



Quantum Key West 2013 January 20 – 25, Key West, Florida USA

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Return of Swan 42, resurgence of Melges 24 bolster Quantum Key West

-- One-design classes bouncing back at North America's premier winter regatta

Key West, Fla - John Hele has wanted to compete in the popular annual race week off Key West ever since he got into sailboat racing. The New York Yacht Club member will finally get to achieve that goal next month because the Swan 42 class is coming back to the beautiful blue waters off the Conch Republic.

"Key West has been on my bucket list for a long time. That is one of the most spectacular locations to go sailing and I'm very much looking forward to it," Hele said.

The return of the Swan 42 as a one-design class and the resurgence of the Melges 24 fleet are among many highlights of Quantum Key West 2013. The Event Organizer and officials with title sponsor Quantum Sail Design Group see those two success stories as further indication the popular winter regatta has weathered the storm.

"Like most major sailing events around the world, Key West was impacted by the economic downturn. However, adjustments made these past few years have produced the stability we were seeking and enabled us to continue delivering what sailors and classes are seeking. The new and returning classes along with better fleet numbers are evidence of that," event director Peter Craig said. "We are particularly excited to have the Swan 42 class back in the fray again while the improved numbers in the Melges 24 class and their exciting plans for a World Championship in 2016 bodes well for the future of Key West Race Week."

The Swan 42 made its Key West debut in 2007 when renowned Hong Kong sailor Makoto Uematsu captured first place in IRC 3 class aboard his brand new Esmeralda. A whopping 12 Swan 42s were on the starting line the following year with Andy Fisher and his Bandit team winning a hotly contested regatta. Swan 42 remained a one-design class in 2009 when Jon Halbert sailed Vitesse to victory, but the past three years have seen just one or two of the beautiful club racers competing under the IRC rule.

"After several years of the Swan 42 class concentrating on racing in the Northeast, and with two successful New York Yacht Club Invitational Cups, we are excited to be once again participating in the premiere winter regatta as a class," Swan 42 class manager Diana McConnell said. "We expect close one-design racing in a wonderful venue and, as always, excellent race management."

A strong group of seven Swan 42 sloops are currently registered with two-time United States national champions Philip Lotz (Arethusa) and Ken Colburn (Apparition) already tabbed as the boats to beat. Fisher is back with Bandit while Halbert will sail Vitesse at Key West for the sixth straight year.

"All the boats that are coming have good credentials. I expect the competition to be very close and intense like it is at all our events," Lotz said. "I'm glad we're coming back to the class. It shows the resiliency of the class and that it has survived the challenges of the past couple years and continues to thrive."

A similar theme has been sounded within the Melges 24 class, which will be the second-largest at Quantum Key West 2013 with no less than 22 boats. That marks a significant increase from last year and is due in part to a grass roots effort by class leaders working closely with Premiere Racing.

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Return of Swan 42, resurgence of Melges 24 bolster Quantum Key West **Continued**

"Some of the most fun I've ever had sailing a Melges 24 came at Key West. Screaming downwind in 20 knots of breeze with warm water and 80 degree temperatures is a blast," said Rob Britts, U.S. class Vice President. "I know a bunch of other owners that feel the same way so we felt it was important to maintain a high level of competition at Key West."

Britts, who resides in St. Petersburg, helped create a Florida winter circuit consisting of four regattas to encourage owners to bring their boats south. Key West is the second stop of the series that also includes the St. Petersburg NOOD and Miami's renowned Bacardi Cup.

"I think the key to reinvigorating our numbers in Key West was simply communication. Premiere did a great job of getting online registration set up early then got some of the top skippers to pull the trigger and register," Britts said. "Bora Gulari signed up early and Riccardo Simoneschi signed up early. We had a dozen boats by November, which prompted other owners to come onboard."

Gulari, based in Detroit, is the defending Melges 24 champion at Key West. Simoneschi, from Milano, Italy, is a past world champion. Other notable owners with a history of success in the class include Brian Porter (Full Throttle, Lake Geneva, WI), Argyle Campbell (Rock N Roll, Newport Beach, Cal.) and Alec Cutler (Hedgehog, Bermuda).

"It's great to see more participation at a quality regatta like Key West. We've always had great competition there," said Gulari, who will have Jeremy Wilmot as tactician aboard his West Marine Rigging/New England Ropes entry. "Every class goes through some ebb and flow and the Melges 24 was not impervious to the economic issues that affected sailing. Things are bouncing back now and owners are beginning to travel again. I think the regatta itself has done a great job of reinventing itself and becoming more relevant again."

Farley Fontenot, Quantum's Executive Vice President notes that "It's been amazing to watch this 2013 regatta evolve into one of the largest One Design Regattas we have seen in years at Key West. The participation of so many one design fleets shows the true direction of where our sport is today. We will see great boat racing, large tight mark rounding and close finishes. What more could we ask for from a great venue regatta like Key West?"

Other positive developments surrounding the 2013 edition of Quantum Key West include the debut of the J/70 class, which will be the largest with a whopping 37 of the popular new sport boats. Organizers are also excited about the growth of the High Performance class, which will feature intriguing new designs like the Carkeek 40, Farr 400, GP 42 and Lutra 42. This will be their first class start in Key West with the 8 boats being scored under the HP Rule.

Bill Wagner
Press Officer
bwagner111@gmail.com

Regatta dates are January 20 – 25, 2013.

Event Sponsors include Title Sponsor **Quantum Sails** (Official Sailmaker) and Day Sponsors **Lewmar/Navtec** (Official Marine Hardware), **Mount Gay® Rum** (Official Rum), and **Nautica Watches** (Official Timekeeper). The Supporting Sponsors are **B&G** (Official Marine Electronics), **Marlow Ropes** (Official Rope), and **Gill** (Official Technical Gear).

Key West Race Week is also supported by *The Florida Keys & Key West Tourism Council*. The *Historic Seaport at the Key West Bight* is the Official Marina. The *Ocean Key Resort and Spa* is the Official Hotel. *Sapporo USA* is the Official Beer.

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24 Industry Partners bring their support through a program that is now in its 12th year.

Quantum Key West 2013 is a US SAILING sanctioned event.

The racing will be conducted under permit in the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary. The sanctuary protects 2,900 square nautical miles of critical marine habitat, including coral reef, hard bottom, seagrass meadow, mangrove communities and sand flats.

Event information, past results and photos: www.Premiere-Racing.com

About Quantum Sail Design Group



Founded by a group of independent, experienced sailmakers who shared a common vision, the Quantum Sail Design Group has been dedicated to overcoming the trend towards mass-marketing and mediocrity in the sailmaking industry. The company is known for its winning sail designs in dozens of classes from dinghies to super yachts and its high-performance FusionM® sails.

Quantum has more than 60 sales and service outlets throughout the world, with European headquarters in Barcelona, Spain, and corporate offices in Traverse City, Michigan.

www.QuantumSails.com

For more information on Quantum Key West Race Week 2013:

[Key West Race Week Photo Gallery](#)
[Quantum Key West 2012 Results](#)

Premiere Racing, Inc.
67B Front Street, Marblehead, MA, 01945
Tel: (781) 639-9545 Fax: (781) 639-9171
Email: Peter@Premiere-Racing.com
Web Site: www.Premiere-Racing.com

Photographs are available to qualified media.
Email: jeanne@premiere-racing.com

