

## 2017 Spice Islands Darwin Ambon Race

Wow what a race! The 2017 Spice Islands Darwin Ambon Yacht Race is done and dusted for another year. The race took off from Darwin on 5<sup>th</sup> August with a fleet of 18 yachts across 3 divisions and over 100 sailors heading north to Ambon, Indonesia.

As usual the start was plagued by light winds. The spectator boat was full with 160 people in addition to those on the shore and a Navy Patrol Boat that all turned out to see the race off from Stokes Hill Wharf. As the battle began yachts crisscrossed through the harbour for many hours. The light winds continued into the night making for a tough night (and following day) at Cape Fourcroy for most with the breeze finally filling in north of the Tiwi Islands.

The IRC Racing Division had 5 yachts that had all travelled north from Fremantle after competing in Freo-Bali & Darwin-Dili in the weeks and months prior. *Walk on the Wildside* & *Endorfin* were neck and neck straight off the start line. Regular *Sue Sea* also competed with a mixed crew that included 2 locals from Ambon who are now sold on the sport of sailing! Racing was tight most of the way with the bigger boats making their way West. *Walk on the Wildside* eventually finished with line honours and a hero's welcome including fireworks & dragon boats complete with drumming and music. Whilst *Endorfin* took out 1<sup>st</sup> place on corrected time in their first race.

Cruising Multihull also had 5 yachts competing, most of whom were new to the event this year with an interesting mix. They all had a hard time on the first few days with very little breeze heading to windward. Only 2 yachts managed to sail the whole way. *Vitamin B* took out both line honours & corrected time. Special mention must go to *Prime Mover* that hosted 2 local Ambon sailors on the voyage, one of whom was attempting a Guinness World Record of reading 1000 poems in 6 languages along the way! There was also local yacht *Psuedorca* sailed by a group of marine scientists heading north to study the prolific marine wildlife that can be found amongst the Indonesian Archipelago.

Cruising Monohull with the largest fleet of 8 yachts and possibly the closest racing across all divisions... *Mango Madness* & *Wallop* battled it out from the start line. After crossing the line within 5 minutes of each other in 2016 they were both prepared for an epic race with a few other contenders such as the visiting *Isuelta* from Townsville and *Colie* the Hanse 575 that just trucked in a breeze. After 3 days of not losing sight of each other *Wallop* suffered a wrap around the forestay and had to pull into Damar for a few hours to send someone up the rig and sort it out. Once fixed they continued racing to Ambon and still managed a tidy 3<sup>rd</sup> place! Without *Wallop* to contend with *Mango Madness* was on a roll and managed to take out both line honours and corrected time.

At the other end of the fleet there were two Mottle 33 (*Our Philosophy* & *Pandora*) both hosting a local Ambon sailor each and having their own battle. Eventually the lack of breeze got the better of them and they decided to motor to Ambon so as not to miss the party finally arriving on Friday.

All yachts were greeted with fireworks at the finish line and a welcoming party of locals on the Jetty as they came ashore complete with food, drinks and a taste of the local wine "Sopi". Once in Ambon as usual the locals really laid it on and the hospitality was overwhelming. There were games with the locals with great crowds turning out to watch Australia VS Indonesia (unfortunately we lost them all!). The famed Dragon Boat Race had mixed crews from each country and they had us paddle almost to town so that as many people as possible could watch (a long way for some unfit and weary sailors).

On Friday some sailors travelled across the island with the *Ambon Sailing Community* to visit Laha Village, where they went to local schools, chief hut and had lunch with the King and many locals. It was an amazing experience and great to see where the donations collected would be delivered and how they can help.

The *Ambon City Government* hosted a Welcome Ceremony & Presentation that were both very grand. On Saturday night as we returned to Amahusu after presentation we were met by a mass crowd that

had gathered for the rock concert on the beach. This was hosted by the *Seni Beta Foundation* and really was amazing with music continuing into the wee hours on Sunday.

As the many crews departed Ambon via planes the skippers and remaining crew took locals motor sailing around Ambon Harbour. Possibly the most popular activity of the week. Now as most of us return to work they have begun the amazing sail home via many of the beautiful islands that Indonesia and the Maluku has to offer. If you haven't done this race yet you had better put it on your list. The local hospitality is unrivalled, racing is close and the Archipelago is some of the best cruising in the world. A race not to be missed.

The Spice Islands Darwin Ambon Yacht Race is hosted by Dinah Beach Cruising Yacht Club and is sponsored by the Northern Territory Government & Ambon City Government. The race has been running since 1976 and over the years many sailors have built strong relationships with the locals which is what makes this event so great.

For more information contact [info@darwinambonrace.com.au](mailto:info@darwinambonrace.com.au) or go to [www.darwinambonrace.com.au](http://www.darwinambonrace.com.au) to submit an Expression of Interest for 2018 and be added to our mailing list. Next year's race will start on 4<sup>th</sup> August 2018.

## IRC Racing

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Line Honours	Walk on the Wildside	Garth Curren
1 <sup>st</sup> Place	Endorfin	Michael Giles
2 <sup>nd</sup> Place	Walk on the Wildside	Garth Curren
3 <sup>rd</sup> Place	Sue Sea	Brian Todd / Igor Mironenko
First over the start line	Endorfin	Michael Giles

## Cruising Multihull

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Line Honours	Vitamin B	Steve Winspear
1 <sup>st</sup> Place	Vitamin B	Steve Winspear
2 <sup>nd</sup> Place	Blue Frog	Bruce Cartwright
First over the start line	Vitamin B	Steve Winspear

## Cruising Monohull

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Line Honours	Mango Madness	Bo Wharton
1 <sup>st</sup> Place	Mango Madness	Bo Wharton
2 <sup>nd</sup> Place	Isuelta	Tristram Denyer
3 <sup>rd</sup> Place	Wallop	Marcus Ilton
First over the start line	Mango Madness	Bo Wharton