

# The Superyacht

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# REPORT

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# NZ MIL CUP



# LENNIUM 2012

New Zealand's offering in a busy calendar of superyacht regattas, the NZ Millennium Cup was first raced in 2000, followed by events in 2003, 2007 and 2009. It has now been relaunched as an annual fixture and was raced once again this year on 15-18 February in Auckland, the City of Sails. Pacific Editor **Ellie Brade** reports.



Numbers of yachts visiting the Asia-Pacific are ever increasing, and the event will provide an extra incentive for yachts thinking about spending time in the region.

In March 2011, NZ Marine announced that they would once again be hosting the Millennium Cup in February 2012 and that it was henceforth to be an annual event. Building on the success of previous editions, organisers see huge potential in the event, particularly with no other superyacht regattas in the southern hemisphere. Numbers of yachts visiting the Asia-Pacific are ever increasing, and the event will provide an extra incentive for yachts thinking about spending time in the region. Holding the regatta with regularity will also mean that yachts – both motor and sail – will be able to plan the event into their calendar well in advance.



ABOVE: A TRADITIONAL MAORI FAREWELL TO SEE THE YACHTS OFF FROM THE DOCKS IN THE MORNING.  
BELOW: ECLIPSE AHEAD OF SILVERTIP, OFF OF RANGITOTO

With its clear waters and a striking backdrop of dormant volcano Rangitoto, Auckland makes an ideal venue for a regatta. Just as the Solent is the home of British yachting, so the Waitemata Harbour and Hauraki Gulf are the main playgrounds for the sailors of New Zealand and provide ample options for race courses and onshore spectator points. Combine that fantastic setting with the renowned Kiwi hospitality, a vibrant city to play host to evening social events, sunshine and the best of New

Zealand's food, wine and music and you have a winning formula. It was a pleasure to be out on the water for three days of sailing; there really is nothing like sailing on a superyacht, particularly in a setting as beautiful as New Zealand.

After its three-year hiatus, the 2012 regatta had a fleet of five yachts, all built in New Zealand, racing for the Cup. Returning to compete was the cup defender, 33.8m *Silvertip*, built by Yachting Developments. Up for the challenge of wresting the cup from *Silvertip*'s grasp were the Alloy Yachts-built 32.3m *Eclipse*, 48.6m *Georgia*, 39.7m *Janice of Wyoming* and 44m *Imagine*. I was generously welcomed on board the beautiful Dubois-designed *Imagine*, the newest yacht in the regatta fleet, for the duration of the event.

After a reception and captains' briefing on 15 February at the Royal New Zealand Yacht Squadron (RNZYS), racing began on the 16th, with a traditional Maori farewell to see the yachts off from the docks in the morning. The regatta was raced in a pursuit-race format, with Hal Wagstaff of the RNZYS and his race committee setting the handicaps. After a slight





delay due to light winds, *Georgia* was first off the mark and having held her lead throughout the race she took line honours. *Silvertip* was able to gain some distance on her fourth place start, and come in second, followed by *Janice*, *Eclipse* then *Imagine*. Racing off the Takapuna coast, along past North Head and back into the harbour, the yachts must have made quite a sight for on-land spectators. On returning to harbour a cocktail event was hosted on Te Wero Island's Floating Pavilion, in Auckland's Viaduct Harbour, overlooking the yachts.

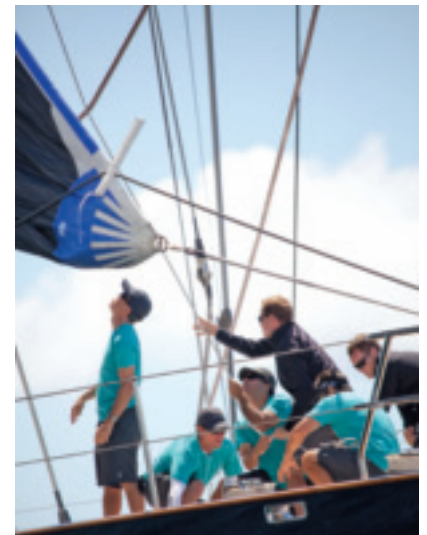
Day two brought with it some better wind and two races were held, both won by *Silvertip*. The first race of the day saw *Silvertip* and *Imagine* both quickly work their way up the ranks, ending the race in first and third place respectively. *Georgia* came a respectable second place, with *Janice of Wyoming* in fourth place and *Eclipse* home fifth.

Rock star crew are no new thing to superyacht regattas and the Mill Cup had some big names taking part, including well-known Kiwi sailor Chris Dickson skippering *Georgia* and

Dean Barker, skipper of the Emirates Team NZ America's Cup team, at the helm of *Imagine*. On board *Imagine* we were able to bear witness to Barker and some of his Team NZ colleagues in action. It was a pleasure to watch some of sailing's elite working, issuing quiet instructions and working fluidly together with the *Imagine* crew, albeit on very different craft from what they are used to with the Americas Cup AC45s. "It's a bit slower than what we normally do," said Barker, on his first time skippering a superyacht. There were plenty of guests also fortunate to be sailing under Barker's command (which will give us quite the bragging rights when it comes to the America's Cup in 2013), including the owner of S/Y *Thalia*, and Ed Dubois, designer of four of the five participating yachts.

Following a short interlude, a second race got underway: after two races the handicapping system had been further adjusted, with all yachts crossing the line within half an hour of the race beginning. Despite their best efforts, *Eclipse* was overtaken by *Silvertip* and *Imagine*, who both gained on and overtook *Georgia*. Having rounded the far point mark, *Silvertip* then moved

ABOVE: RACING GETS UNDERWAY ON DAY TWO  
BELOW: ACTION ON DAY TWO ON *IMAGINE*



It was a pleasure to watch some of sailing's elite working, issuing quiet instructions and working fluidly together...



TOP: SILVERTIP PASSING JANICE OF WYOMING  
ABOVE LEFT: A BALANCING ACT ON BOARD GEORGIA  
ABOVE RIGHT: ECLIPSE UNDERWAY WITH HER SPINNAKER UNFURLED



TOP LEFT: PRE-RACE CAPTAINS' BRIEFING  
TOP RIGHT: MID RACE ON BOARD *JANICE OF WYOMING*  
ABOVE: *GEORGIA* RACES AHEAD



TOP LEFT: GEORGIA ON THE WATER  
TOP RIGHT & MIDDLE: ON BOARD SILVERTIP & RACE FLAG  
ABOVE: ALLOY-BUILT IMAGINE & ECLIPSE PASS BY EACH OTHER



ahead of *Imagine*, comfortably taking first place. A good last run saw *Janice of Wyoming* come in not long after *Imagine*, followed by *Georgia* close behind. *Eclipse* was later welcomed back to the Viaduct Harbour, to a chorus of horns from her fellow yachts after valiantly completing the whole course under sail, despite lagging far behind the other four competitors by the end of Race Three. Another social function on Te Wero island rounded off the day, with *Janice of Wyoming* being awarded a spot prize for best spinnaker unfurl of the day.

The third day of racing dawned beautifully sunny but, unfortunately, windless. Race Four, sponsored by Yachting Developments, had been much anticipated as a decider race, with *Silvertip* and *Georgia* and *Georgia* and *Imagine* both very close in the points rankings after three races. With a slight increase of breeze, the decision was made to give racing a shot and after a postponement of three hours, and an impromptu fishing competition between the yachts, a new course was set. *Eclipse* announced they were retiring from racing and headed back into port, while the remaining yachts got underway. Unfortunately, after three hours of racing, calm conditions forced the race committee to abandon racing just off Rakino Island. At the time of cancellation *Silvertip* was leading the fleet, leaving no doubt of her strong record throughout the regatta.

Concluding the event, the NZ Millennium Cup Gala Evening, sponsored by Yachting Developments, was hosted at The Cloud on Auckland's waterfront. Following a charity auction, the prize giving, led by MC Peter Montgomery, took place. With three of the four planned races completed, *Silvertip* was once again the winner of the Millennium Cup. In second place was *Georgia*, followed by *Imagine* in third



TOP: *IMAGINE* WITH HER SPINNAKER ON FULL DISPLAY  
 ABOVE: RACE TEAM PREP THE SPINNAKER ON *JANICE OF WYOMING*

## RESULTS

Yacht	Series Ranking	Net Points	Elapsed Total Time (3 races)	Real Elapsed Time Ranking
<i>Silvertip</i>	1st	4	7:21:24	2nd
<i>Georgia</i>	2nd	7	8:44:54	4th
<i>Imagine</i>	3rd	10	7:05:17	1st
<i>Janice of Wyoming</i>	4th	10	7:51:05	3rd
<i>Eclipse</i>	5th	14	8:51:32	5th



*SILVERTIP GAINS ON ECLIPSE*

place, *Janice of Wyoming* in fourth place and *Eclipse* fifth. With prizes distributed, guests were then wined and dined and serenaded by the uniquely talented Wellington International Ukulele Orchestra.

Thanks must go to the organisers, the sponsors and, most importantly, the yachts and the owners for all taking part with such enthusiasm. Although a fairly new event, commitment to the regatta is strong, with Platinum Sponsor Yachting Developments already signing up to a three-year commitment.

Dates for the 2013 event have been announced as 14-17 February and registration is now officially open. *Janice of Wyoming*, *Silvertip* and the 31m Alloy-built *Pacific Eagle* have already signed up for 2013, and strong interest from two 2011 European-built yachts has also been registered. Visit [www.millenniumcup.com](http://www.millenniumcup.com) for more information. ■

**Images: Luke Sprague**

A full gallery of the Millennium Cup can be found online at [www.superyachtimages.com/millenniumcup2012](http://www.superyachtimages.com/millenniumcup2012)

To comment on this article, email [issue133@superyachtreport.com](mailto:issue133@superyachtreport.com) with subject: The Millennium Cup



TOP: THE VICTORIOUS *SILVERTIP* CREW  
ABOVE: THE WELLINGTON UKULELE ORCHESTRA PERFORM AT THE GALA DINNER  
BELOW: HARBOUR VIEWS FROM THE CLOUD AT THE GALA EVENING

