



THE BINNACLE

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GITANA PLACES FIRST

NEWPORT, July 25 - The surprise of the elite superyacht race in Newport July 24 and 25 was BYC member Ken Weiss' entry, the sailing yacht *GITANA*, whose own crew and owner were even incredulous when the 118-foot Italian superyacht finished in first place, outdistancing and outperforming the event's traditional performance favorites which are lighter, rigged for racing and designed for speed far more so than *GITANA*.

Stunned owners and captains of the faster yachts expected to place ahead of *GITANA* during the second day of racing at the Newport Bucket were scratching their heads, but *GITANA*'s owner and Boston Yacht Club member Ken Weiss of Eastern Point, Gloucester, where *GITANA* is berthed May through October, attributed the upset to critical tactical decisions by Captain Daniel Rawlins.

"Contributing to our success was a fair handicap, 20 knot wind and a decision to make a longer seaward tack when we perceived a drop in wind speed affecting others on the inside tack. I monitored their wind

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GITANA



GITANA

Photo by Billie Black

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and boat speed falling thanks to our ARPA radar tracking several other competitors," Ken said.

"When Daniel saw the wind dying first from landward during the course of the race, he said, 'We're not going to take the shortest route,' which many others did, 'we're going to head out to catch whatever wind will be left,'" Ken explained.

As a result at mid-race while *GITANA* was screaming around markers, her guests were treated to a view of most of the other 12 yachts in the field languishing in lighter wind, Ken said.

The surprise first place Sunday victory propelled *GITANA* to the third place overall trophy in the megayacht class for the regatta. *WHISPER*, a 116-foot yacht, placed first, and *ROGUE*, 103-feet, placed second. *WHITEHAWK*, 109 feet, which calls Newport home and is a traditional Bucket favorite, placed fifth, edged out by a newcomer, *RANGER*, a 138-foot state-of-the-art performance J Boat built for speed.

The invitation-only Newport Bucket is a regatta of the largest and most pedigreed of the world's yachts, called superyachts and megayachts in the sailing world. Because of their luxury appointments, they are generally not among the fastest yachts on the seas, built more for comfort than speed. The fleet on hand over the weekend was worth an estimated \$400 million. The "Bucket" race started some 18 years ago in Nantucket as a gentlemen's weekend event to put their yachts through their paces in a friendly competitive spirit. The race rules still dictate such untraditional protocols as delivery of a case of chilled fine champagne from the ship's stores with any protests lodged with the race committee. To qualify for the race, yachts must be at least 100 feet in length or be grandfathered into the race from its early days in Nantucket. At the St. Barth's Bucket in March in the Caribbean, wind conditions were so poor for *GITANA* that she recused herself from the race one day and took up position as a marker boat. For that she was awarded a 'Spirit of the Bucket' trophy.

GITANA, designed and built by renowned Italian shipyard Perini Navi, is the only sailing megayacht to call

Massachusetts home in the summer months. **Ken Weiss**, founder of Security Dynamics (now RSA Security), invented the SecurID card, which is now the standard for computer network identity verification security. In addition to belonging to the Boston Yacht Club, he is a member of the Eastern Point Yacht Club in Gloucester.

After undergoing a multimillion dollar refit since Ken acquired her four years ago, *GITANA* is enjoying a renaissance of popularity and notoriety in the yachting world.

In June Hollywood director Andy Tennant ordered the script rewritten for a new Will Smith romantic comedy in order to include *GITANA*. Tennant was filming a movie tentatively titled "The Last First Kiss" on location in Manhattan when he happened upon the yacht at Battery Park. The director was so taken by *GITANA*'s classic lines, unique cockpit, and regal stature that Columbia Pictures hastily arranged a charter so that a key scene could be filmed aboard the yacht.

Last August North Shore Democratic supporters paid as much as \$2,000 a head for dinner aboard the yacht in support of Presidential candidate Sen. John Kerry. And this month Congressman John Tierney's supporters are hosting a reception aboard the yacht. At a charity auction for Community Servings in March of this year, a bidder paid \$6,000 for an afternoon cocktail sail aboard *GITANA*.

For more information on *GITANA*, visit the yacht's website at www.sygitana.com.

