



GILLES MARTIN-RAGET

Hugo Boss, eat your heart out... Yes, it is the same sponsor on the side of the IOR 50 (left) and two IOR One Tonners (above). In spite of the spectacular exposure their error-strewn campaigns delivered, little was seen in regatta circles of the Jameson's Irish whisky brand after the last drama (right), a test of strength between a carbon/Nomex 40-footer (later found to be lacking a little in the keel floor department) and Gurnard Ledge in the Solent. In spite of the 'Jameson On The Rocks' ads going up nationally within 48 hours

it back together. BAR's Bermuda base should be complete in time for them to launch there if they so choose. France's base could also be ready, but their limited budget may mean staying in Lorient longer to save money. The Kiwis may have an interesting challenge: their base is planned for the newly reclaimed land in the South Dockyard Basin. If that area is not ready in December the team will need to operate from a temporary site in Bermuda while waiting for their base in the Dockyard. The alternative appears to be launching in Auckland, then losing those crucial development and training days during transit.

Lots to do. Not all that many days left in which to do it.

## STEADY AS WE GO, MON

– Peter Holmberg

The 2016 Caribbean racing season has come to a close, so it's a good time for a wrap-up and to address some of the chatter on the CSA rating rule.

Let's start with the CSA rule. There has been a lot written lately about handicap rules. Not sure why some people feel they need to criticise another rule to promote theirs. Can't we all just get along?

Some rules work for certain areas, types of boats, types of racing and the local fleet. Is there anything wrong with having a couple of different rating rules in existence, for different places and needs? Who is to say that your rule is not right for your market, your regattas? Who am I to criticise what rule should be used in your region? Hell, maybe some people think that their shoes should be made of wood, and who am I to judge!

The CSA rule has been in existence for over 50 years. It was designed to address the needs of our region, the broad range of boats, the frequent visitors, and to be simple and affordable to suit our market. It has adapted over the years, and now handicaps everything from classic yachts, to charter boats, to cruising boats, to grand prix raceboats. Not bad for a volunteer-based system being run by a bunch of island boys, if you ask me.

And just because a rule is simple does not mean it is inferior. I will remind everyone that small countries, and Caribbean people in particular, have made a life of figuring out how to get it done with what little they have. Maybe if we added a fancy webpage and some blinking lights to our measurement tools it would quiet the herd? But, honestly, if some people spent the amount of time practising that they do whining about their rating, they would have a much better chance of winning.

Because, after it is all said and done, the rule still works pretty well at rating sailboats fairly. When the CSA guys double-score the results with IRC for the debriefs after the events the results come out virtually the same. So the Caribbean Sailing Association still sees our rule as working for our region. It's

simple, no haul-out required, a couple of hours to get measured, inexpensive, and still quite accurate.

Having said all that, the CSA is well aware that the world is changing. It is now extremely difficult to find people with the available time and commitment to keep a volunteer-based rule current. Keeping pace with today's rapid changes in design and technology at the grand prix level with a volunteer staff is a very tall order.

So the CSA rule guys are becoming aware of this, and they are looking carefully at their options. One of the options now being explored is to collaborate with the ORC to tap into one or two of their tools to sharpen things up a little... evolution not revolution. The CSA will work hard to make improvements and retool as needed, all the while rigorously maintaining the principle of a simple and affordable rule working to suit the broad range of needs here in the Caribbean. So let's all relax a bit and try to see the rum bottle as still half full, not half empty.

Now to the racing, and overall it was a pretty good year for the Caribbean. The weather was nice, solid trades at every event except for one, healthy entry numbers, many more grand prix teams, good committee work, and some great racing. Some efficient new yacht transport options made shipping easier, and a new 100-ton crane and deep-water haul-out facility in St Thomas allowed several of the bigger boats to be based here over the winter.

The Caribbean circuit has now grown and matured into its well-deserved place on the international race calendar. Each event has the challenge and incentive to meet the demands of today's race fleets, and it's up to the individual boats to vote their preferences with their attendance. Can't really argue with that.

Teams should also try to enter early to help ensure a good class at the events they choose; experience tells us that other similar boats will be monitoring the entry and so will be more likely to enter themselves. And hopefully the CSA rating committee will move forward with their plans to collaborate with ORC as a means to better utilise technology, while preserving the simple features of a rule system that has served the Caribbean so well over the years.

Next month: the Holmberg event-by-event Caribbean racing guide...

## STEADY HERE TOO

– Terry Hutchinson

The past month has been quite hectic. At the time of writing I am in Newport, Rhode Island, having just come off the inaugural Maxi72 North American Championship. Four boats competed over four days featuring a bunch of windward-leewards and finishing with a 30-mile coastal race.

The Maxi72 is much akin to the Version 5 America's Cup boat as a design. The boat requires a physicality and choreography that is impressive to watch. To be successful you

