

All Eyes on Palma for Spectacular Yachting...

The disappointment we all felt when Valencia was chosen over Palma for the 2007 America's Cup has now faded into the past, and we can now focus on exciting events here in Palma in June.

The Louis Vuitton championship to select the challenger has now been completed, and the America's Cup is due to begin in Valencia on 23rd June. In between these two events (from 16th to 19th June) Palma will be playing host to one of the most fantastic nautical events of recent years when around 60 of the world's largest and most spectacular sailing yachts will be congregating here to compete for the Superyacht Ulysse Nardin Cup and the 3rd New Zealand Millennium Cup.

If you are a sailing aficionado, this is going to be a memorable sight, and one not to be missed. Already signed up to compete are, to name but a few, the famous J Class "Velsheda", the turquoise 32m "Gliss", the 52m Herreshoff "Eleonara", the new 52m Alloy "Kokomo", the extraordinary 88m "Maltese Falcon", the 59m schooner "Meteor 1", the defender "Hyperion", the grand prix Reichel Pugh-designed "Alfa Romeo" and a whole fleet of Wallys.

If you aren't fortunate to get out on the water to witness this spectacle, they why not head for the cliffs just south of Portals Vells on Sunday 17th June when you should be able to enjoy an excellent view of the entire fleet rounding Isla Sec. Don't forget your camera as there are bound to be loads of photo opportunities!

The Louis Vuitton Cup

BMW Oracle (the wealthiest challenger!) have now been eliminated. Our home team Desafio Español put up a brave and impressive fight but eventually lost out to the Emirates Team New Zealand in the semi-final. Well done, to both teams.

The technology used to provide the coverage of the racing has been very impressive. Yachting has never been a successful spectator sport in the past, but Sky are providing some very clever and well thought out coverage using the camera technology installed on every yacht and the computer analysis generating the three dimensional video illustrations of position, lay lines and the spoken tactical commentary from experts. In addition to this, they have been doing their best to introduce the basic racing rules on screen at each commercial break.

The best coverage I have seen has been on Sky Sports from 1400 local time with a highlights summary each evening. It has been on High Definition at times,

which has been fabulous. Sky has been switching coverage from Sky Sports 2 to Sky Sports Xtra depending on demand. Sky Sports Xtra is on a weaker transponder and as such is more difficult to receive here if your satellite dish is too small.

The Internet and mobile phone coverage has been good, but obviously not quite as impressive as watching Sky HD on a large screen.

Technology at the Superyacht Ulysse Nardin Cup and the 3rd New Zealand Millenium Cup

There will be some pretty impressive technology in use at this special 4 day event, even if the budgets are not quite on the grand scale of the Louis Vuitton and America's Cups!

We are looking forward to providing some serious technology on the Dique del Oeste for the event. There will be a free wi-fi service in Palma harbour using satellite VSAT technology from SeaMobile, MTN and ourselves, in order to allow anyone to access the internet for weather and emails. From 16th June, get your laptop, PC or PDA out to search for wireless networks and you will find "Free Super Yacht Cup Internet Service".

We will also be offering a choice of 550 free worldwide newspapers to the yachts, in 37 languages from 73 different countries courtesy of NewspapersDirect. The organisers will be using wireless voice communications using satellite VSAT technology.

We will also be tracking all the yachts in each race and recording the race using AIS on a Nobeletec plotter to enable replay for entertainment, and to study potential sandbagging protests as this is a pursuit race...

For pure pleasure, we will be providing high quality music in the VIP lounge from a top-of-the-range Linn audio system. We will also be on-site providing electronic support to the competing yachts, backed by various suppliers such as Simrad B&G.

The America's Cup

After the frivolous time spent in Palma Bay racing multi-million pound luxury sailing yachts, the focus will return to Valencia for the America's Cup. Our money and hopes are on Alinghi to win again, mainly because we would love to see the next challenge return to Valencia where such a fantastic facility has been developed. It would be such a shame if it is only used once!

Valencia, and especially Port America's Cup, are well worth a visit. It is very impressive, and spectator boats are available if you want to go out to watch the action at close quarters (unless you have your own boat!). As in so many sports, watching from the comfort of your armchair is probably the best way of following the detail, although you may miss out somewhat on the atmosphere. As with the Louis Vuitton Cup, we recommend the Sky Sports coverage. If you are new to the sport, it may initially appear to be about as exciting as watching paint dry or grass grow, but just consider that racing one of these yachts costs \$24,444 per minute on the race course, so there has to be some point to it!

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