



Ensign Yachts Beneteau Cup 2011: on the radar on for new Beneteau owners

Tracey Johnstone

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The opportunity to meet and line up against fellow Beneteau yacht owners in a weekend of racing is a great draw card for several new Queensland Beneteau yacht owners, whether their boats are racer/cruisers or cruiser/racers.

The annual Ensign Yachts Beneteau Cup and French Yacht Challenge, organised by the Queensland Beneteau Owners Group and hosted by Royal Queensland Yacht Squadron, will be held on 1st and 2nd October 2011.

A relaxed Brisbane-based Mike Mollison hasn't wasted anytime in getting out on his first yacht, a Oceanis 40 named Scamp. "This has been a long term ambition of mine, since I was a kid. I saw the Beneteaus in France when I was visiting there. When I got back to Australia I got myself on the Beneteau mailing list and found there were some pretty good offers being made. So, I decided to make the jump."

Since then he has been out on the bay, auto-pilot on, spinnaker up, enjoying the boat, "having a lovely time".

The Ensign Yachts Beneteau Cup will be a chance for Mollison to test his eight crew in much more serious racing conditions. "We have only been doing some races on the bay with the Combined Club Series." Gold Coast's Paul Laurence is one of the first in Australia to own the new First 30. "We have had it in the water for 10 weeks now and it is going nicely. Every race we go in, we win."

Laurence originally owned a 35-foot cruising yacht which delivered some good results in local and Whitsunday races. The move to the much sportier First 30 has encouraged him to look at competing in this year's Beneteau Cup. Firstly though, he admits, there is still a lot to learn about the new boat, G2. "We haven't quite figured it out yet. We are about to head up north to compete in the Hamilton Island Race Week. By the end of that we will actually know what is going on."

G2 has been cautiously entered in the Cruising Spinnaker division for Hamilton Island. Pushing the boat and crew at this stage to achieve at the top end of the racing fleet is not on Laurence's agenda, at least not yet. "It's a brand new boat and the crew that race with me at Hammo only step on board a boat once a year. Let's see what happens in the Beneteau Cup if I can make it there."

In the big boats, Mooloolaba's Bob Robertson launched his new First 40 this week. The choice of the First 40 was a fairly simple one for Robertson. "They are probably the best rating and performing boats in their class at this time."

With still plenty of racing in him, the feisty and perennial big race competitor has set a tough program for his new boat. Too late to compete in the Brisbane to Keppel Race, the program will start with Hamilton Island Race Week before he returns to Brisbane for the Ensign Yachts Beneteau Cup and then heads south to contest the Sydney to Hobart Race.

Joining him on board for Hamilton will be many of his crew from Robertson's 1991 Hobart campaign when, with Queensland Maid, they placed third overall.

True to form, the 71-year-old Robertson has chosen an unusual name for the boat moving away from Neil Diamond song names to something vastly different – Lunchtime Legend. "It's a bit of a send up I suppose. All yachties say about each other, you're a legend in your own lunchtime. I thought I may as well get into the groove.

"Life can't be serious. You've got to have some fun."

The Notice of Race and online entry for the Ensign Yachts Beneteau Cup and French Yacht Challenge is available from the [event website](#).

Entries close 16 September 2011.

For more information, please contact event organiser, [Jane Virtue](#).



Paul Laurence's Beneteau First 30

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