

Darwin-Dili

YACHT RALLY

BY ROSEMARY JILDERTS

East Point was the best vantage point for watching the start of the 2014 Darwin-Dili Yacht Rally but some boat owners preferred to be out on the water for a closer look. Excitement was in the air as the boats awaited the starting gun. Amongst the approximately 80 people onboard the start boat, *The Spirit of Darwin*, were Mr Joao Mendes Goncalves, Head of Mission and State Representative of the Office of Timor-Leste Prime Minister, Timor-Leste's Consul General, Mr Frank Felipe, the NT Chief Minister, Hon. Adam Giles and Ministry of Tourism Timor-Leste.

The rally is organised from Timor-Leste through the Ministry of Tourism and a cross sector committee. The Ministry of Tourism once again generously supported the rally with prize money of USD15,000 with the NT Government providing support for the rally, and the Cruising Yacht Association of the NT (CYANT) providing technical support and advice to the committee through funding from the NT Government.

This year's contestants were competing in the fifth Darwin-Dili Yacht Rally of the modern era. After successful events in 1973 and 1974 there was a 36 year gap, before the rally was reintroduced in 2010.



The boats were sailing in three divisions : Division I – Monohull Competitive Cruising; Division II – Monohull Cruising and Division III – Multihull Cruising. In Division I were local boats, *Australian Maid*, *Raucous* and *Evolution NT*. Division II comprised a diverse fleet of cruising yachts from Darwin, Brisbane and Launceston their sizes ranging from 9-24m.

The fleet also had the honour of having the rally's first-ever Timorese participant, 11 year old Tommy Lee Fawcett who sailed aboard *Skye Melody*.

At 10am on Saturday, July 12, 2014 the fleet of nine yachts that were carrying over 60 crew crossed the starting line just west of the Darwin Sailing Club. A 10-15kt south-easterly breeze was blowing making perfect conditions for a spinnaker start for Division I boats.

that it took a lot of stress away from the organisers and was definitely worth the effort. Its usefulness was especially felt when *Coxinga* broke its steering before clearing the Tiwi Islands and needed to be towed back to Darwin. The ability to “zero down their location via Yellowbrick was a fantastic aid to direct the tow vessel to the right location first time,” Anne said.

Coxinga was the only boat to retire from the rally. The other eight boats all arrived in Dili.

A special mention should be made of Graeme Hay in *Skye Melody* who once carried on board almost 140 cartons of medical supplies that had been donated. They would be given to the humanitarian sailing vessel, *Vega* and will be distributed to hospitals and health clinics through Timor-Leste and eastern Indonesia.

The first yacht over the finish line in Dili was Jon Wardill's *Australian Maid*, taking out line honours. This year, however, they didn't match last year's effort when the yacht set a new rally record with an elapsed time of 52.12 hours. The yacht

The first yacht to cross the start line under sail was *Raucous* skippered by Bob Colman. The best dressed yacht to cross the start line was *Australian Maid* and the best dressed crew across the start line was *Jalan Jalan I*. Last yacht across the line under sail was *Insatiable II*.

Once clear of Cape Fourcroy in the Tiwi Islands the fleet had around 15kts from the south-east. Unfortunately this was not quite enough breeze for *Australian Maid* to make too much distance on *Raucous*. These conditions were lighter than they'd had for the 2013 rally which meant that Division I was hotly contested on handicap with each of the three Division I yachts holding the lead (on handicap) at least twice each during the event.

Use of the Yellowbrick tracking system was a great success. Anne Kemp, of Sail Timore-Leste, said

left: Yacht *Raucous* skippered by Bob Colman came first on handicap in Competitive Monohull Division I.

above right: *Australian Maid* took out line honours again.

right: *Sundancer NT* came first on handicap in Division II Multihulls.



finished this year in a time of 61.32 hours. *Jalan Jalan 1* arrived next with *Raucous* being the third to arrive. Overnight rain at the end of the rally had made the conditions a little more uncomfortable.

Bob Colman's *Raucous* won the Competitive Monohull Division I on handicap, with Barrie Morgan's *Evolution NT* coming in second followed by *Australian Maid* in third place.

The Cruising Monohull Division II was won on handicap by *Insatiable II*, followed by *Skye Melody*. First on handicap in Division II Multihulls was *Sundancer NT* followed by *Jalan Jalan I*.

As usual, the crews were treated to a warm welcome from the East Timorese people and who could resist those smiles? Some contestants have said that when they return to Dili it almost seems like coming back to a second home. They always receive such a wonderful welcome.

Part of the festivities included two complimentary tours, one being a full day tour that took them away from the hustle

and bustle of Dili into the countryside and mountains. Dili's Golf Club was the venue for the Rally Dinner which was marked by a great smorgasbord of local food and dancing in which the yachties eagerly joined.

According to Anne Kemp, the presentation ceremony was highlighted by a range of cultural dances and music, but she said that "perhaps the thing that most stuck in participants' minds was the announcement by Mr Joao Mendes Goncalves that Timor-Leste was talking with neighbouring provinces in Indonesia about giving the rally a more regional focus and streamlining arrangements for yachts in the Dili Rally to sail onwards into Indonesia. Hopefully the 2015 Darwin-Dili Yacht Rally will become known as 'Dili and Beyond'!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Anne Kemp, Organiser Sail Timor-Leste



above left: Around 80 people were onboard the *Spirit of Darwin*, the start boat, for this year's Darwin-Dili Yacht Rally.

left: Yacht *Insatiable II* won the Cruising Monohull Division II on handicap.

above from top: Local dancers entertain guests at the presentation.

The trophy table looked very impressive before the presentation.

The final photo shoot included all skippers and crews.