



Maxi Yacht Rolex Cup 2006

The Event

Now in its 16th edition, the Maxi Yacht Rolex Cup is probably the event most synonymous with the Sardinian sailing paradise of Porto Cervo. Since 1980 this has been the preferred venue for competition between the world's biggest racing boats. Attracted by the flat water, generally excellent breeze and stunning mountainous backdrops, other large boats are drawn to accompany the hottest racing maxis and compete at their own level with like-minded people.

The Maxi Yacht Rolex Cup race week traditionally includes a variety of racecourses along the stunning north-eastern coast of Sardinia. The courses are designed to make best use of the daily weather conditions. Winds in September can be anywhere between light thermally-induced sea breezes to the famous Mistral, which can blow from the northwest at up to 45 knots at times. Maxis are big enough and well-equipped enough to handle most of the wind and weather seen in the north of Sardinia, which means the event organiser, the Yacht Club Costa Smeralda, has no fear in sending the fleet out to race in just about all conditions.

Often the courses will take the fleet through La Maddalena Archipelago just to the north of Porto Cervo. Narrow straits, rocky outcrops, shifting winds and tight competition, set against one of the most spectacular racing backgrounds imaginable, test the crews' nerve, skill and speed to the utmost. As Maxi boats are big, and hence fast, races never last more than a few hours at a time even though significant distances are often covered before the fleet returns to their moorings in the idyllic setting of Porto Cervo.

Ashore every evening the big boats with their numerous crews and guests enjoy the special Sardinian hospitality that most people only dream about. Porto Cervo – during one week in September with the Maxi fleet and its crews – is a unique mix which provides the perfect setting to observe these dream boats, lucky people and a genuine sailing atmosphere.

At week's end, the Maxi Yacht Rolex Cup and Rolex watches are presented to the overall winner of each Division.



MAXI YACHT ROLEX CUP 2006



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Provisional Programme

Sunday, 3rd September

0900 – 1300 Inspections, Registration

1500 – 1800 Inspections, Registration

1830 Briefing – YCCS Club House

1930 Welcome Cocktail – YCCS Clubhouse (by invitation)

Monday, 4th September

1200 Race

After race Refreshment – Piazza Azzurra

Tuesday, 5th September

1200 Race

2030 Rolex Crew Party (owners and crews) – Piazza Azzurra

Wednesday 6th September

1200 Race

After race Refreshment – Piazza Azzurra

2030 IMA Dinner (by invitation)

Thursday, 7th September

Lay Day or Resail

2030 Rolex Dinner (by invitation)

Friday, 8th September

1200 Race

After race Refreshment – Piazza Azzurra

2100 YCCS Dinner – YCCS Clubhouse (by invitation)

Saturday, 9th September

1200 Race

1830 Final Prizegiving - Piazza Azzurra

1930 YCCS and BMW Closing Cocktail

YCCS Clubhouse (by invitation)



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About the boats

Split into five divisions, the Maxi Fleet will represent one of the most expensive gatherings of sailing yachts ever assembled. From the most luxurious, through the most traditional, to simply the fastest monohulls afloat today, this fleet is nothing but impressive.

What is a Maxi - a short history

The term Maxi meant the maximum size that was allowed to be built under the international handicap system that existed during the '70s and '80s, the now defunct IOR (International Offshore Rule).

When offshore racing started to become more and more structured 30 years ago, and the handicap systems used to determine the winner of any race became refined, there still remained a real interest in line honours, the honour associated with being first to cross the finish line and first into port, regardless of handicap result. The biggest boat usually had the best chance of being first home and collecting that honour. Those that had the means and the will built the biggest boats allowed under the IOR, the boat with the maximum allowed rating, the Maxi Rater, known affectionately as the Maxi.

Maxis tended to be 70-80 feet in length and were sufficiently fast and seaworthy to cross oceans, becoming the boat of choice for the Whitbread Round the World Race for more than 20 years. They were considered to be as big as sailors could safely handle with just muscle power - any larger and mechanical power would have been required to operate winches to control the enormous sail plans. Mechanical power was not allowed in those days and may well have been too heavy to install on a racing boat in any case.

Racing around the world was not every owner's objective, inshore races, short coastal hops and some of the offshore classics were more attractive to a different set of people, especially when there was a chance of line honours or a crack at the double, first home and handicap honours, too. At this stage the fleet began to split in two, the inshore and offshore fleets going down separate paths, both of which were towards more and more extreme configurations without compromising for anything other than the task at hand.



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About the boats *(continued)*

Older, less competitive boats sometimes found themselves being fitted out for cruising purposes, the large internal volume of these boats supplying adequate space for more accommodation. When regattas were held in areas where many of these large cruising boats found themselves, they could still participate. When the chance of putting several Maxis against each other to see who was the most worthy occurred, the Maxi Yacht Rolex Cup was born. Sardinia was the venue and the Yacht Club Costa Smeralda has welcomed the evolving fleet of Maxis ever since.

In the 1980s, Maxis really were the largest and most impressive boats around. The sport of sailing was growing fast in scope and sponsorship of these boats and events was becoming more widespread. This had the effect of accelerating the process of design and new projects, especially with regard to building boats for the round the world races. For the first time, many Maxis were run by their skippers and their associated sponsors rather than by the owner. Developments during this period led to increased confidence in the boat-building industry to use new technologies and design ideas from the then maximum sized sailing boats and take the next step forwards, which ultimately led towards the modern International America's Cup Class and the Super Yacht eras.



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The America's Cup

At the end of the 1980s, the America's Cup community decided to race in a new class of boat, moving from the old fashioned 12-Metre class to a new class, the ACC (America's Cup Class). The new America's Cup boats were a bit bigger than the Maxis of the day and infinitely more complex, powerful and with no hint at all of being anything other than an open day boat that sailed short match race courses. By the early 1990s, the new class had started to eclipse the IOR racing Maxis and draw some of the owners from Maxis to the America's Cup arena.

The development in yacht design and structural engineering that these new boats spawned saw a pass-on effect across almost all aspects of yacht design. It is true that the first composite Maxis were used as a starting point for ACC design, but the resources and in-depth research applied to the new class accelerated the process across the board.

The Super Yachts

New materials such as carbon fibre and epoxy resins, along with a greater understanding of their behaviour meant ever more ambitious yacht building projects were entertained, and the era of the Super Yacht dawned and blossomed. A Super Yacht is generally a type of sailing boat above a Maxi, ie: over 80-foot (24-metres) in length, but mostly from 100-foot (30-metres) length overall. Both arenas of naval architecture fed from each other. The maxis and ACC boats developed hull shapes, techniques and material use; the Super Yachts needing to get away from huge crews, developed mechanical sail handling equipment and simplified systems.

Today we see both types of boats sailing together, where many of the ideas developed on Super Yachts have trickled down to be used on relatively small Maxis and performance cruising boats, whilst the overall length of the pure racing-only Maxis has slowly moved up towards the 100-foot length.

Maxi Yacht Rolex Cup

The Maxi Yacht Rolex Cup in fact welcomes all types of large boats today. From a situation where only IOR rated boats of a maximum size in the 75 feet range were sailed 25 years ago, that size would be amongst the smallest boats around today. While the minimum overall length allowed at the MYRC is now 18 metres (60 feet), boats over 100 feet in length are more the norm in Sardinia. Average speeds for the fastest boats will take another leap forward this year with the participation of several state of the art canting-keel boats such as Alfa Romeo, Wild Oats, and the Volvo 70 Ericsson.



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The five classes at the Maxi Yacht Rolex Cup

1) The Racing Division

High-performance racing yachts often featuring the latest technological advances in build techniques, sails and boat-handling race in this division under IRC. The IRC handicap system is developed from, and replaces, the Channel Handicap System rating rule, and is widely used worldwide at a great variety of different levels, ranging from club and local series to a significant number of major events including the Maxi Yacht Rolex Cup. The minimum length for yachts in this division is 24 metres. Three Volvo Ocean racers will start in this division with separate scoring.

The rule is jointly owned and administered by the Royal Ocean Racing Club (RORC) and the Union National pour la Course au Large (UNCL). The rule algorithms are confidential to these two clubs; this confidentiality of the rule prevents designers designing yachts to the rule and effectively prevents rapid obsolescence. This feature is central to IRC.

2) The Cruising Division

A range of heavy and light displacement yachts, some of which will feature the same high-performance design innovations as yachts in the Racing Division. The big difference is that these yachts rarely, if at all, compromise on comfort below decks, where lavish interiors and all modern conveniences feature. The handicap system is IRC and the minimum length is 24 metres.

3) The W Division

Racing with their own handicap based on the IMS handicap system's Velocity Prediction Program.

4) Spirit of Tradition

This division encompasses modern day classics – yachts that are built to look like they are from a bygone era, but which under the waterline may sport the latest keel configurations or below decks may be equipped with all modern conveniences. On deck and above, sail handling equipment is often managed with a complex hydraulic system and steering is light as a feather.

Most are built for cruising and enjoyment by owners and friends in a classic style. Many of these Spirit of Tradition yachts show impressive speed and provide a wonderful spectacle when sailed to their full potential. They are a great addition to the fleet at the Maxi Yacht Rolex Cup. Yachts race with a day-by-day performance handicap controlled by the IMA Technical Office. The minimum length is 24 metres but, with yachts such as the 55 metre Adela taking part, this group often dwarfs the others.

5) Mini Maxi

This year a new division has been introduced to accommodate the more traditional Maxi yacht, which is smaller than its newer sisters in the Racing Division. Mini Maxis are between 18 metres (60 feet) and 23.9 metres (79 feet) in length. The Mini Maxi boats must comply with the IMS/ORC Club Rules and Regulations. IRC rated boats will also race in this division with separate scoring and prizes.



Maxi Yacht Rolex Cup 2006

About the Organisers

The Yacht Club Costa Smeralda was founded on May 15th 1967 by its current President, His Highness the Aga Khan, and a small group of Founder Members, as a non-profit sporting association whose purpose was to bring together nautical sports enthusiasts and those who love the sea. The Board of Directors, the Commodore and the Secretary General supervise all of the Club's social and sporting activities.

Affiliated with both the Italian Sailing Federation (FIV) and the Federazione Italiana Motonautica (FIM), the YCCS promotes and organises a series of major sporting events for which it is renowned throughout the world. These include the the Maxi Yacht Rolex Cup, Sardinia Rolex Cup, Rolex Swan Cup, Rolex Settimana delle Bocche, and the Veteran Boat Rally. The YCCS has also organised many other World and European Championships in various classes, such as the Star Class World Championship, the 12-Metre World Championship, the Rolex Farr 40 World Championship, and the IMS Offshore World Championship. The YCCS is the administrative headquarters of the Offshore Racing Congress (ORC) and the International Maxi Association (IMA).

In addition, the YCCS burgee was also to be found aboard Azzurra, the first ever Italian Challenger for the America's Cup, in Newport in 1983, and Destriero, which brought the Blue Riband back to Italy in 1992 after smashing all previous Atlantic crossing records. 2004 marked the 20th anniversary of the YCCS's first collaboration with Rolex, which is also the Club's Official Time Keeper.

The YCCS Clubhouse, overlooking Porto Cervo Marina, is considered one of the most prestigious and beautifully functional structures of its kind anywhere in the world. The adjoining Piazza Azzurra, the nerve centre of the Race Village during sporting events, hosts a series of cultural initiatives throughout the rest of the year. The Clubhouse offers Members and regatta participants 24 guest suites, a modern Wellness Centre and a Bar and Restaurant on the panoramic Poolside Terrace. Patrons can also avail of an established sailing school with over 25 years of experience.

Yacht Club Costa Smeralda

Via della Marina
07020 Porto Cervo (SS)
Italy
Tel: +39 0789 902200
Fax: +39 0789 91257 / 91213
Email : secretariat@yccs.it
www.yccs.it



Rolex and Sport

Rolex made its debut in sport in 1927 when a swimmer, Mercedes Gleitze, swam across the English Channel wearing a Rolex Oyster, the first truly waterproof watch.

Since 1933, Rolex has been a partner on Himalayan expeditions. On those ascents, the climbers wore Rolex. The Oyster Perpetual was the first watch to reach the highest point on earth during Sir John Hunt's successful Mount Everest expedition in 1953, when Sir Edmund Hillary and Sherpa Tensing Norgay reached the summit.

In 1967, the golfer Arnold Palmer was presented with a Rolex in recognition of his achievements on the golf course. This was the beginning of a long and continuing association with golf. Rolex now has a major commitment to five sports internationally; these are yachting, golf, tennis, equestrian and motor sport.

Rolex 2006 Yachting Events Calendar

Throughout 2006 Rolex is involved in many sporting events - a full list follows

Rolex Miami OCR

22 – 27 January 2006

Miami, FL, United States

Established in 1990, the annual (Olympic Classes Regatta) organized by the Olympic Sailing Committee of US SAILING, is sailed on Biscayne Bay and features elite-level competition in the classes selected for the Olympic and Paralympic Games. As the only International Sailing Federation (ISAF) grade-one ranking event in the U.S.A. for Olympic classes, the Rolex Miami OCR has a track record for high attendance by foreign teams.

Rolex TP 52 Global Championship

7 – 12 March 2006

Miami, FL, United States

The 2006 Rolex TP52 Global Championship is a championship regatta that will be hosted at Acura Miami Race Week. The week will feature six days of racing including windward/ leeward, a distance race (18-24 hrs) and a coastal race in the challenging sailing conditions off Miami. The highly competitive fleet features level racing with strict owner/driver rules for the championship.

Rolex International Regatta

24 – 26 March 2006

St. Thomas, US Virgin Islands

The "Rolex" is a fun-filled competition for Corinthian and professional sailors alike, in the subtropical Caribbean setting of St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands. The regatta combines one-design and handicap racing for yachts in up to 10 classes, including spinnaker and non-spinnaker divisions. In 2006, the regatta celebrates its' 33rd season and Rolex has been a partner since the very beginning.

Rolex Capri Sailing Week

27 April – 1 May 2006

Capri, Italy

Following a successful introduction last season, the Rolex Capri Sailing Week returns to the turquoise waters of Capri providing spirited competition for the start of the Mediterranean racing season. Hosted by the Yacht Club Capri and the Yacht Club Costa Smeralda, the Rolex Capri Sailing Week provides a week of highly competitive racing for the Swan 45 and Farr 40 one-designs, the I.M.A. Mini Maxi, and the Comet 41S, 45S, 50, 51S classes. The strikingly picturesque island provides a stunning backdrop to the on-the-water racing action in the Bay of Naples, off Capri.



Rolex Antigua Sailing Week

30 April – 6 May 2006

English Harbour, Antigua, West Indies

Now in its 39th edition, the Rolex Antigua Sailing Week is the traditional finale to the Caribbean racing season. The week has evolved from a regatta for local yachtsmen into an international event that spans 6 days, attracting over 200 yachts, and 1500 participants – both well-known professionals from the America's Cup and grand-prix racing circles, and top competitive amateurs.

The steady trade winds produce great sailing conditions for the yachts to race both 'round the buoys and point-to-point. Ashore, the nightly social activities follow the fleet to some of the most idyllic locales on the island.

Sardinia Rolex Cup

5 - 10 June 2006

Porto Cervo, Sardinia, ITA

This coveted team trophy, organised by the Yacht Club Costa Smeralda, is competed for every two years. Each nation team participating at the Sardinia Rolex Cup 2006 will comprise three yachts: a Farr 40, a Swan 45, and TP52. ISAF has designated the regatta the Offshore Team World Championship, and upwards of 6 national teams will also be racing for the Rolex Offshore Team World Championship Trophy.

Giraglia Rolex Cup

11 – 17 June 2006

St. Tropez, France – Genoa, Italy

One of the most renowned distance races in the Mediterranean, the Giraglia has been a tradition for European sailors for over 50 years. From the race start off the historic port of Saint-Tropez, France, the fleet head through the idyllic Iles des Hyeres and across the sea to the Giraglia, a rocky islet off northern Corsica, before racing to the finish at Portofino Italy (and the prize giving in Genoa, home to the organisers the Yacht Club Italiano), a total distance of 243 miles.

Bol d'Or Rolex

17 – 18 June 2006

Geneva, Switzerland

Close to 600 boats gather every year to compete at this 93-mile race on Lake Geneva, Switzerland. The event is widely regarded as the most important sailing competition on inland waters. This spectacular, long-distance race is organised by the Société Nautique de Genève.

Rolex Commodores' Cup

25 June – 2 July 2006

Cowes, Isle of Wight, United Kingdom

The Rolex Commodores' Cup is an international offshore regatta for three-boat national teams. Organised by the Royal Ocean Racing Club, this biennial event is held over seven days at Cowes, Isle of Wight. The Rolex Commodores' Cup is designed to test the teams over a variety of courses. A Pro/Am Crew Rule requires that each crew consist of a minimum of 50% amateur sailors.

VIII Trofeo S.M. La Reina - Copa Rolex

30 June – 2 July 2006

Valencia, Spain

The Real Club Náutico de Valencia will host this year's Trofeo S.M. La Reina Rolex Cup. As in past editions, there is expected to be a very high turnout, upwards of 100 boats. The regatta is open to the following yachts: TP 52s and IMS 500, 600, 670, C and D will enjoy three days of racing in the waters off Valencia.



NYYC Race Week at Newport presented by Rolex

15 – 23 July 2006

Newport, RI, United States

This biennial race week has become a favourite of sailors with its split format. The regatta's first four days feature handicap racing for IRC, PHRF NYYC CR and Classics, as well as 12 metre yachts. Then, a daylong Distance Race around Conanicut Island on Wednesday divides the week and is an option for all competing yachts. The second half of the week features an expanded four days of one-design racing for more than ten classes, including North American championships for Beneteau First 36.7, J/44, J/109, Farr 395, and Farr 40, and national championships for Melges 32.

Rolex Baltic Week

6 – 13 August 2006

Neustadt, Germany

Following a successful premiere in 2004, the Norddeutscher Regatta Verein (NRV) Hamburg will organize a third Rolex Baltic Week in early August 2006. The event will encompass three different regattas - and once again it will take place on Lübeck Bay in Neustadt/Holstein on the Baltic Sea. This year's highlights will be the IMS Offshore World Championships and the Star Class European Championships. The Rolex Baltic Week 2006 will again feature the Swan Race, a regatta exclusively for Nautor's Swan yachts.

Rolex Farr 40 World Championship

6 – 9 September 2006

Newport, RI, United States

For 2006, the World Championships will move to Newport, Rhode Island. Upwards of 35 racing sailboats – 40 feet long and all identical in design, will race over four days in ten challenging races for the world championship crown, the World Cup, and a coveted Rolex timepiece. Each crew is made up of four professional and five to six amateur sailors. Each yacht must be driven by its amateur owner/helmsman. Racing is precise, tactical and intense. With all other factors equal, skill and timing are crucial.

Maxi Yacht Rolex Cup

4 – 9 September 2006

Porto Cervo, Sardinia, Italy

The Costa Smeralda provides a stunning setting and perfect sailing conditions for the Maxi Yacht Rolex Cup. The conditions are ideal to highlight the high-tech performance of these stunning 20+ meter yachts. With the fleet racing competitively all week, the race viewing is spectacular, and the social events very elegant and festive. The first Maxi World Championship took place in 1980, created by the Yacht Club Costa Smeralda in Sardinia. The regatta is now an annual event, with owners and crews enthusiastically returning to Porto Cervo each September.

Rolex Swan Cup

11 – 17 September 2006

Porto Cervo, Sardinia, Italy

Porto Cervo becomes the centre of Swan world in September 2006 with upwards of 100 Swan yachts competing in this weeklong regatta. Recognized worldwide as one of the preeminent designers/ builders of luxury sailing yachts, this biennial event attracts both racing and racer/cruiser yachts. A draw for top sailors, the Rolex Swan Cup provides a spirited week of racing and gala social events for which the Yacht Club Costa Smeralda is renowned.



Rolex Big Boat Series

14 – 17 September 2006

San Francisco, CA, United States

Established in 1964, the St. Francis Yacht Club's Big Boat Series takes place annually on San Francisco Bay. In 2005, Rolex became title sponsor of this prestigious regatta which includes very competitive one-design and handicap racing. Big Boat is widely recognized as one of the most important sailing events in the U.S. Sailors come from around the world to compete in this "granddaddy" of big boat racing.

Rolex Middle Sea Race

17 – 28 October 2006

Marsamxett Harbour, Valletta, Malta

The takes place in the heart of the Mediterranean and covers one of the most beautiful racecourses in the world. Starting and finishing in Malta, the route includes the deep azure waters of Sicily and the Straits of Messina, the islands of Pantelleria, Lampedusa, and even the active volcano of Stromboli, as course marks. In addition, two days of coastal races around Malta and Gozo take place prior to the start of the long-distance race.

ISAF Rolex World Sailor of the Year Awards

07 November 2006

Helsinki, Finland

These awards recognize the top male and female sailor in the world. The winners are selected by the 112 ISAF Member National Authorities from an impressive field of nominees chosen by the global sailing community. Recent winners have topped their fields, from one-design to offshore racing. This year's award ceremonies will take place in Helsinki.

Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race

26 December 2006 – 1 January 2007

Sydney – Hobart, Australia

Mention the leading ocean races in the world, and the Rolex Sydney Hobart is certainly in the top three. This 628-mile offshore race organised by the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia provides a tough test for skippers, tacticians and crews alike. This year's race will be the 62nd annual edition of this time-honored event. In this race, Rolex saw a yachting classic that attracts a well-seasoned fleet ready to test themselves against the challenging conditions.



Media Contacts

International Media Information

Key Partners (KPMS)
20, Av. Edouard Dubois
CH - 2000 Neuchâtel | Suisse
Tel: +41 32 724 28 29
Fax: +41 32 724 28 33
Mobile: +41 79 359 15 47
Email: info@regattanews.com

www.regattanews.com

Italy

Ufficio Stampa Rolex Italia
Foro Buonaparte, 54 | 20121 Milano
Tel: +39 02 72001513
Fax: +39 02 72020171
Email: alberto.franchella@seci1981.it

antonella asnagli & associati
Via Giacomo Leopardi 14 | 20123 Milano
Tel: +39 02 48008294
Fax: +39 02 43916618
Email: sinergie@asnagliassociati.it

UK & Ireland

Giles Pearman
The Old Bakery | The Street Lodsworth
West Sussex GU28 9BZ
Tel: +44 (0)7984 432948
Fax: +44 (0)20 7861 2470
Email: giles@regattanews.com

Germany

Andreas Kling
Foehrdener Strasse 6 | 25563 Wrist
Tel: +49 (0)4822/360 900
Fax: +49 (0)4822/360 901
Mobile: +49 (0)172/257 8817
Email: andreas@regattanews.com

Spain

Alejandro Varela
Varadero Comunicación
C/ M^a Auxiliadora, 4 | 36202 Vigo
Tel: +34 986441001
Fax: +34 986441830
Email: varadero@telefonica.net

France

Thomas Champion / Delphine Dandurand
70, rue de la Tour | 75116 Paris
Tel: +33 (0)1 45 03 21 26
Fax: +33 (0)1 45 03 40 04
Email: tcampion@eventinternational.com
ddandurand@eventinternational.com

Portugal

Diogo Muller e Sousa
EgoCorp Comunicação e Imagem
Rua Braancamp, 88 - 5^o Esq. | 1250-052 Lisboa
Tel: +351 21 383 86 00
Fax: +351 21 383 86 10
Mobile: +351 91 727 25 27
Email: dsousa@egocorp.pt

USA

Susan Maffei Plowden
Key Partners / Newport (International Events)
304 Thames Street | Newport | RI 02840
Tel: +1 401 619 1103
Fax: +1 401 619 1103
Mobile: +1 401 855 0234
Email: suma@regattanews.com

Barby McGowan (National Events)
Media Pro International
41 Memorial Blvd. Newport | RI 02840
Tel: +1 401 849 0220
Fax: +1 401 847 4535
Cell: +1 401 225 0249
Email: barby.macgowan@mediapronewport.com

Australia

OMD
Alistair Henderson
32 Pyrmont Bridge Road
Pyrmont, Sydney, NSW 2009
Tel: +61 2 9692 2000
Fax: +61 2 9692 2222
Email: alistair.henderson@omd.com.au

To learn more about Rolex and its involvement with sports in general visit www.rolex.com.
For more information about the Rolex Yachting portfolio visit www.regattanews.com.