

## 40TH ANNIVERSARY REGATTA

# A CELEBRATION OF SWANS

*Nautor's Swan marked the milestone of its 40th anniversary with a regatta in the land of its birth, Finland, where 700 sailors enjoyed a spirited week of racing and social events*

A fleet of 79 Swans gathered in Turku at the end of July to celebrate the 40th Anniversary Regatta. This special regatta was organised in co-operation with Turun Pursiseura, the Yacht Club of Turku, which was also celebrating an anniversary this year – its 100th. The archipelago of Turku on the south-western coast of Finland provided a beautiful setting for participants and the 700 sailors enjoyed a spirited week of racing and socials in glorious weather. Three days of racing, involving four classes, were held from 27-30 July. Competitors sailed in beautiful sunshine and very warm conditions, although a lack of wind made all the races very challenging.

The fun started with a pre-regatta Swan Rendezvous in Nauvo, with around 20 Swans taking part. There were some popular onshore activities such as a beach volleyball contest and a regatta where sailors young and old came to do battle in single-handed Zoom dinghies.

On the Wednesday morning, the Rendezvous participants set sail for Turku where a good many Swans had already arrived and settled in. After a skipper's briefing, the teams came together for a welcome dinner hosted by Leonardo



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Ferragamo and the patron of the event, Speaker of the Finnish Parliament and honorary ClubSwan Member Paavo Liponen. A big cheer went up when Mr Ferragamo commented that it should be much less than 40 years before the next Swan regatta is held in the northern Baltic Sea region.

The first morning, IBS Race Day, saw the fleet divided into four classes – two racing and two cruising – with all the yachts sent on a challenging route through the islands of the archipelago. The light winds called for maximum concentration and, with the temperature reaching 25°C in the middle of the day, the tired but happy sailors were ready for a beer and barbecue at the regatta tent, as a local rock band entertained them until late into the evening.

*“Pekka Koskenkyla’s vision to build large yachts of Rolls Royce class but for the price of a Mercedes has indeed been fulfilled”*

After a brief postponement while waiting for the wind to fill in, Aker Yards Race Day got underway with another, slightly shorter, archipelago race. That evening, right after the prizegiving, there was a crew party and, for the owners, a medieval banquet held at Turku Castle. With entertainment provided by musicians playing medieval music, this was an authentic affair, with guests required to eat dinner with their fingers!

Heinz Ramm-Schmidt, the very first Swan owner who bought his Swan 36 exactly 40 years ago, made an emotional and well received speech at the banquet, where he told the story of his beloved *Tarantella*, which is still actively racing today. He concluded his speech: “It’s a pleasure for all of us Swan fans and enthusiasts that Leonardo Ferragamo in 1998 took over Nautor and in an admirable manner continues the development of the world’s finest boatyard. Koskenkyla’s vision to build large yachts of Rolls Royce class but for the price of a Mercedes has indeed been fulfilled.”

There was glorious sunshine but still light winds for Anniversary Race Day and the race around some of the nearby islands had to be shortened to get the fleet back in time for the final prizegiving. Initially a German yacht appeared to

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have won the week overall, but after the shortened course had been taken into account in the handicap calculations, the overall winner was *Tarantella II*, the Swan 37 owned by the Ramm-Schmidt family. A more fitting winner of the regatta would be hard to imagine.

Bernhard Michler, who sailed aboard Swan 44 Mk II *Moriju* was victorious in Racing Class A, while Leif Ramm-Schmidt and *Tarantella II* were Class B winners. In the non-spinnaker divisions, Matti Kilpinen celebrated victory in Cruising Class C with Swan 441 *Odette* and Göran Sjöholm came 1st in Cruising Class D with Swan 36 *Fågel Blå*.

The final prizegiving was a great success, reflecting the family atmosphere that permeated the regatta, with trophies

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awarded to the youngest and oldest participants – Swan 36 *Johanna III* was sailed by a three-man crew whose combined age came to a staggering 225 years. There were also a couple of Finnish sailing celebrities present; Olympic Champions Jyrki Järvi and Peter Tallberg enjoyed a slightly more relaxed form of competition than they have experienced in the past.

The following morning the City of Turku provided the sailors with a champagne brunch for Turku Farewell Day, ensuring that the 700 sailors departed Turku in high spirits. As the fleet left the harbour in a parade of sail the Swan sailors were amazed to find a flotilla of more than 200 yachts giving them a rousing send-off that you could have mistaken for the start of the Volvo Ocean Race. The fleet sailed away in sunshine and fair winds, but later that day it started to rain and even hail over Turku. It had been a blessed regatta.

Joakim Hildén, the Sales Director Semi-Custom Yachts for Nautor's Swan, was delighted with how the regatta had gone: "Our objective was to show the Finnish summer and archipelago at its best. I think people really enjoyed their time here and were stunned by the beauty of the place. I'm sure many of them will be back someday."