

**For Immediate Release**

**Race off to a dramatic start even before boats begin competition**

(14 January 2014) The 20<sup>th</sup> Singapore Straits Regatta got off to a dramatic start today. During the routine Skippers's safety briefing at Singapore's ONE°15 Marina Club, there came the disappointing news that legendary Australian sailor Ray Roberts would not be participating in the regatta this year. It was reported that Roberts fractured his collarbone during a motorcycle accident while on holiday in Phuket, Thailand. Roberts, however, did attend the briefing and clearly showed the discomfort of his injury. Roberts is one of the regions best-known sailors and was to make an appearance on the last day of this year's regatta at the Closing and Awards Presentation Party.

After the briefing it was time for teams to make their way to their boats and the 16 km sail to Nongsa Point Marina. From the very start, conditions were less than ideal. After weeks of the region's Northeast Monsoon seas were choppy and bumpy. A fairly constant 16-knot wind also kept the conditions a bit sloppy. The helmsman of an inflatable rubber dinghy said their journey to Batam was like riding a "pile driver" thanks to the swells and choppy water.

One boat that didn't seem to mind the conditions and took them in her stride was the *Nimble Leopard*. The sleek, drab gray military style powerboat made light work of the rough seas. The boat helped ferry race officials from the ONE°15 Marina Club to the Nongsa Point Marina on Batam Island. James Soon, president of the company that owns the high tech vessel explained: "Originally this carbon composite boat was designed as a pursuit vessel to assist with stamping out pirate activities in the region. As a result she does well over 35 knots." The boat also has a Seakeeper gyro stabilizer that virtually eliminates boat roll and makes for a much more comfortable ride even in adverse conditions.

While the officials speeded on their roll-less way to the race destination, another participant didn't fare very well. Race contender, *Born in Fire Too*, had engine trouble while making her way through the Nongsa Marina's channel. Skipper Pascal Jaouen reported that she drifted into rocks where the jolt caused her mast to break and fall. Thankfully, there were no reports of injuries and the boat, under assistance made her way safely to the marina.

As one of the judges reported, "We've had a lot of drama before the race has even begun. I wonder what excitement tomorrow will hold?"



## About Singapore Straits Regatta

The idea of a yachting regatta of international standing in Singapore waters was mooted in 1994 by a handful of local enthusiasts to entrench Singapore's position as a yachting hub in Asia and catalyse the growth of the local keelboat sailing scene. The annual fixture in the Asian Yachting circuit has since come to be famed for its blend of Singaporean and Indonesian flavour, being the only regatta that brings the yachts and sailors to clubs on both sides of the Straits. A truly unique regatta that presents a myriad of sailing conditions and experiences. The Straits Regatta has been constantly evolved over the past 19 years and the upcoming 20th edition will present itself in a format closer to the roots of the original editions in the early 1990s. A time-tested formula that has attracted sailors and yachts from all over the world!

In 1995, the inaugural Singapore Straits Regatta was held. A brainchild of pioneers of sailing in Singapore, this event saw Raffles Marina, Nongsa Point Marina, and Changi Sailing Club coming together with the Singapore Sailing Federation to organise this landmark event.

The Regatta is organised through a unique organising chair rotation system amongst the Singapore clubs and Nongsa Point Marina. The coming together of all stakeholders in Singapore sailing clubs through a Memorandum of Understanding signals the strong camaraderie and collective drive to promote the sport.

## About the Perpetual Cup Series

Inaugurated in 1997, the Perpetual Cup Series crowns the top performing yacht in the elite racing class across three key sailing events in Southeast Asia, namely The Raja Muda International Regatta, Phuket King's Cup and Singapore Straits Regatta, and awards the winning team with the prestigious Sir Thomas Lipton Trophy from the treasure trove of historical trophies from the Republic of Singapore Yacht Club. Over the years, the Series has been awarded to several elite sailors, earning itself a prestigious reputation throughout the sailing community.

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