

What's Happening!



Tracking the Progress of the R33

By Pat Reynolds (no relation) of Marina del Rey's The Mariner

As we remove the now useless 2005 calendar from the wall and pin up the new 2006 version, it's time to take a minute to reflect and ask ourselves if we met our goals in the past year and what the events and accomplishments that took place mean for the future.

This was undoubtedly the busiest and most exciting year we have ever had with more accolades, racing awards, and press coverage than ever expected. It was in this past year that the R33 turned a corner and like a child growing up, found her way into places and circumstances that were never anticipated. The company is more than proud of how the R33 has fared in some very extreme situations. The boat wasn't designed to weather some of these more severe conditions, but came through strong - proving the cat to be far stronger and safer than was ever thought.

In the racing world the R33 has been nothing short of dominant. With designer and chief bottle-washer Randy Reynolds setting the tone in April with a Newport to Ensenada win at the helm of hull # 8 Cat Attack, the rest of the R33s around the country piled up win after win. Amongst the more prominent and prestigious victories were the Founders Trophy, which some consider the World Series of the ORCA fleet, the 100 mile long Miami to Key Largo Race (Steve Bohlmann's hull #10), Ted Miller took first in both the DJ Johnson around Oahu Regatta and the 62nd Annual Lahaina Return (hull #5), Chesapeake Bay Yacht Racing Association's High Point Series, the prestigious Governors Cup (hull #9 Tim Lane) and a long list of other wins both offshore and inshore.



Ted Miller at the helm of his beloved *Manju*

With all these racing victories comes media attention and the R33 was featured in many publications including national publications like Sailing World Magazine, Pacific Yachting, Multihulls Magazine and other local newspapers as well. Sailing World said of the R33: “The Reynolds 33 looks like nothing we’ve seen before, but looks can be deceiving. Whether you’re out racing around the cans on Tuesday nights, sailing in that 50-mile local event, or even just going on an overnight with the family to the islands, the R33 will make you smile.” The reviewer, Chuck Allen, said of the sail, “. We went with the blast jib and the triple-reefed main at first, and simply took off, reaching 20 knots with ease. After 17.5 knots we seem to be going right up and over the top and passing waves, and that really seem to be the magic number. I was a little concerned that we might stuff the bows, but buoyancy in the forward sections kept the hulls popping out and through each wave. There was never any feeling of losing the rudder control; steerage was solid and responsive—just an awesome feeling.”

Sailing World’s Mutihull of the Year

The magazine went on to award the Reynolds 33 with the honor of Sailing World’s 2006 Multihull of the Year.

“I didn’t really think we stood a chance because Morrelli & Melvin [ed. note - the designers of the famous record breaking Playstation, the A2 catamaran and co-designers and engineers for the R33] designed a beautiful boat called the Gunboat 48,” said Reynolds. “It’s a 1.3 million dollar boat – high performance – sails beautifully with lots of room. We thought we’d definitely lose to her, but according to the judges the reason that the R33 beat the Gunboat was for the pure sailing aspect of our boat.”

Although Reynolds captured the honor over Gunboat. Reynolds said, “I’ve offered to trade 9 R33s for one Gunboat 48, but they won’t do it,”

In other news coverage, writer Chris Knapp did a very insightful piece on Randy and the R33 for the Orange County Register in California.

Thursday, November 10, 2005



Randy Reynolds builds champion catamarans whose speed and design test their limits.

By CHRIS KNAP
The Orange County Register

FROM ALAMITOS BAY – Randy Reynolds is skimming across the water at what looks like a 45-degree angle, flying the windward hull of the Cat Attack six feet off the surface.



The wind is hovering around 7 knots - barely a breeze - and Randy's racing at twice that, using the mainsail and the rudder to balance the cat on the edge of capsize.

"Hope I don't sneeze," he says, cackling diabolically.

Randy Reynolds may be the prototypical Southern California sailor. He taught himself to sail in a dinghy. Raced Lasers and Lidos in his teens. Then, at 22, designed a winning catamaran. Now, 25 years later, after designing windsurf sails and trimarans, he's gone back to cats with the Reynolds 33, a lightweight design fast enough to beat million-dollar yachts.



Photo by Eugene Garcia

Two years into production, the R33 fleet is 21 boats strong and a Southern California sailing sensation. But it is also, when pushed, a bit of a handful, with enough power to capsize in an instant. That's a problem because righting the boat requires assistance.

In essence, Reynolds has created the nautical version of a Porsche 930 or Cessna 210, a racer-like vehicle any duffer can drive slowly, but only the best can handle at the limit. And just like that car and that plane, enthusiasts have embraced it, while more cautious types say that this thing is dangerous and why isn't there some sort of regulation?

In the R33's first Newport to Ensenada, Randy came in second overall, beating the \$7 million racer Pyewacket. In 2005 he won the catamaran class outright, beating the 52-foot Afterburner.

"You'll never find somebody more passionate about the sport of high-performance sailing," says Mark Michaelsen, who helms Afterburner. "Randy is completely committed to seeking the edge of the envelope."

With dealers lining up and racers all over the country posting wins, the inevitable happened: An R33 flipped in the middle of the Trans-Erie.

No one was hurt, but for weeks the sailing chat rooms ran wild. It seemed as if the R33 was the first cat ever to capsize. The boat was called unsafe. A killer.

Reynolds still fumes at those postings.

"Those guys were completely wrong. The boat has a lot of safety systems. Beginners don't flip the boat. It's the racers that flip the boat."

A taste for speed

When Randy was 9, his father, Hart, bought an old sailboat,



which came with a wooden dinghy. Hart and Randy fitted a sail from a Sabot and took the little boat to Cabrillo Beach to learn sailing.

But the wind was whistling, and the boat kept blowing back to the dock.

Finally, a bystander told the Reynolds they were missing the leeboard, the keel on the side. So Randy unscrewed the center seat and attached it to the side with a C-clamp.



“Worked good for a year,” Randy reports.

One day a neighbor took Randy for a ride on a racing cat called a Unicorn.

“That’s when I was hooked,” Randy recalls. “You get a taste for speed and it’s so hard to go back.”

By the time he was 16, he was crewing for local racers on Lido 14s. In 1974 he and Terry Dahl were national champions on a Solcat.

Randy graduated early from Newport Harbor High, rented an industrial building in Costa Mesa and started a sailmaking company.

At 22 he made his first foray into the boat business. The Reynolds 21 improved on cats of that time with better stability and hulls big enough to sleep in. Randy sold 35 before selling the company to take up a new passion: windsurfing.

If sailing fast boats is addicting, windsurfing is worse. The speed and acceleration of a sailboard rivals the adrenaline kick of a motorcycle. On a sailboard you literally can fly, at least for brief periods.

Randy patented a new design, the Multi-Sail, and hoped to make a million.

But after 15 years, the sport started to stagnate. Windsurfers seemed stuck sailing back and forth on a single tack. Randy wanted the speed of a sailboard, but the comfort and range of a cruising yacht.

“Randy came to us with a concept,” recalls Pete Melvin, the engineer behind Morrelli and Melvin, the Huntington Beach designer. “He wanted a high-performance racer cruiser ... a new breed of boat.”

The result is a lightweight cat with five fast sails and a minimum of accommodation. It can jibe around a buoy like a windsurfer, then hit 25 knots downwind. All for \$136,070.

“If you enjoy sailing fast you get out your checkbook as soon as you sail on it,” said Michaelsen, the pro sailor.

But Melvin confirms, “The boat is a little more tender. ... You can get caught with your pants down.”

EATING COOKIES

Dave Walzer and his crew were flying a hull, so far ahead in the 140-mile Trans-Erie that the crewmen went to the leeward hull to get cookies.

That's when the boat was hit with a gust.

Countersteering might have saved the boat, but Walzer lost his footing and slid. Over she went.



Ten miles offshore, the crew floated atop the hulls for two hours, waiting for rescue. The Coast Guard couldn't figure out how to right the boat, and the R33 had to be abandoned overnight.

In the end, no one was hurt and the boat was undamaged, but from the hysteria on the sailing boards you might think someone had died.

"I honestly don't see how the designers/builders of the R33 sleep at night," a sailor identified as "Multihauler" posted on www.sailinganarchy.com.

But the criticism didn't seem to affect sales, and eventually the tide seemed to turn.

"This story's got all the attraction of 'Ferrari spins out under neophyte's hands,'" scoffed a sailor who signed himself "No Rumours."

Randy is working on a self-righting system for the R33. It's still on the drawing board, but he promises a high-performance feature that will make the boat safer and faster.

"Monohulls that push the leading edge have capsized, dismasted and sunk, yet they keep pushing the envelope. So are we," he wrote on reynoldssailing.com. "Why should they have all the fun?"

'Put up the screacher'

Reynolds is cruising back into Alamitos Bay Channel when a NACRA F18 comes blasting downwind and tacks directly in front of Cat Attack.

It's Jack Young, manager of Performance Catamarans, taunting Randy.

"Get out of our way," yells Young.

Randy chuckles at the affront. "Put up the screacher," he says. "We're gonna sail right up his transom."

He adjusts the main sail, and Cat Attack speeds down the channel.

Young tacks back and forth, trying to stay ahead. Relentlessly, Randy closes in on the NACRA, blocking its wind.

“Get out of our way,” Reynolds yells.

But it’s just a game, and as the R33 passes, Reynolds can’t help but admire the little cat.

“Nice-looking boat!” he yells to Young.

Then it’s back to the office to push the envelope a bit more.

Off the Blogs:

“Another blogger weighs in: These boats haul ass. Having sailed one thru the Molokai Channel a couple times, I can say the Reynolds 33 goes fast in the breeze ass well as the light stuff. Close reaching in 15 kts. The thing cruises at 13-15. Off the wind Screacher up same wind cruising at 19kts, bouncing off 24 in the puffs! A 44 footer? Now were talking!”



On the Horizon

The Reynolds Powercat

The most exciting new development around Reynolds Design is the introduction and first sea trials of the new Reynolds Powercat. It is essentially an R33 without rig and equipped with a hard deck and twin 60 HPs and has proven to be an amazingly powerful, and agile sport boat. The Powercat is very economical (4-7 miles to the gallon) and versatile. The Mariner magazine out of Marina del Rey California did a review on the boat in this month’s issue:



The schism between powerboaters and sailors has long roots and in all likelihood they’re not going to stop growing anytime soon. Like Oscar and Felix, they coexist based on some commonalities and shared interests, but they find them selves often being annoyed by each other.

But lo and behold maybe there is finally a boat that bridges the gap between the factions and, like Jimmy Carter in 1979, can make the two adversaries shake hands, smile and agree. The 33-foot Reynolds Powercat might be such a boat because it uniquely and effectively blends elements of both types of vessel into a fun agile sport boat.

The Reynolds Powercat is a derivation from the R33 catamaran sailboat that was just recently voted Sailing World’s Multihull of the Year for 2006. Last year the R33 won the Founder’s Cup, The Governor’s Cup and the Newport to Ensenada Race (ORCA Class) and a host of other competitions across the country as well. This sailboat has been reviewed in many publications and websites with strong accolades consistently written about its solid and sturdy base construction. That solid foundation is what makes the Powercat a worthy choice for the buyer who is looking for a boat that is fast, economical, comfortable and versatile.

“I love going to Catalina, “ said designer Randy Reynolds. “I have a 34’ Scarab right now, but I stopped taking it out because it costs a hundred bucks every time I take the thing out, but in this boat it only takes twenty dollars and it’s only ten knots slower.”



The Reynolds Powercat currently is set up to carry twin 60 HPs, but will soon be equipped with twin 90s which Reynolds believes will enable the boat to cruise at speeds around 28 knots. Due to its lightweight construction, the boat boasts gas mileage between 4-7 miles per gallon. Its open deck allows ample room for guests, family or fishing buddies as the case may be and it also has sleeping quarters suitable for 4 adults.

As a sailboat, the R33 has encountered and survived some enormous seas and treacherous wind conditions, proving it to be a boat that has the strength to handle whatever is thrown its way. During initial sea trials of the Powercat’s prototype, Reynolds encountered some dreadful conditions and put the boat through a particularly rigorous test right out of the gate.

“ I went out in gale conditions - 12 foot seas –real close together, 50 knot winds and I’m still around to talk about it,” Reynolds said only half kidding. “The seas were coming from three different directions – 10 to 12 feet tall breaking. I felt like I was in the surf. I started out heading into the waves then turned around and ran with the seas and was doing twenty-five knots. The boat preformed very well from a steering standpoint. Even though it looked like it could easily broach (due to the conditions), it had enough power and maneuverability to steer straight.”

Reynolds made it back from the harrowing trial pumped with adrenaline, but more confident that the boat is indeed sturdy and safe.

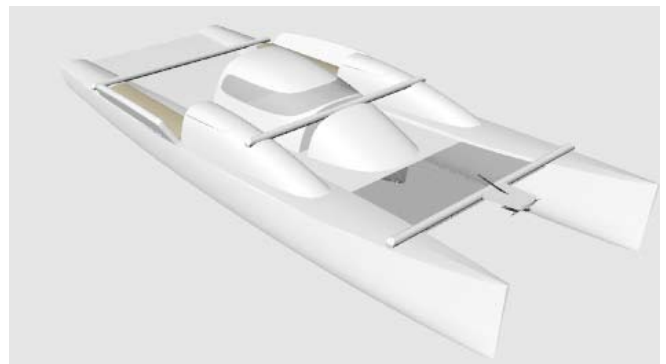
The cockpit of the Reynolds Powercat has an enclosure and built in back rests making for both a comfortable ride with added security. This boat makes for a practical fishing boat or a sporty family cruiser that is easily trailerable or can fit into a standard slip. It’s plenty fast and the sleeping accommodations are surprisingly comfortable. The Reynolds Powercat comes in at around \$118,000 equipped without the motors and appears to be a solid versatile boat for the potential owner that’s looking for something that can suit a myriad of purposes.

The R POD

The design team is almost finished with the development of the cruising POD (Place of Desire) that will be an available option that turns any R33 into a more comfortable cruiser.

“By the end of March we should be sailing the new R33C a cruising version for the R33 which will have a hard deck, a 60HP motor, and a center pod or cabin with a queen sized bunk, sit down shower and sit down galley,” said Reynolds.

The extras will weigh about 500 pounds, but Reynolds promises that the boat will still be able to hit 25 knots under sail and under power should reach about 18.



Righting System

There are three different systems being developed to make any capsizing of an R33 a non-event. One of the systems is almost complete with just the finishing touches to be done. It has been tested twice already with four crew capsizing the boat under sail. “It worked so well we can’t wait to do it again, said Reynolds. “It was fun! And we didn’t even get wet...both times!”

The systems will be very user friendly and once fully operable will make the R33 the only multihull on the market with such a safety system in place. While other performance boats encounter the risks inherent in the sport and adopt a “use at your own risk” policy – Reynolds Design is determined to make their boats their sailboats the safest boat on the market for their size.

Big Brother

Reynolds and the design team plan to continue perfecting the R33 and creating options, but he is also committed to designing a larger boat for the stable. “This year we’re definitely coming out with a bigger boat,” said Reynolds. “We have the 44 design, but we don’t know exactly what we’re going to do, - watch for updates because we’re going to make something.”

On the Home Front

There has been a new edition to the Reynolds Designs family. Scott Klodowski is the new acting Sales Manager with a head full of ideas to go along with a lifetime of sailing experience.

“I’ve been around the water most of my life and got hooked on catamarans as a kid,” said Klodowski. “Since then, I’ve been blessed to become a two time Nacra 5.8 National Champion and survived the Worrell 1000. Randy invited me earlier this year to race with him and I’m now hooked on the R33.”



Finale:

The R33 went beyond all expectations this past year making the team anxious to capitalize on the growing momentum. There are a gaggle of new projects and ideas on which to focus to make the boat the best catamaran foot for foot and dollar for dollar than anything else available. Reynolds Designs is confident that 2006 will hold more growth for this budding company and more surprises from this “beach cat on steroids”.



Pat Reynolds (no relation)
Your humble newsletter author.