

## The breeze is on

In staunch easterly trade winds and a coursing blue seaway, the fleets set sail for the start of the 42nd running of Antigua Sailing Week.



Credit: Ted Martin / Photofantasy Antigua  
*Rio*, Charles Dunstone's TP52, Antigua Week 2009

The regatta kicked off with a single race on Saturday, 25 April for the Division A Racing fleets and the Division B classes of Performance Cruisers, Cruising fleets, Dragons, and Multihulls. The rare Saturday start was the first of many new innovations for the 2009 running of the annual event. The four Bareboat charter classes that comprise the remainder of the 140 strong fleet begin their racing on Sunday.

Under the direction of a new race management team, the UK-based GWM Racing, competition got underway with a 12 nautical mile windward/leeward race for the Division A racers and a 14 nautical mile contest around a modified figure-of-eight course along the island's south coast for the Division B sailors. An 18-20 knot northeasterly breeze, with gusts in the mid-20s, provided ideal conditions across the board for the respective divisions.

In Racing 1, Mike Slade's canting-keel maxi, *ICAP Leopard*, fresh from a dominating performance in the Antigua to Guadeloupe feeder race suffered a disappointing start to the official proceedings after breaking its boom prior to Race 1.

With *Leopard's* pre-start withdrawal, the door was opened wide for Charles Dunstone's TP52, *Rio*, which drew first blood with an inaugural race victory in the four-boat class. In Racing 4, Jamie Dobb's J/122, *Lost Horizon*, the 'Most Worthy Performer' in last March's St. Maarten Heineken Regatta, picked up where it left off with a Race 1 bullet in the 14 boat division.

On the Division B circle, principal race officer Peter Wykeham-Martin oversaw tight competition amongst the Performance Cruising 1, 2, and 3 fleets, the Cruising 1 and 2 classes, the one-design Dragon division, and the Cruising Multihull class. Veteran race official and Antigua Sailing Week arbitrator Arthur 'Tuna' Wuhlschleger, a formidable and consistent presence at the event for over three decades, ably assisted Wykeham-Martin and his team.

"Over the years, the boats at Antigua have become more and more high-tech and sophisticated so the race committee has had to become more sophisticated," said Wuhlschleger.

"It's brilliant having 'the Tuna' aboard," said Wykeham-Martin. "He's a true observer and he constantly drops these little pearls of wisdom. He's marvellous and I hope I'm doing just as well as he is when I'm his age."

In Performance Cruising 1, Damon Guizot's well-sailed Swan 53, *Katrina* a Northern California-based entry sailing an extended Caribbean season after a transit of the Panama Canal, and ably navigated by Tom Leweck, the founding publisher of the well-known newsletter *Scuttlebutt*, kicked off the regatta with a victory in the 20 boat class, the event's biggest.

The Performance Cruising 2 class appeared to be shaping up as a battle between two popular racer/cruisers, the Archambault 40 and the Beneteau First 40.7, with three and two entries,

respectively. But a funny thing happened on the way to the winner's circle, as Martin Jacobson's Swan 44, *Crescendo*, took the opening salvo in the 10 boat class. Another Swan, Richard Burbridge's vintage S&S-designed 43-footer, *Pavlova II*, was the winner in the Performance 3 class. In the competitive, 14 boat Cruising 1 class, the Oyster 72, *Spirit of Montpellier*, with Oyster builder Richard Matthews at the helm and British sailing legend Harold Cudmore calling tactics, pulled the proverbial 'horizon job' on its class to take the Race 1 victory.

In Cruising 2, local knowledge paid off in spades for Antigua sailor Hugh Bailey and his talented team aboard the First 456, *Hugo B*, the day one victor. The Cruising Multihull class was won by Larry Pollock's 54 foot trimaran, *Running Cloud*, a feat equaled by *Compass Point* in the long, lean Dragon fleet.



Credit: Antigua Ocean Series

Guadeloupe to Antigua Race

Previously, on Friday, 24 April, Mike Slade's *ICAP Leopard* had roared to a commanding victory in the Guadeloupe to Antigua Race.

Knocking off the 42 nautical mile contest in near record-breaking fashion, Mike Slade's powerful *ICAP Leopard* secured an impressive 'double-double' victory, winning both line honors as first-to-finish and correcting out to first overall on corrected time, in the 2009 edition of the Guadeloupe to Antigua Race.

The annual event, which attracted 25 entrants, serves as both a feeder race for Antigua Sailing Week and one of three races that comprise the new Antigua Ocean Series. *ICAP Leopard's* elapsed time of two hours, 26 minutes, and seven seconds was just over seven minutes off the race record set by Bob Miller's 140 foot schooner, *Mari Cha IV*, in 2004.

The victory also put *ICAP Leopard* into the driver's seat in terms of the inaugural Antigua Ocean Series, which Agnew said was an exciting new innovation to Antigua Sailing Week. "It's terrific for us," he said. "It really makes the week much more interesting because a big boat like *Leopard* needs long legs to kick up its heels and get going. So we really like the idea of the longer races."

With the completion of the Guadeloupe to Antigua Race, the 2009 edition of Antigua Sailing Week officially got underway.

For complete information, news, photographs, video, entry lists and much more, visit the Antigua Sailing Week website shown below.

## Resources: