

# Race 9 - The Final Showdown



Back on standard daylight hours we mustered 15 boats and 87 keen WOWzers to the final showdown at noon on Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> April. The sun beat down as we gathered what wind was apparent and caught a ride on the increasing ebb tide. Our mission.... to escape the harbour and pass around A Beacon one mile out returning against the outgoing tide. And what a mission it was!

Whatever wind blew was initially from the south but it swirled around the land and buildings to swing through 90 degrees unpredictably giving that extra challenge to skippers and crew. Whatever started half an hour after the first boat but we love a chase. The spinnaker went up at mark 17 but just as we were getting in the groove the fickle wind stopped then immediately came in from the north...a sea breeze at last... so up went the headsail ready for the vortex in the Entrance.

Straight through maximum current and staying on the north side we close hauled out to the big stick while dodging the returning smaller boats which we were still yet to pass. The spinnaker was set as we eye-balled the dragon and formed the plan of attack. The consensus seemed to be ...hug the Mount and catch the back eddy. So there we all were pointing our bows into the swift current with no wind, approaching ever-decreasing depth....hmmm, interesting spectacle for the onlookers on the Mount and surfcasters on the beach. We jostled with little Brilliant then Smudge wanted a piece of the action. In Step just started the donkey and got the hell out of there but Heluva Hurry decided to retreat to the other side and try her luck on the sand banks of Matakana Island.



We watched in envy as they gradually slipped through the gap so as we were getting sucked back out to sea we bore away and slithered on over to give it a go too. High Point, La Rochelle, & Ghia had made the right choice but just couldn't push through. Tack after tack we slowly inched our way through leaving General Jackson, with several men onboard, in the dust while Brilliant, Freedom Express & September Blue persisted with rounding the Maori warrior. Through all this, we realised that some in the ranks were absent, deciding early on to retreat to calmer waters to enjoy the fun side of sailing. Happily rafted up together at Pane Pane were Happy Hour, Fiddlestick, Fly Away Sam, & Invincible partaking of wine & rum and enjoying the company of many women which was much more to their liking and made for a memorable finish to their WOW season.

Adjourning to the bar many of us disguised ourselves to contest the 'Best Dressed Team' award of two bottles of wine each for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup>. Whatever team were Go Go Girls with special guest Austin Powers, La Rochelle donned moustaches to be Frenchmen, Smudge were hosting our sponsor, Sarah, from Scarlett Hair Salon so were adorned with bright purple wigs and green ribbons. There was the Happy Hour Gang in their leathers and, of course, we had many pirates and so the evening was great fun as always.



Gifts of chocolate and Burnsco vouchers were given to all our wonderfully supportive boat owners and MTA vouchers went to Bill and Bruce for running the races from the Tower. Finally, after a protest by Smudge on Whatever resulting in Whatever withdrawing, the Women's Series trophy along with the \$200 Mills Reef lunch voucher & \$150 prize money went to 1<sup>st</sup> place Heluva Hurry skippered by Carolyn Frost, 2<sup>nd</sup> place with \$120 & a bottle of rum went to Freedom Express skippered by Paulien Eitjes & 3<sup>rd</sup> place with \$90 & rum went to Whatever. Congratulations to all our winners & to all our keen sailorettes who help make WOW the best fun women can have on the water in Tauranga.....cheers from your retiring chairwoman, Megan Harris.