



AUDI HAMILTON ISLAND RACE WEEK
19 – 26 August 2017



The Clash of the Titans at **Audi** Hamilton Island Race Week 2017

After racing on opposite sides of the world for almost a decade, two of offshore sailing's best known supermaxis will be vying for top honours at Audi Hamilton Island Race Week 2017, and for the first time both will be competing under Australian colours.



The Oatley family's record breaking Wild Oats XI is destined to be challenged by Brisbane yachtsman Peter Harburg's latest acquisition, Black Jack 100, in the series which is scheduled from August 19 to 26. Ironically, the two 30-metre yachts started life as near-identical Reichel-Pugh designs, and were built in the McConaghy Boats facility in Sydney in 2005.

When launched, Black Jack 100 was named Alfa Romeo and owned by New Zealander,



Neville Crichton, who has resided in Sydney for many years. After being beaten for line honours by Wild Oats XI in the 2005 Sydney Hobart race, Crichton returned to the classic with the same yacht in 2009 and was first to finish. Alfa Romeo was then sold to a European owner, renamed Esimit Europa II, and campaigned with considerable success in the Mediterranean.

Peter Harburg purchased the yacht earlier this year and had it shipped to McConaghy's where it is being upgraded. He is planning to contest the Sydney to Southport race in July then head to Hamilton Island for the showdown with Wild Oats XI at Race Week.

"Audi Hamilton Island Race Week will be an important part of our preparation for this year's Hobart race," said the yacht's sailing master, Brisbane sailmaker, Mark Bradford. "We have assembled a really strong crew, including Olympic gold medallist and America's Cup winner, Tom Slingsby, so we're looking to give Wild Oats XI a run for her money."

While the clash of these ocean racing maxis will be a highlight at Race Week, the competition among the "minis" and the multihulls will be no less intense. Of the near 140 yachts already entered, the smallest is the 6.6 metre long trailable yacht, Rhumbmaid, owned by Ben Harper, from Palm Cove in north Queensland.

There are more than 20 multihulls already entered to date.

German luxury carmaker, Audi, is returning for the 12th year as principal sponsor, demonstrating the brand's continued commitment to high quality, competitive offshore racing and a benchmark onshore social calendar that is as inclusive as it is exclusive.

All information relating to the regatta is on the website:

www.audihamiltonislandraceweek.com.au

For additional information please contact:

Rob Mundle

Promotions Manager, Audi Hamilton Island Race Week 2017

e. rob.mundle@bigpond.com Phone: + 61 (0)417 323 573

Image Captions and credit:

- **BIG BOAT BATTLE:** Brisbane yachtsman, Peter Harburg, has purchased the 30-metre supermaxi, Esimit Europa II, and changed the name to Black Jack 100. The yacht will challenge Wild Oats XI at Audi Hamilton Island Race Week in August. (Image: Daniel Forster/Rolux)

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