

THE 2011 AEDAS FOUR PEAKS RACE: ONE TO REMEMBER



Cool, fresh, steady wind. Superb sailing. Fast paddling into rocky bays and sandy beaches. Running hard up Hong Kong's mountains. Having fun. The Four Peaks Race was about all of those this year. But above all – and as always – it was about planning, training, safety and teamwork.

Twenty-three boats crossed the start line in Tai Tam Bay on Saturday 29 January. They headed out on courses that included Port Shelter, the Ninepins, Hong Kong Island, Lamma and Lantau Islands. Thanks to loyal volunteers and generous supporters, including title sponsor Aedas Architects and prize sponsor Fragrant Harbour Publications, the race was on.

After a fast beat to Saikung, the prudent dropped off runners from dinghies or kayaks. The daring sailed right into the steps and did a smart u-turn [well some did!] and runners jumped off. The runners tackled the peaks throughout the afternoon and evening and on into the night. Ma On Shan, Peak 300 and Violet Hill, Lantau Peak and Mt Stenhouse, all accomplished by the various divisions with verve, sometimes panache, occasionally pandemonium.

Spinnakers were flown across to Lantau and the Soko Islands, making for fast times and exciting crew work. Volunteers in safety boats, on peaks and in race control back at the ABC kept an eye on safety, logged times and kept





track of who was where. This tough test of sailors, runners, boats and equipment calls on every last ounce of stamina. It reveals every loophole in strategy. First timers and seasoned hands, the suck-it-and-see and the well-prepared, they all love it.

Don of Cuchulain, the only boat in this year's fleet that was also on the start line the first time the race was run in 1985, was "impressed with the management and execution of this yacht race. Very well done to all!"

Kate and Janis of Topsy Frenz, the double prize winners who ran all four peaks this year, had never done the race before. They liked the tricky Mt Stenhouse most. Why? "Because it was the most challenging."

Arthur of GA who had four runners up all four peaks said, "Thanks for the efforts of ABC managing team and volunteers, Team GA members really enjoyed the 4 Peaks Race very much, especially the challenging conditions this year."

Vittorio of Brizo added, "Great organization. Amazing commitment...the combination of running and sailing was wonderful: the Castle Rock/Lantau stretch was an awesome sail under gennaker at 8/9 knots plus..."

Rob Berkley, crew on Blackjack, winning boat on HKPN in Division A Rob Berkley, crew on Blackjack, winning boat on HKPN in Division A "Just by taking part, we are all choosing to do something very different which makes everyone a winner. A great race this year both on the water and in how it was organized by the ABC...one of the few true yacht-racing adventures we can have in our local waters."

Jo of Tardis, doing the Four Peaks for the first time commented, "Thank you for a fantastic event! The Tardis Team enjoyed every minute, except maybe for that freezing 6 am shore transfer!"

Tristan of Wicked, winning boat on IRC, Division A admitted it was, "one of the most enjoyable Four Peaks I have done." Elaine, one of his crew- and the only competitor this year who was also in that first 1985 race - confessed, "year by year we learn how to do it better. It never gets easier and it's always wonderful to take part."

Aberdeen Boat Club is proud to have initiated the Four Peaks Race and looks forward to welcoming an even bigger fleet in 2012. As many of the competitors said: "PS Count me in for next year!"

Elaine Morgan

