

CHINA SEA RACE MEMORIES

This was back to home territory for me as I lived in Hong Kong between 1972 and 1984 and the Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club was my second home.

I used to crew dinghies in the UK before I went on a two year contract that became 12 years, a marriage and three daughters.

I learnt helming in a Laser and started to crew on the keel boats at the club. In 1976 I was invited to join the foredeck crew on Clarissa a Norlin 34' with some highly qualified crew. I accepted and after a well managed campaign we won each race of the five race China Sea Race series.

I missed the China Sea Race of 1978 when I found out that there was nine months between the Admiral's Cup at Cowes in 1977 and the CSR in 1978. I was retained in Hong Kong for parental duties and my foredeck berth on Uin-Na-Mara was filled. Uin-Na-Mara then won the CSR in 1978.

I regained a foredeck berth on La Pantera a Peterson 42' for the 1980 campaign and then the boat won each race of that CSR Series after completing an Admirals' Cup role for Hong Kong in 1979 (3rd boat overall).

The navigator's tactics in each of my CSR long races was a clean start and then sail low in the NE monsoon winds so that you could harden up in the lighter airs near the Philippine coast or work the thermals at dusk and dawn using No. 1 or No. 3 headsails.

Great memories of bar crawls onshore and leisurely delivery sail passages back to Hong Kong.

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