

Our highlights of the St Barths Bucket 2018

This year's St Barths Bucket Regatta may've seen a decrease in numbers but there was no change to the warm welcome, bustling atmosphere and congeniality of both the island and the event. The reduction in numbers is owed, in part, to the devastating hurricanes of September 2017, which tore through the islands causing significant damage to residences, businesses and infrastructure, prompting many yacht owners to alter their Caribbean cruising plans.



Image credit: Michael Kurtz/Pantaenius

The 26 superyachts in the fleet, ranging in length from 28 to 56 metres, were divided between the Pursuit Racing Classes, Corinthian Class and J Class. The spectacle continues to appeal to many motor yachts, however, and last week both the 162.5m Eclipse and 52m Rasselas were spotted around the island.



Image credit: Michael Kurtz/Pantaenius

As is usual of the Bucket social schedule, guests were officially welcomed at the Owner's Reception on Thursday evening. Hosted at a villa with impressive vistas over Gustavia Harbour and the anchored sailing yachts, and exquisite food and flowing Champagne made for a sparkling atmosphere.

The superyacht fleet began their racing on the Friday in glorious sunshine, on a course that took them counter-clockwise around the island with 13 to 15 Knots of breeze.

In the Corinthian Class (racing without spinnakers), which grew to a fleet of six yachts this year, it was a particularly close finish on the first day with 43m Koo edging out 52m Q by only two seconds and 33m Missy finishing just 30 seconds behind – testament to the effectivity of the rating system and pursuit racing method.



Image credit: Michael Kurtz/Pantaenius

34m Spiip, overall winner of the Bucket last year, made a confident start and placed first amongst the Mademoiselles des Mers class on day one. Also securing early wins on the first day were 35m Sojana (Les Elegantes des Mers), 34m Nilaya (Les Gazelles des Mers) and 36m Whisper (Les Grandes Dames des Mers).

Friday night's 'Yacht Hop' could easily have been mistaken for the famous St Barths New Year's Eve celebrations, with yachts Q and Visione battling for attention. Q got the party going with a DJ and saxophonist, whilst Visione indulged guests with Champagne and Beluga Caviar.

Saturday's course, the 'Not-So-Wiggley' route, took the sailing to the west side of the island, around several rocky outcrops. Initially solid breezes weakened to seven Knots in the afternoon and the challenging courses made for exciting sailing, with yachts vying to maintain their early leads.



Image credit: Michael Kurtz/Pantaenius

Nilaya and Whisper again finished first in their respective classes, but Spiip lost out to Farfalla. In the Corinthian Class, Missy was able to take advantage of the lighter airs with her lightweight, composite hull and finished in first place.

Following the Saturday night 'Bucket Bash', with dockside barbecue and live music, yachts were sent off on the 'Wrong-Way-Around' course for Sunday's sailing. This route allows for race viewing at some stage of the day from almost every beach on the island.

Going into the last day's race in tied position, Farfalla pipped Spiip to the post and concluded her class win.



Image credit: Michael Kurtz/Pantaenius

Sojana's battle with Rebecca continued in the Les Elegantes des Mers class, but a win for Sojana gave her the class victory at the end of the week.

36m Whisper's consistent performance delivered a trio of wins and placed her three points ahead of runner-up, Blue Too, in the Les Grandes Dames des Mers class.

Another win for Missy on Sunday's final race secured her the class title, much to the delight of the owner and his team, for whom this was their first regatta entry.



Image credit: Michael Kurtz/Pantaenius

For the J Class, who completed five races over the regatta's four days, it was Svea who collected the silverware, only conceding one win over the course of the week to Velsheda.



Image credit: Michael Kurtz/Pantaenius

Taking the overall Bucket title was Nilaya, who not only won three out of three races but who the organizers determined, with a quantitative formula that uses race data, finish times and series points, was the regatta winner, prevailing in the

most competitive, closely contested class.

Featured image credit: Michael Kurtz/Pantaenius