

Sailing – the fine art of getting wet and becoming ill, while going nowhere slowly at great expense (equivalent to standing in a cold shower, fully clothed, throwing up, and tearing

up \$100 bills, while a bunch of other people watch you) – a standing joke among the yachting community worldwide. Yet, these ocean addicts continue to race, cruise or do both, stylishly. In fact, over unlimited Norwegian salmon, Swiss Movenpick ice-cream, Hennessy cognac cocktails, Glenmorangie single malt Scotch whisky and much merriment at Mumbai's colonial haunt for sailors – Royal Bombay Yacht Club, Colaba – the winners of the racing season of the annual Bombay Merchants Cup (BMC) were declared last Sunday. The luxurious Gurkha Cigars (\$5000 per cigar), in association with IIFL and Rustomjee, sponsored the trophies. It marked the end of the fourth season where every Saturday from October to May, 15-20 yachts belonging to Mumbai's top industrialists including Jamyshir Godrej, Arjuna awardees and even the Navy, engaged in a mad race to the Bombay Harbour and back. Here's profiling a few swanky yachtsmen and their mean machines:

FRANK HANCOCK'S CUNNING PLAN



Frank Hancock, a founding member of the Bombay Merchants Cup (BMC), shares a lineage with a better-known BMC – the Brihamumbai Municipal Corporation; his great grandfather, Colonel HF Hancock, was the Corporation president 1877-78, and lent his name to the now demolished 136-year-old blackstone bridge at Sandhurst Road. The 57-year-old Brit investment banker, has been working in India for over 20 years, and sailing for 30. In 2011, he bought Cuning Plan, a Jeanneau 34, from Langkawi, Malaysia for about a crore with sailing partner and Mumbai businessman Sajid Malik. The pair had it sailed across a 3,000-mile, three-week journey via the Andamans, Sri Lanka and Kochi to finally reach Mumbai.

Hancock borrowed the name 'Cuning Plan' from *Black Adder* – an iconic '80s UK TV fictional series he grew up with, where a dimwitted servant, Baldrick would announce "Sire, I've got a cunning plan," right before doing something stupid. CP was originally a long distance cruiser till businessman Bharat Kewalramani introduced Hancock to big boat racing. His friend, Arjuna Awardee Captain Homi Motiwala (IN Red), who runs a boat business, then reconfigured CP for racing; two extra winches to manipulate the sails more quickly and a prow mechanism to carry more sophisticated sails, like a spinnaker, were added.

In 2014, Kewalramani formed the BMC with Motiwala, Hancock and their sailor friends Adil Zainulbhai, Frank Koenig, Arvind Rao, Nandan Chandravarar, and Ravi Mariwala to

YACHTMEN AT THE SEA

Ornella D'Souza profiles three yachtsmen who engage in mad race to keel every weekend from October to May to the Bombay Harbour

foster a racing culture among big boats. From three to four yachts, the number has grown to 15-20 racing every weekend, which in a city of 20 million, Hancock feels is nothing compared to Dublin in Ireland, that with a population of just over 1m supports an ecosystem of 400-500 big boats sailors.

The Englishman confesses to being a "mid-level" sailor, perhaps hinting at why CP came last this season in the big-boats category, despite winning the event last year.

Apart from dolphin sightings, good winds, an opportunity to detox from the everyday gruel and even cruise twice a year to nearby ports, it's the camaraderie of BMC – "all friends and good sailors" – that he enjoys the most. For those keen to attempt this 'rich man's sport', Hancock suggests forming a syndicate where the parties can split costs, about ₹40,000 a month. "All are welcome to join the BMC, which is keen to be inclusive and grow the ecosystem of big boat sailors," says Hancock.

NANDAN CHANDAVARKAR'S SKADOOSH

Among the slick fleet, Nandan Chandavarkar's Skadoosh with its big, black Angry Bird sail and a crew sporting quirky African



print dashikis (kurtas) cut an endearing image. "We take our fun very seriously," says the Joint Managing Director of FDC Limited. Chandavarkar's 41ft quirky Skadoosh, is a J122E sailing vessel by French manufacturer J/Boats. He purchased this Ocean A-certified model for ₹3.5 crore in 2015. The performance cruiser is equipped with two



Pic: Ornella D'Souza

cabins, a toilet and galley (kitchenette).

He began windsurfing 20 years ago to quench his love for the high seas. "But windsurfing was just you, your board and your sail. I prefer keel boat sailing because you train and sail with eight to 10 friends in your own 40x8ft space. I may helm, but it's more about how in sync I am with my team."

Chandavarkar and his crew, all of whom had only sailed on club dinghies and sea birds within the harbour, learned to sail Skadoosh over much practice – including, a nonstop 36-hour Mumbai to Goa sail. Despite Chandavarkar nursing a broken toe and another mate, a dislocated shoulder, they raced and won Skadoosh second place. "Well, it was the last race of the season," he trails off, matter-of-factly.

Most of the ₹20,000 monthly costs includes salaries of the deckhands as Chandavarkar does most of the maintenance of the yacht on his own. For updates on the world sailing community, he actively follows leading US Sailmaker North Sails' social media and J/Boats' monthly newsletter.

Sailing, for him, is a complete disconnect from the rest of the world. "Once you leave the jetty, even if it's for a couple of hours, you leave behind your daily life and conflicts... It helps

keep your sanity."

AASIM MONGIA'S BLOOD VESSEL AND PREMIER CRU

Mongia, 49, certainly throws overboard the caution that one cannot stand on boats as he's much in love with his two yachts Blood Vessel (BV) and co-owned Premier Cru (PC); though maintaining both costs him close to ₹40,000 each, every month. Aasim, who grew up watching his father (ret'd) Commodore Surinder Mongia, sailing for his country and then man a yacht of his own – Wahe Guru, and grew so addicted to the sport that he ended up being an Arjuna awardee like his father.

BV, which is the oldest yacht on Bombay Harbour at 30 years, is a Danish X Yacht 372 second-hand 1988 cruiser-racer. It's massive sail area, powerful rig and the only yacht here with runners for mast support, makes it a 'high performance sailor',



according to Mongia. The 37-foot sail yacht boasts of two cabins each of which accommodates six, a galley, toilet and a chart table, and is touted to go water-coast cruising up to the Maldives.

When Aasim bought 'Blood Vessel' from a doctor, at '30 lakhs, it had the red heart on its white spinnaker, the name and the design, he continues to retain for they remind him of surviving a blood disorder in the early '90s and a relapse in 2000 that led to his resignation as a naval lieutenant. He then ventured into business and founded the successful West Coast Marine Yacht Services India in 1994 – now a one-stop shop for yachting.

Premier Cru, on the other hand, that he purchased at '40 lakhs, is akin "to driving a sports car and ideal for racing because it's fast," says Aasim. Built by Chinese company Far East, this 28-ft boat won the Design Class of the Year award in 2017. She's the smallest big-boat, but one of the fastest; having won seasons 2, 3 and 4, with Mongia's loyal crew of 10 years. BV holds a special place for Mongia as on it he stumbled upon the Ambavani bay, 100 miles south of Bombay outside Raigad, which is not even on the map! For the race, Mongia helmed PC while BV was handled by his friend Shahid Basheer, a marine surveyor; National champion of the Keyboard class and representative at the Asian Sailing Regatta.

"Sailing develops your focus, inculcates discipline, makes you take split second decisions, lead a team... all entrepreneurial skills. Also that unexplainable feeling of disappearing for a couple of hours..." is how Aasim sums up his passion for the sport.

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Stargazer, the 40-ft sailing boat built by Mumbai's prominent boatmaker, Sheri Bamboat, was one of the competitors in the recently concluded BMC regatta

Pic courtesy: Moser

CHARMING CZECH CRYSTALS

Moser, the latest entrant to Indian markets is creating ripples. Pooja Patel finds out more



When you think of crystals, Indian consumers immediately conjure up images of Swarovski, Baccarat and Lalique. However there's a new kid in town: Moser, with its elegant crystal vases and timeless designs – since most of the artwork on the crystals was designed around 80 to 100 years ago. Even today, these designs that are immensely eye-catching, as one saw at the recent launch of The Silver Room in Mumbai, where the use of Moser colours was the main theme of 2018.

The colours that overlay and underlay the products are rose, green, reseda (yellow-brown), blue, aurora (orange), amethyst; and the six-colour set of crystal – topaz (honey brown) aquamarine (light blue), eldor (light yellow), alexandrite (light violet), rosaline (pink) and beryl (light green). Intriguingly, some of these products change colour shadow from bluish to dark violet depending on the light, giving them a dreamy look. Also on display were luxury drinking sets such as Splendid, Lady Hamilton,

Maharani, etc. "These have embellished the festive tables of Queen Elizabeth II and many other royal families and prominent personalities all around the world," says Pavel Cerny, Area Sales Manager.

The uniqueness of these crystals are that they are handcrafted and infuse traditional craftsmanship passed down from generations of glassmakers. "The time invested in the various products differs according to the number of art techniques used – hand blowing, shaping, cutting, art engraving, painting with 24 carat gold or platinum, and polishing. For example, one goblet from the famous Splendid collection has to be taken care of by 35 pairs of hands before it reaches the table of our clients," Cerny elucidates.

What's also notable is that the crystals are extensively hand-painted in gold, platinum and coloured enamels. The products usually have hunting scenes, wildlife and monograms intricately engraved on them. "At present, decorating with the use of precious stones – 24 carat gold and platinum – has achieved an almost exclusive position in painting



Above: Moser's drinking sets such as this are used by the likes of Queen Elizabeth II; inset: crystal decor pieces with wildlife engravings

These (crystal drinking sets) have embellished the festive tables of Queen Elizabeth II and many other royal families and prominent personalities all around the world

Pavel Cerny, Area Sales Manager

techniques. Gold is hand polished with agates and bloodstones in order to achieve a high gloss," says Cerny. pooja.patel@dnaindia.net; @7_Poojapatel

WHAT'S NEW

ELEGANT INDIGO

Flying off the shelves is a new fragrance, Mr. Burberry Indigo, not just for its fresh and casual notes (with citrus and woody aromas, reminiscent of crisp air along the British coast – aromatic violet-leaf and spearmint oil, invigorating hints of lemon and rosemary. Amber and oak moss bring depth as the notes indicate, a veritable breath of fresh air – as we are informed), but also for the fact that one can personalise the bottle. The lacquer bottle, reminiscent of the brand's navy trench coat in shades of blue from navy to indigo, conveys the invigorating freshness of the scent. Customers will be able to monogramme their 100ml or 150ml Mr. Burberry bottle with up to three initials through a service available on Burberryy.com.



NICHE AND NICE

More on fragrances. At the busiest corner of Mumbai's P M Road and M G Road, is a swanky store restored in all its glory and christened Scendito. As the name suggests, it is about scents, but not the kind found at duty free stores. These are niche fragrances (the brainchild of Shishir Mehta, whose search for perfumes led him from one niche fragrance perfumery to another). Do not expect a Tom Ford or Issey. Instead, you're breathing in whiffs of scents from brands like Roja Parfums, Escentric Molecules, Berdoues, Aedes De Venustas, Ormonde Jayne, Jovoy Jeroboam and Gabriella Chieffo. Each of these have their own quirky characteristics. Escentric Molecules, for instance, comes in pairs. While one bottle focuses on the basic molecule, the other contains ingredients that form its bouquet. There's Berdoues, with an exceptional collection of fragrances of the world, hence labeled Berdoues: Russkaya Koka or Berdoues Selva Do Brazil. For more, step into the store.

ONE PENMANSHIP

You may not have words of gold, but who's to say you cannot write with a pen of gold? The latest Lapis Bard Contemporary Dark Metal Fountain Pen blends workmanship, engineering and aesthetics and is sculpted with light aluminum metal and tasteful rose gold trims. The classic medium nib of the fountain pen enables an ease of writing experiences. The rose gold plated trim complements the glossy black lacquered aluminum body. The pen comes with a cartridge ink filling mechanism. The Lapis Bard Lyre logo is encased in resin with a touch of blue on top of the cap.



BACK TO BASICS



A new entrant on the block is Scabal, nestled in Mumbai's Kings Bespoke Tailoring. While Kings has been around since 1959, Scabal's Spring Summer 2018 collection brings to the table new enthusiasm with palette, design and detail in an array of 10 lines including the Denim Deluxe, Summer Cashmere and Taormina, all of which are suited for the Indian summer.

LITTLE PRINCE ON THE NIB

Mumbai saw Montblanc launch the Meisterstück Le Petit Prince Collection, a pen inspired by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's popular novella by the same name. The launch saw Nicolas Baretzki, CEO of Montblanc and Franck Juhel, President of Montblanc Middle East, India and Africa (MEIA), Montblanc ambassador and cricketing legend, AB de Villiers, Mandira Bedi and other popular faces. This pen is the first edition of this series and includes three writing instruments, a notebook, a woven leather bracelet, a money clip and cufflinks – all of these feature the characters of the young prince and the fox from the novella. Succeeding editions will highlight other characters from the book, with the idea of promoting relationships, imagination and friendship.

