

Vendee SaltSpring Report

(Written by Tony Brogan)

Friday - arrival

Friday afternoon around 16:00, after a stimulating 5 hours sail, I was contently tied up in Maple Bay on the main dock leading to the clubhouse. Getting an assist to tie up was a treat, and I soon wandered down the dock to greet Shingebiss's Gyle and Sam and Oasis's Bob Jones. Later, Ogotogo's Paul Faget and Soul Thyme with Suzanne and Keith arrived.

Supper was held up at the clubhouse. The pre-race Skipper's meeting was scheduled for Saturday morning. There was no challenge to be in the bunk at sundown, but it wasn't so easy to stay abed after sun-up. Consequently, I was up at 5 am making a pot of dark roast "kick Ass" coffee to start the day, anticipating the start of the race.

Saturday – Day one

Breakfast began at 0700 in the clubhouse, and soon the docks were alive with people heading one way or another, organizing their boat's gear and lines, and debating which sail to deploy or stow. As for Radiant Heat, I trusted in the jib for windward progress and the spinnaker for lighter downwind progress.

There was a light breeze filling the bay as we gathered for the skippers meeting at the head of the dock: cheerfully conducted by Maple Bay FCR Glenn Robinson.

Many were speculating the route would be South and Port handed around to Ganges. The tide was ebbing to 1400. But Glen announced that, with the service of a local helicopter pilot, the wind had been spotted building from the North. Instead of going south, we would head north and starboard handed against the current. We would have to rely on the wind to overcome the tide!

There were three starts. The first was for Division 2: boats with higher PHRF ratings. Five minutes later Radiant Heat's Division 1 began, and in another five, Division 3 consisting of the two multi-hulls started.

Radiant Heat's start was complicated by several boats not adhering to the rules, resulting in bad air that slowed RH from 5 knots to 3.5 knots.

Approaching the line at a good speed near the committee boat at the starboard end, Radiant Heat worked through the boats to leeward and came up to the line to leeward of another boat who refused to steer up as required prior to the start. The result was that we were trapped in the wind shadow of first it, and then many other boats. It is amazing how much disturbed air is caused by 16 -30 boats ahead of you.

The result was that Radiant Heat was the last boat to leave Maple Bay and enter the Narrows.

The wind while light, was now coming from the south, not the North as predicted by the helicopter, and Spinnakers were being hoisted all over the fleet as we made our way toward Vesuvius. While raising the spinnaker I was aware of a boat to starboard on a reach bringing them closer but still away.

Being single-handed, with all the deployment of lines, loosening the bag, putting up the pole adjusting the up haul and the down-haul, hauling the halyard, seeing the spinnaker not unwrapped and then doing so, I was startled to hear cries of alarm.

I discovered the aforementioned boat had cut in front. As Radiant Heat accelerated with the new sail partly filled and up, she was in danger of running down the boat. Quickly disengaging the auto helm, and grabbing the tiller, collision was averted.

As we went alongside, with the spinnaker raise completed, the neighbouring skipper said, "No problem. I admire you single handers. I could not do that myself" .

'Next time', I thought, 'maybe you could give me a little more room'.

Now the wind lightened and a number of boats came to a halt. Those on the Salt Spring shore found the last of the breeze and the best of current relief, and then we too made little progress. Close ahead I noted Shingebiss and Oasis. Gradually the wind filled in from ahead and the front of the fleet moved off toward Grappler Rock and Southey Point.

We began to move, but the breeze was taking its time filling in, and we were now a half mile back from the leader.

Approaching Southey Point, we had to complete a couple of short tacks to make the turn into Houston Passage, where we met the freshening South Easter flowing up Trincomali. Fortunately, the tide was still ebbing, and the fleet made good progress.

A series of tacks was required to maneuver down Trincomali, every tack requiring close concentration so as to keep the boat moving. Progress was made and lost against this boat and that. We noticed, with anticipation, that Oasis was gradually closer. The time for the tide to turn had arrived as we approached Captains Passage, but little current was noticed.

Radiant Heat tacked twice to Nose point and eventually took the short route in a lift as we crossed the channel toward Prevost. A competitor commented later that they stayed out and saw that we gained a quarter mile in that one maneuver. Nice to have validation.

The final two miles were completed in good time. Most of the fleet completed the race within the time limit.

Now was the time to berth, and make my way to the club house, go home to check in, returning in time for an excellent dinner catered by Penny, and to collect a yellow prize jersey for being second in the single-handed Division on Day one.

Sunday – the race back to Maple Bay

Sat at the club was a great evening. The food from Penny's Pantry was acclaimed, (not the case in MB the night before), and some even got second helpings of beef ribs.

FCR Greg Taylor had foregone the previous two days sailing in order to be on hand to coordinate the reception of 27 boats and their crews. Great job!! Thanks from the racing fleet.

Sat supper finished with FCR Maple Bay, Glenn Robinson, giving us all the news of the day. The results of leg 1 were announced and the yellow jerseys awarded to the winners of the single handed, double handed and the multihull divisions. The bar was open, talk was vibrant and smiles were seen all around.

Sunday dawned with light airs and by 0700 breakfast was served at the clubhouse. The 0830 skippers meeting announced the course and the short courses and the race organizer surprised us again by having us going back the way we came: port-handed or Counter clockwise.

By the start time for Div 2, the wind was brisk and all boats were jostling about, adjusting rigs and sails, and avoiding each other.

(Skeena Cloud had joined Ogopogo, Soul Thyme, Shingebiss, Oasis, and Radiant Heat for day two of the Vendee. SC was in Division 1, and in passing Tony, who was in Division 2, was told I had better get going, as I was still 5 minutes from the line. It turns out, I was 2.5 minutes late. But I had a reasonable excuse, I went to have a look at the 150' sailing yacht anchored in the harbour.)

The start line was set across the harbour with the committee boat next to the sand banks South of Walter's Spit. and a pin end marker to the East. The proximity of the sandbank to the committee boat precluded a usual starboard tack approach to the line if one wanted to avoid risking going aground.

There were many trying the port hand approach toward the committee boat followed by a quick tack to starboard to get over the line. That in fact was what Radiant heat achieved. Weaving toward the committee boat a little late allowed us to get in behind the early boats and to take the line close to the committee boat. Now we had the long starboard tack to Chain Islands and the right of way over the early boats coming back over on Port tack.

RH had rounded Second Sisters in the brisk wind in no time and quickly passed Welbury Spar. Again I found myself headed for the high spot of the reef and bore off to get deeper water. The wind was up now with the apparent wind in the teens as all made good progress to Captains Passage, which had a light ebb, but insufficient to slow progress.

Once into Trincomali, the wind was lighter but behind us and chutes were soon popping up all over the place. Many who gybed for faster boat speed were heading for the Galiano side but I, as usual, opted for the deep run, and was making good progress straight up the channel. I saw two advantages with this. Firstly the metrics say that velocity made good is more effective on a deep broad reach for the j-30, and I was headed into the current and not oblique to it thus eliminating much leeway. *(Note to Skeena Cloud, this is why Tony wins and you whine)*

The results seem to bear this out as the fleet divided into faster boats ahead (what else,), and a group with the slower boats behind. *(He means me on the Skeena Cloud).*

(Skeena Cloud thought she was well placed. I didn't want to push it too hard, having only one good hand, and thought being within five or six cables of the other SISC boats put me in a reasonable position. But that didn't last long, once Shingebiss and Radiant Heat launched their spinnakers, they quickly disappeared. But Oasis and Soul Thyme remained in my sights.)

Radiant Head was now in the lead group. We rounded Southey Point on a beam reach, still flying the spinnaker. The rain that had been threatening all day was now falling steadily from a leaden sky. Inching past Grappler Rock, the mainsail was set with the boom fore and aft, keeping a steady stream of water pouring into the cockpit, and over the single handed skipper, every time a sail adjustment was called for.

(Back behind, well behind, the fleet and wind had left Skeena Cloud. The only bright spot was seeing First Draft and her crew heading to Ganges from an outing somewhere nearby. Interestingly, I was becalmed beside a boat whose crew I sat with a dinner the night before, so we chatted some more. I gybed back and forth under spinnaker, but made no real progress against the other boat, as the current set me back after each gybe. I should have set my white sails and gone below to get out of the teeming rain. Meanwhile, I could see first Oasis, and then Soul Thyme, asymmetrics still flying, catch a bit of a breeze, and the tide change, to round Southey Point, leaving me truly alone, as my partner had since wisely motored off.)

Back to Radiant Heat. We all came to a halt, some creeping down the Salt Spring shore and others in the center. Spins were down in a sodden mess below deck as we searched for wind now appearing to come from the direction of the narrows, but the steam clouds of Crofton mill saying it was from the West.

Finally, I was inspired to go below and search for the "whimper": a spinnaker cloth head or flying sail (either) cut like a 60% Yankee Jib.

It worked, and I was up to a knot in the right direction, but then the wind freshened, and nearby boats started to move with their regular sails. Another sail change back to the jib and hunting for the bands of winds beginning to show. The boats on the Vesuvius shore began to move into the narrows as we also approached. It was now a NEW RACE as all the slower boats up Trincomali were with us. *(Skeena Cloud just started to see this all develop as she ghosted around Southey Point, towards Grappler Rock.*

The Race Committee came on air and announced an amended finish line just at the entry to Maple Bay

Slowly the winds freshened as we closed on the Narrows and we had a series of good tacks through. Again, it was time to make up ground on the boats ahead, and leave a few behind, The committee boat came into view around the last bluff, and the wind eased again as a possession of boats filed by the committee boat to be recorded as finishing

(The wind never made it back to Skeena Cloud. The boats slowly evaporated in the heavy rain and scudding clouds as they entered the Narrows.)

It was a wet day out and Radiant Heat was grateful for gear that was impervious to rain. I was snug and dry except for saturated feet as boots were forgotten in the change to wet weather gear.

Putting the auto helm in play, sails were downed and stowed, fenders deployed, Brest lines attached and moorage made on the outer dock.

Shortly after arriving at the club house we were served burgers with all the trimmings and had a glass or two of wine later while awaiting the results. Skeena Cloud made it just in time (under power) for the burgers.

FC Glen did an outstanding job of delivering the prizes of inscribed glass tankards, more yellow jerseys, Cowichan valley wine and cookbooks etc. to the winners. Radiant Heat took first in the combined single-hand, and Oasis took third, so SISC acquitted themselves well, having only six boats out of 35.

There was much laughter, applause and congratulations. Condolences to the non finishers but they had some great sailing to remember.

Monday was the delivery home but that is another non eventful day. *(Skeena Cloud had its best sail of the weekend Monday, a two or three hour spinnaker run from just below Beaver Point to home. Unfortunately, it didn't account for anything more than an excuse to share a beverage or two with Sam and Gyle on Shingebiss, who arrived home about the same time.)*

MBYC
File: 2019 Vendee Salt Spring_v2
Vendee Salt Spring 2019
Class: Monohull - PHRF (Time on time)

Race 3
Start Time: Sunday, July 07, 2019 00:00:00

COMBINED

Pos	Order	Sail	Boat	Skipper	PHRF	Type	Finish	Elapsed	Corrected	Score	Division	Single
1	10	CAN151	SUNNYVALE	McMillan,Fraser	85	Melges 24	19:16:18	10:16:18	11:02:08	1	Div1	
2	26	589	NEMESIS	Coughlin,Tim	231	San Juan	21:49:14	12:49:14	11:05:47	2	Div2	
3	4	29725	JAGUAR	Mills,Clay	152	HotFoot 27	20:33:42	11:33:42	11:10:59	3	Div2	
4	28	29383	KIA ORA	Kibble,Matthewson	198	Ranger	21:29:42	12:29:42	11:18:42	4	Div2	
5	24	2	OGOPOGO	Faget,Paul	108	Left Coast Dart	19:59:00	10:59:00	11:22:05	5	Div1	
6	1	42512	BULLETPROOF	Martin,Nigel	138	Olson 911SE	20:37:22	11:37:22	11:28:53	6	Div1	
7	15	18426	CHANGES	Horsfall,Derek	152	Capo	20:53:13	11:53:13	11:29:52	7	Div2	
8	8	74337	MISTLETOE	Clarke,Chris	138	Fraser 41	20:40:37	11:40:37	11:32:06	8	Div1	
9	3	22346	KATANA	Major,Wade	158	C&C	21:05:40	12:05:40	11:35:42	9	Div2	
10	9	29547	ARKLE	Blauw,Kerry	169	HotFoot 24	21:26:52	12:26:52	11:44:35	10	Div2	
11	18	29745	NVS	Gibson,Paul	153	HotFoot	21:09:56	12:09:56	11:44:59	11	Div2	
12	30	3588	CAHOOTS	Armitage,Jack	171	CS 36 Merlin	21:29:28	12:29:28	11:45:00	12	Div2	
13	19	208	SAMSARA	Cairns,Brad	135	Laser 28	20:51:45	11:51:45	11:46:19	13.5	Div1	
13	31	53160	AMELIE	Levaaho,Veli	122	J29	20:37:37	11:37:37	11:46:19	13.5	Div1	
15	25	6875	PRIME	Swayze,Murray	120	First 35.s5	20:38:00	11:38:00	11:48:54	15	Div1	
16	20	2398	LOVE IT OR LIST IT	Tanner,Dennis	185	J24	22:00:17	13:00:17	11:59:25	16	Div2	
17	5	43	EIN	Kelly,Rob	87	First 36.7	20:12:10	11:12:10	11:59:47	17	Div1	
18	14	8	PULELEHUA	Wallis,Matthew	114	Dash 34	20:43:26	11:43:26	12:01:11	18	Div1	
19	23	40525	TEQUILA SUNRISE	Brown,Don	150	Elie 30R	21:24:43	12:24:43	12:02:29	19	Div2	
20	7	67901	RADIANT HEAT	Brogan,Tony	138	J30	21:15:36	12:15:36	12:06:39	20	Div1	SH
21	12	67727	PACIFIC PEARL	Fitzgibbon,Gary	126	Olson	21:04:19	12:04:19	12:08:48	21	Div1	
22	27	421	OASIS	Jones,Bob	120	First 41.s5	21:17:44	12:17:44	12:29:16	22	Div1	
23	13	617	WYNSOME	Andersen,Leigh	183	Elan 31	22:36:56	13:36:56	12:35:21	23	Div2	
24	22	87383	INTERIM	Williams,Steve	108	Ross 930	21:14:19	12:14:19	12:40:02	24	Div1	
25	2	49077	SHINGEBISS	Kenting,Gyle	84	J36	20:47:06	11:47:06	12:40:57	25	Div1	
DNF 17		80	LOONACY	Anderson,Neil	240	Aloha 8.2				32	Div2	
DNF 16		121	SKEENA CLOUD	Taylor,Greg	186	Hunter 28.5				32	Div2	
DNF 6		477	MYSTIQUE	Johnston,Andy	188	C&C 29 MK2				32	Div2	



