

Petticoats should go to the winners

I HAVE read with interest the articles on this year's Da Gama Race, particularly the participation of the yacht Meditech Computers (Marchioness) which I am sure was an unforgettable experience for all on board.

However, I was somewhat dismayed to see the attention focused on a boat that failed to finish the race, whereas little or no mention seems to have been made of the 20-odd boats that succeeded in getting through to East London.

Perhaps your readers would be interested to know, for instance, that line honours was ably taken by the Mystique 43 Silverstream with John Sergel at the helm; that Micky Taylor and Barcom Seaboard were the unprecedented fourth-year-in-a-row IMS Handicap winners; that the smallest boat in the race was 28 foot Kate skippered by Councilor Malcolm Prentice.

Cruising Class and winner of the Bentley-Nuttall Trophy for RCOs was 30 foot Little One, skippered by myself with an all-girl crew of Ashleena Gobind, Ireene Le Tourneur and Melissa Rossak, the latter being only 23 years old and already a veteran of three Da Gama races.

All the boats taking part in the race had a hard time of it this year. Those that completed the race were fortunate in being able to overcome the wet, the cold, the miserable conditions, the seasickness and escape serious damage to boat and crew, as well as sailing a hard tactical race.

I would certainly not endorse the suggestion made by one wag in East London that the crew of Meditech Computers should be awarded petticoats. No, I think petticoats should only be awarded to those who finish the race!

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