

TA-TA ONE —

The way we see it, there are two ways to measure the success of a sailing event. The first is how good the sailing conditions were. The second is how engaged and connected the participants became. Based on those criteria, we think last month's first ever SoCal Ta-Ta — aka Reggae Pon Da Ocean — was a smashing success. Given the number of participants who told us they were ready to sign up for a Ta-Ta Two, we're not the only ones.



Commodore Liana reggaes pon da ocean.

The week-long event saw the 33-boat fleet rally from Santa Barbara to Two Harbors, Catalina, with stops at Santa Cruz Island, Paradise Cove and Redondo Beach. None of the legs was more than 37 miles, so there was no overnight sailing.

The fleet was composed of 34 boats — six others didn't show up — ranging in size from Brandon and Devani Priest's Santa Barbara-based Coronado 25 *Sea Monkey* — which got special dispensation for being under the normal minimum length of 27 feet — up to Pat McCormick's Alamitos Bay-based Beneteau 440 *St. Somewhere*. There were six multihulls and one powerboat.

Most of the boats were production built 'racer-cruisers', such as the four Beneteaus, three Hunters, three Catalinas, and three Islanders. A number of boats were at least 30 years old, which says something good about the durability of early fiberglass boats. A few of them have been under the same ownership for decades, such as Keith Albrecht's beautifully restored Alamitos Bay-based Columbia 36 *Ojo Rojo*, which

We're not sure how long the Albrechts have been together, but Keith and their Columbia 36 'Ojo Rojo' have been an item for 27 years.



he has owned for 27 years. Mike Pyzel has owned his Santa Barbara-based Cal 28+ *Caballo Blanco* since before he sailed her in the '78 Singlehanded TransPac.

While most of the fleet came from the Santa Barbara-to-Dana Point stretch of Southern California coast, at least three boats — Stephen Yingst and Christina Barasch's Sausalito-based Beneteau 31 *Green Flash*; Andy Smith's Coyote Pt.-based Union Polaris 36 *Tilligo*; and Al Fricke's Treasure Island-based Catalina 36 *Jubilee* — had to sail 275 miles to get to the Ta-Ta starting line at Santa Barbara, and had to travel at least 350 miles from Catalina to get back home. Kevin Belcastro's San Francisco-based Tanton 43 cat ketch *Toucan* also came down from San Francisco for the rally, but like a half dozen other Ta-Ta entries, is planning on doing the Baja Ha-Ha.

Chuck and Elaine VanderBoom of Lake Havasu City came the farthest, having trailed their F-31 *Boomerang* all the way from Arizona. Curiously, none of the three San Diego boats that had signed made the 150-mile trip to the Santa Barbara start.

As is to be expected of an event taking place during the work week, many of the 105 participants were retired. Nonetheless, it was a lively group of adventurers not interested in spending their golden years snoring on a couch to a blaring boob tube.

Two was the most common number of crew per boat, followed by three. But Jean Mondeau somehow managed to stuff six into his Madera-based Cal 2-27 *Carmela*, which he'd bought for \$500 and completely restored. Billy Lilly's Newport Beach-based Lagoon 470 catamaran *Moontide* had five crew, four of them women, and *Profligate* had six crew, four of them women. The estrogen on the cats was so thick that it was hard to see from one side of the salons to the other, and the intense discussions about personal relationships never ended.

Two entrants who really tickled our fancy were John and Janice Barker of the Long Beach-based DownEast 38 *Dulcinea*. They'd not only done the first Baja Ha-Ha 19 years before with the same boat, but they wore their new-looking '94 Ha-Ha T-shirts to the Ta-Ta skipper's meeting — and so did Randy and CJ Juengst. They'd done the inaugural Ha-Ha aboard their Norseman 40 *Royal Venture*, and



were doing the Ta-Ta aboard Al Fricke's *Jubilee*. Randy and CJ first met Al in Mexico in '94, shortly after the inaugural Ha-Ha, and they've remained friends since.

Southern California has a reputation for light-air sailing conditions, with frequent periods of too little wind for decent sailing. So it was something of a surprise that a majority of boats were able to sail the entirety of all four legs, which totalled 110 miles. While there were some periods of six to 10 knots of wind, nobody slatted, and overall the sailing conditions were excellent.

We'd done the 26-mile first leg from Santa Barbara to the west end of Santa Cruz Island about 15 times before, but never in such fine conditions. It was sunny from daybreak, and there was a steady 12-knot breeze for the 11 a.m. start. The Poobah cautioned the fleet that the wind would come aft once they got out into the channel, so it would actually

REGGAE PON DA OCEAN



Clockwise from spread of 'Orange' passing Pt. Dume. (Yes, the photo is flopped.) Northern Californians Kevin Belcastro of 'Toucan' and Robert Walker of 'Grace'. Question: Tell no lies, where do you want to reggae most? Answer: The ocean. Dreddy mates. Lani Cordero and Mike Pyzel of 'Caballo Blanco'. Jim Anderson's Beneteau 49 'Thalassa' just after the start. Jim and his crew, Derek Leistra, who plans to go cruising in his own boat.

benefit them to stay low of the rhumb line. The suggestion that members of a reggae-themed fleet "not get too high" was, as you might expect, universally ignored.

After sending the fleet on its way, we futzed getting *Profligate's* main up, then set our biggest asymmetrical. Thanks to more northwest in the wind than normal, we were easily able to curve up to the east end of Santa Cruz, passing San Pedro Point in less than three hours, a few minutes after *Boomerang*. Having ignored our advice, some boats arrived at the island so high they had to gybe back out to get downwind. But even those arrived a short time later.

Smuttler's Cove is one of the few places in the Channel Islands that can accommodate a fleet of more than 30 boats, so that was the Ta-Ta destination.

There was plenty of room for everyone, it wasn't very roly, and there wasn't much of a south swell running — which made beach landings possible if not easy. With continued bright sunshine, lots of people sunbathed, paddled their kayaks, swam in the 68° water, and otherwise enjoyed themselves.

Thanks to the relatively small size of the fleet, *Profligate* was able to host one-third of the skippers and first mates at sundowner parties each night. This was a great way for folks to really get to know each other.

The second day was an overcast lay day. The Poobah proposed a hike from Scorpion Bay back to Smugglers, and offered to take everyone

over to Scorpion aboard *Profligate*. The catch was that all hikers had to be willing to swim out through the surf — it was relatively small — once they got back to Smuggler's. The hike was longer and more hilly than expected, but it was more quiet and serene than anywhere else in

Charles and LeeAnne Clark hit the start of the first leg with 'Spray'. Their goal is to get a larger boat and take off cruising.



TA-TA ONE —



Clockwise from above. The bubble machine and 'Dulcinea' at Smuggler's. Caren and Danna doing yoga at 10 knots. Heidi Gross, the young owner/skipper of 'Sea Esta'. The VanderBooms of 'Boomerang'. The dock and hikers at Scorpion. Hot and not-so-hot gybing angles off the east end of Anacapa Island. The fleet anchored and rafted up behind the Redondo Breakwater. Michelle Hansen of 'Kailani' gives her husband Cary a tongue lashing.

Southern California. The only sign of civilization was an old farm house with rusty farm machinery strewn about.

Hovering in the inflatable off Smuggler's Beach, the Poobah was concerned that the weary hikers might balk at having to wade through the chilly surf in order to be picked up and taken back to their boats. He need not have worried, for these were hardy pioneer rally stock, and not a discouraging word was

Judy, one of the estrogen crew aboard 'Moon-tide', enjoyed kayaking after the Santa Barbara to Santa Cruz Island leg.



heard — even after some hikers had to be manhandled into the dinghy.

Day three dawned with drippy fog. About half the fleet set chutes in less than 10 knots of wind on the way to Paradise Cove, just past Pt. Dume. The wind was forecast for 10 to 15 knots, but stayed light until early in the afternoon, at which time it started blowing above the forecast. With winds gusting to the mid-20s from Zuma Beach on, many skippers reported hitting their all-time top boat speeds, including the VanderBooms, who racked up an 18.3. Although the wind was strong enough to finish off *Moon-tide's* tattered 16-year-old main, there was no other significant damage to the fleet.

Paradise Cove usually provides excellent protection from the wind, but it continued to gust to the mid-20s in the anchorage well past cocktail hour. The real heroes were the Ta-Ta volunteers

who got drenched shuttling skippers and first mates to the *Profligate* sundowner party. But no boats dragged, and as is the norm for Santa Monica Bay, the wind died promptly after sundown.

Day four dawned foggy and calm, so the Poobah led the fleet on a near-shore tour of Malibu homes. It really wasn't necessary, but celebrity after celebrity — Cher, Goldie, Dustin, Ali, Sting — all came out on their terraces to wave. The Poobah thought his arm was going to fall off from waving back. You'd think they'd never seen a sailboat before.

We mingled with the surfers at Malibu for a few minutes — two-to-three foot waves, kinda sloppy, crowded — before setting the chute. The wind never got over 10 knots crossing Santa Monica Bay, but it was a spinnaker reach, so it might as well have been blowing 16. It was a mellow sail under clearing skies.

REGGAE PON DA OCEAN



Clockwise from above. The busy anchorage at Smuggler's. The crowded 'Carmela'. Patsy Verhoeven, another woman skipper, on the throne of her Gulfstar 50 'Talion'. Leslie and Seth of 'Talion' at the King Harbor YC. Diane and Christine Eggleston of the Lagoon 400 'Scout'. He's the NorCal dealer. Katrina Liana, Commodore of the Punta Mita Yacht & Surf Club, takes the leap. A recovered Doña de Mallorca leads the Ta-Ta conga line.

The trickiest part of the Ta-Ta was going to be the raft-up at anchor behind the huge Redondo breakwater. But it came off without a hitch. The fleet was graciously welcomed by the folks at the King Harbor YC, who set up a dinghy dock and allowed everyone to take showers, dump their garbage, and feast at a delicious spaghetti dinner. This despite the fact it was their last beer can race of the year — a big night at the club.

Then, in the middle of dinner, near-disaster struck. Dona de Mallorca, who had felt great all along, suddenly grabbed the table and announced that she was feeling extremely dizzy. The former ICU nurse was soon stretched out on the dining room floor in great distress.

Paramedics arrived quickly. De Mallorca passed one heart test and then a second more sophisticated heart test. But since her vertigo was severe, she had to be rushed to the hospital. A CAT scan ruled out a stroke and brain tumor, but since de Mallorca continued to barf

violently and have diarrhea into the wee hours, she was, for insurance reasons, transferred to another hospital for an MRI before getting the 'all clear' signal.

By the next morning her symptoms were gone. Because the vertigo hadn't been accompanied by tinnitus, doctors advised that it is unlikely to occur again. Subsequently, she's learned that vertigo is not an uncommon malady.

The Poobah and de Mallorca spent the day in a motel catching up on sleep, while Assistant Poobah Andy Turpin and others took over for the fourth and final leg of the Ta-Ta. From what we were told, it was yet another fabulous day of sailing, with 15 knots on the beam under bright sunshine. Even the first potluck turned out great — except for the Poobah's choice of movies. *The Harder They Come* is not as cheery a movie as he'd remembered. *Captain Ron* would have been a better choice.

The Poobah and de Mallorca

arrived at Two Harbors late the next afternoon, just before the final potluck and awards ceremony. De Mallorca got a rousing welcome from the crowd, almost all of whom had gotten to know her from the sundowner parties on *Profligate*.

In order to get everyone in the reggae spirit, the Poobah announced that when de Mallorca was on what she believed to be her deathbed, she had one last wish, which was that she could lead the entire Ta-Ta fleet in a conga line at the potluck. The Poobah might have made

With no wind for the start of the third leg, the Ta-Ta fleet motored down to Malibu and hung with the surfers before setting chutes.



TA-TA ONE

this up, but in what he viewed as the biggest vote of support for the Ta-Ta, every person — minus one with gimpy knees — got up and conga'd in circles behind de Mallorca. And then they did it again about a half hour later. Perhaps you had to be there, but the group spirit brought a huge smile to the Poobah's face.

After giving a special award to every boat entered — they were all winners! — Ta-Ta One reggaed into the sailing history books. Our heartfelt thanks to everyone who participated, as you were fabulous. And thanks to all the many people who helped make it happen.



Will there be a Ta-Ta Two? We're going to take a few months to decide if, in addition to doing the magazine and running the Ha-Ha, it's too much. We suspect there will be a Two, but in some ways nothing is ever quite like the first time, is it?

— **latitude**/richard

2012 SoCal Ta-Ta Participants

AHA	Fountaine-Pajot Tobago 35..	Bruce & Marlene Beal.....	Dana Point
Big Sweetie	Hunter 450 Passage.....	Carolyn & Charles Moyer.....	Channel Islands
Boomerang	Corsair UC31.....	Chuck & Elaine VanderBoom.....	Lake Havasu City, AZ
Caballo Blanco	Cal 28+.....	Mike Pyzel.....	Santa Barbara
Carmela	Cal 2-27.....	Jean Mondeau.....	Madera
Dariana Ruth	Custom 46.....	Michael Alfred.....	Channel Is. Harbor
Dulcinea	Downeast Cutter 38.....	John & Janice Barker.....	Long Beach
Escapade	Ericson 38.....	Darrell Sausser.....	Los Alamitos
Grace	Traveller 32.....	Alameda.....	Robert Walker
Green Flash	Beneteau 323.....	Stephen Yingst & Christina Barasch.....	Sausalito
Indulgence	Beneteau First 435.....	Andrew Beath & Joseph Blackburn.....	Santa Barbara
Jubilee	Catalina 36 MkII.....	Al Fricke.....	Treasure Island
Kailani	Catalina 400 MkII.....	Cary & Michele Hansen.....	Nawiliwili, HI
Mean Kitty	Catalina 42.....	Bill Walters.....	Ventura
Moira	Beneteau 351.....	Scott Stephens.....	Ventura
Moontide	Lagoon 470.....	Bill Lilly.....	Newport Beach
Ojo Rojo	Columbia 36.....	Keith & Terry Albrecht.....	Alamitos Bay
Orange	Contour 34.....	Paul Martson.....	Ventura
Oso Loco	Kettenburg 32.....	Bear Turpin.....	Santa Barbara
Quiddity	Hunter 33.....	Steve & Bobby Young.....	Santa Barbara
St. Somewhere	Beneteau 440.....	Pat McCormick.....	Alamitos Bay
Scout	Lagoon 400.....	David & Christine Eggleston.....	Jackson, WY
Sea Esta	Pearson Vanguard 32.....	Heidy Gross.....	Marina del Rey
Sea Monkey	Coronado 27.....	Brandon & Devani Priest.....	Santa Barbara
Shadow 2	Islander 36.....	Greg & Kathy Kircher.....	Ventura
Someday	Hunter 34.....	Don McNeil.....	Channel Islands
Spray	Islander Freeport 36.....	Charles & LeeAnne Clark.....	Channel Islands
Talion	Gulfstar 50.....	Patsy Verhoeven.....	La Paz, BCS
Tempest	Jeanneau 46.5.....	Steve Moffett.....	Alamitos Bay
Thalassa	Beneteau 49.....	Jim Anderson.....	Redondo Beach
Tilligo	Union Polaris 36.....	Andy Smith.....	Coyote Point
Toucan	Tanton 43.....	Kevin Belcastro.....	San Francisco
Triagan	Corsair F-31.....	Hans Millenaar.....	Leucadia
Wayward Wind	Catalina 42.....	William & Kathryn Gaffaney.....	Marina del Rey