



## In a Class of Their Own

by **Clarissa Flockart**

Today's state-of-the-art racing yachts are designed and built with all the latest technology has to offer. Computer aided design and testing, exotic materials and equipment such as carbon fibre, Kevlar, canting keels, wireless instruments and modern navigation software and devices. But what of yesterday's state-of-the-art yachts, what becomes of them when their skippers and crews seek new ways to maintain the competitive spirit in their sailing endeavours?

**O**f course many boats continue to sail competitively for years in fleet and ocean racing events. As time goes by and new and faster boats evolve, some boats fall by the wayside while others slip into a class of their own – they become classics.

Through the efforts of the *Waitangi* restoration syndicate lead by Col Anderson, the Classic Yacht Association of Australia was formally set up in 1996. The association has active members in Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Perth, Adelaide and Hobart. The objective of the club is to promote the ownership, knowledge

and appreciation of classic sailing craft in Australia and to preserve them for future generations.

Currently they have some 120 boats on their register, which includes some famous names from yesteryear. The Melbourne roll call includes *Boambillie*, *Mercedes III*, *Cyan*, *Marie Louise III* and from Brighton, *Kingurra*. There are also Tumularins and Couta boats but for sheer majesty, nothing quite compares with the truly classic gaff rigged topsail cutters *Acrospire III* and *Sayonara*.

Melbourne is the most active chapter of the CYAA, having a summer and a winter series where racing pedigrees are dusted off



From *RBVC, Kingurra*

and old and new rivalries are given a work out. The feature event of the year is the Melbourne Cup Regatta, which sees members of the Classic Yacht Association of New Zealand come across to compete for the Trans Tasman trophy.

The 2012 Winter Series is under way, being hosted alternatively by Royal Yacht Club of Victoria and Hobson's Bay Yacht Club. Sailed on Sunday mornings, the fleets have been made up of some 20 plus boats and skippers have not lost their touch for nail biting starts and tight mark roundings.

There is strong competition for line honours and even stronger competition for the handicap prizes. The Yachting Victoria yardstick for local handicapping is used with a degree of tolerance. After the first few races only a handful of points separate the top 10 boats, which should ensure the competition builds as the series progresses.

A classic yacht is defined as a vessel designed and built before 31 December 1972 and built of traditional materials i.e. wood, either as planks fastened to wooden frames (ribs), or with diagonally laid layers of laminated wood fastened to frames. There is also a division known as modern classics, which are pre 31 December 1972 designs built with modern materials.

The Classic Yacht Association offers owners and crews of yachts not suitable or no longer competitive in club racing an opportunity to race with contemporaries but you do need to be on the register. If you are



*Mercedes III*

interested in classic yachts or taking part in the remainder of the winter series, visit the website for more information <[www.classicyacht.asn.au](http://www.classicyacht.asn.au)>. Race dates for the remainder of the 2012 winter series are:

- Race 4 – 24 June
- Race 5 – 22 July
- Race 6 – 5 August
- Race 7 – 19 August
- Race 8 – 9 September

