

RALLY ROUNDUP



Camaraderie, great sailing and good times can basically sum up 2008's round of fall rallies. Here is a look at some of the offshore rallies that took hundreds of sailors to the sun:

CARIBBEAN 1500

After a week of preparatory briefings, safety inspections and social events, the 19th Annual Caribbean 1500 Rally fleet left Hampton, Va., on November 7 and arrived in Tortola in the British Virgin Islands between six and 13 days later.

Elusion, a Hallberg-Rassy 49, owned by Kirt and Gayle Schuldt from Virginia Beach, Va., took Overall Handicap Honors. First to finish and winner of the performance cruising class *Between the Sheets*, a Hallberg-Rassy 62, owned by Tom and Diane Might, Phoenix, Ariz., completed the passage in 6 days 22 hours and 24 minutes.

"The heavy weather played to *Elusion's* favor," said winning skipper Kirt Schuldt of his Hallberg-Rassy ketch. "On top of that, I had an excellent crew. The winds being at 20-plus

most of the time helped greatly. What is really nice to see is even an old Granddame (*Elusion*, hull #36, was built in 1986) in the hands of good sailors still has a dance or two left in her."

The 2008 Caribbean 1500 fleet included participants from 17 states, four Canadian provinces, Germany, the UK and Chile. The boats averaged 48.5 feet in length, and almost half of them are owned by veteran rally participants. Two boats joined the rally in mid ocean after a Charleston, S.C., departure. Sloops, ketches, seven multihulls and a schooner joined rounded out this year's fleet.

"The wind blew 20 to 25 knots for most of the rally," said Steve Black, founder and president of the Cruising Rally Association, which manages the event. "In the past several

years, rally participants racked up motoring hours in light air and calm seas. This year, the winds stayed up and the squalls blew through on a regular basis, especially for boats that followed the rhumb line south."

For more information about the Caribbean 1500 and the popular Ocean Sailing Seminars, visit www.carib1500.com.

ATLANTIC RALLY FOR CRUISERS

More than 200 yachts sailed out of Las Palmas, Canary Islands, on November 23 starting the 23rd Annual Atlantic Rally for Cruisers. This huge fleet included boats from 21 different nations ranging in size from the 106-foot *Iemanjá* to the Beneteau 31.7 *Madonna*.

At press time, there were several boats still sailing toward the finish line in St. Lucia, but the majority

BLUE WATER DISPATCHES



The ARC start, above, in beautiful Las Palmas. The camaraderie of the Caribbean 1500, right, is hard to beat

experienced an 18 to 20-day crossing in light to moderate conditions. A Swan 82S, *DreamCatcher KM* took line honors for ARC 2008 crossing the line in Rodney Bay after 13 days, 23 hours and 44 minutes. Unfortunately, this did not beat the current course record, which is 11 days, 5 hours, 32 minutes and 30 seconds, held since 2006 by Italian maxi yacht *Capricorno*.

December 13 was the busiest day for arrivals with 40 yachts coming in to port in 24 hours including the first double-handed crew to cross—Alan and Susan Kingsman aboard *Juju*, a J/133—and *Madonna*, the smallest boat in the fleet. With six on board including two boys and 8-month-old Marina, not to mention hand steering the whole way, *Madonna's* crew really worked hard to get to the finish line extraordinarily quickly for their size.

While fundamentally a fun rally for cruising yachts, the ARC does have a more serious Racing Division, run under the auspices of the Royal Ocean Racing Club (RORC). Yachts in the Racing Division are



not permitted to use their engines for propulsion (unlike the cruisers), although use of autopilots is allowed.

For more information about the World Cruising Club, which hosts the ARC in addition to the ARC Europe, World ARC, Rally Portugal and the Classic Malts Cruise, visit www.worldcruising.com.

BAJA HA-HA

The Baja Ha-Ha is an annual cruising rally down the West Coast from San Diego, Calif., to Cabo San Lucas, at the end of Mexico's Baja peninsula. This rally attracts the largest cruising fleet in North America—2008 had 141 participating boats—and is unique because they make two

stops, one in Bahia Tortugas and one in Bahia Santa Maria. Since the first Baja Ha-Ha 15 years ago the spirit of the rally has remained the same: fun! This year's Ha-Ha had great weather, great sailing and great fishing for the 750-mile run down the coast. The air and sea temperatures were noticeably warmer than in previous years with water surface temperatures in the 80s 50 miles offshore.

Along with the sailing, the Baja Ha-Ha is known for the fun get-togethers and parties that happen at each stop. A fiesta at Santa Maria, a wine party and even a kids sleepover are all just part of the Ha-Ha experience. For more information about the Baja Ha-Ha, visit www.baja-haha.com. 