

30' Sailboat Adventure

by Capt. Doug Malat

I always thought you can't do much with a 30' sailboat but sail around the bays, with an occasional hop to a not so far away harbor. I was wrong. I discovered racing sailing in my area and it gave me purpose on the weekends. I enlisted friends for crew and set off to win one. Some races are around buoys, some around islands, but in either case you have to know your tides and winds. These are your main topics because with tides you want to know where it runs strong and also light...when running against the tide on your race course (some race courses can be 5 to 10 miles), you definitely want to veer to the lighter side of the tide, but when running with it, you want to stay in the strongest part for that major boost in speed. Your winds are the same way...in a bay you will find more wind possibly closer to shore where the land is warmer, driving the wind onshore. It may be only 1/2 to 3 knots of wind difference, but staying on course in the middle of the bay where the wind is fickle may lose you ground. Veterans of sailboat racing know their stuff. I've given up many a trophy to those guys. Once, turning a last buoy and heading to the finish line, the sailboat behind me continued without turning up towards the finish line. Our crew cheered thinking we finally won because it looked like the other sailboat gave up and was heading home. Well, he turned way further up, catching a stronger wind and having a better angle to it. He flew by us like



Racing... taking every advantage!

we were...well you know...but after each race, you learned more and more. You automatically get to know where the cutting edge is...keeping your groove longer than other sailboats. It's like when you are in a car, you just stop and go where you need to and don't remember you did it. You just

do it automatically...see! My racing days were filled with excitement and of course frustration. The races were hours to a few days long! There is that Newport, RI to Bermuda race, which takes up to 6 or 7 days!

Some of these races are in high wind condition. They might not start that way, but I've been in some wild ones where crews on other sailboats had to have helicopters remove them for treatment for broken bones and other various things. I have been on a race and won a trophy for third for actually drifting the best during the race...there was no wind for two hours and for some reason the current grabbed me better...because of my deep keel...wide beam? I was certainly happy to take third place! So the more I raced the more familiar I became with different wind and sea conditions. Knowing where my 30' sailboat rode the best, pulling top speeds without heavy effort on the crew or the boat! You get to feel that groove where you are ripping, yet comfortable. It's a combination of your boats' best point of sail, with a mix of using the sailboats lines and characteristics to its' advantage.

There is also another aspect to racing sailing which never really occurred to me. It is becoming familiar with provisioning for the trip...being it for the afternoon, the day or three days. Crew can range from two to six people. But the kicker is the

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 Navigation Area _____ Ocean Use Y / N More than 5% Y / N
 Private or Pleasure Use Only Y / N Do You Have A Current Survey Y / N

VESSEL INFORMATION

Year: _____ Manufacturer: _____ Live Aboard _____
 Model: _____ Length: _____ Beam: _____
 Hull Material _____ Hull Type _____ Weight _____
 Mooring Address _____ Purchase Date _____
 Purchase Price _____ Top Speed _____ Fuel Capacity _____
Engines: Gas Diesel Electric Year _____ Manufacturer _____
 No. of Engines _____ H.P. Each _____ Jet Propulsion c.c. size _____
Type: Inboard Inboard/Outboard Outboard Auxiliary (Sailboats) None
Equipment: Auto Fire Ext Radar Depth Finder VHF Radio GPS Loran
 Fume Detector Burglar Alarm Compass Epirb I/O Lock Prop Hub Lock
 Smoke Detector Trailer Ball/Axel Lock
Coverage / Limits: Boat Value \$ _____ Liability Limit _____
 Hull Deductible _____ Outboard Value _____ Trailer _____
 Spillage _____ Other Opt. Coverage _____

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sail to the race starting line that may be as much as 24 hours away. The sail and the company (your crew) are great...relaxed, getting things shipshape, listening to all the strategies, watching the sunset and sunrise going by...yet gearing up at race time...maneuvering for best air and position...keeping all extremities inboard because of the very close proximity to the other boats as we sail by each other at high speed... jockeying for the good spots to hit the starting line at full speed. Yelling is now the call of the day...making sure everyone hears the course changes, as well as sudden boat maneuvers, such as jibes and come-abouts...looking for those puffs of wind on the water, to take every advantage to widen your lead or catch up to the leader!

The race is over and your sail back to your homeport begins...a



Sailing Home... what a change!

calm flows over...composure and that sense of no rush is in order now. An absolute opposite of what you were just doing... yet everyone moves into that relaxed mode once again as if the craziness never happened. You know they're your friends for sure...what is really better?

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