

San Francisco Hosting 34th America's Cup

America's Cup, the world's oldest sports trophy which was first introduced in 1851, will be defended on San Francisco Bay. The 34th America's Cup starts its new 2012-13 AC World Series Regatta from August 21 to 26 and again on October 4 to 7. This will be followed by Louis Vuitton Cup Challenger Series July 4 to September 1, 2013 to produce a challenger who will race defender Oracle Team USA at the final America's Cup match September 7 to 22, 2013.

Construction has started at Pier 27 for America's Cup village featuring an amphitheater for 10,000 spectators to enjoy live entertainments, exhibitions of past America's Cup winners, and other festivities. This location is also the start and finish line for the Louis Vuitton Cup and the America's Cup Match Final. In addition, the Pier 30/32 location for team bases will provide a real "pit row" experience for fans to see the sailors, boats and international teams up close and personal.

The 2011-2012 America's Cup World Series Regatta took place in Cascais, Portugal; Plymouth, England; San Diego; Naples and Venice, Italy; and concluded in Newport, RI. Regatta Director Iain Murray and his team have conducted 133 races over 30 days of racing in the six international venues. To give you a taste of what we will be experiencing in San Francisco, I have reported the races from Naples and Newport in my previous blogs, video and column.

Nine of the best international yacht racing teams competed in Naples: Oracle Team USA Spithill and Bundock, Prada Luna Rossa Piranha and Swordfish, Emirates Team New Zealand, Energy Team France, Emirates Team New Zealand, Team Korea, Artemis Racing Sweden and Team China. Races on April 11 to 15 were struck with severe stormy weather with rough seas, and gusting winds more than 25 knots and rain showers. Team Sweden Artemis with American skipper Terry Hutchinson capsized and Team China damaged their boat during first race. Prada Luna Rossa Piranha won the Naples regatta.

Newport hosted the final leg of 2011-12 World Series June 28 to July 1. Oracle Team USA Spithill won the overall Series Championship. Spithill also claimed the Series' Fleet Racing while Sweden's Artemis Racing won the Match Racing. Oracle's team Coutts won the Newport Match Racing. Chris Draper's Prada Luna Rossa Piranha won Newport Fleet Racing. Starting with the 2012-13 AC World Series, a new team Ben Ainslie Racing from UK will join the eight other teams and Team China has dropped out. The Newport's final regatta on July 1 was broadcast live nationwide on NBC, marking the return of the America's Cup to network television for the first time in more than 20 years. The final days of racing in 2012-13 AC World Series in San Francisco will also be aired on NBC.

The World Series AC-45 catamaran each has only five sailors; the AC-72, 72ft catamaran in the 2013 races will have a crew of 11. AC-72 with 140 foot wings will be extremely exciting to watch and challenging to race. Even though AC-45 is easier to handle, it was not all smooth sailing. I witnessed the spectacular capsizing of Team Sweden Artemis in Naples and the Emirates Team New Zealand in Newport as well as the four time America's Cup winner Oracle Team USA's Russell Coutts collided with a mark boat in Newport.



AC Newport races in front of 8,000 spectators.



With Louis Vuitton Chairman, CEO Yves Carcelle at The Breakers Newport party.



Olivia with Oracle Team USA skipper Russell Coutts



The America's Cup, the oldest sports trophy in the world started in 1851.

In addition to the races, America's Cup hosted events and parties at each race venues, such as the dinner reception at the magnificent Newport mansion The Breakers for team members and sponsors. The Breakers was originally built in 1895 as the 70-room summer estate of Cornelius Vanderbilt II. Also, there was the black-tie gala at the Marble House Newport for Herreshoff Marine Museum's America's Cup Hall of Fame that inducted Patrizio Bertelli, head of four time Italian challenger syndicate the Prada Luna Rossa Challenge, Jonathan Wright, trimmer for five America's Cup syndicates and Gerard Lambert, member of four defenders between 1930 and 1958. Yves Carcelle, President and CEO of Louis Vuitton, the 29-year long supporter of the Louis Vuitton Cup Challenger co-hosted this event. Louis Vuitton Cup will be celebrating its 30th Anniversary in San Francisco next year. San Franciscans can expect a whole season of world class racing, exciting events and festivities in the coming months through September 2013.

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Olivia with Oracle Team USA skipper Jimmy Spithill and John Arndt, publisher of Latitude 38



Oracle 4 Spithill beat New Zealand team in Newport.



Oracle Team 4 Spithill racing Oracle Team 5 Coutts at Newport final match race.



Lucy Jewett, Francesco Longanesi-Catani and Ryoichi Steven Tsuchiya congratulates Prada CEO Patrizio Bertelli for his induction into America's Cup Hall of Fame.



Owner of Prada teams, Patrizio Bertelli with Olivia Decker

photography by GILLES MARTIN-RAGET, OLIVIA DECKER and CARLO BORLENCHI