## KEELBOATS

Keelboats and the one design Sports Boats Class will enjoy a series of Round the Cans races outside Sliema seafront as well as a cruiser race from Marsamxett on towards Munxar Buoy and back. On Saturday 30th May keelboats will be able to enjoy a long distance, overnight offshore race to Linosa and back. This already is a talking point amongst racers and cruisers alike. There will be various classes for the outright racers as well as a class for the cruisers family, looking forward to a bit of adventure.



## POWERBOATS

In conjunction with Voomquest Race Management, the second Grand Prix of the Voomquest World Championship of the season will take place during the Yachting Malta Race Week. In addition, a spectacular Voomquest parade is scheduled to start from Sliema seafront ending at the Valletta waterfront. For those wanting a close look at these magnificent boats, access to Pit Setup and Testing will be allowed to the general public. Wrapping up the event will be a series of straight runs in Grand Harbour on towards Westin Dragonara Point to Baħar iċ-Ċagħaq.



## SAILING DINGHIES

A Dinghy Ranking Event hosted by the Royal Malta Yacht Club, under the auspices of the Malta Sailing Federation, will take place outside Sliema seafront. Racing will include SB20 and RS Feva classes.



## TRADITIONAL BOATS

Equally impressive will be the traditional Vela Latina Regatta. Additionally, the Għaqda Regatta Tradizzjonali u Qdif leħor will be hosting a time-honoured rowing race inside the Grand Harbour. In these historical regattas, rowers compete using traditional fixed-seat colorful Maltese boats over a c. 1000m distance to win a Palju.



## SOCIAL EVENTS

No racing week of the sort would be complete without a series of on-shore and social events. A static display of boats is planned to take place in Ta' Xbiex whilst daily evening social events will take place in various locations.

Yachting Malta Race Week is set to become one of Malta's favourite maritime events, where competitors, family and



friends will be brought together to enjoy the convivial atmosphere and unique camaraderie of the event's on-water and off-water celebration.

The sight of all this maritime activity promises to be unforgettable, both from vantage points on the shore and from the boats and yachts taking part. Yachting Malta will strive to make this an annual event which will grow to become the perfect showcase of Malta's beautiful seas, which make it a top sailing destination for many. This is part of Yachting Malta's unwavering commitment to all things maritime.

[www.yachtingmalta.org](http://www.yachtingmalta.org)

# Ah Please! I LOVE MALTA

**SPINNAKER Magazine received a guest post from Hannah Millar who travelled to Malta to visit family and spent some time sailing at the Club. Hannah's visit was so positive that she cannot stop waxing lyrical about her Maltese experience.**

Can you imagine waking up to a view of hundreds of boats, yachts and ships just outside your window? Can you imagine enjoying a freshly baked loaf of wheaten or "soda bread" while still in your pyjamas? Can you imagine having your toes so warm and cosy in the comforting sun as its rays gaze down onto the balcony? Well, I don't have to because I have experienced it all before! Those are only some of the reasons why the place I love is Malta...

I would say that the main reason I love Malta so much is the family that I have there (by blood and not). You see, my uncle Trevor has been living there for eight years... I think, and eight years ago was the last time we were there; other than when



we went earlier in Easter this year– Best. Holiday. Ever. So you can expect that I was extremely excited to be going there again. PLOT TWIST! When we arrived it looked like uncle Trevor had replaced us with a family of his own, his “SailCoach” family, but they soon became family to me too. You wouldn’t be able to understand how much I miss them now... I feel like cookie monster without his cookie. Nevertheless, family is not the only reason why I love Malta; trust me, there’s a whole lot more...

That brings me onto my next reason. Sailing. Have you ever had the outstanding opportunity to go sailing? No? Well, if anyone ever asks you to, say yes. I wasn’t always the swashbuckling pirate I am now though. Believe it or not, it took me a long time and a lot of persuasion to find my sea legs. My dad and uncle Trevor had the opportunity to learn to sail when they were at school and never failed to choose sailing over school and studying; unfortunately, I’m not so lucky... Joking! Their sailing experiences had led my dad to have opportunities to sail and compete in various locations all over the world and also sailing around Ireland in four days (and dragging my mum along with him!) and led my uncle Trevor to coaching Olympic medallists and eventually opening his own sailing school in Malta; but my sailing journey all began when I was in P7. I am the youngest of two and my dad’s efforts in making a sailor out of my older

brother, Craig, resulted in him picking an engine over some ropes and a sail. Obviously, my dad felt destroyed that Craig had chosen a sailboats arch nemesis “The Motorboat” and so he turned to me to fulfil his dream and pass down the legacy of sailing Millars. I was the last hope.

Even though I had started sailing when I was 12 years old, my passion didn’t really light up until we went to Malta that time in Easter. I just wanted to make my dad and uncle Trevor proud that there was, after all, another sailing Millar in the family (since uncle Trevor has no children) and there was no better feeling than when I did. I don’t know what it was, but it was easier to sail in Malta; much more enjoyable. The Royal Malta Yacht Club was only a delightful stroll from our apartment, past all the moored extravagant boats and yachts, and there I found Dalton and Rüya. They were like the wind filling my sails. As well as my dad, these women taught me a lot about sailing when I was there and never neglected to help me when I needed it. Also, the weather was a whole lot more perfect in Malta than at home!

I can bet you that you’d rather be sipping a cocktail or a glass of wine (or beer) while reclining in a beach chair in a hot tropical country than reading this right now... Am I wrong? Yeah, that’s



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what I thought. It's also another key reason why I love Malta (and no, not to drink alcohol!). It's the wonderful weather that has the power to brighten up even the darkest of days. Besides the good weather for sailing, nothing can beat sitting on your balcony and letting the golden sun's rays keep you warm while you're eating breakfast, lunch and dinner; even though I'd hope while you're in a foreign country you'd go out and enjoy the food and culture every now and then!

Speaking of, the food and culture in Malta is spectacular – right from how this country, at some point in history, was invaded by practically every other country trying to take it over, to the UNREAL Food Mall in the city of Valletta. If I was to choose a building I love, it would be that Food Mall. All around the edges are at least 30 different types of restaurants/cuisines you could choose from, depending on your mood at the time, and in the middle were bars for all the adults to enjoy. And there's more! You could take an escalator down to below the Mall where there was a supermarket. I know right, can you believe it?! I'm jealous for you that you didn't get to witness this majestic creation.

One of my favourite days at Malta (even though they were all my favourite!) was the day uncle Trevor took us everywhere... And I don't mean that metaphorically. We used practically every mode of transport under the sun – from a rib to go to dinner, to the only car ferry in Malta to go to the tiny island of Gozo. Uncle Trevor had become our own personal tour guide and along with that he was Malta's official encyclopaedia; spitting out obscure facts left, right and centre.

Some may argue that Malta would get unbearably warm and that there would be bugs crawling all over you and your apartment. Well, what I have to say to them is that it's only summer when it gets up to 40°C or more and we went in Easter... So HA! Other negative Nancys would say: "Are you not scared of being in an unknown country to you?" No. Because I know that I'll always have some family member (kinda) to guide me wherever I need to be.

All in all, I think that's a darn good argument for why Malta is the place I love. Not only because it's stunning, warm and has fantastic food, but because I have met so many astounding people who I am thrilled to consider part of my family. I have left Malta with more family than I arrived with, and definitely a much more diverse one. With a Dalton from America, Rüya from Turkey, Alex from Moldova and Vishnu and Upa from India. I can say that my Malta sailing experience has led me to win the Junior Sailing Cup **[Editor's Note - The Junior Sailing Cup was a competition to find the best up-and-coming young sailors at Hannah's local Kircubbin Sailing Club where she lives in County Down, on the shores of Strangford Lough]** and hopefully many more in the future!

**Hannah Millar**





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|--------|-------|---------------|-------|-------|-----------------|--------------------|----------------|-------|

[www.suzukimarinemalta.com](http://www.suzukimarinemalta.com)

# ANNUAL Boxing Day Race

The annual Royal Malta Yacht Club Boxing Day Race is a yearly appointment where sailors take part in a short race to raise funds for the Malta Community Chest Fund's Boxing Day initiative - L-Istrina.

Crews were given a short course, leaving Marsamxett Harbour, heading towards Fairway Buoy and towards St. Julian's in a double loop before finishing in front of the Yacht Club.

During the race, sailors and crews were encouraged to dress up their boats and themselves to add to the festive cheer. Some joined for the fun, others made an effort whilst others pulled out the stops to continue in the Christmas spirit!

Crews and members were welcomed to the Club after racing for mince pies and mulled wine. This year's event raised €1250.

A big thank you to all those that donated!

## PRIZES WERE GIVEN FOR THEIR EFFORTS AS FOLLOWS:

**Best Dressed Boat** - Dods

**Best Dressed Sailors** - Crew of Liara B

**Best Sport Boat** - **Triple Action** - Stefan Debattista, Catherine Halpin, Barry Hurley

**Best Sailing School Crew** - Ahmed, Kyran Busuttil, Matthew Camilleri





# WILDBOAR GOULASH STEAMED

## yeast knoedel & cranberries



### GOULASH INGREDIENTS (serves 6)

- 1kg Wildboar meat (rump or boneless leg meat) cut into chunks
- 4 Shallots (diced)
- 4 Bayleaves
- 2 Carrots (diced)
- 30ml Apple cider vinegar
- 50ml Olive oil
- 2 Teaspoons grain mustard (pommery)
- ½ Bottle of Chianti (mid-priced)
- 500g Tinned tomatoes (deseeded) & chopped
- 1 Spoon of mild paprika powder
- 1 Litre veg/beef/veal stock (best would be wild boar stock made up from veg & meat scraps)

In a heavy wide pot over strong heat, start by sautéing the shallots, carrots and wild boar meat in olive oil till all liquids evaporate and the meat starts colouring.

Add the bay leaves, mustard and vinegar, mixing well keep over high flame for a few minutes.

Add the wine and mix all again let wine reduce into the meat, add the tomatoes, paprika powder with 250ml stock, bring to boil and turn heat on lowest possible.

Cover with a lid and let simmer for at least for 2 hours, stirring carefully from time to time adding stock if needed and making sure it does not stick to the bottom of the pan. Season with salt and optional chilli powder instead of freshly ground pepper. The goulash must look nice, thick and the meat very tender.

### YEAST KNOEDEL INGREDIENTS

- 500g Flour
- 250ml Milk
- 1 Egg
- 15g Yeast
- 1 Teaspoon sugar
- Salt to taste
- Oven paper
- Clean muslin cloth or tea-towel

Warm slightly the milk (do not boil) pour it in a round metal, earthenware or glass container add the yeast, sugar and 2-3 spoons of the flour, cover with cling film and let it proof for 30 minutes.

Beat the egg well add it to the mixture with the rest of flour and season. Knead the dough, form 2 small baguette shaped loaves and place it in the middle of the cloth on top of the baking sheet, roll the baguette shaped dough in the cloth forming a sausage.

Secure both ends of the roll with elastic or a cooking thread. Cook for 20-30 minutes in ample salted boiling water.

Remove from water and let drip and cool slightly on the side. To be served in slices with the goulash.

### CRANBERRY SAUCE INGREDIENTS

- 200g Fresh cranberries
- 2 Shallots finely chopped
- Juice of 2 oranges
- 2-3 Pieces of orange rind
- 250ml Red wine (can use the Chianti)
- Beef gravy (jus) can also be bought ready from knorr in supermarkets
- 4-5 Cloves & ½ a cinnamon stick
- 2 Knobs of salted butter

Start off by sautéing the shallots in the butter, add all the ingredients but leave out the cranberries.

Cook on medium heat till the liquid evaporated by half.

At this stage pass all the liquid through a fine strainer keeping just the smooth sauce.

Reduce for a further 5-10 minutes and add the fresh cranberries, cook for 5 minutes and the sauce is ready to be used.

Serve the goulash in a large deep plate with 2 slices of the yeast Knoedel and serve the cranberry sauce separate....

I love to also add a dollop of fresh sour cream on the goulash... Giving it that extra creamy buttery taste.

Pour yourself the rest of the wine and enjoy a hearty winter classic. One may also add extra veggies with this meal or replace the Knoedel with salty boiled potatoes. This, however, is my favourite.





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