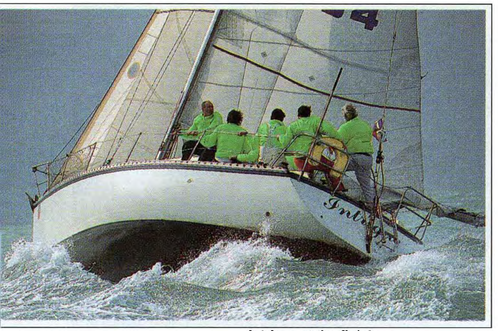
HONG KONG

FOUR PEAKS RACE

With winds of up to 35 knots on the water and fine, cool conditions on land, dramatic new records were set in this year's Four Peaks Race. At 0250 on Sunday morning, *Gambit*, a Young 8.4 skippered by Frank Young, crossed the finish line off Chung Hom Kok — last year's record finish time was 0837.



Intrigue at the finish

The TAG Heuer Four Peaks Race '94 saw 26 boats cross the line off Shek O at 1100 on the 29th of January. Several yachts timed it to near perfection and at the final report of the starter's gun, *Vengeance*, the navy entry skippered by Rick Hanslip, nosed over the line followed by Paul Dalton's *Conquistador* and Vic Locke's *Bugis*. Although a second or two later, *Farr Fetched* made perhaps the best getaway, skipper Chas Doyle finding clean air and streaking away from the fleet. *Bugis* and Mark Leese's *Xiabu Xiabu 5* chose the left side of the course and headed up to take their advantage. Two of the starters arrived late: *Gipsy* had engine problems and crossed the line at 1115; and Eric Tavernier's *Lok Sun* only made the start at 1125.

Under clear skies and a freshening breeze the boats took full advantage of the brisk northeaster and headed for Port Shelter and the first peak — Ma On Shan. *Sky Song* was the first to land its runner off the Marine Police base in Sai Kung, followed by *Gambit*. (Just 13 hours later, *Gambit* had covered the full 90 nautical miles and it's runners had scaled all four peaks.) Mark Biddle, *Sky Song's* runner who was first to the top, recalls picking his way back down the winding path when suddenly he looked around to see "a Gurkha leap off the path and go straight down the side of the mountain". The Gurkha — Kushang Gurung, who incidentally holds a record for climbing Mt Kinabalu — clocked the fastest time for Ma On Shan at one hour and 24 minutes.

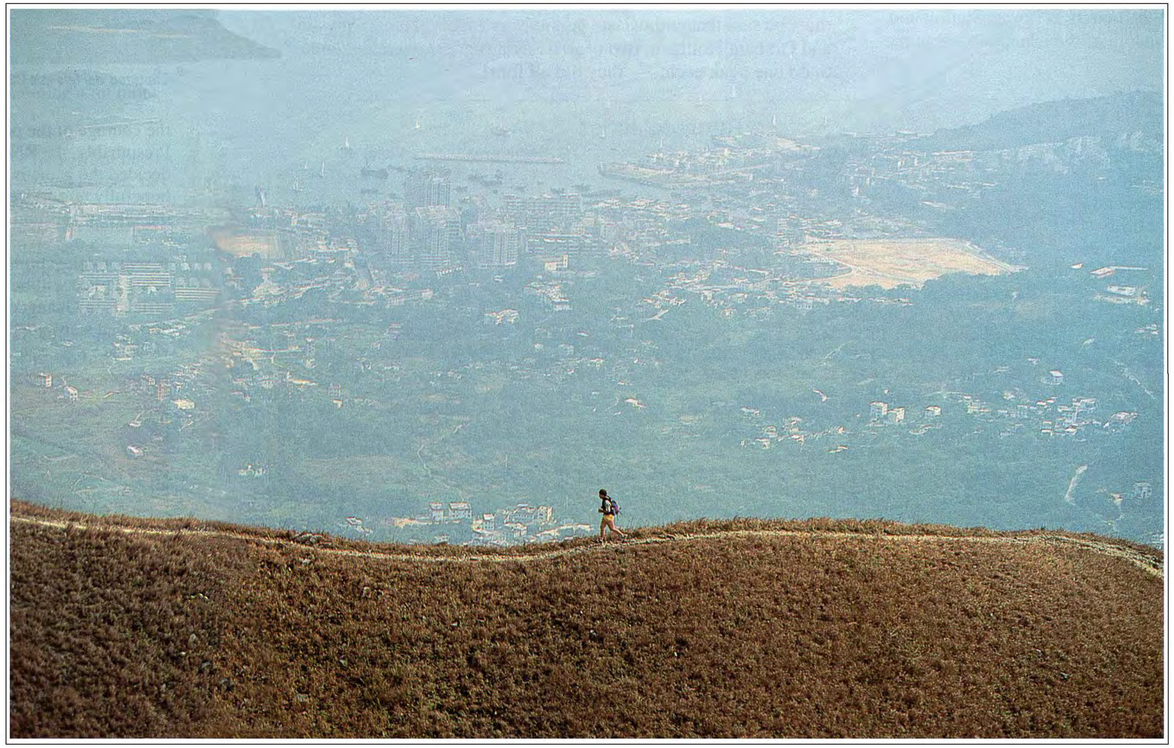
The second leg of the Four Peaks is often the hardest. In the past, boats have suffered damage, crews have retired through seasickness and the running of Lantau Peak in the dark is a tough challenge for all, regardless of fitness or skill.

After sailing out of Port Shelter, the boats settle in to a broad reach with chutes to Waglan Island, gybe off to Po Toi and broad reach to Cheung Chau. From there they change course for Lantau.

Gambit covered the second leg in approximately five hours, a time which astounded even race officials. "A magnificent run in testing conditions," said race chairman Brian Phipps. The strong winds also created steep swells and made the going tough especially for the runners, many of whom are not seasoned sailors.

At Cheung Sha beach, the favoured dropping point on Lantau Island, runners made their landfall this year in dangerous conditions. Several dinghies pitchpoled in the surf and one observer recalls seeing the beach littered with paddles and overturned craft. There have been suggestions that the race committee should advise the use of inflatable dinghies, or light canoes, as one runner had the unpleasant experience of being trapped under a heavy GRP dinghy in the shallows.

From Lantau, the boats romped off to Lamma Island. Faster times were



***Xiabu Xiabu 5* off Clearwater Bay (top) and Ma On Shan, fleet in the background (above)**

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TAG Heuer FOUR PEAKS RACE '94

29th-30th January 1994 — Start 11:00:00

Division A

Pos	Yacht name	Sail	PYS	Class	Finish	Elapsed	Corrected	Class Pos I	Class Pos II
1	Gambit	850	90	I	02:50:35	15:50:35	17:02:52	1	-
2	Xiabu Xiabu 5	HKG1683	84	I	03:10:10	16:10:10	18:17:49	2	-
3	Bugis	KH793	87	I	04:07:56	17:07:56	18:56:42	3	-
4	Sky Song	C1698	84	I	03:47:26	16:47:26	19:02:11	4	-
5	Vengeance	GBR8401	91	I	05:05:29	18:05:29	19:23:10	5	-
6	Windseeker	C1198	95	II	05:58:36	18:58:36	19:42:44	-	1
7	Warrawilla *	C1678	98	II	07:18:30	20:18:30	20:37:14	-	2
8	X-Calibur	HKG999	88	I	06:00:07	19:00:07	20:54:41	6	-
9	Conquistador	C1623	94	I	07:11:38	20:11:38	21:09:49	7	-
10	Wave Dancer	KH1128	93	I	07:26:40	20:26:40	21:36:25	8	-
11	Shearwater V	C21	95	II	08:01:37	21:01:37	21:52:14	-	3
12	Gipsy	KH1555	102	II	09:47:20	22:47:20	22:26:25	-	4
13	Boss Hogg	C1066	99	II	09:31:32	22:31:32	22:42:09	-	5
14	White Dragon V	C739	108	II	13:22:03	26:22:03	24:47:05	-	6
15	Old Intrigue	C254	90	I	10:15:21	23:15:21	25:17:04	9	-
	Aurora	K3966	95	II	Did not finish				
	Farr Fetched	KH7215	96	II	Did not finish				
	Gale Force	KH676	88	I	Did not finish				
	Shikari	C244	99	II	Did not finish				
	Lok Sun	KH5	89	I	Disqualified				
	Shady Lady	C1161	107	II	Transfered to Division B				
	Shogun II	C189	108	II	Transfered to Division B				

Division B

Pos	Yacht name	Sail	PYS	"K"	Finish	Elapsed	Motoring	Corrected
1	Skerryvore	C791	110	2.68	09:31:29	22:31:29	00:00:00	20:55:53
2	Shady Lady **	C1161	107	2.60	07:18:03	20:18:03	02:27:00	23:22:49
	Ariki III	C8	140	2.00	Retired			
	Lan Ying	C536	113	2.20	Did not finish			
	Scot Free	KH1197	94	2.60	Did not finish			
	Shogun II	C189	108	2.05	Did not finish			

Note: * Granted redress of 29 minutes and 58 seconds ** Not eligible for line honours in Div B

***Windseeker* nears Port Shelter**

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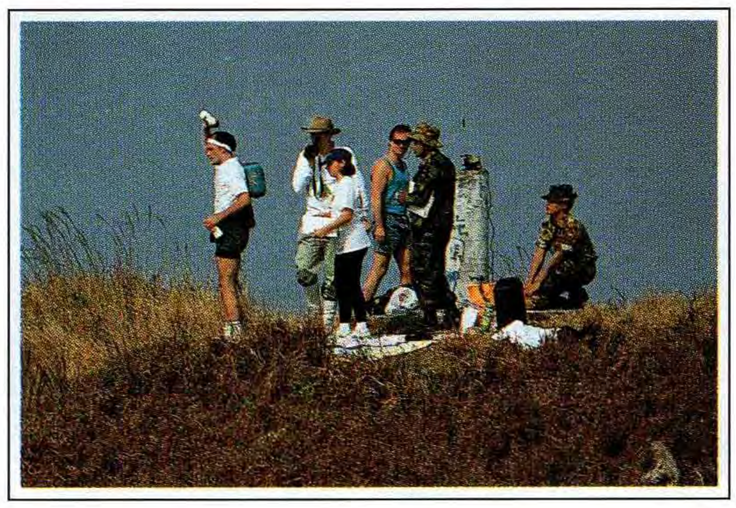
made by boats which dropped their runners at Power Station and sailed on to pick them up off the south of the island — all in the middle of the night.

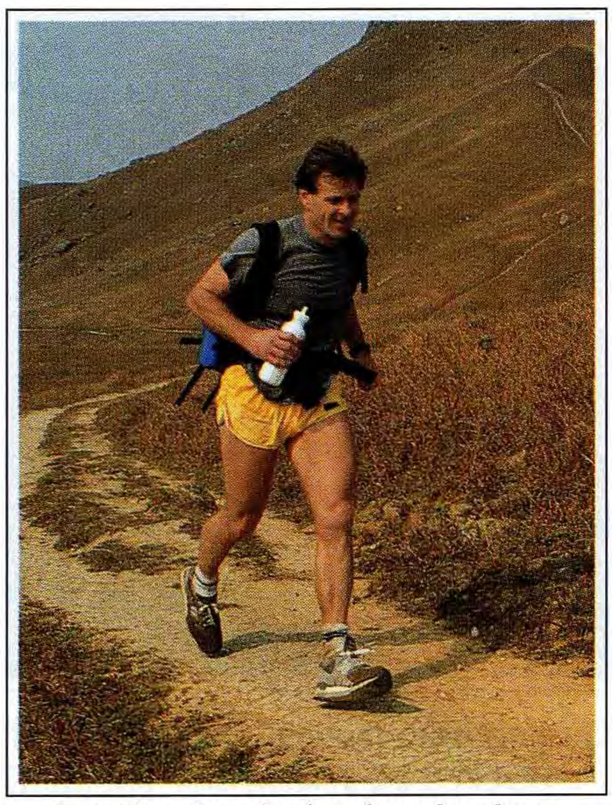
"Coming out of Lantau, we had *Xiabu Xiabu 5* and *Gambit* together with us," said Mark Dagge, helmsman in *Sky Song*. "but we went to different drop-off points on Lamma. *Xiabu Xiabu 5* and *Gambit* went to Power Station and sailed around. We went around the south for our drop-off. They got a lot of time on us there; we lost a lot on all the beating down the west of Lamma."

Graeme Large, skipper of the oldest boat in the race, *Ariki III*, told FH that he "nearly had a mutiny" on the long haul to Lamma. "It was a very rough passage and the crew were ready to retire. But we finally got there and I must say it was very warm in the cabin while my runners went up Stenhouse!"

Having collected their runners from Lamma Island, the crews of the other boats were then faced with a beat and reach into Repulse Bay and preparation for the final peak — Violet Hill (433m). "*Ariki* is more suited to broad reaching, not for beating into heavy seas," Mr Large continued. "We did our best to keep Lamma to port but in the end we put the donk on and went around the north. Perhaps the committee may consider this in the rules."

After the runners had returned from Violet Hill, it was a short reach to a transit between Round Island and Cheung Hom Kok. *Gambit* came in at 10 minutes to three, followed by *Xiabu Xiabu 5* and *Sky Song*. *Bugis*, which made it a few minutes later, had also been very much in contention but was denied a third victory which skipper Vic Locke had been hoping for. *Vengeance*, also fared well crossing the line just after five in the morning.





A cooling rinse (top) and coming down Ma On Shan (above)

The race sponsors were delighted with the results: "As always, the Four Peaks has proven to be an extremely exciting event," said Martin Ganz, director of Desco (Hong Kong) Ltd, distributor for TAG Heuer in Hong Kong and Macau. "Conditions were somewhat uncomfortable for the crews, but what a stirring performance. We are proud to be a part of it."

The Four Peaks is taken seriously by all who enter.

There is always debate as to whether the race is won on the water or on land . . . and the debate will continue. But in conclusion, it must be said that enthusiasm counts very highly. Harry Dawson and Graham Holtham, two of *Ariki III's* runners, were not content to do one peak each — they did all four!

Runners' times

Yacht name	Ma On Shan			Lantau Peak			Mt Stenhouse			Violet Hill		
	D-off	P-up	Total	D-off	P-up	Total	D-off	P-up	Total	D-off	P-up	Total
Ariki III	Retired											
Aurora	Did not finish											
Boss Hogg	13.31	15.19	1.48	21.03	23.53	2.50	4.11	6.40	2.29	8.06	9.16	1.10
Bugis	13.01	14.44	1.43	19.38	21.38	2.00	23.57	1.29	1.32	2.21	3.58	1.37
Conquistador	13.13	15.36	2.23	20.52	23.53	3.10	2.24	4.20	1.56	5.25	6.44	1.19
Farr Fetched	Did not finish											
Gale Force	Did not finish											
Gambit	13.09	14.33	1.24	19.20	21.20	2.00	23.35	0.42	1.07	1.39	2.31	0.52
Gipsy	13.55	15.50	1.55	21.55	0.40	2.45						
Shady Lady	14.21	15.54	1.33	21.14	23.50	2.36	2.50	4.20	1.30	5.58	6.55	0.52
Lan Ying	Did not finish											
Lok Sun	Disqualified											
Old Intrigue	13.22	15.54	2.32	21.56	1.00	3.04	5.42	7.45	2.03	8.49	9.52	1.03
Scot Free	Did not finish											
Shearwater V	14.01	16.08	2.07	21.35	23.45	2.10	3.18	4.27	1.09	6.48	7.50	1.12
Shikari	Did not finish											
Shogun II	Did not finish											
Skerryvore	14.00	16.01	2.01	21.21	1.15	3.54	4.03	6.08	2.05	7.55	9.20	1.25
Sky Song	12.56	14.42	2.46	19.24	21.19	1.55	23.43	0.58	1.15	1.58	3.34	1.36
Slalom Glade	Withdrawn											
Vengeance	13.12	14.58	1.46	20.08	22.08	2.00	0.50	2.50	2.00	3.35	4.50	1.15
Warrawilla	13.22	15.07	1.45	21.00	23.15	2.15	2.00	4.50	2.50	5.52	7.40	1.48
Wavedancer	13.12	15.12	2.00	20.35	22.35	2.00				5.52	7.10	1.18
White Dragon V	14.16	17.15	2.59	23.50	2.20	2.30	7.00	9.00	2.00	11.20	12.55	1.35
Windseeker	13.32	15.06	1.34									
X-Calibur	13.03	15.20	2.17	20.40	23.03	2.23	1.23			4.25	5.42	1.17
Xiabu-Xiabu V	13.04	14.41	1.37	19.24	21.20	1.56	23.27	0.40	1.13	1.47	2.56	1.09