



Bonjour!

During the last Northeast Monsoon season the cat fleet was joined by two of Singapore's National Sailors, Jen U and Peter Wong. The duo sailed a Hobie 16 around from the Singapore Sailing Federation's base on the East Coast to take part in the Monsoon fun at CSC. But there was also an ulterior motive! If they could chalk up enough points they would qualify to head to France for the Eurocat Regatta 2011. That in itself should be incentive enough however, there is more...

Should the duo make the split in the Eurocat, they will have made the grade to enter the Youth World Championships that are due to be held in Croatia in July. This is a significant event for CSC as for many years we have tried to encourage the SSF cat sailors to station themselves at the 'home of cat sailing in Singapore' - Changi Sailing Club.

Maybe it's because of Edwin our new General Manager that has eased this passage and it does herald a new beginning of better ties with the SSF and



Eurocat '11

that's a great thing. So Jen U and Peter sailed with the cat squad during the peak of the Monsoon, qualified and now there in France.

Singapore to London. London to Paris. Paris to Lorient... 24 hours after leaving Singapore we checked in. Unfortunately it was Rosemary's lovely Hotel des Rochers which becomes the 'base' for all the eurocat sailors as it is centrally located and right opposite the busiest catamaran boat park on the planet!

Eurocat is now in its 24th incarnation, growing from strength to strength all these years to become one of the largest and keenly contested catamaran regattas in the world! In 2011 350 catamarans lined up to to battle!

Catamarans have been with us for a long time but suddenly there is a big emphasis to "catch up" with the cat sailing world. This is primarily due to the fact that the next Americas Cup will be raced on AC72's - huge, super fast cats! Since that decision was made



every sailing federation has been clamouring to get sailors onto multihulls and up to speed as quickly as possible!

The entire city of Carnac is proud of the multihull heritage and just about every shop in town exhibits a poster of the event with key businesses offering discounts to competitors. But then again, Carnac is a special sort of place.

We arrived at Lorient Airport and were greeted the President of the SL Class and stepped out into a perfect French Spring day. Beautiful blue skies and a perfect 24 degrees - it couldn't be better! The drive from the airport meandours through the picturesque French countryside that is dotted with stunning little villages resplendent with traditional architecture. Initially it felt like we were on the wrong side of the road mainly because we were on the other side! But the important bit about the trip is that it leads you past La Trinite Harbour!

This is significant as it is THE base for the fastest boat on the planet. We were fortunate enough to spot Gitana and Sodebo lying next to the dock as casual as can be. Both of these French maxi-multis have obliterated world records - jump on YouTube and watch Sodebo's amazing feat just moments after starting the race. Then be mesmerised as you realise that there is only one person onboard. For a multihull enthusiast, this is multihull Mecca!

Carnac's history is dates back 6000 years when a curious Alignment of rocks transformed the countryside. The Alignments stretch for kilometres

over the rolling countryside. The largest of the megaliths is 6 metres high and weighs a whopping 280 tonnes and so the perennial question arises once more... "how did they do it?"

Carnac is a proper little seaside town with great beaches and the Yacht Club Carnac. This Club goes about its business without cracking a sweat. It just seems to run like a well tuned machine. With two world championships conducted each year in addition to events such as the Eurocat, it is no wonder it happens like clock work. Then you find out that there is only 13 full time staff which gets beefed up with part timers and volunteers during major events. The Club has an extensive training program that starts with kids in cats... not Optimists! When you see it in action you can understand why the French have become the world leaders in multihulls - it is in their DNA!

In the days leading up to the Eurocat Jen U and Peter took part in 3 days of training under the watchful gaze of the SL Class. This was well organised and was put in place to give all the youth competitors a chance to learn the SL16 catamaran.

Mornings started with a briefing, a brisk jog down main beach, lunch and then an afternoon on the water. Here it is necessary to thank Vincent Gueho and his team for the invaluable training and the great hospitality that really made the trip special.

Special too was Hotel des Rochers that we soon made 'home base' as it turns out great french fare and is in full view of the race area. The Hotel is owned by



Rosemary whose convivial nature made our visit a very pleasant one.

But for Jen U and Peter they would have their work cut out for them. New waters and a new boat. The SL16 is the platform of the ISAF Youth Class. The closest thing we have to it in Singapore would be a Nacra 500. The SL has all the things the Hobie doesn't and so coming to grips with the extra strings and flying a kite would just be added challenges for the pair.

Back in Singapore, the duo were coached on the Hobie 16 but were seldom encouraged to use the spinnaker. In the modern world of catamarans, we never leave home without it and you wouldn't even consider racing without a spinnaker any more!

As most high speed junkies know, sailing faster than the wind requires a few special techniques and the absolute best way to learn this is by competing with others and pushing hard, all the time! It is not as easy as it appears and there is a lot going on beneath the surface. A modern catamaran can often double the windspeed. This then mean that we 'create' our own wind which in turn bends the wind that created our forward motion. Simply put, it is apparent wind! Exercising it is a fine art.

The training should up a few areas that needed a bit of work. Overall, Jen U and Peter are very good sailors. At Changi Sailing Club throughout the Monsoon they were always on the line, on time and in any yacht race that is 50% of the hard yards! Upwind, getting used to the characteristics of the squarehead

mainsail was all that was really required. Downwind, well that needed more work as the modern cat is all about sailing 'hot' and in the groove. Achieve that and you'll sail away from your competitors.

The face of high performance sailing has changed over the years. It used to be that you sailed hard upwind and could almost relax downwind as older platforms tended to sail dead downwind.

On the modern platform it is entirely a different matter. Most sailors are pretty good upwind. Once we turn the corner now and pop the kites, the world becomes a different place. Downwind requires deft control over the platform to maintain lateral balance, fore and aft trim while juggling three sails between two people. Sheet loads on the kite can be tiring and striking the right balance between sail twist, speed and power is a continual one.

The pair exhibit the common traits when crossing over from the Hobie 16 to a modern boat. For a while, they were carry too much weight in the back and sailing the boat to flat. This in turn was not allowing the hull to break free of the water which then creates more drag and reduces the speed. But they quickly altered their sailing style and the boat speed started to appear. The pair have always had good tactical skills and that has come from years of coaching at SSF.

Our focus was to break into the top half of the fleet. As such we elected to leave the tune in its standard state and simply concentrate on solid basics i.e. good clean starts, correct tactics and good boat speed.



A few days on the water and even Team GBR commented that Jen U and Peter were doing well... That was encouraging to say the least as Great Britain are always solid performers in every class. Vincent from the SL Class did a great job of getting all the teams up to speed with good briefings, great on the water exercises and shooting session videos.

Registration for Eurocat was a crowded affair with 350 boats, that is about 700 competitors. Most numerous is the Formula 18 Class. With 120 boats, they are assigned their own race area. Everything else is onto the same area that the Youth Class would be sailing in. This fleet comprises the slowest and the fastest cats but thankfully, they are split into two divisions with a separate start.

This was particularly interesting as the SL Class would start with all the odd sorts and five minutes later the likes of the Extreme 20's, Nacra 20's, Tornados and Vipers would zoom off.

The race course handles the differing class by putting the smaller boats onto an 'outer loop' and the faster boats onto an 'inner loop' course.

As race one lined up, competitors were itching to go. So much so that a general recall brought out the black flag. Another start, another general with a few boats being black flagged i.e. disqualified for being On Course Side (OCS). We can all be proud of the training that SSF has instilled in the sailors as each and every time after the General Recall SIN 3 always found their way back into a great position. That is pretty hard to achieve in the ensuing confusion. The scene was repeated on the F18 course as well with

some of the world's foremost catamaran sailors finding themselves with a Black Flag. So well done Jen U and Peter... Good clean starts every time!

Race One was conducted in light air. Isn't it strange that in the days preceding the regatta the weather was perfect. Come race day, it clouds over, turns cold and the wind becomes erratic. Sound familiar!

Race two was held in slightly improved wind but even colder as a cold front passed over. A little dip in downwind speed saw a few spots lost but Team Singapore was still in the top third of the 72 starters.

The wind freshened more for race three and the pair got off to a great start from the pin end and carrying a lot of speed. They were within the top few boats when they tacked over to the lay-line but a drop in pressure saw their boat-speed drop while the wind picked up elsewhere! Still they rounded the top mark within the top five! A great effort and things were looking good all the way around until the last mark. Here the wind faded for the leaders and built for the trailing pack - but that's racing! Some great tactical calls saw them squeeze back into the 'private' wind and notch up a good score with some of the Class leaders behind. A great effort.

Saturday in Carnac is marathon day. Some competitors come solely for this event. It starts and finishes in front of the Yacht Club and leads the fleet down the bay to round a rocky outcrop some 15nm away before turning and heading for home. As it doesn't add points for the qualifying rounds we elected not to take part, but next year on a bigger



platform we will! It wouldn't be a whole lot of fun doing 50 miles on a small boat would it?

Part of the beauty about sailing in other parts of the world is meeting new people and discovering different cultures. So the lay day became our one free day to discover what Carnac is historically famous for, Megalith and Menhirs.

These curious rock Alignments and structures date back thousands of year. One popular lore is that the Pope was fleeing the Romans and when he encountered the sea and realised he couldn't swim, turned around and cast the army in stone! That's a much better story than the one that says "they represented an intelligent being that discovered a way to lift huge stones into an arrangement that would stump future more intelligent beings" when we all know they are airstrips for alien craft!

Carnac exudes a nicely relaxed atmosphere. Everything is immaculately clean and the only dodgy bit that I could find was Churchill Peninsular where one English General had a house and then just around the corner is a beach that is most popular with English tourists! Apart from that, it's just splendid!

Eurocat is now in its 24th year and the really good thing about it is that in a very nice atmosphere the world's top cat sailors can be found. Each are running interesting programs and all are pushing as hard as one another.

Familiar to most racers at CSC is Macca aka Macca Monsoon Madness Clinic who showed up on the deck of a well turned out Hobie Wild Cat. Olympians and world champions are all here. If you wanted one regatta to sharpen your sailing skills this would be it.

Hot platforms this year include Nacra's Mark II Infusion, the Hobie wild Cat, a curiously shaped Cirrus R and the boat which garnered its fair share of media the Phantom Project. This boat was given the thumbs up by both Jen U and Peter. Great to see good young sailors getting excited about some hot new boats - oh well next year!

Of the other hot boats, we at CSC are familiar with the 20 Carbon and we thought that was huge! But, there is this thing called an Extreme 20 that makes the Carbon look skinny - if that is possible! On the water the Extreme 20 is taller, wider, lighter and generally the fastest thing out there. During the marathon Macca filmed the leading Ex20 leaping off a wave, catching the leeward foil and riding this until it broke. That sent the crew flying forward right through the carbon spinnaker pole - carnage to the tune of Euro \$5,000 or thereabouts! But an awesome machine all the same.

The fastest cats polished the marathon off in record time. Two miles after the downwind start the wind shifted offshore so once the leading boats round the island it was all downhill from there. The leaders were back in just under three



hours while the slower boats struggled home some eight hours after starting.

Overnight the weather turned. Out with the sun and in with the grey. By 10pm there was a great thunderstorm and heavy rain, not a good sign for the last day of racing! By morning, the wind was still blowing onshore and now it was much cooler.

The onshore breeze created congestion at the launching area with the chop playing havoc with some of the boats.

Out on the start line Jen U and Peter lined up yet another good start and off they went into the sloppy waves, two on the wire. Three quarters of the first beat SIN 3 was pretty well placed with the leading group when suddenly a gust caught up with them. With a slight jam on the cleat the cat flipped over. Once you are in the water it's not that cold! But the real problem came that the crew had been flung into the sails or more correctly, through it! Disappointment set in when we realised that there were no spares and this was the first race of the day. Unfortunately this was an early retirement coming up. Back onshore, our attempts to rectify the situation drew no response and so it was pack up time.

But every dog has its day.

As cat sailors we have all been thrown through our sails at one point or another, I know I have! For Jen U and Peter they did really well considering it was all unfamiliar territory. This is just the start of their cat racing careers and so many lessons can be learned. Most importantly is, to bounce right back. Next year we'll bring a bigger contingent to this great place for the 2012 Eurocat.

Out on the F18 courses the level of competition was making the cold waters boil. Over 100 F18's were whizzing around as Olympians and world champions diced with one another. Australian cat guru, Darren Bundock (double Olympian) sailed a C2 to great effect but he too scored a couple of black flags amongst his 1-2-1-2 placings! As did Mischa, but at the end of the day Mischa's and Bastians scores were the most consistent of all and so it was a well deserved win for Mischa and the Cirrus R.

As Mischa said "its a fast boat, but like any sailing boat it has to be sailed in the right direction!" True. On the modern multihull platform the crew's effort is about 70% of the boats performance. To give you an idea;

Upwind, the crew works the mainsheet as sheet loads are just too high for one arm. Then comes the cunningham, mast rotation, foils and jib sheet. Downwind, the main sheet goes back to the skipper and the crew continues with everything else.

Carnac is special in a lot of ways, special place with special people and fantastic sailing conditions. As the plan stands now, we will be assembling a bigger team of privateers to race in Eurocat 2012. This most recent trip has set in motion a new initiative with CSC and the Singapore Sailing Federation, and this is a very positive step.

As Singapore Sailing is committed to sending top sailors overseas we will be able to combine our efforts and form a suitably sized team comprising CSC cat sailors and the SSF Team. SSF will commit to ensuring there is a team manager/coach on hand and will organise the support boat. As CSC sailors we can share this arrangement for the benefit of everybody.

Ideally we would like to see our Formula 16 and 20 sailors take part in the Eurocat. As such the racing schedule for 2011/12 will be structured so that the Singapore Cat Nationals will become the selection trials for the Singapore National Sailing Team while our fleet will use all the races in the next monsoon as training for the big event.

So far we have expressions of interest from three CSC teams. A container will be organised to take the cat fleet to France with costs being shared by all. The Pro Sail Team (i.e. Alice, Alice and Alice) will arrange the logistics of the exercise as well as field an entry in the F16 Class.

The other item of interest to come out of Eurocat was the fact that the next Olympic Cat platform will be a mixed crew boat. Mixed crew means a male and female mix onboard. Although the exact platform has not been selected yet a strong possibility suggests that the Viper F16 is a strong contender! If the Viper is selected then the Cat Fleet in CSC can celebrate as we have quite a few Vipers in the fleet.

Anyone else keen to get up to speed for the Eurocat can contact the Team at Pro Sail in Changi Sailing Club for more details.





eurocat 2011 champion what it takes... interview with mischa

This interview Mischa Heemskerck will give everyone an insight into the top team from the Eurocat 2011. Of particular interest is the attitude towards what makes a great sailor. Mischa is a champion in every sense, very open and very friendly. Mischa was in Singapore for the Extreme 40 series and we are hoping to get him back guiding a local entry this year. We are indebted to catsailingnews.blogspot.com for the interview and anyone keen on finding out what is happening in the world of multihulls should subscribe to the blog. Congratulations to Mischa, Bastian and the Cirrus Team for producing such a stellar performance.

You have been involved with several successful F18 projects. How do you feel now working with Cirrus? It is nice to work with a relative small company. The communication lines are very short. Further working with Manu makes better solutions cause we are both perfectionists and smart technicians. We are building the boat like a super sport car. Every boat is build with personal attention.

Tell us how you guys made the switch to the Cirrus? After a successful Eurocat, how does the boat feel? Any special difference in comparison to your previous boats? The Cirrus R is a super stiff platform which translates all energy into driving power. The design of the hulls, rudders and daggerboards make the boat easy to sail of course in relation with winning designs of Sail Innovation sails.

The Cirrus R has some special characteristics: super fat transom, quite pronounced rocker with a major 'negative' section backwards, and also the trademark volume of the Cirrus B1. Any development still going on setup? Is the boat is easy to adapt? Has it been a smooth ride from day one?

The extreme hull design with it's wide transom performs well. The rudders are a pleasure. Steering is accurate and no load. The rudder raising mechanism is my personal favourite. The

negative rocker is interesting, analyzing aerial shots from this boat and other boats there is a big difference to be seen in the wake. The R leaves a wake print which is half the size of the other boats.

I think this win is quite important as now you can focus on training. It is clear now that the Cirrus R is performing, in fact you can extract more juice out of it for sure. Which is why the Team is focussing on Hungary?

The win is a dream start for the new boat. More importantly, the platform sailed without any problems and with good speed. The plan for Hungary is to make more hours with the boat and learn about all the potential. So we can sail the boat at top speed all the time.

A four year contract is a long term project, how do you foresee the class in the future? Regarding design innovation and popularity? Does the class need to update and open up more to technology and adapt to new launches?

The class is still growing and many people like the open atmosphere in the class. The design part in the class is also one of the charms of Formula 18, there are already many great designs out there. But still the sailors are the biggest part of the success and that is how it should be. The class

should not open for more technology as we have competitive racing and a 5 year old boat with good sails is still a winner.

When did you start sailing cats? Ha ha, that is a good one.

At the age of one, my parents took me on a boat. At the age of 4 my Dad took me sailing on a catamaran and since age eight, I have been racing catamarans. Together with my Dad we built full carbon 6 metre cat to win the Round of Texel, but we got to third with that machine.

Building a boat taught me a lot and after the boat was strong enough we started building our own sails in the garage.

In 2000 I made my own Formula 18, the Hunter.

In 2001 I started an Olympic campaign with Sven Karsenborg on the Tornado.

My first ever Tornado Europeans we finished 4th equal points we number 3. That was the beginning of 7years Olympic sailing and in the mean time race for Hobie cat on the Tiger.

Then I got asked to do the Introduction of the Nacra Infusion and won Carnac with the boat in the second year.

Later I did the introduction of the Wildcat and won Carnac with the boat in the second year and now for Cirrus again won Carnac but in the first year. Among all these adventures I raced on the Extreme 40's which is the type of sailing I love. Intense, short, complicated, team work and fast.

Is this the best time to be a cat sailor? The AC helps a lot with exposure and recognition for the cowboys as catamaran sailors are normally called.

Are the best sailors the ones with a special feel or is it pure hard hours on the water? The best sailors are the ones with a special feel on the boat and who enjoy sailing.

All the top guys seems to have a common good disposition on sharing their knowledge?

It is the best part about the class, all information is out there. It is my philosophy to share the knowledge and make others better so I get better by the increased competition. It seems to work cause and we have a big group of racers who are frequently at the races to enjoy their cat's.

Plans for the future? For the future I want to compete in the AC, want to do a round the World race. Sail the Little America's cup. Guide a team to an Olympic medal. Set up the Catamaran two on two Team race Grand Prix. This is such a team sport and I am really lucky with my team. Bastiaan (Tentij) has the same spirit, drive and ambition which makes every day a lot of fun. Every issue we take on as a team which makes working hard fun. We have been doing crazy hours lately and than is really rewarding if you do well. Big part of the success is all the people behind us who are supporting us. All our sponsors and suppliers who are behind us and who we proudly represent.

Thank you all,
Mischa.-

