

# BERMUDA RACE WEEK: BRAVO BERMUDA

BY DAVID POOR

During the last week of April, the Nantucket IOD “Bravo” Syndicate headed to Bermuda to represent Nantucket in the hotly contested IOD series as part of Bermuda Race Week. Such IOD World Champions and legends as Penny Simmons (Bermuda) and Tony Huston (Long Island Sound), as well as current North American reigning Champ John Pulverton (Nova Scotia), and former Bermuda Race Week winners Jan Petter Roed (Norway) and Giles Peckham (Cows/Great Britain), were joined by a number of other very experienced Bermuda Race Week IOD veterans, ensuring an extraordinarily high level of competition. The Bravo team was enthusiastic and always cheerful, but generally observed the action from near the back of the fleet.

After a quiet start on Sunday, the weather filled in with gusto to bring a week with some of the consistently strongest winds on record for Bermuda Race Week, and plenty of carnage all around. Chris Westerlund and team would have been fully engaged, with a number of collisions, an Etchells demasting, several shredded spinnakers, a blown traveler, and even the broaching and sinking of a J-24. Day Two:



winds consistently 25 knots and above. Day Three: winds 20 knots building to 30 knots. Day 4: winds at 25 knots, “moderating” to 18 knots by the end of the day. Day 5: a relatively quiet day of 15-20 knots. In Nantucket, and/or with a less experienced fleet, it is likely that many races would have been called. One classic line: when asked in the case of the most serious collision whether the protest flag had been flown, the response was “No, it was being used to block the hole in the hull!”

The Bravo team included core members David Poor at helm, Peter Barrett on the main, Marty Wayne on the jib. Peter Goulding had to cancel at the last minute to help manage a corporate management execution, but we were fortunate to secure the enthusiastic foredeck pro from Team Tango, Becky Belcher. Chris Gould rather belatedly discovered that he had left his heart and an expired 2008 passport in San Francisco while he tried in vain to board his flight in New York. Fortunately, Leslie Johnson stepped into the vacuum for the first two days of racing while Chris negotiated the passport office in Manhattan. And where was Susan Shapiro? Remarkably, she decided the pending birth of grandson “Benjamin” (we are assured his real name



## In-Season Soundings

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is Bravo) took precedence.

The Bottom Line? Penny Simmons whipped the competition, winning the six race “A” Series, the five race “B” Series, and the eleven race overall Vrengren Gold Cup, with 8 first place finishes out of eleven races. Bravo ended the week 12/13, winning the coveted and perpetual “second to last” trophy. Bravo was relieved to discover that other recent recipients of this very special award included Bobby Constable and Peter Gevalt. We also left our damage deposit behind in Bermuda, after

a failed but heroic shrimp fishing effort: someone pointed out that shrimp in Bermuda must be smaller than the six foot holes we ripped in our spinnaker as it was dragged through the Great Sound. In the spirit, “if it doesn’t kill you, it makes you stronger,” a humbled yet eager Bravo looks forward to restoring its pride, and regaining competitive form this summer with friends and in the friendly waters of Nantucket Sound.

