

Five months to go for Marion Bermuda

by Talbot Wilson on 12 Jan



'Hotspur II' skippered by Ron Wisner of Marion will be sailed with celestial navigation in the Marion Bermuda Race. In its true Corinthian spirit, the Marion Bermuda Race is the only ocean race to Bermuda that offers a celestial navigation prize, the Beverly Yacht Club 'Polaris' Trophy. Yachts that meet the requirements and elect to steer by the stars receive a 3% credit to their ORR handicap. © Fran Grenon Spectrum Photography

Over the fall and winter, volunteers from the Marion Bermuda Race organizing committee have been making presentations to various yacht clubs and sailing groups from Maine to New York. This year the turnout has been the largest since they started making presentations six years ago. Entries may be in the 75 plus boat range — just about double the 2015 finishers.

According to Ray Cullum, some 250 sailors interested in the race have attended six presentations. Some of these have done previous races, but the majority are now doing the race for the first time or thinking about entering or crewing for a friend. The final presentation for this edition of the Marion Bermuda Race will be on February 18 at The Hinckley Company, One Little Harbor Landing, Portsmouth, RI 02871. Details are posted on Facebook and on the [event site](#).

In talking about the presentations, Cullum said, "Many of the questions about the race focus on sails and equipment. Originally, the rules limited sail material to Dacron and did not allow electronic navigation. Times have changed and we now allow modern sail material and electronic navigation, power driven winches and autopilots. Yachts may elect to use a spinnaker attached at the centerline or a spinnaker — symmetrical or asymmetrical — on a pole. Celestial navigation is allowed, even encouraged, and a 3% rating credit is added to yachts who choose to steer by the stars. This is the only North American ocean race with celestial navigation prizes."



'Alibi', a J120 sailed double handed in the 2013 Marion Bermuda Race finishes off St David's Lighthouse. Co-skippers Gardner Grant and Stephen Fisk of Westport CT. 'Alibi' was first in Class A and 12th in the 33-boat Founders Division.

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Since 1977, the Marion Bermuda Race has been a premier 645-mile ocean race. It's a sailing event which appeals to a broad range of cruising and racing enthusiasts. The Corinthian spirit of the race is one focused on Family and Fun, and all yachts and crew are participating for the joy and pleasure of sailing, competition, and the camaraderie that accompanies such an offshore event.

Once a race for what we would now call 'classic' cruisers, Marion Bermuda has kept up with cruising trends and remains modern to this day. The average length of a boat in 1977 was 38 feet. Now it is 47 feet.

As Allan McLean, Executive Director wrote, "The unique value of our race really lies in our mission to maintain its roots in blue water cruising while staying abreast of the changes in our sport." Details about how the race has evolved may be found in his 2017 race invitation at [About the Race](#).

Yachts enter the race by using the online system accessible on the Marion Bermuda Race [website](#). All race-related correspondence, including requirements for written notice, or questions about the eligibility of your yacht, may be conducted by email addressed to the race@marionbermuda.com.

The early entry fee is \$950 for Yacht and Skipper and jumps to \$1,100 after April 10, 2017. The entry fee for a service academy or .edu defined organization is \$475 and \$625 after April 10th. For both entry fees, each additional crewmember is \$50.

The entry fee includes professional briefings on weather and the Gulf Stream at the Skipper's meeting, an 'on-call' professional medical diagnosis and consulting service provided by the George Washington University Maritime Medical Access Facility during the Race and on the return passages and use of the transponder for the position tracking system during the race.

One of the important safety requirements to plan for is to make sure that at least 30% of those aboard the boat, but not fewer than two members of the crew including the person in charge, shall have attended a one-day or two-day US Sailing Safety at Sea Seminar within the last 5 years, or other courses as accepted by US Sailing. The Marion Bermuda Race offers a [Safety Symposium](#) March 11-12 at the University of Massachusetts, Boston.



Class B starts the 2009 Marion Bermuda Race with Joe Mele's 'Triple Lindy' near the boat end of the line. The 'Triple Lindy' team cut their offshore teeth on Bermuda Races before heading down under for the 2016 Sydney Hobart Race. The 2017 race is scheduled to start June 9, 2017 © Talbot Wilson - Copyright

America's Cup 35 — Bermuda Style:

This year the race ends just before the 2017 America's Cup starts. There will be an America's Cup Superyacht Regatta, a J Class Regatta, the Red Bull Youth America's Cup, and the America's Cup Match finals... all happening as Marion Bermuda yachts are coming into Bermuda. This will be a spectacular 16 days of sailing for Marion Bermuda racers who choose to vacation in Bermuda after the race.

For race participants who choose to stay for the cup races and festivities, the America's Cup Event Authority has established the first and only dedicated travel website for America's Cup spectators to view and book packages to

attend the 35th America's Cup. Race participants will have slips available at the Royal Hamilton Amateur Dinghy Club for America's Cup finals on a first come first served basis. Special accommodation packages are available, please visit [website](#) for more information.

If you are interested in booking hotel accommodation only, please email bermuda@travelplaces.co.uk and a dedicated team member at Travel Places Bermuda Ltd., will happily assist you. If you are interested in Bed and Breakfast accommodations or other Bermuda properties visit [website](#).

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