More yachts than ever before competed at the Loro Piana Superyacht Regatta. Tricky winds and tight courses led to some thrilling racing, as Andi Robertson reports.
“Any day we can finish ahead of our rival that has a speed advantage over us is a wonderful day. So beating the fleet as well... well, we are thrilled”
Sir Lindsay Owen-Jones, owner of Magic Carpet³

Superyacht start
Ohana is the first to start, in the superyacht classes, in a 31nm race up to and around Spargi island. Even with a staggered start, the first few minutes of the initial beat upwind are crucial as they set the order of the fleet heading into Bomb Alley, where clean air is key.

Wind shift
The sting really is at the end of the race. The superyacht leaders are first to slam into a nasty header as the southwesterly thermal breeze attacks from the south and wins out. This line of new breeze upends the top of the course for the second wave of superyachts. Kites are hastily dropped.

Saudade’s kite gets wrapped into its rigging, Inouï makes a hasty drop out the back of the boat and only just resuscitates her battle

Congestion zone
Off Palau, the string of superyachts starts to bunch into more of a fleet, instead of a pursuit race.

Easy breeze
In the superyacht classes there is further compression as the breeze drops away in the channel to the west of La Maddalena, right down to just eight or nine knots. Changing gears and anticipation are the watchwords. For the Wallys, Open Season sets a reaching kite at their top mark, trying to separate away from Magic Carpet³ but then has to peel to a more downwind sail. It’s a costly move.

With WinWin, losing a few metres. Despite her damaged spinnaker, Saudade survives to win by 19 seconds. The Wally race goes to Magic Carpet³ by more than three minutes.

The leading Wallys are already through the finish before the transition hits the fleet.
**Starting Light**
The avenue's breeze rips off a false breeze, which is lightest at the start and finish of their 36nm course around La Maddalena, sailing west up Bomb Alley between the island and Spargi before running back down the north of the islands.

**Beat goes on**
On the first beat to Monaci lighthouse the breeze shifts progressively right and it becomes a one-sided, one-tack leg to the first turn for the superyachts. Some end up above the layline and hoist Code sails or reachers.

**Down the run from Monaci**, it's a matter of holding the best line for the breeze blowing off the island shore on the right. Err too close to the land and there are sudden lulls that cost time.

**First casualties**
Two early withdrawals are P2, which breaks headsail top and bottom swivels and is forced to retire, and Ganesha, which tears her jib leech before even making the first turning mark.

**Bombing run**
Bomb Alley lives partially up to its reputation with some nasty gusts. Sail selection wins the day, according to Ohana, the biggest competitor in Class A. She chooses a smaller headsail for the day and does not struggle. “We were all sailing with too much ‘rag’. We had a light jib,” reports (unfurling) tactician Gary Weisman.

**Wallys left wanting**
All the fierce action is almost too much to witness for the Wally fleet, which has a fruitless afternoon waiting in a no-man’s land between two breezes. Even 15 knots, 12 knots on the line at times, is too much settling long enough to set a worthwhile towards course. No racing for the Wallys, a great race for the superyachts!

**Starting Light**

**Beat goes on**

**First casualties**

**Bombing run**

**Wallys left wanting**

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**We had two different sails to make the choice between: we chose the smaller one and that was the right call. I think the others went bigger and some had their problems**

Mauro Pelaschier, tactician, Ohana
Light northeasterly winds and warm sunshine make for a gentler day. The Wallys contest a 23nm coastal course complemented by a good windward-leeward race. The superyachts complete a 30nm course to a mark to the north-east of La Maddalena, leaving the island to port on the way out and starboard on the way back.

**Image:**
Gently does it

**Image:**
One tack mind

**Image:**
Lucky strike

**Image:**
Win for Whisper

**Image:**
Back and forth
While the Wallys engage in more windward-leeward races, for the superyachts it is the Southern Wind Seawave making the early running, spotting the best breeze and extending her lead away from the chasing pack, which is tussling behind her.

**Battle royale**

Open Season and Magic Carpet³ continue their duel, which goes to the wire over two windward-leeward races. In the first race there is an incredible tie between the two.

**Cutting corners**

The transition zones around Mortorio and Soffi are never easy but Seawave is smooth through the gears. She gains a few extra metres on the corners because navigator Mike Broughton and tactician Titch Blachford have completed a detailed study before the regatta by RIB.

**Timing is right**

After a well-timed start with maximum speed on the line, Maegan works to utilise the rise and fall of the gentle wind, staying in phase with the pulses – sailing high in the lighter airs, and down and fast when it builds more. She eases and fetches tactic to the islands, finishing the regatta on a high note – more than one minute ahead of class winner Grande Orazio.

**The regatta was fantastic. The wind helped us all week. To win for the third time is really special. I dreamed about it, but I did not think it was possible.**

Massimiliano Flori, owner of Grande Orazio

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**RESULTS & AWARDS**

**THE LORD PIANZA PRIZE,**

**THE SILVER JUBILEE CUP BY BOAT INTERNATIONAL MEDIA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class A</th>
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<td>3. Magic Carpet³</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Grande Orazio</td>
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**SPECIAL PRIZES**

**GINO BOSSI TROPHY**

Magic Carpet³

**IMA TROPHY**

Saudade

**YCCS TROPHY**

Open Season

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**SY CLASS A**

1. Saudade
2. WinWin
3. Ohana
4. Saudade
5. Ganesha
6. P2
7. Unfurled
8. Gaia
9. Spiip
10. Inouï
11. Magic Carpet³
12. Open Season
13. J One
14. Galma
15. Ryokan 2
16. Tilakkhana
17. Y3K
18. Kenora
19. Grande Orazio
20. Ammonite
21. Tempus Fugit
22. Firebird
23. Whisper
24. My Song
25. Magic Blue
26. Magic T G
27. Tango 6.10
28. Magic Carpet³ 6.6
29. Open Season 6.6
30. J One 7.65
31. Gama 8.65
32. Revolver 9.65
33. Tikaluna 10.85
34. YSR 11.75
35. Konora 12.15

**SY CLASS B**

1. Saudade
2. Galma
3. Unfurled
4. Gaia
5. Spiip
6. Inouï
7. Magic Carpet³
8. Open Season
9. J One
10. Galma
11. Ryokan 2
12. Tilakkhana
13. Y3K
14. Kenora
15. Grande Orazio
16. Ammonite
17. Tempus Fugit
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26. J One 7.65
27. Gama 8.65
28. Revolver 9.65
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**WALLY CLASS**

1. Saudade
2. Grande Orazio
3. Magic Carpet³
4. Open Season
5. Magic Blue
6. Magic T G
7. Tango 6.10
8. Gelda 6.6
9. Revolver 9.65
10. Tikaluna 10.85
11. YSR 11.75
12. Konora 12.15

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**ALL CLASSES**

Saudade’s third is enough to seal Class A overall. Tactician Bouwe Bekking says: “We have a great team and that made it easy for me to step on board for the first time this week.”
Social circuit

After each day’s racing, owners, crews and guests enjoyed a round of spectacular parties at the Loro Piana Superyacht Regatta.

It’s the most enjoyable time of the year. There is nothing better than to sail at this regatta.

Thomas Butter, owner of Open Season.