

Enchantress heads to Sydney then Hobart



Steve Jenkins

Spurred on by the fun they had in the 2010 Melbourne to Hobart West Coaster, *Enchantress* is heading off for the 2012 Sydney to Hobart race at the end of this year.

Enchantress loves the ocean and after celebrating skipper John Muirhead's 60th birthday for the 2010 race, this time its navigator Steve Jenkins' 50th to be celebrated.

John Muirhead is a highly skilled skipper and, as a past Australian Champion in International Cadet's with brother Andy, his name also appears on most trophies in the RSAYS cabinet along with a few in Tasmania these days too.

The crew will be similar to last year including fellow skipper and co-owner of *Enchantress* John Willoughby.

The Skipper's sailing started as a boy at the RSAYS on *Nerida* with his father, through to racing 505's at Brighton Seacliff and campaigning *Enchantress* at RSAYS.

Nerida was owned by Tom Hardy when his father was sailing on her and was then owned and raced by Colin Haselgrove in the 1950 Sydney to Hobart to become the first SA boat to win the race.

Long-time crew member Noel Swan is also back on-board providing cockpit, sail trim, helm and good humour. Steve Jenkins will be on navigating and bowman duties as well as managing race preparation activities. He has no idea if his birthday celebrations will be high speed downwind sailing fun or un-celebrations of hard wind on the nose as typically occurs during a Hobart race.



Mast out, re-rigged, all fittings reset; complete preparation.

John's brother and crack helmsman Andy Muirhead will be the only one on-board with Sydney to Hobart (1996) experience. He will arrive from Townsville a week before the race for some harbour training to finally meld the team.

Australian Hill Climb Champion and brother-in-law Roger Harrison will be cockpit crew and boat mechanic along with Rob Large on mainsail and helm. Rob will also prepare pre-cooked race meals with wife Leslie and ensure that the mandatory 80 bananas (2 per person per day for a 5 day race) are on-board in Sydney.

Last and not least will be the *Enchantress*' newcomer, Michael Lane who as a past Australian Mosquito class champion brings aboard mainsail and helming skills.

John's close friend and long-time crew member Chris Magarey is not aboard this time after he decided that a niggling calf injury could potentially let the team down during the big race. He'll be sorely missed by the crew who all understand how hard a decision this was for Chris to make.

Knowing they are in for a tough race, all crew and skippers are committed to getting fit by exercising with personal trainers, swimming, and following a



John Muirhead cutting out the stern

training plan that will prepare them for a probable 5 days at sea, as one of the smaller boats in the fleet.

Attention to detail is a key part of *Enchantress's* race preparation. So a 2nd hand square-top mainsail was tested in the 2011 season to see if it would enhance performance without adversely affecting the boats handling characteristics. The trials were a success so a new square-top mainsail will become part of her sail plan along with new headsails and spinnakers. The intention is to improve areas that have been lacking in recent times.

A life-raft needs to be carried on-board and with nowhere convenient to stow it, *Enchantress's* stern has been modified to stow it out of the way. This will also improve the exit path for any large waves that come on-board and improve access to recover a man overboard if required.

With crew safety at the top of the list and boat functionality improvements always on the list, the topsides needed refreshing. While she was on the slip the crew removed all deck fittings and sanded and re-coated her. All fittings were double checked as they were replaced, relocated or removed. A new U bolt in the centre of the foredeck was fitted to clip on a short

tether in heavy weather. The idea was gleaned from a fatal MOB report in the UK.

John's meticulous preparation regime from bow to stern is designed to minimise the chance of anything failing and enabling the crew to race as hard as it can.



Stern modifications complete

Just like last time pre-xmas racing will be used as training days, to measure speed against the local fleet, and updating polar diagrams to suit the new sail plan.

The current schedule is to depart Adelaide in early December ready for the big race start on Boxing Day.

With early preparation complete all should be ready to race by the end of September.

Here's hoping for another fast trip to Hobart in 2012 - We can only prepare well, race hard and wish!!



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Charts Needed

If anyone has up to date charts of the NSW, Victorian and Tasmanian coasts to loan *Enchantress* for their race and delivery schedules Steve would like to hear from you.

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