

Skandia Geelong Week - Record entries again

Skandia Geelong Week surpassed all expectations once again with record entries of 473 boats and close to 5000 sailors racing across 19 categories and divisions, beating last year's tally of 457 boats competing at Melbourne Docklands and in Geelong.

Event organiser Doug Jarvis and his Rhumbline team and host, Royal Geelong Yacht Club, were thrilled with the regatta that continues to grow in numbers and stature, with many international stars flying in for the event, not to mention most the top Australian sailors.

Skandia's (the international long-term savings company) major partnership continues to have a significant impact on the regatta and newer partnerships with the Victorian State Government, City of Greater Geelong and Audi Australia, the German luxury car manufacturer, have increased the regatta's profile and hence the numbers and the profile continue to grow.

Of course the regatta, the oldest in Australia, which came into existence in 1844, is not all about sailing; the onshore entertainment is second to none and is what makes this regatta stand out from all other major sailing events in Australia.

Once in Geelong, the Audi IRC Series continued with a further three windward / leeward races sailed over two days on the beautiful flat waters of Corio Bay. The series was hosted by the Royal Geelong Yacht Club again.

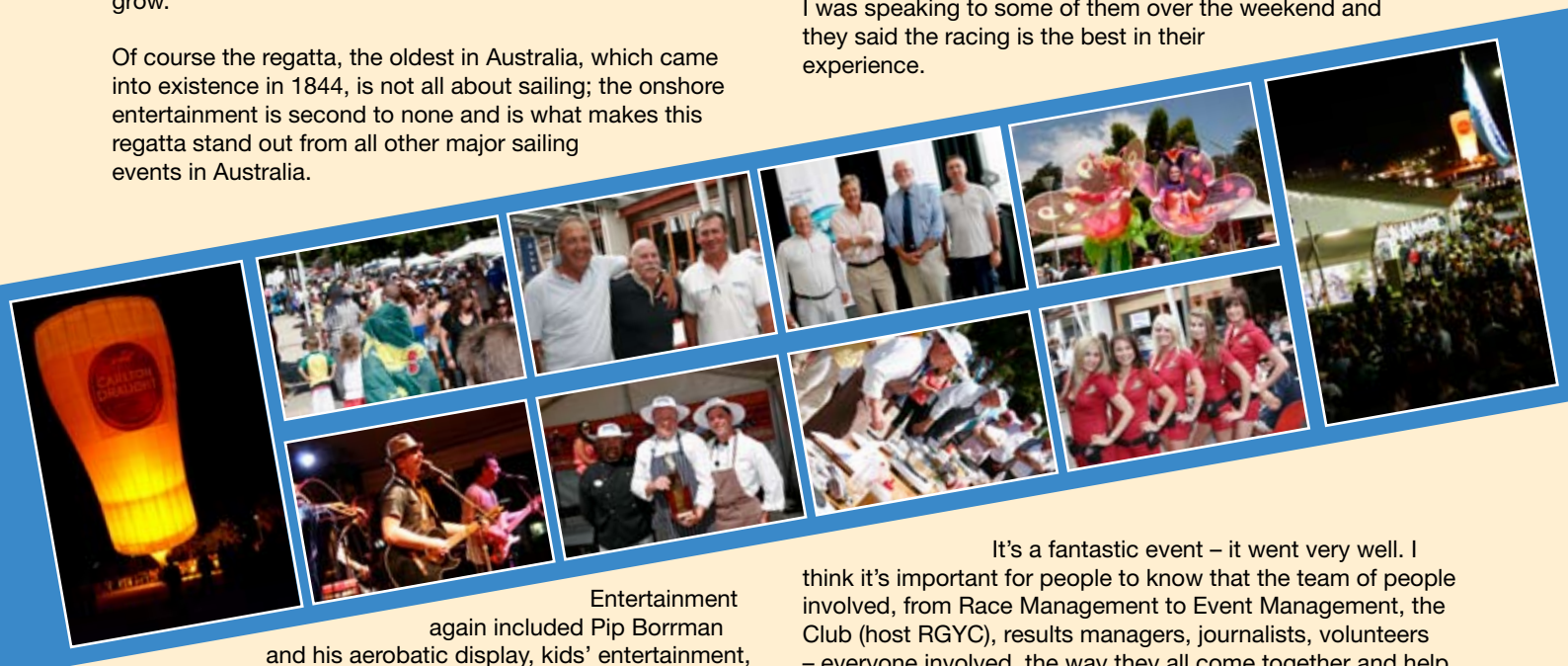
Other series already started in Geelong included: the Zhik International Moth Australian Championships, William Angliss Institute SB3 Australian Championship, Bundaberg Rum ASBA Sports Boats National Championships, Morris Finance Sydney 38 One-Design, S80 Series and the myriad PHS, Cruising, Four Points by Sheraton Trailer Yacht, Geelong Taxi Network Multihull, Bluebird and International Cadet series.

"IRC racing was amazingly close," said Principal Race Officer Denis Thompson. "We were pretty blessed with the weather and I'm very pleased with the whole event."

The last words go to tireless event organiser, Doug Jarvis, who has organised the event for 14 years now: "This is a tough economic climate, so to have another record fleet – and not just in quantity, the quality of the fleet was excellent. This event has a spirit that is unbreakable.

Yacht owners and their crews are supporting Skandia Geelong Week strongly.

I was speaking to some of them over the weekend and they said the racing is the best in their experience.



Entertainment again included Pip Borrman and his aerobatic display, kids' entertainment, a brilliant fireworks display on Australia Day eve, a 'rocking' Victoria Police band, buskers, displays and food stalls.

The sailing side of Skandia Geelong Week kicked off with the Audi King of the Docklands and Skandia Docklands Invitational. Due to gale force conditions on the second day of both events, racing was cancelled. It was disappointment all-round, particularly with regard to the Audi event, as there was the prize of an Audi A4 and International SB3 involved, but as only half the heats had been sailed and many of the competitors having to move to Geelong for their various series, nothing could be done to solve the problem.

Following the Docklands events, the first two races of the Audi IRC Series were sailed on Port Phillip Bay. The 34.3 nautical mile Passage Race from Williamstown to Geelong was next, shortened in the Channel due to excessive winds on Corio Bay which would have endangered the fleet.

It's a fantastic event – it went very well. I think it's important for people to know that the team of people involved, from Race Management to Event Management, the Club (host RGYC), results managers, journalists, volunteers – everyone involved, the way they all come together and help each other to make it a success is phenomenal. They deliver with a smile on their faces 99 percent of the time."

Skandia Geelong Week would not be possible without the efforts of associate and support sponsors: Bundaberg Rum, Parks Victoria, Geelong Advertiser, Sunsail, Skilled Engineering, 95.5 K-Rock, Telstra Country Wide, Henri Lloyd, Four Points by Sheraton Geelong, Geelong Taxi Network, Coca Cola, Fosters Group, Boating Industry Association of Victoria, Morris Finance Ltd., William Angliss Institute and 93.9 Bay FM.

Nor could it be the success it is without the help of the hundreds of volunteers who turn up each year with smiles on their faces and keep the regatta going. There are too many to mention by name.

Di Pearson - Skandia Media Team

