FRAGRANT HARBOUR

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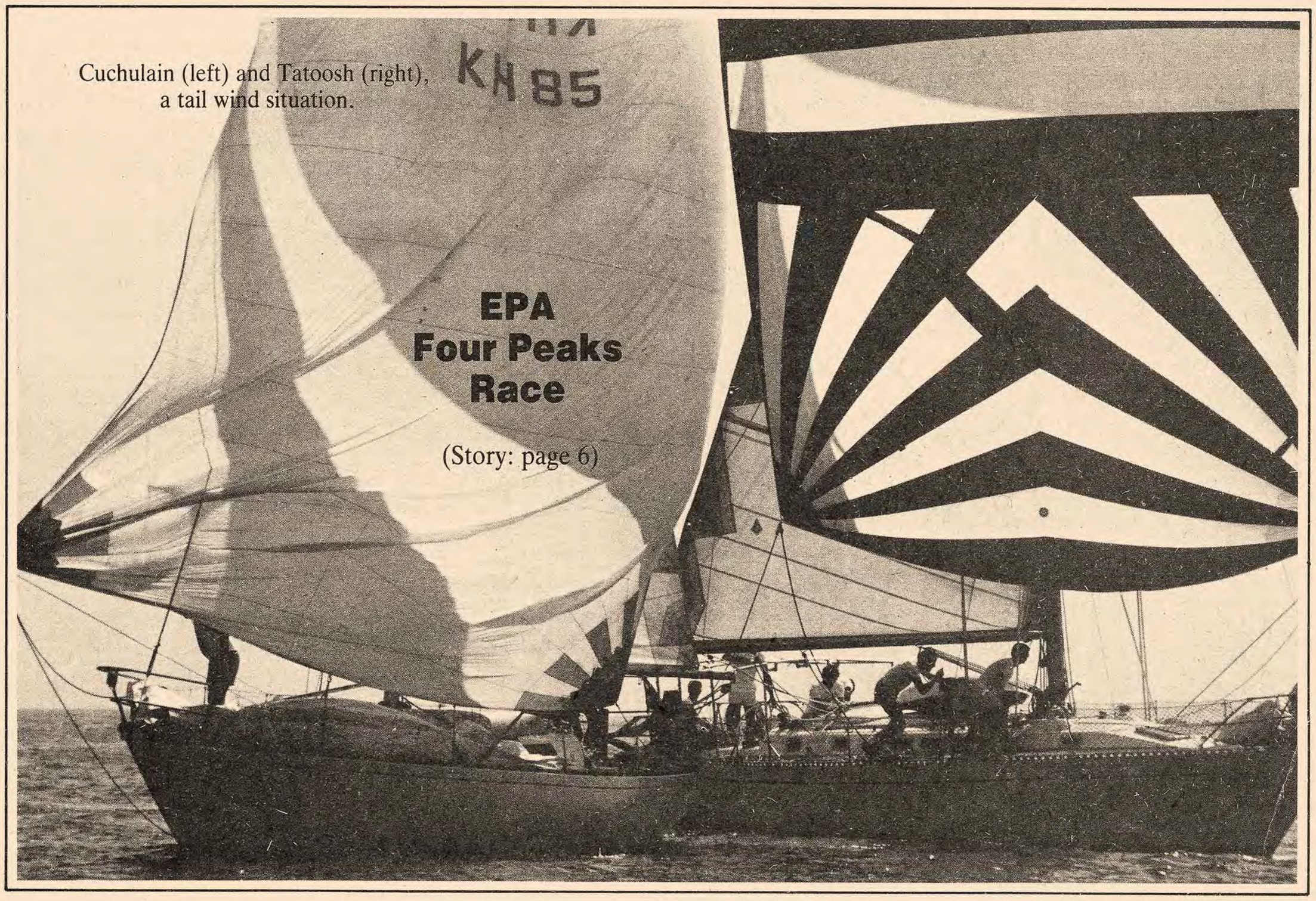
VOLUME II ESTABLISHED 1985 NUMBER 18



Cuchulain (left) and Tatoosh (right), a tail wind situation.

EPA Four Peaks Race

(Story: page 6)

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The EPA Four Peaks Race

This year's Four Peaks was undoubtedly the most successful to date with all but one of the 17 starters completing the course. In 1985 only six made it to the finish!

It was the third time this event has been organised in Hong Kong, getting its inspiration from the famous Three Peaks Race in the UK.

The excitement really began two days before the race. Skippers and crews met at the Aberdeen Boat Club for a briefing and cocktail party held by the major official sponsor – Edwin Palfrey & Associates.

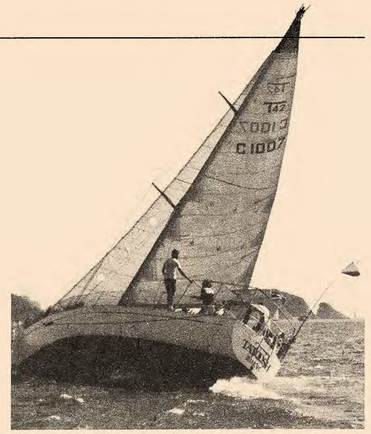
"This year the committee decided to allow the use of engines for up to 15% of elapsed time, without penalty, within Division B"

Several queries arose concerning the motoring division. This year the committee decided to allow the use of engines for up to 15% of elapsed time, without penalty, within Division B. It follows a Stephen Davies' formula designed for the Inaugural Luzon Cruiser Race (to be held alongside this year's San Fernando race). Skippers seemed delighted at how well it worked and how interesting it was trying to predict their own elapsed times.

Most of these skippers husbanded their 15% carefully, with the notable exception of Rolling Home. Light winds all day Saturday and a weather chart indicating no significant change for the next day persuaded skipper Andrew Shillinglaw to motor for most of the course. He had not calculated on the spanking 18 to 20 knot breeze which sprung up on Sunday morning.

On to the race: in Sai Kung one kayak overturned and all but sank as plans for a fast drop fell through and would-be paddlers ended up swimming ashore, towing their craft behind them. And that wasn't all. Two yachts found themselves aground off the public pier and spent their time kedging off while their runners tackled the first peak, Ma On Shan.

Good morning, Edwin


Overall winner in Division A – Tatoosh

All runners had cleared in at Ma On Shan by 1730hrs when the Queen's Gurkha Signals (QGS) closed down their post at the peak. QGS mounted a radio communications network for the race which included all four peaks as well as Race Control at the ABC. The soldiers and their equipment were heliported in but the staunch helpers from the Club and the Royal Hong Kong Regiment (The Volunteers) arrived on foot. Out of sight at their Kowloon base, the Civil Aid Services Mountain Rescue Team also stood by. Thankfully, they were not needed.

At Repulse Bay – Deliverance

By five o'clock long rowing sweeps were appearing on the foredecks of a number of yachts as the sea breeze faded into dusk. Oars are permitted as additional means of propulsion within the designated "dropping zones".

After dark the fleet could be found ghosting around the Ninepins, accompanied by a large school of porpoises or dolphins. A half moon helped foredeck crew and sailtrimmers until Venus rose in the early hours of Sunday morning.

Most of Division A were, by then, approaching the Soko Islands. A brilliant white light beckoned from the post at the top of Lantau Peak. The Volunteers had spent the night in sleeping bags surrounded by a hundred or so eager spectators awaiting the runners.

Rowing Rolling Home out of Port Shelter

Bimblegumbie's shore party made the summit by 0705hrs. Things got a little hectic around nine as the other runners came in en masse. Plenty of excitement at sea level too – dragging anchors and motoring out of trouble. Naughty!

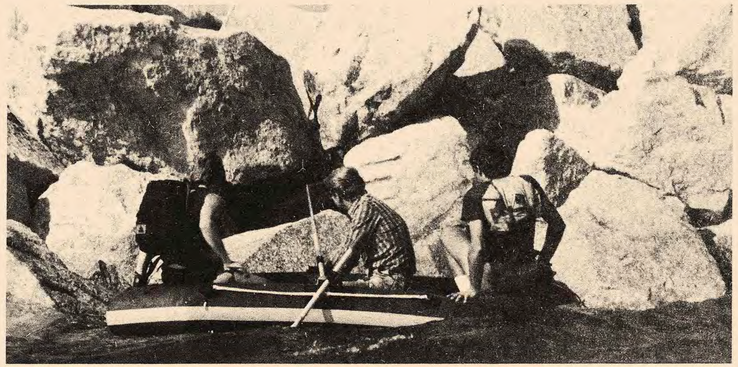
Mt. Stenhouse. and Violet Hill (behind Repulse Bay) were Sunday's specials. A multitude of dinghies were to be seen throughout the day dropping off and picking up (sometimes at the most unlikely places) around Lamma and later Repulse Bay.

A splendid breeze hung in throughout the day and made for some spectacular, if unconventional, flying of kites on the last leg to the finish.

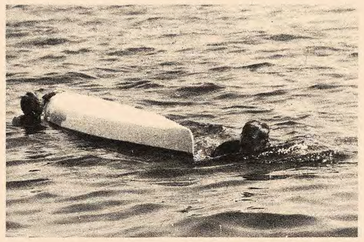
The results gave Tatoosh a very convincing win overall in Division A with Fiddler's Green II as runner up (no pun intended). Bimblegumbie took line honours and Arawa won two pots in Division B, one for coming first on corrected time and the other for being last over the finish line. Beat that for versatility.

Strong looking boys

Now what do we do?



Strange


Damned Kayak!

Postscript and attention all you less energetic yachtsmen: next year there will be another class in Division B. It will allow for two designated crew to stay on board throughout the race – motoring: optional. The penalty: a reduced scratch time in which the hills must be completed.

Some are already planning their campaigns.