



Pure CLASSIC

The biggest-ever Panerai British Classic Week saw historic yachts, friendly racing and feisty Solent conditions

STORY **ROB PEAKE**



Main pic: legendary sailor Bruno Troublé helms the Q-Class *Jour de Fête* over the start line in the fleet race. Top to bottom above: David Murrin's *Cetewayo*; *Jap* aims for a clean start; The 10-Tonner *Cereste*; 113-year-old gaff cutter *Kelpie*



Top: A lively run on Timothy Wood's Stella L'Etoile.
Middle: Martin Thomas and team smartly attired on Charm of Rhu.
Bottom: Griff Rhys Jones helms his S&S Argyll and on stage at the prize-giving dinner: "This is my only chance of getting up here tonight."



JONATHAN HOARSE



INGRID ABERY



Top: The biggest entry was the 49.5m schooner Eleonora, a replica of the 1910 Herreshoff Westward.
Inset: Jap was the oldest boat and won overall

Sailing a classic boat is like taking a piece of Chippendale furniture and throwing it into the sea, and then steering other bits of Chippendale furniture within inches of it," said Griff Rhys Jones to the 350 guests at the prize-giving dinner concluding Panerai British Classic Week in July.

His speech came on the final night of the biggest ever regatta organized in the British Classic Yacht Club's 14-year history, with 79 pieces of nautical Chippendalia moored up in Cowes Yacht Haven on the Isle of Wight for a week of racing and shoreside events.

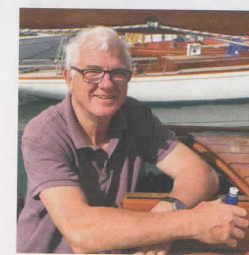
Among them were Griff's own 1948 Olin Stephens yawl Argyll and some of the most famous names in classic yachting, including Stormy Weather, Sumurum, Eleonora and Mariquita. Many boats had taken part in the Transatlantic Race to be at the event and many had

come from the Mediterranean. A fascinating range of designers was represented. The biggest and smallest boats were both Herreshoffs – the 160ft (49.5m) schooner Eleonora, and Spirit of Marion, a 24ft 6in Buzzards Bay 15, built last year to a 1896 Herreshoff design by Summerwine Boats in Swanage, Dorset.

The big Class 0 boats were the immediate head-turners, but it was the oldest and one of the smallest that won the overall trophy. Jap, a 1897 William Fife III-designed Cork Harbour One Design, was helmed all week by Paralympic Gold Medallist Andy Cassell, bar one day when America's Cup legend Harold Cudmore took the tiller. The 37-footer, just 29ft 4in on deck, took straight wins in her class and the combined fleet races.

Owner David Sherriff, who previously won the overall trophy in 2012 on Jap, was joined by Martin Payne, Toby Mumford, Lauren Fry, Mark Yeabsley and

[REGATTA REFLECTIONS]



Barry Bristow, who owns the 1937 Dallimore cutter Foglio, has been coming to the regatta since its inception: "Back then it was 10 family boats, about 30ft-45ft (c9-14m), and quite a different atmosphere. Now there's a more professional element and some very smart

boats – posh boats I call them – but while people do look at them, they also see these relatively ordinary boats, which are still beautiful but not maintained to such a professional level, owned by ordinary people like me. We're all on the same pontoon and in the same marina. It's good fun."



World-class dinghy sailor Liz Rushall and husband Mark, who is the RYA's High Performance coach, were on their 28ft Honeybee, built in 1965. Liz said: "Ragdoll has been our cruising boat and we'd never raced her before. Initially for me it was a little

daunting, short-tacking up the beach with all the big boats. We'd never had to do a big bear away and duck behind while cruising! But we got used to how the fleet behaved and we had a fantastic week. We are very proud of our little boat holding her own. We are definitely going to return."



David Myatt, who sailed his 1949 8-M Erica, based in the Channel Islands, said: "We've been very encouraged to see so many vintage 8-M yachts, six in all, from the UK and from France. Each year we see more, so it's a space to watch."

Olympic Rowing Gold Medallist Zach Purchase. As well as their silverware, the team were presented with a Panerai Radiomir 1940 3 Days Acciaio watch, worth £5,800 and a full set of Zhik waterproofs.

The Flight Trophy for second overall in the regatta went to Giovanni Belgrano's Cowes-based Whooper, a 39ft Laurent Giles sloop built by Woodnutts of Bembridge in 1939. Fresh from a victory in the JP Morgan Asset Management Round the Island Race in June, Belgrano and his well-drilled crew did it again in the regatta's own Round the Island race, this one sponsored by EFG International.

Among other famous names taking part in the regatta was Bruno Troublé, skippering the restored Q-Class boat Jour de Fête from 1930, which won the EFG International Trophy for third place overall, and Johnny Caulcutt, on the 19-M Fife Mariquita from 1911, which

[REGATTA REFLECTIONS]



George Pilgrim, from Maine, was crew on *Sumurun*:

"I'm deckhand - that basically means pulling on stuff! I've been with the boat the last 18 months and it's my first time in the Solent. I'd say we've seen a lot of current, we've had lots of sail changes and we can't get a

forecast that reflects the real conditions! It's been a blast.

"We were only disappointed on the final day when they cancelled the race because of the higher wind. We like the stronger conditions and we were ready to go that day."



Lawrence Wride, owner of the Sparkman & Stephens *Sunmaid V*, a RORC One Ton Cup Design, was returning the boat to her Solent roots after an extensive restoration on the Humber:

"She was built by Clare Lallow in 1967, but then left the Solent in 1970 and

hadn't been back until this summer. We had one bad result but we were sixth overall. A good start! There were lots of other S&Ss on the water. It's always nice to see other boats by the same designer but it was lovely to see all of the fleet. We now aim to be down again next year."



One of five crew on the regatta's only riveted aluminium yacht, *Gulvain*,

owned by Chris Mannion and designed by Laurent Giles in 1949, Ben Smith said: "We did well and we had a great time but we really want to come back and get a better result

next year. We've done better each year we've been here, but now we want a class win! Time to become better sailors."

won the trophy for the big boat class. Designer Ed Dubois was also on the water with the crew of his 1965 Sparkman & Stephens *Firebrand*.

The Spirit of Tradition class proved more popular than ever this year with nine international entrants and some of the most competitive racing. After a week-long battle, Michael O'Flaherty's *Soufriere*, the Spirit 54 which featured in the James Bond film *Casino Royale*, was narrowly beaten into second by Spirit 52 *Flight of Ufford*, helmed by regatta chairman Sean McMillan, owner of Spirit Yachts.

The Classic Boat pontoon party was a success on the Tuesday evening, with the international flavour of the regatta evident in the French, Dutch, Italian and American accents to be heard among those enjoying drinks, paella and a steel band. The Long Inshore Race, sponsored by Classic Boat, was one of the most testing



of the regatta, with regatta rivals *Jap*, *Whooper* and *Jour de Fête* taking the podium positions in the 28-mile windward/leeward course in the eastern Solent.

Classic Boat also sponsors the Seamanship Trophy, which this year went to Murdoch McKillop's 8-M *Saskia* for her crew's rapid rescue of Bowman Mark 'Gonz' Gonzolez who was swept off the foredeck by the genoa during an unexpectedly quick tack. Displaying great presence of mind, he grabbed hold of a trailing sheet and was promptly hoisted back aboard 'one arm' by fellow crew member 'Big Malc'.

British Classic Yacht Club Commodore David Murrin's *Cetewayo* claimed the Corinthian Cup for Class 2. Designed by Laurent Giles and built by Morris and Latimer in 1955, the 48ft (14.6m) fractional sloop has been the object of a long-term restoration that now sees her fitted with extra winches and modern race sails.



The Universal 8 Cup for the first 8-Metre was awarded to Avia Willment's 1926 Frank Morgan Giles designed *Siris*. One of the biggest cheers of the prize-giving was reserved for Jeremy John's *Matambu*, which won the Stiff Drink Trophy after finishing the Round the Island Race precisely one second before the time limit.

Amid the race talk that dominated the event, the regatta also has a cruising class and discussions are afoot to make more of this next year.

THANKS TO THE SPONSORS

The event's title sponsor once again was Officine Panerai, with the official partner sponsor EFG International. The official media partner was Classic Boat, while race day sponsor was the Sandeman Yacht Company and official rum supplier was Mount Gay Rum. The official clothing supplier was Zhik, with all winners receiving Zhik kit.

Above: the 28ft *Ragdoll* (sail no. 1965), helmed by Liz Rushall, chasing David Myatt's 8-M *Erica* (sail no. GBR38) and Rummer Yawl *Tinkatoo* (sail no. 1161) owned by Peter Robinson



JONATHAN HOARE



INGID ABERY

Top: The Classic Boat pontoon party. **Above:** Luke Yeates was turning heads in new-build *Spirit of Marion* (sail no. 154), a 24ft 6in Buzzards Bay 15 designed by Herreshoff in 1896.



JONATHAN HOARE

The all-conquering *Jap*, receiving the Long Inshore Race trophy from CB editor Rob Peake (left) and BCYC founder Tim Blackman (right). Tactician Martin Payne said: "It was a great event. The competition was tough with so many beautiful boats that were seriously on the pace."

[REGATTA FILE]

The oldest yachts competing included David Sherriff's 1897 Fife Gaff Cutter *Jap*, which was eventual winner overall, as well as Richard Oswald's 1902 Fred Shepherd gaff schooner *Coral* and Pelham Olive's 1903 gaff cutter *Kelpie*.

Past winners of the event, taking part again, included David Murrin's 1955 Laurent Giles Sloop *Cetewayo*, Jamie Matheson's *Opposition*, the 1971 Sparkman & Stephens sloop built by Lallows for British Prime Minister Ted Heath, and Murdoch McKillop's 1931 Fife-designed International 8-M *Saskia*.

International Moth world champion Simon Payne was making his first appearance at Panerai British Classic Week, swapping his racing foiler for his somewhat slower but perhaps more elegant Nicholson Jolina 35 *Damian B*.