
REJUVENATED SYDNEY DRAGON FLEET

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Around our Dragon sailing states of New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania and West Australia, we are coming to the end of our 2012/2013 sailing season. There have been some highlights this season particularly for NSW which has hosted the Winter Championships on Botany Bay, the NSW Championships and the Pacific Interport Regatta on Sydney Harbour and during the first two weeks of January, the Prince Phillip Cup (aka the Australasian Championships) on Botany Bay. Old hands and new have battled it out on these superb waters – Carl Ryves with crew Dick Sargeant, Gordon Ingate with David Giles, Martin Burke and Ian McCrossin, Matt Whitnall with Christian Brook and Rob Bishop, Marcus Blackmore with World Champion Tim Tavinor and Terry Wetton, Richard Franklin, Anthony Armstrong, Robert Alpe, Norman Longworth, Wolf Breit with Roger Hickman, et al.

This enthusiasm for the Dragon Class in Australia is a reflection of the renaissance of the Class that has been developing in Europe over the last 15-20 years. The Dragons are now the largest one design fixed keel racing fleet in Europe attracting Europe's finest sailors – former Olympic gold medallists and World Champions from many classes, royalty and the rich and famous. An increasing number of our Australians are taking advantage of the strong \$A to participate in the Circuit of European regattas held in many exciting and alluring places from Oslo and Berlin to Cascais in Portugal. Very importantly, new and nearly new boats are being purchased by our Dragon sailors to rejuvenate our previously ageing fleets. In Sydney the average age of our boats has dropped from 20 years to 4 years in a short space of time. The upgraded handling systems in these beautifully engineered boats whether from UK's Peticrows, Tasmania's Ridgeways

Marcus Blackmore
in his new Peticrows
Dragon with Tim
Tavinor (current World
Champion) and Terry
Wetton (right), Prince
Phillip Cup January
2013. Photographer:
Andrea Francolini



REJUVENATED SYDNEY DRAGON FLEET CONTINUED



Second overall is octogenarian international yachtsman Gordon Ingate, helming *Whimsical*. Photo: Andrea Francolini.

***Sidewinder* (Carl Ryves) placed third in the Prince Philip Cup. Photo: Andrea Francolini**

or Holland's *Doomernik* enable the trim finesse that the Dragons call for to be applied by the most demanding of skippers and crews.

Dragon fleet growth is occurring in Sydney and Perth as we see ourselves increasingly as a unified Dragon fraternity across our large land mass. Perth has a fleet of around 29 boats and growing! They continue to buy up boats from around Australia and participate with great enthusiasm on our national regatta Circuit. In Sydney the fleet of around 16 boats faces the challenge of limited hardstand space around the Harbour. This is being addressed so that the Sydney fleet may grow into the demand which exists among downsizing boat owners and elite sailors who seek to challenge their skills in this prestige class. The Melbourne fleet is still recovering from the exhaustion of having brilliantly hosted the 2011 Worlds but renewed enthusiasm has resulted from the development of youth in the class and two youth teams competed in the recent Victorian Championships.

We have created an Australian Dragon regatta circuit with the State Championships now held in interstate visitor friendly formats over 2, 3 or 4 consecutive days – more Dragon owners are getting involved with these regattas which provide the best waters, and high quality race management akin to the standards on the European Circuit. We have taken our Circuit regattas to new waters – in addition to Melbourne's renowned Port Phillip Bay we have some of the best water in the world for windward leeward Dragon racing. The iconic water off Fremantle was the venue for the WA Championship in 2012 for the first time in many years. Great racing! Botany Bay near Sydney now sees the Dragon fleet back after many years of absence and is the venue for our well supported Winter Championships in its third year in May. These waters around Australia and the quality of our race management will ensure that Australia will again host the World Championships in the not too distant future – we are looking at 2019.

We now have a national website built on the IDA template, which unifies us and is gaining good traction and support from the states. A professional web manager ensures the high quality and updating of this website. We have embraced the Australian Ranking List, now in

its second year, which is quite catching and will stimulate greater participation at Club level and the National Circuit in the years to come. The ARL in itself is a unifying force as we are all ranked on the one list covering the season's racing, whether we are in Perth, Sydney, Melbourne or Hobart.

Dragons are a racing class of the future, constantly challenging our yachting veterans and the young alike. Demand continues to grow. The Dragon with its design going back to 1927 has remained alive and vital through the constant engineering improvements being invested in its timeless classical design and beauty.



International Dragons fly colourful spinnakers on Botany Bay. Photo: Andrea Francolini

2013 Prince Philip Cup winner *Akula* helmed by Matt Whitnall with Christian Brook and Rob Bishop (right). Photo: Andrea Francolini

Dragon Prince Philip Cup 2013 – Results

1	AUS224	<i>Akula</i>	M Whitnall	17.4	(28.0C)	5.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	11.7	0.0
2	AUS217	<i>Whimsical</i>	G Ingate	35.0		8.0	0.0	8.0	3.0	8.0	(28.00) 8.0
3	AUS189	<i>Sidewinder</i>	C Ryves	35.4	(28.0B)	10.0	3.0	8.0	3.0	5.7	5.7
4	AUS200	<i>Riga</i>	I McCrossin	47.7		3.0	13.0	5.7	16.0	10.0	0.0 (17.0)
5	AUS226	<i>Hooligan</i>	M Blackmore	52.1		5.7	3.0	10.0	10.0	11.7	(20.0) 11.7
6	AUS213	<i>Shapes</i>	W Breit	53.1		0.0	11.7	(15.0)	11.7	5.7	14.0 10.0
7	AUS210	<i>Linnea</i>	S Anderson	70.0		10.0	8.0	(28.0F)	21.0	20.0	8.0 3.0
8	AUS221	<i>Saphira</i>	I Malley	77.7		11.7	15.0	13.0	15.0	(19.0)	10.0 13.0
9	AUS211	<i>French Connection</i>	A Armstrong	83.7		13.0	(18.0)	17.0	5.7	17.0	17.0 14.0
10	AUS184	<i>Taranui</i>	G Totterdel	90.7		14.0	19.0	11.7	(26.0)	15.0	15.0 16.0