

# Having Fun Offshore

*BWS* has always been involved with fun and competitive offshore events for cruisers and racers. The magazine sponsors the Caribbean 1500 and the Pacific Cup and has taken part in and reported on just about every offshore rally or race run from North America.

This spring we were even more involved in the offshore game because my son Simon Day raced his Mini Transat 6.5 *Josephine* (21-foot overall) from Newport, R.I., to Bermuda and back in the shorthanded classic, the Bermuda One-Two. (See the report on page 26). The Bermuda One-Two is a fun race. The skippers are amateurs who enjoy solo sailing, offshore passagemaking and the company of like-minded sailors. The camaraderie amongst the skippers is wonderful and one of the main reasons they keep coming back every two years for another race.

Fun is what offshore sailing, racing and rallies are all about. Sure, there are highly competitive classes in some marquee events that are filled with cutthroat professionals. These guys and their amazing, modern race boats are thrilling to watch as they blast over the horizon. We can learn from them... both what to do and what not to do. But for most of us, offshore events are vacations at sea with parties at the start, parties at the finish and a lot of good sailing with friends and family in between.

The Caribbean 1500 is a prime example of an event that combines offshore sailing, racing and cruising with an ocean passage that can take up to 10 days to complete. The event is celebrating its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year (see our story on page 18). Over those two decades, thousands of sailors have been initiated into the league of blue-water men and women through the rally. Today you can find alumni cruising the world and participating in other offshore events in other oceans. The Caribbean 1500 has become something of a rite of passage for cruisers who want to move to the blue-water level.

On the West Coast, the Pacific Cup offers the same type of casual competition that is just right for both cruisers and racers. In 2008, America's Cup and Volvo Ocean Race skipper Paul Cayard (one of the world's highest paid sailors) took part with his family just for the pure joy of going to sea and the possibility of winning a trophy. Every two years amateurs set off from San Francisco Bay bound for Hawaii. It is a classic event bracketed by some of the best parties we have been to. And like the Bermuda One-Two and the Caribbean 1500, every running of the Pacific Cup is filled with skippers who have come back once again to go passagemaking and racing with their friends.



Offshore events are a great way to get away from the madding crowd, to build sailing and seamanship skills and to become a member of a very special fraternity of people who know just how much fun it is—good weather and bad—to spend time on the seven-tenths of the planet most people never see, the blue-water part.

*George Day*