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## **Key West Race Week – Delivering Excellence for 27 Years**

Key West, Florida Keys - Quantum Key West 2014 is gearing up for its trademark full week of racing on the aqua-colored waters off the coast of the Conch Republic. From the professional-laden 52 Class to top tier club-oriented programs in the PHRF classes, this midwinter classic offers something for everyone.

Spectators on the water will be thrilled by the sheer size and speed of the racing machines in the Mini Maxi class (IRC 1). *Shockwave*, skippered by George Sakellaris (Framingham, Mass.) will look to defend its title against fellow 72-footer *Bella Mente* (Hap Fauth, Minneapolis, Minn.) and the 69-foot *Caol Ila R* (Alex Schaerer, Newport, R.I.).

Action figures to be intense in the 52 Class (IRC 2), which features an international fleet of six boats loaded with the world's top professionals. Key West is the kickoff event for the 52 Super Series, which was won last year by *Quantum Racing*. Doug DeVos will skipper the Quantum entry in Key West with America's Cup veteran Terry Hutchinson aboard as tactician.

"We had a very successful 2013 season and are looking forward to getting off to a good start in 2014," said Hutchinson, noting that Ed Baird (strategist) and Juan Vila (navigator) complete a talented afterguard. "We love having Doug driving the boat. He's the leader of the whole program and brings great energy to the team."

*Azzurra*, owned by Pablo Roemmers of Buenos Aires, Argentina, took first in Key West last year and will have Vasco Vascotto calling tactics again as it seeks a repeat. *Ran*, which captured the 52 world championship, will look to improve upon its third place finish from a year ago with British pro Adrian Stead calling tactics for owner-driver Niklas Zennstrom.

"It's an impressive fleet and it's going to be quite a battle. *Azzurra* and *Ran* are both formidable programs and you can't count out boats like *Interlodge*, which is a real rocket ship," Hutchinson said.

Defending champion *Decision*, a Carkeek 40 skippered by Stephen Murray (New Orleans) headlines the High Performance Class and will no doubt duke it out daily with sister ship *Spookie* (Steve & Heidi Benjamin, Norwalk, Conn.).

Robin Team (Lexington, N.C.) and the boys aboard *Teamwork* will look to repeat in PHRF 1 while going against another J/122 and four J/111 designs in this competitive 8-boat class.

Rick Wesslund was a regular at Key West from 2004 to 2010 with his *EI Ocaso* program and returns after a three-year hiatus with his newly-purchased J/122. "This is our debut regatta and we are really eager to put our best foot forward. We are cautiously optimistic, but know this will be a real good performance test for the boat. Robin has a terrific team and that is always a well-sailed boat so we will have to be on top of our game in order to win," said Wesslund, who earned the PHRF Boat of the Week honor in 2006.

*Continued*

## Key West Race Week – Delivering Excellence for 27 Years - *continued*

Regatta chairman Peter Craig is excited about the 10-boat lineup in IRC 3, which will have such diverse designs as a Swan 42, Sydney 43, Mills 43 and Ker 43. *Catapult*, a Ker 40 owned by Marc Glimcher of New York, captured IRC sub-class honors at Quantum Key West 2013 and will be challenged by an influx of new entries.

Among the newcomers are Andrew and Linda Weiss (Mamaroneck, N.Y.), whose Sydney 43 was designed specifically to the IRC rating rule. Andrew Weiss is eager to see how his boat performs against boats of similar size, but different design characteristics.

“We are very happy with the makeup of the class. There is a nice mix of designs and a lot of strong teams,” said Weiss, who has competed against the Swan 42s as well as *Catapult* and the Mills 43 *Cool Breeze* (John Cooper, Cane Hill, MI) in the past. “It will be interesting to see which boat comes out on top over the course of five days and in varying conditions.”

Newport-based professional Tim Healy will be back to defend his title in J/70 class, which has attracted a whopping 62 boats. Runner-up Brian Keane (Weston, Mass.) and third place finisher Bruno Pasquinelli (Dallas, Texas) will also be back as the J/70 class contests its Midwinter Championship.

A real bounce-back one design at Key West this year is the J/80 class, which will have 13 boats on the starting line. Skipper Ron Buzil and his *Vayu2* team will try to repeat as regatta winners against a deep fleet that includes former North American champion *Rumor* (John Storck) and several other accomplished programs.

“Our owners love coming to Key West and we’re thrilled to have a very competitive fleet this year,” said Chris Chadwick, national class secretary for the J/80. “Premiere Racing always puts on a quality regatta and the racing is second to none.”

Talk to the owners and skippers heading for Quantum Key West 2014 and you will hear a similar story.

Dave Franzel attended what was known as Key West Race Week way back in 1981 as crew for a J/24 program. The founder of the Boston Sailing Center returned 32 years later as a J/70 skipper and was crowned as Corinthian champion after finishing eighth overall in the 39-boat fleet.

“I had an absolute blast. It was one of the best regattas I’ve ever been to. It made me wish I hadn’t waited so long to come back,” said Franzel, a resident of Somerville, Mass. “I was very impressed with the race management. The courses were sound and the starting lines were solid. We got in 12 races in five days and you can’t ask for more than that.”

Deneen Demourkas will be sailing her Melges 32 after being nominated for the Rolex Yachtswoman of the Year award for her performance on the Farr 30 circuit in 2013. Her husband, John Demourkas, will be racing in J/70 class as the couple makes their annual pilgrimage from Santa Barbara, Cal.

“John and I have been attending this event the last 14 years and we love the relaxation Key West affords, particularly after a hectic holiday season,” Demourkas said. “And then there is Race Week, which always delivers. You can pretty much guarantee great sailing conditions, beautiful weather and good competition. Why wouldn’t you be here?”

John and Linda Edwards have been bringing their *Rhumb Punch* racing program to the southernmost tip of Florida every January since 1999. Quantum Key West 2014 will be the 15<sup>th</sup> year of participation for the couple.

“There’s just something special about Key West,” said Edwards, a Maryland pharmacist. “You combine amazing weather with great competition, that’s a perfect formula. If you don’t love sailing in Key West, you don’t love sailing.”

The *Rhumb Punch* team has enjoyed plenty of success in Key West, winning eight of nine races to capture J/29 class in 2007. The Edwards moved into the Farr 30 class the following year and finished third in PHRF 1 at the 2010 regatta.

## Key West Race Week – Delivering Excellence for 27 Years - *continued*

"It's become a family tradition. We come down every year with the same team and stay in the same house," said Edwards, who always sails with Quantum professional Clarke McKinney as tactician. "I think a big part of the attraction is that our wives love being in Key West. It's great to be somewhere warm in the middle of January and there is so much fun stuff to do."

"We have a terrific fleet and there should be some exciting competition across the board," said Farley Fontenot, executive vice president of Quantum Sail Design Group. "I think the reason this regatta survives and thrives is because it rolls with the trends of the sport."

This will be the third straight year that Quantum will serve as title sponsor and Fontenot said the Michigan-based sail-making company has enjoyed its partnership with Premiere Racing.

"It's been a great relationship because we both have the same interests in mind, which is to keep an iconic regatta moving forward in tough economic times," said Fontenot, who will be in Key West coaching the Melges 24 team aboard Delta. "Quantum's goal for this is to perpetuate our sport by supporting one of the greatest events in the country."

Bill Wagner  
Press Officer

For those who can't be out on the race course, there will be plenty of ways to follow the racing. Last year was a first for "Key West Live" coverage (**#QKeyWest**) and there will be more real time bloggers and video coverage to keep everyone connected this year.

Regatta dates are January 19 - 24, 2014.

Event Sponsors include Title Sponsor **Quantum Sails** and Day Sponsors **Lewmar/Navtec** (Official Marine Hardware), and **Mount Gay® Rum** (Official Rum). 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 **Ocean Key Resort and Spa** is the Official Hotel. **Sapporo USA** is the Official Beer and **Regatta Ginger Beer** is the Official Ginger Beer. **Chelsea Clock** is providing their classic Ship's Bell Clocks for the Boat of the Day trophies.

**23 Industry Partners** bring their support through a program that is now in its 13th year. Quantum Key West 2014 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](http://www.Premiere-Racing.com)

#### About Quantum Sail Design Group



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

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

[www.QuantumSails.com](http://www.QuantumSails.com)

[Key West Race Week Photo Gallery](#)

[Quantum Key West 2013 Results](#)

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