

CLASSIC DRIVER

2010 British Classic Yacht Club Panerai Cowes Regatta



Substitute 'Royal Yacht Squadron' for 'British Racing Drivers' Club' and you'll have an idea of the level on which these classic yachts, real 'wooden boats', operate.

The famous club in **Cowes**, just a short trip from **Southampton** off the British South Coast, hosted the prize-giving for this year's **British Classic Yacht Club** (BCYC) regatta. This year, for the first time, luxury watchmaker **Panerai** had included the British event in its **Panerai Classic Yachts Challenge** series.

As a headline sponsor since 2005, **Panerai**, with its long tradition of nautical timekeeping, has put its name to some of the world's leading classic yacht regattas including the **Régates Royales, Cannes**, the **Opera House Cup, Nantucket** and the **Antigua Classic Yacht Regatta**. The class winners of each heat receive a **Panerai Regatta 1/8th Second Titanio 47mm Chronograph** (below).



At **Cowes**, the overall (and class winner) was the **1957 fractional Bermudan sloop, Cetewayo**. The boat's owner, **British Classic Yacht Club** Commodore **David Murrin**, was therefore presented with two watches, one of which was immediately donated to his favourite charity, the **Special Boat Service Association**.

I was invited to join the action on the **Solent** this July. The weather was fair, and members of the press were able to enjoy a ringside seat aboard an original **Dunkirk** 'little ship', the **Bounty** motor-cruiser.







The rules - which can be mastered quite quickly (by an **Oxbridge Don** or a **chess Grandmaster**) - need not trouble the **Classic Driver** reader. What matters most is the ethereal sight of these stately yachts creaming through the grey waters of the **Solent**, spinnakers billowing and sterns as elegant as any **Maserati 250F's** standing proud of a bubbling wake.

More than 500 yachts compete in the **Panerai Classic Yacht Regattas** worldwide, split into classes for **'Vintage'** (built before 1950), **'Classic'** (constructed between 1950 and 1975) and **'Spirit of Tradition'**, for authentic replicas of old designs launched after 1975. **'Large Boats'** - those with hulls more than 30 metres long - make up a separate class if enough are present.



The **Cowes** event saw some of the big yachts, such as the wonderful 125ft **Mariquita** (above), as well as smaller, Northern European entries including three **'Windfall'** class boats taken as prizes of war by the British from the **Luftwaffe** after WW2.



All yachts are given a 'rating' which results in a **'Handicap Per Mile'** (HPM), thus equalising differing performances.

But, before you reach for your slide-rule, trust me: you do not need to master the intricacies of the rules to appreciate **Classic Yacht Racing**. If you fancy a break from things automotive, do try to catch one of the remaining rounds of the **Panerai Classic Yacht Challenge**:

CORINTHIAN CLASSIC YACHT REGATTA

August 6th – 8th, 2010
Marblehead, MA (USA)

OPERA HOUSE CUP

August 12th – 15th, 2010
Nantucket, MA (USA)

COPA DEL REY

August 25th – 29th, 2010
Mahon, Minorca (Spain)

MUSEUM OF YACHTING CLASSIC YACHT REGATTA

September 3rd – 5th, 2010
Newport, RI (USA)

VELE D'EPOCA DI IMPERIA

September 8th – 12th, 2010
Imperia (Italy)

RÉGATES ROYALES

September 20th – 25th, 2010
Cannes (France)

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