

MYC NEWS

April 2020



JOURNAL OF MANLY YACHT CLUB

PO Box 22 Manly NSW 1655 | Tel: 02 9977 4949 | Email: info@myc.org.au | Web: www.myc.org.au

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Let me start by saying – and frankly - I'm bloody stir crazy.

I yearn to be on Mondo healing with salt spraying my face as we crash through the winter swell. Most of all I miss the people. Whether its yelling at Bruce Davis to get out of my way; joking with crew; Bob Morley's jokes or witnessing in bewilderment, yet another Teudt manoeuvre. Even taking pictures of Ian D and his prize in front of the Red Fire Hose in jest of Maz. That one never gets old!



We are living in an ever-changing environment where yesterday's norm is overtaken by the uncertainty of what we are yet to face. At the moment I am reading "The Sydney Harbour Yacht Race" by Rob Mundell which provides a detailed history of the race's history through stories. It's easy to draw parallels to the early years before skippers and crews benefited from technology that provided weather forecasts and navigation assistance. To set off on such an offshore race with so many unknowns, over the treacherous Bass Strait and the real possibility of not surviving. It's interesting to think about what the key personality traits of these mad sailors are and do modern sailors share them. Does this make us better equipped to face the impact that this pandemic is having on our lives? From my perspective there are a few key traits:

- **CALMNESS** – Good sailors when things go wrong never scream or throw a tantrum. Under duress, they focus on figuring out what is going on and how to fix it. To be calm is to be clear of mind and have clarity which is a significant advantage when sailing and facing an uncertain future.
- **RESOURCEFULNESS** – The ability to think on your feet and improvise with limited resources. Sailors do more than trim sails. They need a variety of skills to thrive – navigation, provisioning, electronics, mechanics, splicing, to name but a few; good sailors who, when faced with a problem, simply start figuring out solutions based on the materials at hand. Every week of the last month we have had limitations forced on our lives. The ability to focus on what we do have and make the best of it, is key to get ourselves through this situation.
- **INTUITION** - the ability to understand something instinctively, without the need for conscious reasoning. Intuition is what gives good sailors the confidence to go out and know that whatever comes their way that they are able to deal with it. It ultimately means that good sailors tend to suffer less from anxiety and fear of the unknown. The "unknown" becomes a core component of adventure.
- **RESILIENCE**- the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties. Good sailors never throw in the towel; they forge ahead knowing conditions will improve.

I know we will get through this storm, because we have the resources, the resilience and, if nothing else, the Rum to do so!

MYC'S NEW FOCUS

The Board and Sailing Committee are continuing to monitor the COVID-19 situation. While all club activities have stopped, we are going to utilise this downtime to focus on putting plans in place to return to operations as quickly and as safely as possible.

CLUB FINANCES

The Club is in a sound financial position.

Firstly: we were already heading into our off-peak season where we traditionally have only a small amount of activity at the Club.

Secondly: we are a volunteer-based club, so our operational expenses are low compared to most clubs.

Lastly: our Club has been operating at a modest profit for several years now, so we have sufficient cash reserves to rely on.

BEST CASE SCENARIO: If we are able to re-open before October the financial impact on the club will be minimal.

WORST CASE SCENARIO: If we can't return to full operations for the next 12 months we will expect the club to use about 35% of our cash reserves to cover essential operating expenses.

From my last email communication, the Board have taken the following actions in response to COVID-19:

1. Undertaken measures to reduce non-essential expenses including moving the bins inside, cancelling our rubbish collection and cleaning services and turning fridges off;
2. Financial planning based on a closure of 6 months and 12 months;
3. All sailing activities will only commence once the Board gives the go ahead, possibly in September. *Plan for the best but expect the worst*
4. The Board has formed a subcommittee in response to COVID-19. The objective of the committee is to:
 - a. monitor COVID-19 restrictions;
 - b. review Club activities;
 - c. report to the Board each month, while restrictions remain;
 - d. create a stepped plan for reinstating various club activities – sailing, venue hire etc when Public Health Orders are relaxed.

Continued on page 2...



Like us on Facebook, share experiences and help promote club events like Women's Challenge + Mini Regatta.

www.facebook.com/ManlyYachtClub

COMMODORE'S REPORT

The Four Horsemen appear to have been warming up for their act this year.

Drought, Fire, Flood, Pestilence.

Strange Times Indeed.

The advice and directives from various authorities tend to change rapidly and sometimes appear contradictory. Keep an eye on the Department of Transport website, as they appear to have sensible advice for boating. Please stay within the guidelines.

Manly Yacht Club has been dragged kicking and screaming into the digital age. Whoever said you can't teach an old dog new tricks, has yet to see Bruce Davis on a video conference. Yes folks, it happened ... strange times indeed.

The sailing year has now drawn to a close and the results are finalised. This year we are planning to hold a virtual presentation event due to the prohibitions on social gatherings.

We hope to return to full sailing circa September. In the meantime, we are in discussion about what we can and can't do within the guidelines.

Ideas mooted include virtual sailing, short-handed racing and racing one family per boat.

If you have any ideas, please contact the Sailing Committee and we shall add it to the wish list.

Keep safe with your families. We will get through this challenge.

Jason Bond –Commodore



Upcoming Events:

SUNDAY 19TH APRIL 2020
COMMODORE'S PICNIC

CANCELLED

SATURDAY 12TH MAY 2020
NSW CLUB JUDGE COURSE @ MYC

ONLINE?

SATURDAY 16TH MAY 2020
MYC PRESENTATION NIGHT

VIRTUAL

SUNDAY 17TH MAY 2020
FIRST WINTER SERIES RACE

ALL RACING ABANDONED

SUNDAY 28TH JUNE 2020
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

ONLINE ?

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

...Continued from page 1

While the Club is not operating the following will occur:

1. Replace the roller door downstairs in front of the new laser racks. This heavily rusted roller door which broke two weeks ago is beyond repair.
2. Continue with planned maintenance work – repair and painting of the hall by professionals.
3. Review of the Club's governance structure.
4. Replacing our current Articles of Association with a new constitution. This document was written in 1950; is outdated; and no longer aligns with our club's operations.
5. When we are able to lawfully assemble, we will require a small group of volunteers for a working bee. We will repair the downstairs sliding doors and repaint the men's bathroom and the beams on the deck.
6. Continue to investigate and assess **SailPASS**
7. Our intention to hold a celebration at the end of the year to celebrate our 70th ANNIVERSARY has been put on hold
8. I look forward to watching the online Presentation Evening and celebrating the success of our skippers and crews. I especially want to thank Maz Radford, Santo Saunders and Geoff Reid for making this night a possibility.

Stay positive.

Lisa Callaghan – President



PRESENTATION NIGHT

CELEBRATE

WELL ... THE PRESSURE IS ON!!

What was planning to be a great get together to swap tall tales, toast our wins with a glass of bubbles or 2 and congratulate all classes of winners, will now see Maz dragged kicking and screaming into the digital age...

Not quite as advanced as a video conference, a number of our members are working to bring a virtual presentation that can be viewed via a YouTube link. Hopefully we will succeed ... if not, the next newsletter will have ample content.

Presentation Night is still
16 May 2020

We'll send an email in plenty of time to get your drinks, popcorn and pizzas organized

- Who has won the Catering Cup?
- What about the Starter's Prize?
- And who is the Good Citizen for this year?



LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Reader,
This newsletter was meant to be filled with colourful images of great days out on the water... The final 2 club champs for the yachts, the Narrabeen Super Cup for our BIC sailors, our signature Women's Challenge, and the offshore jaunt up to Pittwater on Good Friday. At least the Laser fleet managed its final club championship. Instead, our sailing has been abandoned due to a pandemic that has swept the world.



We have a committed Board monitoring the various government directives. The uncertainty of the times makes it difficult to plan for the new season, but the Sailing Committee is working towards normal resumption and preparations in the new season handbook are underway. Contingency plans for pushing the sailing season back if necessary are being considered.

In the meantime, please stay safe, follow the guidelines, and plan for a great season once it gets here.

Kind Regards
Maz



More from Barry ...

I thought folks would be interested to know that for the first time in some time the "Cook your own Steak" format returned a profit over the 17 Twilight dinners held.

We had a 21 Race Series with 4 races abandoned where no dinner took place.

We were also able to run the Meat Tray raffle at the dinners which also returned a good profit to assist with Life Jacket purchases for the Junior Fleet and of course the Bar was busy on the nights.

The feedback has been very strong over the period due in part to the low Dinner price of \$15 and the significant efforts of Maz to make it happen in a most creative way along with others volunteering to assist.

All in all, a most pleasing result for the Club.

(Couldn't have done it without you, Barry. Thx)



CLUB MANAGER NEWS

While there has been no sailing activity at the club – there has been plenty of rubbish! As part of the “shut down” and to conserve costs to the club, our Club Manager ceased all further garbage pickups ... makes sense ... no sailing and no venue hire!

An update from Club Manager, Barry 8th April 2020...

Today our 15 wheelie bins were professionally cleaned and sanitised and they are now residing inside the Club in the new laser racks.

Between today and yesterday someone dropped off 5 bags of rubbish at the back door of the Club - it wasn't pretty. I re-bagged the rubbish and Bruce (Davis) kindly let me take them up to the marina and put them in his Sulo bin.

Those years as a bin-boy at Seaforth Primary School are finally paying off!

So, I have now laminated a couple of signs and run a spectra line and hook across the old bin area, and I have asked Ken (webmaster) to provide any CCTV footage from yesterday to see if we can recognise someone doing the wrong thing.

If this doesn't work, then another option may be to leave one red bin out which we can have removed when full, not a great option but at least a chance that rubbish won't be stacked around the back door.

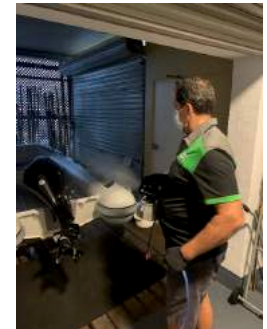
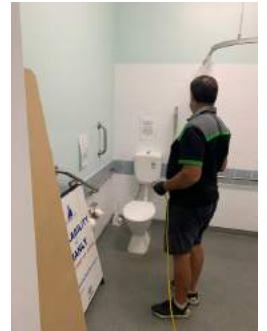


HERE'S WHAT "FOGGING" LOOKS LIKE AT MANLY YACHT CLUB

Extract from UPDATE – MYC Response to Coronavirus 6 April 2020

Accessing Manly Yacht Club

Following the last venue hire and sailing event two weeks ago, MYC employed a specialist cleaning company to 'fog' the premises with a disinfectant spray. We have sealed off the hall and are restricting all access. If you are accessing the downstairs for a tender or your laser, please be aware that there is no cleaning that is being carried out. Please ensure that you use the appropriate protective gear, wash your hands before and after and wipe down the areas you have touched.



CALLING ALL GREEN HEARTS AND THUMBS!

Come along to the Pittwater YHA Bush Regeneration Weekend

August 21st – 23rd September 11th – 13th



BOOKINGS ESSENTIAL!

Phone us: 9999 5748
Email us: pittwater@yha.com.au

VOLUNTEER FOR TWO MORNINGS' BUSH REGENERATION AND RECEIVE:

- 2 nights' accommodation
- 2 evening meals + 2 BBQ lunches + 2 morning teas
- Speaker will talk on environmental/Indigenous topics
- Use of kayaks

Alternatively come for a Sat or Sun mornings bush regen and enjoy a morning tea, BBQ lunch and an afternoon kayak.

\$50 non-refundable booking fee with a \$30 refund on arrival. A \$20 contribution for a weekend of great company, food and activities!

A Pittwater YHA activity in partnership with PNHA, NP&WS, Northern Beaches Council & supported by the Greater Sydney Local Land Service with funding from the Australian Government and The NSW Government Programs.



Michael and Sarah invite MYC members and friends to join in on one of the 2020 bush regen weekends to be run this May and August. Please make contact directly with the hostel using the details on the flyer above.

PH: 9999 5748

E: pittwater@yha.com.au



MYC SROS Juniors Development Program

What is a SROS?
Short Rig Open Skiff

Manly Yacht Club is building its Junior Sailing fleet with 9 additional **SROSs**. This is an excellent, fun class of boat giving kids the thrill of sailing at an entry point to our juniors' development sailing program.

Introducing 9 new **SROSs** means some 70 juniors can experience the enjoyment of sailing with other like-minded children, progressing together through our juniors' development sailing program.

The total project cost for the new **SROS** boats is **\$26,500**.

We seek your support to give our next generation of sailors the opportunity to participate in a fun outdoors family orientated sport in the beautiful sailing waters surrounding Manly.

Your donations are tax deductible.

[Donate](#)

<https://asf.org.au/projects/manly-yacht-club/>

Please give generously when making your donations to this worthy project directed at developing our future generation of sailors.

A PICTURE PAINTS A THOUSAND WORDS

Colin's 2016 New Year's Eve fireworks burst

As the dark spectre of Coronavirus looms over Manly Cove, it reminds me of a neonised (sic) picture I created of the 2016 New Year fireworks bursting over the bay. Please excuse my gloomy introduction.

How have you been coping with the cancellation of races and events, at MYC? Tough isn't it, with no sailing fix.

Sara and I have found some solace in visiting our favourite viewing spots, on the Harbour, which, although devoid of the usual activities, still offers nourishment to the soul.

On one such excursion we were roused from our quiet reverie by, "Hoots Mon!" (A typical Scottish interjection).

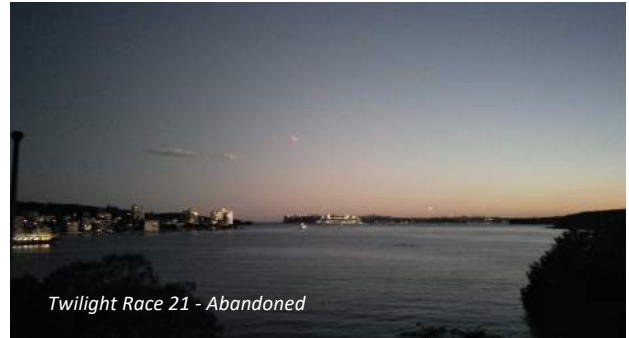
Greg Windsham (Commodore of our neighbouring club ... Ed) and his wife Janet had spotted us, as they were exercising along the Harbour walk.

Adhering to the required social distancing, a wee "blether" (Scottish for blather... Ed) ensued, with old sailing reminiscences, of past exploits, sailing on the mighty 'Felix', with Gene Scott, and I told him there's a photo of the three of us hanging in MYC.

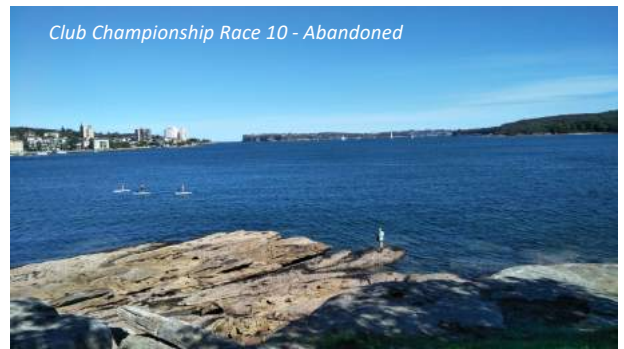
Q: How did we make it into the rogues' gallery of Sydney to Hobart yachts?



Gene on helm, Grant amidships, Colin as foredeckie



Twilight Race 21 - Abandoned



Club Championship Race 10 - Abandoned

A: El Presidente Gene Scott

- being the only genuine Sydney to Hobartian.
- having made the passage with Brian Wilson on "Eos"
- and with Bruce Hitchman on "Pacific Breeze" ...Greg and I, mere charlatans.

I hope no one thinks we made it in an open boat. Well I wouldn't say the camera never lies, but a **picture is worth a thousand words.**

Take care.

Colin Cameron



PEPPERTREE WINES CLUB CHAMPIONSHIPS RACE 9 & 10

PROVISIONAL RESULTS HERE: <https://sites.google.com/site/mycresults/2019-2020/club-championship>



PEPPER TREE WINES



ABANDONED



CORONAVIRUS

MYC LASERS REPORT



RESULTS: <https://sites.google.com/myc.org.au/lasers/results/2019-2020?authuser=0>



CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP 15 & 16 (APS 13 & 14)

*The last Club Champs before the "lockdown"
... thanks, Colin for the image*



PEPPER TREE WINES

Leading up to what was to be the final 4P heats, Covid-19 stopped the yachts and by skipper vote, we raced the final Club Championship heats instead. It was in case we didn't get another chance - and we didn't. Of the 3 contenders for the CC, Ian's knee (sadly) kept him from starting, leaving Phil and Ian in the ring.



12 of our single-handed (and therefore self-isolating) Lasers glided off in a zephyr (6 knot) ENEaster. The first race was tight with Ian winning by just 14 seconds from Phil,



Phil



Christy and Dutchy – images by Lisa

And just to wrap up, Ian's been striving for the top prize for many seasons and slowly but surely, through a lot of extra regatta sailing, doing twilights with the yachts and hanging out with Evie's coaches, he's finally put it all together and will be extremely hard to knock off his perch. Well done Ian. You did the hard yards and triumphed.

Congratulations must also go to Phil for his close 2nd in the CC and for also taking out the Annual Pointscore Series. Ian can add the Spring Pointscore to his show bag and Gordon can swagger (as he does) away with the Autumn Spring Series. Nice work. Thankfully, Ian didn't limp away empty handed, winning the season's 4P Championship - thanks for all your off-water help Ian.

Last but not least is Dutchy, who with his renowned stamina, has managed to excel in a bunch of short races to take out the Micro Regatta. A feather in your cap Mr Holland.

Thanks to everyone for a fun and competitive season and to Maz for your tireless work in putting this newsletter together. Stay safe everyone and hopefully we'll be back on the water in the not-so-distanced future.

Geoff Reid - Lasers



followed by the 'light-wind dark horse' Gordon, 10 seconds in front of Garth, Vivien and Cameron (all within 3 seconds).



Cameron and Gordon battling it out – image by Colin

On handicap it was Dave who stormed back into form, finishing a mere 3 seconds in front of a fast Cameron, followed closely by Gordon and Vivien. In the second race on handicap it was déjà vu, with identical top-four results – spooky. Dave removed the cap, only to put it back on.

The scratch results in this final CC heat (like the breeze) did not favour the radial sailors, with Veronique in 11th and Tim in 9th. And while Phil managed a brave 3rd behind Dave, it was Ian who finished the day with two bullets to deservedly take out the Club Championship for the 2019/20 season.

A special thanks must go to our President Lisa Callaghan for helping the day's racing actually happen. She stayed 1.5 metres away from me at all times in the Robbie R as we laid the course and officiated proceedings - cheers Lisa. I'd also like to thank Santo who followed the fleet round and repositioned and picked up a few marks for us.



PEPPERTREE WINES TWILIGHT RACES 20 AND 21



RESULTS: <https://sites.google.com/site/mycresults/2019-2020/twilight-series>

PEPPER TREE WINES



TWILIGHT RACE 20 INCLUDING TWILIGHT FEMALE HELM RACE 5



Ruffian steams home



Congratulations ... Jeannie (3rd Moonraker), Lyn (2nd Sirius), Jackie (starters prize 00:00 on Esra Tew, Nicola (1st Ratty Tooey) ... and the fire hose reel ... LAST!!



Twilight race 21 – ABANDONED
On the spot reporter Colin checks out the scene



PETER WILKINS STARTER'S PRIZE

CLOSEST TO ALLOCATED START TIME
TWILIGHTS, SUMMER AND WINTER SERIES

TEXAS BBQ
PLATEFULS OF LEGENDARY LONE STAR FLAVORS
★★★

MYC BALL 2020
4 APRIL 2020 7PM
\$50
INCLUDES FOOD & ENTERTAINMENT

ORDER TICKETS ONLINE VIA
WWW.MYC.ORG.AU/MYCBALL
OR
BUY AT TWILIGHTS & SUNDAY RACES

POSTPONED - DATE TO BE ADVISED

The **QUAYS**
MARINE CENTRE ON PITTWATER

THE GRAND PRIZE DRAW FROM THE BARREL IS SCHEDULED FOR PRESENTATION NIGHT... SAME RULES STILL APPLY ... YOU NEED TO BE ON THE DECK TO COLLECT THE PRIZE

UPDATE

PRESENTATION NIGHT IS VIRTUAL, SO... WE'LL DRAW IT ON THE FIRST TWILIGHT WE ARE ALLOWED TO!

MARATHON RACE 3

RESULTS: <https://sites.google.com/site/mycresults/2019-2020/marathon-series>

With a reef in *Khaleesi* and only one starter in division 2 and a casual as well, I can only surmise that it must have been a bit windy for Marathon Race 3. There is no indication from the race results, what course was chosen but it seems seven Division 1 boats and one Division 2 boat took to the course and all came back safely. (You can tell that the editor is making this up as she goes along ... Note to ALL race directors... if you want accurate reporting, please contribute!)

Thank you, Colin, Phil and Isabel for the images – much appreciated... Ed

SEVEN MILES

COFFEE ROASTERS



deVita
TASTES OF NAPOLI



Khaleesi ... missing out on the starters prize by 1 second and second fastest round the course – I can see there will be some tussles between Corum and Khaleesi next season



Enigma – second on handicap, first to cross the finish line



Corum... fastest round the course and closest to the start... well done!



Stephen with Phil - Ca Va - first on handicap



Spiritbird – third on handicap



Michael picks up the "sticky" starters prize

NEED A BREAK FROM SAILING?

WHY NOT CHILL OUT IN THE BLUE MOUNTAINS...

"ASHWOOD"

3-BEDROOM
MOUNTAIN COTTAGE
NEAR KATOOMBA FALLS



Enquiries: Contact Barry on 0423 519 863

CONGRATULATIONS MONDO

Grand Prize Winner

ASHWOOD

KATOOMBA ACCOMODATION PRIZE

You've got to be on the deck to claim your prize ... even if you didn't race on the last day



Colin stepped in to fill a spot on Robbie R – well deserved prize for sacrificing a sail

A NOTE FROM ELI

changes are taking place in the World.....thousands of people dying in Europe because of the Corona Virus, and we are here in Australia, thousands of Kilometres away, virtually under lockdown and trying our hardest to keep the virus under control. Every person is trying their utmost to stay healthy, and to avoid the spread of this deadly virus. Who would have thought just a few short weeks ago that we would have to stop sailing, stop going out for meals, the gym would be closed, and everything we always took for granted would be off our menu?

But this is what has happened.

I want to let everyone know that we are thinking of them and working as hard as we can to remain fit and healthy, so that when we are finally allowed to do so, we can get our Sailability going again, stronger and better than ever.

So much to look forward to...a healthy workplace, clear skies, everyone back to work, and everyone we know healthy enough to enjoy it. We are thinking of you all every day, hoping that we see your smiling faces back at Sailability soon.

Things that have been postponed will be just around the corner when we get going again...

- The Women's Challenge....so keep this in mind to stay healthy and fit.
- Our 25th Anniversary Dinner coming up as soon as we can book the hall again.
- Hopefully, our end of season and end of year Regatta...possibly combined this year.

So much to look forward to in the coming months.

We care about you and are thinking of you every day.

Eli Demeny



HANSA NSW STATE TITLES 2020

Coomba Park Aquatic Club did a great job hosting the event for the second time. Three weeks of much needed heavy rain meant their building and landscape works weren't quite complete. When finished this will be an excellent facility. Wallis Lake is wide open with true breezes offering very good and fair sailing. There were eight branches represented.

It was great to see Peter Stokes from Taree.

Two 2.3s sailed, Allan Jones doing better on Saturday and Alyse Saxby better on Sunday and then winning on a count back.



The crew talks tactics

The 303 singles racing was very tight, the first four boats finishing with low scores. Allister Peek (ACT) winning with 8 points, Jonathan Frearson (Coomba Aquatic Club) on 11 points, Bronwyn Ponder (ACT) on 13 points and Michael Burnett (Manly) 14 points. Michael the

big improver, attending only his third regatta.

The 303 doubles again had very tight races with four different heat winners. Unfortunately, Denis Linney (Manly) broke his boom on Sunday after being very competitive on Saturday. Sarah Plunkett and John Sanderson (Dobroyd) 9 points retained the title, Colin and Brad Alderton (Port Stephens) 10 points and Nathaniel Quan and Margaret Sanderson (Dobroyd) 13 points.



Ivan & Denis in Woody 1st place

It was great to have three Liberties competing, thank you to Allan Jones and Crystal Bay for supplying them and Allan for making two trips to and from Sydney. Jason Elwes (Port Stephens) first, Doug Monk (Port Stephens) next and then Brett Stevenson (Middle Harbour).

An on-water challenge was avoiding the streams of floating sea grass. Picking up weed made you very slow and did impact the results of all at various times.

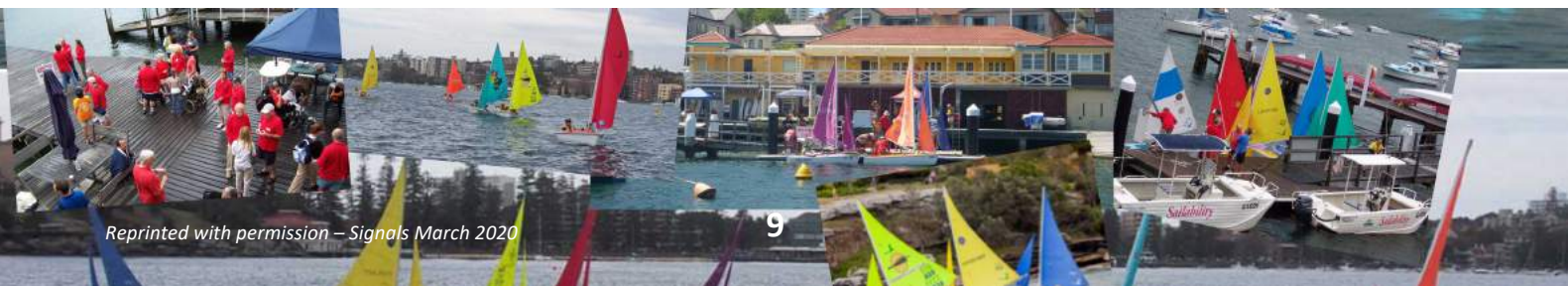
A big thank you to Terry Peek for his top-quality race management. The committee at Coomba Park and the volunteers did a sterling job. The dinner on Saturday night a highlight.



Michael & Eli 3rd place



Boats spread over the course



SYDNEY TO HOBART RACE

An **amateur** Navigator's view

by *Duncan McRae*

Entering Storm Bay in the 2018 race – possibly the wrong headsail up!

As with most sailing events, preparation is important. The owner spares no expense making sure gear is fit for the purpose and in top shape. In addition, the boat (and crew) has had a pretty serious regime of races (about 8000nm of racing in the five years since the boat was launched, including five Hobarts, the 2018 1060nm Sydney to Noumea, and the 650nm Groupama race which is a circumnavigation of New Caledonia – bouncing off coral reefs in a tropical paradise).

Over this time, gear has been broken and upgraded as required (blowing both spinnaker halyards in a memorable Gold Coast midnight run off Byron Bay prompted a bit of up-spec'ing in the replacements). Systems have been modified to work better or weigh less, such as the carbon coffee-mug rack and carbon rudder, sail configurations evolve (spinnaker staysail, blooper) and various parts of the boat are always being upgraded to get that extra tweak in performance.

Our immediate race prep. Included the Cabbage Tree Island race (180nm) two months prior to the big event. This is used as the Hobart qualifier (you must do an overnight passage of at least 180nm), however we'd qualified previously in the year with the Sydney to Gold Coast race. The race was a good cobweb clearing exercise, as we had some very heavy running in up to 40kn overnight (the new boat speed record of 19.3kn while on the helm under a single-reefed main and poled out jib top was somewhat pant-staining given that Komatsu Azzurro is a displacement boat designed in the 60's), then a solid bash into 25-30kn and a messy seaway off Newcastle coming back. All the gear and crew held up well, so it gave us all plenty of confidence that we were ready to hit the ground running on Boxing Day.

The crew this year consisted of the owner Shane, Jim and Michael (both whom I've sailed with for about 25 years on various boats), Adrian from Tassie (an indestructible individual with a raucous laugh), and Clint from Argentina (who had sailed with us

previously in a Gold Coast victory, and who constantly fails to teach me Spanish). We sail 6-up, 3 on each watch, 3hrs on, 3hrs off. Sleep is interrupted for anything that requires more bodies on deck or if body weight needs to be relocated.

As official naviguesser, my pre-race work focussed on making sure we had easy (and low bandwidth) access to all the useful publicly available weather and current data, reviewing the weather forecasts and models every run (12 hourly) up to the day, running and interpreting the optimal routes, putting it useful waypoints, and ensuring the navigation laptop was configured. The boat has a mobile data modem on board which provides decent data rates when within about 50nm of the coast, plus a satellite phone which provides very low bandwidth (at high costs) which can be used when out of mobile range.



Raceday – crew all ready to go!

L to R: At boom Adrian, Duncan, Clint, on housetop Michael, Jim, Shane



Nav station



Stove left, toilet mid bow, nav station to right

The 'nav station' consists of sitting on the engine box wedged against the mast. The laptop computer is velcroed onto the fridge lid, located under the chart plotter and near all the other gizmos like sat phone, HF and VHF radios.

My interpretation of the forecasts and our evolving race strategy were emailed to everyone daily as the weather forecasts moved about. This was important to make sure that the crew were 'on-board' with the race strategy and could provide input to our strategy. For example, Jim had some mates down in Tassie reporting adverse set on the coast South of Freycinet, and Adrian had experienced the same when in some recent local races. There's also a wealth of experience of past Hobart races amongst the crew (a total of 80, with a crew of six!), remembering where things went pear-shaped in past races can be very useful, as can heeding the golden rules such as 'your first sight of Tasmania should be Tasman Island'.

There are a few weather models around, and they all differ slightly in their scope, outlook time, spatial and temporal resolution. Global models like GFS (US) and ECMWF (Euro) concentrate on the big picture but aren't so great for coastal effects like sea and land breezes.

They provide a good large-scale overview. The BOM has its own modelling (<http://www.bom.gov.au/australia/meteye/>), which has a shorter outlook (6 days) but is tuned to the past Australian weather, so tends to be much more trustworthy along the coastal features. There are also some commercial models from companies such as predictwind, which promise higher resolution and better forecasting at a price.

Not all the models are available as GRIBS – eg: the ECMWF and BOM models – so there's a lot of back and forth comparison between the available visual presentation of their data and the models for which we have GRIBS. GRIBS are essential for the routing software – they encode two dimensional snapshots of wind speed, pressure, etc at fixed time intervals in the future. These are then fed into the routing package (we use Expedition, though similar free packages such as qtVlm are also available), which calculates your boat's optimal route along the racecourse based on the boat's polars. Polars capture how fast the boat can sail in various conditions, based on TWA, TWS, wave conditions etc. Your aim is always to sail at least as fast as your polars. This is another aspect that needs some human input – you have to have confidence in your polars – can the crew sail the boat at that speed all the time?

Routing looks as simple as point and click then follow the track, however like all sailing (including around our small part of the river), you need to consider risk and reward. Are you always going to sail 100% of your polars? Does a particular route rely on a high risk strategy – such as meeting a shift at just the right time according to the models? Is that projected favourable current actually there? How accurate are your weather models in direction, speed, and time?

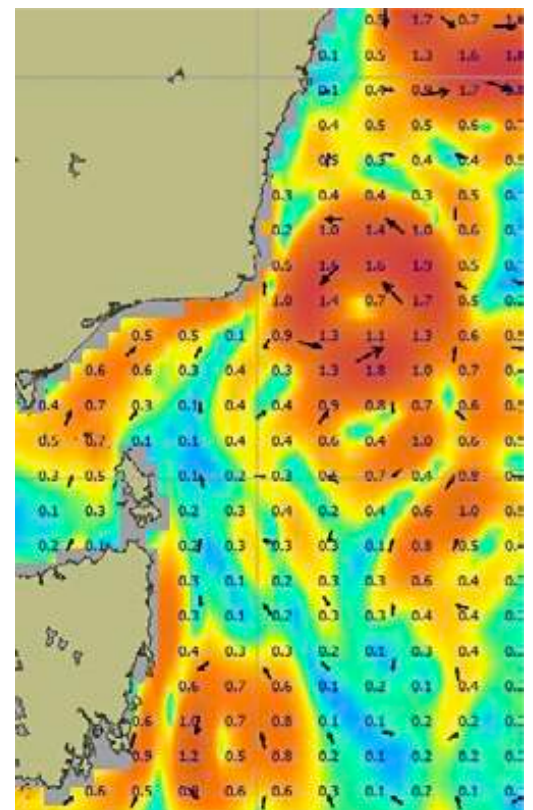
Fortunately, the routing packages provide mechanisms to assess many of these risks, such as scaling your polars up or down and ignoring the current models to see how much that changes the optimal route, calculating a 'time sensitivity' around the optimal route showing how far from the ideal route you can deviate and still finish within a time window of the 'optimal' time, for example. These are all available, but you need to know what they do, and how to drive them. As with all software and modelling, you get out what you put in. Garbage in Garbage out. You need to be aware of the limitations of current and weather models and your boat (and crew's) actual performance.

We also tag a couple of boats we want to keep an eye on; those of similar performance, friendly rivals, or boats we really want to beat.

With the benefit of internet, we can keep an eye on them while within mobile data range of the coast.

The Weather:

One week out, the weather models will start to show the general picture, but the timing and strength of changes is only a guide. At this point, the models were all pointing to a 20kn SE on race day due to a trough working its way up the NSW South coast.



The all important EAC chart, always taken with a grain of salt

A low pressure over the northern part of Australia, and a high ridge extending across the bight through to NZ could be generally relied on. ie: apart from the start, mostly light winds, sea breezes. This was atypical weather for this time of the year, with no low pressure systems coming sweeping up the coast to clobber the fleet in typical Hobart fashion.

Not to be trusted this far out from raceday, I'll quote the email I sent on the 19th December: "nothing on weather yet – other than both models say we're going to start in a 25-30kn SE'ster, so that probably won't happen."

Three days out, the models were aligning on a trough off the NSW South Coast but disagreeing on how far North it would get. Some said a SE start, others were saying it would wash out on the South Coast and we'd have a NE start.

The EAC was also a bit tepid – only a moderate anticlockwise eddy 50nm or so off Gabo Island would be likely to give us any advantage.

Something to keep an eye on. In a smaller boat (slower speeds), a knot or two of favourable current can make a significant difference if you can find it; but again – you need to evaluate the risk/reward. How far off track do we need to go to take advantage? How accurate is the model? The current models in particular are an evolving science. They are calculated from satellite altimetry, which captures the high and low spots on the ocean. From this, an estimate of water velocity is made, much like low and high pressure systems and the wind. The complications arise due to factors such as local depth (seafloor topography), upwelling, local gravity – which provides a static offset to local sea level and must be subtracted, and other such magic beyond my knowledge. It pays to keep an eye on a couple of weeks' worth of current projections, plus any real-time data available (Ocean Buoy data in the form of Argo drifters), and local knowledge (eg: having a Tassie onboard who'd recently done the Maria Island race, we knew there was a bit of Northerly running set along the Southern Tassie coast, Jim had some other mates in Tassie confirming).

By the 24th, the models were all agreeing that the trough would park on the South Coast. A brisk NE start. The MSLP prognosis was suggesting more gradient Northerlies a day or two into the race.

Christmas Day, and all the weather models now align on what's going to happen for at least the first couple of days, which is nice. Race day was Thursday.

The magician's box routing software was saying one of two things (depending on the weather model used):

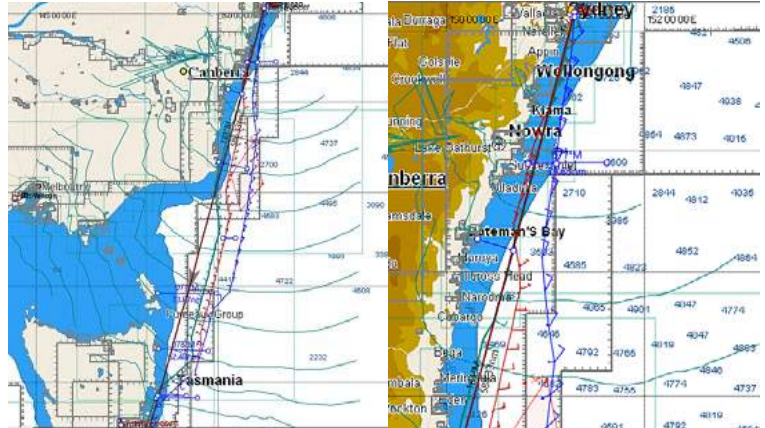
1) duck in to the coast through the trough line and work the Southerly, before the NE built again Friday afternoon off the South Coast of NSW.

OR

2) stay wide of the trough through Thursday night, in the easing NE. Breeze may veer East, but remains North of E all night before building again Friday.

A closer inspection of option 1) showed that it relied on a little kink in the isobars to get through the trough with any breeze at all, and there was enormous time sensitivity on that route. ie: high risk!

Option 2) was much more robust to variations in the forecast, and also set us up for the large eddy in current circling anticlockwise about 75nm off Gabo Island. Option 2) it was for the NSW coast.



The routing on the evening of the 25th, showing three quite disparate routes, some markups (eg: the red diamond off Gabo indicated the Southerly going stream of set we wanted to be in), and the predicted weather (flags along routes). Green goes through the expected trough.

The BOM Meteye view of the trough off the NSW south coast predicted for two days after the start (when we'd be there). Staying well offshore meant we remained in the NE breeze. The Meteye view is useful for eyeball Mark-I calibration of the other weather models, but the data is not available (affordably) for routing.



Bass Strait forecast for the time we'd be crossing (Friday night / Saturday morning) was strong (20- 30kn) Northerlies all the way, with a backing to the NW and easing then W 10-15 by evening Saturday. At this point, the models were aligned on a shift to the SW, 10kn and then quickly SE somewhere off St Helens around midnight on the 28th (Sat).

There was no set to speak of in Bass Strait. Forecasts after the SE shift were backing E and NE during the day, with good East Coast Tassie sea breezes all the way to Tasman.

This drove the strategy for the latter half of the race. The course across Bass Strait wasn't too critical as we had tail winds, but more importantly, we should avoid the lee of Flinders Island and Northern Tassie in the W/ NW breeze, and we wanted to position ourselves wide of St Helens so that we could capitalise on the SE breeze, and be eased-sheets into the Tassie coast on port tack. We did not want to be pinned on the shore!

It all pointed to plotting a course significantly (50nm or more) East of the Tasman Island rhumb line.

The forecast after Tasman light (overnight / early hours of Monday) said gradient Northerlies over Storm Bay... so we were hopeful that meant breeze, without the typical Derwent River 'shut-down'.

During the race:

With a crew of only 6, there are no specialists other than bow. Adrian and I handled the bow on each watch, but we all rotate on the helm every 30min. This helps keep everyone moving in a cold race (where you may otherwise be spending 3 solid hours sitting on a cold and wet rail), and it ensures the helmsman is fresh and alert, which can be very handy if conditions are dicey.

My other role during the race is to keep an eye on the evolving weather, by downloading the models every 12 hours, re-running the routing from our current position, and keeping the crew up to date on the impending weather and strategy to ensure they go in the right direction (not always to the next mark (Tasman)). We tend to handle the direction issue by setting waypoints on the nav system for the helm to aim, making sure the watch understands how critical (or not) that particular direction is – sometimes it can be 20 or 30 degrees window, and the aim is to sail as fast as possible at any angle in that window. Shane (the owner) handles the regular radio scheds and doesn't appear to need much sleep.

What eventuated?

We nailed the NSW South Coast. Went wide of Jervis Bay (about 50nm), plus some unforecast Easterly flowing current pushed us out. We kept the boat heated up under spinnaker as the breeze eased Thursday night.

By midday Friday, we were 100nm off Bermagui in a 10kn NE and had gained 20nm latitude on the boats inshore who had sailing through the trough and into a light S breeze. Then we hit the top of the Eddy spot on, and by evening in Bass Strait running in 20kn, we'd pulled out 40nm on one of our closest competitors, *Katwinchar*. By the time we fell out of the Eddy the next morning, we had run five or six hours of 3kn favourable current and had pulled off a 200nm day (which is pretty good for a displacement 34 footer).

The other memorable part of the large eddy was the number of sunfish we spotted. In my 25 years of sailing offshore, I think I've seen three sunfish. In this one eddy, I saw another three, and we hit one Friday evening.

Fortunately, *Azzurro's* keel is old-school (fat, tapered, bulb-less and sloped), and it slipped aside with a sore head.

Somewhere around this point, our only significant breakage occurred. We were running in a building 20-25kn NE with our S2 (0.75oz symmetric spinnaker) and decided to change to the heavier S3 (1.2oz) at last light on the watch change (9pm) – prudent and conservative, as the nights were pitch black with no moon, stars obscured by cloud or smoke, so it was going to be tricky to steer. I was up on the foredeck hooking up the heavier spinnaker for the hoist when the helm yelled out that the kite had gone. It blew at the luff tape about 2m above the clew, and then quickly zippered across to the foot of the sail.

So down came the remains of that kite, and up went the S3. This was an odd failure, as the S2 was almost brand new, and we had never flogged or abused it. We normally run the S2 up to about 25kn true (about 18 max apparent breeze) ... words will be had with the sailmaker, though a post-race (possibly lubricated) discussion with a fellow sailor suggested that brand-new kite cloth was prone to failing if stressed.

The breeze built all night to about 30kn or so and the sea became quite confused with a conflicting NW and NE swell, so around midnight we changed down to a poled-out jibtop headsail, which is much easier to steer by and more forgiving / indestructible, and a single reef in the main by early morning. Still on port tack about 100nm East of the rhumb line.

Through Saturday morning we shook out the reef and the breeze backed enough to the N that we gybed and starting heading straight at Tasman Island. In hindsight (isn't it a wonderful thing), we should have gybed to the West earlier in the night, as the confused sea was partly due to us pushing about a knot of adverse current. The breeze continued to back further to the NW (bringing bushfire smoke with it) and ease during the day, such that by mid afternoon we were tight reaching with the jibtop and a staysail up.

That evening's weather model (I'd downloaded what I thought was the most accurate over the sat phone) was still pointing to the SW/SE shift off the north coast of Tassie around 11pm, I briefed the crew on the expected 11pm wind shift to the SE and the plan of attack – 'tack as soon as its favoured, around 180 TWD'. We continued to tight reach towards Tasmania as dusk approached, and the other watch changed to a #1 headsail as the breeze further headed us. Up on watch at 9pm, and we cruised into a pitch black night on a flat sea – 7ish knots in 13kn of breeze with a cracked headsail. One of those memorable evenings as a dense sea fog flowed out of Banks Strait, while phosphorescent dolphins kept us entertained on the rail.

It was a pleasant surprise to have the fog lift and breeze shift rapidly SW then SE within the space of 20 minutes or so. We tacked over around 11:15pm just as predicted as the breeze went past 180 and the other tack became favoured. I became a navigational god for a brief time and went off watch at 12pm.

The run into Tasman Island went as expected, the breeze backing further E, building and clocking NE with the sea breeze. We were keeping an eye on the boats around the corner, and there had obviously been a big split in the fleet, as there were 20 odd boats parked at Cape Raoul all morning, with nothing between them and the finish. We arrived at Tasman some time around midnight Sunday, but eerily couldn't see the light, we assumed due to low cloud.

The next part of the race is always dicey. You either get hammered by a big SW (we weren't going to get that, which was nice), or if a NE is blowing (as it was – a gradient somewhat lighter than the sea breeze during the afternoon) there can be very tricky dead patches under the cliffs at Cape Pillar (behind Tasman) and Cape Raoul. For this reason, we had turned the corner at Tasman keeping about 3-5 nm offshore.

Fortunately, we had the AIS, race tracker with mobile data and yachts ahead of us to observe. There was a big park-up at Raoul with boats going in random directions trying to find breeze, but they were all moving well between Tasman and Raoul.

Going off watch at 12pm – we had a somewhat vigorous debate regarding how far off Raoul we should stay. Tensions often rise this close to the finish, and every extra mile off was a mile further to sail, but more likely to stay in the breeze. A tricky call either way. The other watch motored to Raoul (10nm) in quick time reaching with kite.

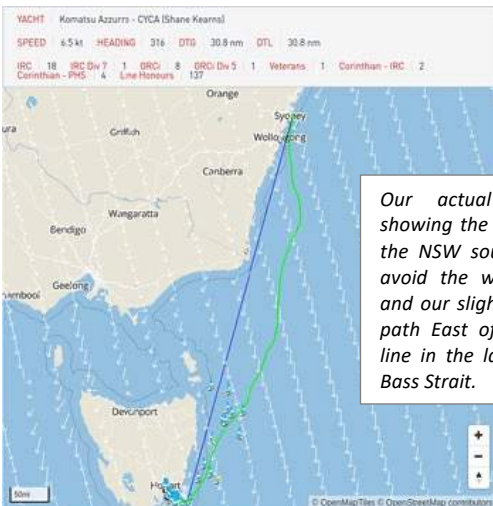
... and then the wheels fell off. I woke at 3am with us becalmed about 2nm off Raoul in the vicinity of about 9 other boats. We sat through our whole watch (3 hours), moving about 2nm, while boats ahead in Storm Bay powered towards the Iron Pot, and others (but not all) took a more circumspect route further offshore. It wasn't that much faster offshore, but they were at least moving.

Sometime after dawn, we drifted into a visible line of NW land breeze that was draining out of Nubeena to the East, and subsequently Tiger Head Bay to the NW. We powered across Storm Bay with a Jib Top while trying to work out how to enter the Derwent river. At the Iron Pot, a gaggle of larger boats sat becalmed.

So – we worked the breeze we had, staying in it as long as possible. Up near Betsey Island where the breeze dropped out, and we drifted towards the pot. One of the greatest strengths of *Azzurro* is her slippery hull shape. She drifts in flat water and light breeze better than just about any other boat. As it was now late morning, a zephyr of S sea breeze started to build outwards the shore of South Arm, and we crept along it, passing three of the 40 footers



Azzurro all snug outside Constitution Dock, another race completed



Our actual racetrack, showing the wide arc off the NSW south coast to avoid the weak trough, and our slightly too-wide path East of the rhumb line in the latter part of Bass Strait.

Then golden rule #3 kicked in. In the Derwent, “the East shore may be bad, and the Western shore no better, but the middle is always the worst!”. So we picked the Eastern shore, drifted in and out of bays in anything from zero to 10kn from the E, NE or SE. The sailing master (Jim) kept me busy on the bow with the drifter, code zero, #1 headsail and S1 kite all stacked and ready to deploy as the wind changed.

Nicole Douglass (a sometime Spiral sailor known to drop in on CRSC) has two great drone videos of us sailing up the Derwent river on her facebook page, including a drive-by interview – see <https://www.facebook.com/pg/sailorgirlHQ/videos> “Live from the middle of the Derwent” dated Dec 30. They give a very good view of how frustrating it can be in the river after sailing for four days.

A final attempt to hold the kite plus blooper from Garrow light to the finish for a bit of a laugh – but the wind shifted and we ended up crossing the line under kite at 45 minutes or so under 4 days.

133 over the line, 52nd on IRC, 1st of IRC div 7, 3 in ORCi div 5 and 2nd in Veterans Corinthian.

Postscript:

After re-reading the above, I realise haven't covered much (if any) of the actual sailing. Unfortunately, after 25 plus years of offshore sailing, only the memorable moments (wonderful, frightening or both) tend to stick in the mind. I understand that most of you kind readers know the mechanics of sailing anyway.

If you want an overview of the boat, search “Boat Tour – Komatsu Azzuro” on youtube.

Duncan McRae



Small but sweet

This article was first published in the March 2020 edition of Up the River, a Bi-monthly magazine of Concord and Ryde Sailing Club Inc.

It was reprinted with permission from the author and the editor of that magazine.

I commend the magazine for its easily read content and layout.

See <http://www.concordrydesailing.org.au/>

The author, Duncan McRae, is Commodore of the Concord and Ryde Sailing Club and has sailed in the MYC Club Champs on Pam and in offshore races on Copernicus a number of times.

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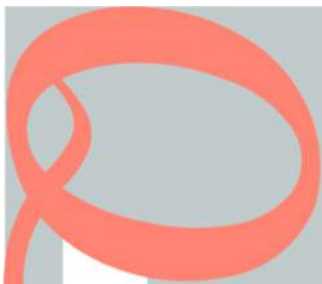
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"14 Shores" Merlot	Wrattobully	2014	\$45.00	\$38.25		\$459.00		
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Semillon	Hunter Valley	2019	\$30.00	\$25.50		\$306.00		
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Chardonnay	Wrattobully	2017	\$30.00	\$25.50		\$306.00		
Chardonnay	Hunter Valley	2017	\$30.00	\$25.50		\$306.00		
"Four Clones" Chardonnay	Orange	2017	\$30.00	\$25.50		\$306.00		
"Classics" Cabernet Merlot Petit Verdot	Wrattobully	2016	\$30.00	\$25.50		\$306.00		
"The Pebbles" Shiraz Viognier	Wrattobully	2016	\$30.00	\$25.50		\$306.00		
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Chardonnay	Varietal	2018	\$20.00	\$17.00		\$204.00		
Merlot	Varietal	2016	\$20.00	\$17.00		\$204.00		
Cabernet Sauvignon	Varietal	2011/6	\$20.00	\$17.00		\$204.00		
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