
By RON WEISS

THE STORM TRYSAIL CLUB STORY

To fully appreciate The Storm Trysail Club, one must understand the circumstances surrounding the very moment the club was conceived, and the fact that the circumstances involved a bottle of rum.



It was during the 1936 Bermuda Race that a group of sailors set off on the schooner *Salée*. The

'36 race was bad, one of the worst in the history of the event. Many boats withdrew, but others elected to challenge themselves and tough it out. During that horribly rough storm, one sailor on another boat was ejected from his windward bunk, smashed face-first into the leeward bunk, spat

out his freshly dislodged teeth, got his foulies on, and at 4 a.m., took his trick at the helm. (We hasten to add that the Club, in a continuing effort to reduce the frequency of such incidents, is very much focused on offshore safety.) As the storm built in intensity, *Salée's* mainsail blew out, and the crew was forced to set the storm trysail — a small, triangular and heavily constructed sail generally used in only the direst of conditions.

That winter, as the crew of *Salée*

gathered around a bottle of rum (and possibly more than one) and talked about their shared memories of the race, this hardy group was inspired to form a new club — The Storm Trysail Club — open only to those sailors who had proved capable of handling themselves offshore in the worst weather imaginable. Dues were initially set at a bottle of rum a year. From these rough and tumble (literally) beginnings, The Storm Trysail Club has grown to almost 1,000 members. Each member, from the first to the latest, has been selected for their experience offshore, their willingness to share their experience and knowledge with others, to be a good shipmate and a tough competitor, as well as being someone who knows how to have fun.

In short, we are fierce on the starting line, and friendly on the beer line.

The Storm Trysail Club provides leadership in the sailing world through our well-regarded Safety at Sea and Jr. Safety at Sea seminars, race management of some of the most prestigious and well-attended racing events in the world, and our efforts to increase

participation in ocean racing, especially youth involvement.

Members of The Storm Trysail Club are deeply engaged in the upper echelons of sailboat racing all around the globe, in virtually every aspect of the sport. Those who are selected for membership know that STC is not about amenities and facilities, but is instead focused on nothing more than the health and growth of offshore sailing. A member of STC is widely regarded as not just an experienced deepwater sailor, but also as generous and willing to share their experience in giving back to the sport that provides them so much in return.

For eight decades, The Storm Trysail Club has been, and will continue to be, at the bleeding edge (sometimes literally, in the case of the aforementioned '36 Bermuda Race participant) of development in organizing new events, rating rules, yacht design, and safety standards and best practices, while continuing the tradition of camaraderie, fellowship and fun started by the crew of the *Salée*.

If you share our love for ocean racing, a passion made even stronger by racing with and against people you respect and enjoy spending time with, and wish to introduce others to the sport, its camaraderie and its ideals, then membership in The Storm Trysail Club should be on your horizon.
