

Royal Lymington successes in Royal Cornwall 2011 Azores and Back Race (AZAB)

Elixir (Elan 380) sailed by Roger Barber and Flic Gabbay, and Ding Dong (Stewart 37) sailed by Chris Rustom, with Nathan Salt on the outward leg and Steve Homewood the return leg, arrived back in the Lymington River on Thursday morning after the 2,500 mile 2011 Azores and Back race. Both yachts finished on the podium in their respective classes, and in the overall results. Elixir was 2nd in Class 3, Ding Dong was 3rd in Class 4 and they were 4th and 5th in IRC overall. After nearly 2,500 miles of racing Elixir and Ding Dong finished in Falmouth within 20 minutes of each other on corrected time!

Chris Tibbs and Don King in their J105 Taika, both professional offshore racers of Whitbread and Steinlager fame (amongst others), sailed an awesome race to win Class 3 and IRC overall. The return leg was hard work for most of the boats who sailed almost an extra 100 miles on the water to catch the more powerful winds in the west. It was touch and go for Elixir to hold onto her second place as she was closely chased by the two single handed HOD 35s all the way. One, Comedy of Errors, sailed by Sam White, took the single handed return leg record which was previously set in 1999 by Charles Allen in a Mustang 30.

AZAB was set up to provide a race for single handed and double handed offshore racers with enough distance to provide a real challenge within a four to six week time-limit and a course clear of major shipping lanes. The first AZAB race took place in 1975 with 52 starters. In 2011 there were 61 boats and six different nationalities. The course covers just less than 2500 miles of ocean. Roger Barber and Chris Rustom have both done AZAB before, Roger flipping his trimaran Meridien on the return leg in the Western Approaches. Roger was therefore delighted to complete the 2011 race the right way up! He did, however, admit to the odd adrenaline rush in the 2011 race even if it was in a monohull!

Chris Rustom (skipper Ding Dong), Roger Barber, and Flic Gabbay (co-skipper and skipper Elixir) on their return to Lymington on Thursday.

