

Racing on Ran Tan II

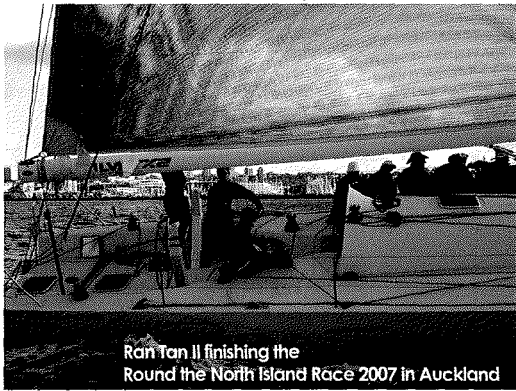
By Jim Gordon

I have now done three races on John Meade's new Elliot 50 Ran Tan II. The boat itself is like nothing I have been on before. Its keel both cants and lifts and it flies gennakers only off an extendible rotating prod. It is however, very easy to run as it has minimal controls.

The first race was the Coastal Classic from Auckland to Russell. The start was great (I suspect that all starts on boats as quick as Ran Tan II are fun). I have never seen so many yachts in one area. Apparently 241 boats started, both multi-hulls and keelers, with there being a number of starts. We hoisted the big (and I do mean big) gennaker 30 seconds before the start, crossed most of the fleet on starboard and gybed for North Head. At this stage we were leading the keelers, but that didn't last too long as the race turned into a drag up to Cape Brett in a lightish westerly.

We got caught on the wrong side of a very late Nor-west change and ended up being the 5th keeler in, about 40 minutes behind Wired, the Brett Bakewell White designed boat that took line honours for keelers. Aside from a few minutes at the start we couldn't use gennakers, and the code 0 didn't get a lot of airtime.

The second race was the Royal Port Nicholson Yacht Club's Nelson Race, which got away in 20 to 25 knots of Northerly at 1600 on the Friday of anniversary weekend. It was great to see 12 boats on the start line, a good turn out particularly considering that two usual contenders were up in at the Bay of Islands Regatta. Tony Phillips' team from Nedax provided most of the crew, with two or three Aucklanders and John and I. I was really impressed at how well everyone worked together.



Ran Tan II finishing the Round the North Island Race 2007 in Auckland

We missed the start but in the conditions the boat is so powerful that we were able to go through underneath the fleet and lead around Point Halswell. The gennaker run down the harbour was memorable; apparently we were doing over 20

knots at one stage. From there the reach through to Karori Light was as usual (apart from being quite quick) and we hardened up to cross Cook Strait. Two tacks behind the Brothers saw us around Cape Koamaru and on up to Cape Jackson where we took the "Lermantov" passage.

As was expected the twelve hours from 10.00pm or so was slow and frustrating, but we were always able to keep moving in the right general direction. The radio sched at midnight caused us to pay attention as we plotted Pretty Boy Floyd's position as being 7 miles behind – it seemed that they were going quite well.

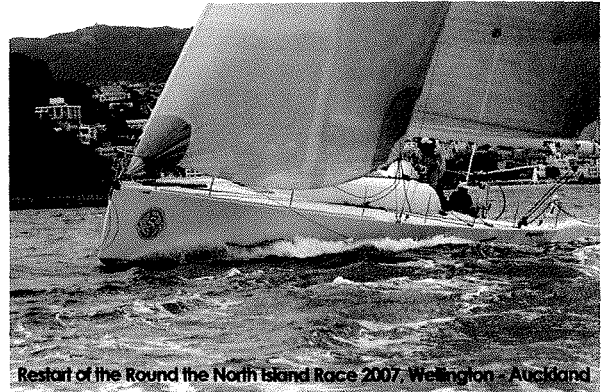
We rounded Stephens Island after mid-night very slowly in the light and shifting wind. From what we heard afterwards everyone took some time here. The start of the run down Tasman Bay was also slow, with the wind moving from Northeast to North. Finally at about 10.00am the wind filled a bit and we enjoyed a gennaker run to Nelson. As we finished at 12.30pm the wind dropped out again with Ross Telford, the hard working timekeeper, reporting from the Nelson Yacht Club's start box that it was down to 3 knots in Tasman Bay.

As can be expected a couple of bottles of rum disappeared very quickly and hot showers were welcome. John was very pleased with the line honours and we even started to think about handicap results, but were not very optimistic as we had taken so much time to start with. The next boat in was almost 6 hours later and Illusions, the last finisher, crossed the line just after midnight.

We were all surprised at the prize giving at the Tasman Bay Cruising Club when it was announced that we had also taken the club handicap with Illusions second. Subsequent confirmed results gave all three handicaps, from memory something that John also achieved in this race in the early 1990's. We would like to thank the Race's sponsors Burnsco for their significant generosity both with spot and winning prizes, and the Tasman Bay Cruising Club for their hospitality.

I also did the first leg of the Round North Island fully crewed race. The race was split into two legs anti-clockwise from Auckland. Five fifty footers started; the new German owned Elliot 52 Outsider, Wired, V5, Pussy Galore and Ran Tan II. As well Jive Talkin and Prawn Broker competed.

The fifty footers were in close proximity up the East Coast and around the top of the North Island, with all five boats taking it in turn to lead. Even at this stage, the race amongst the fifty footers had restarted several times.



Restart of the Round the North Island Race 2007, Wellington - Auckland

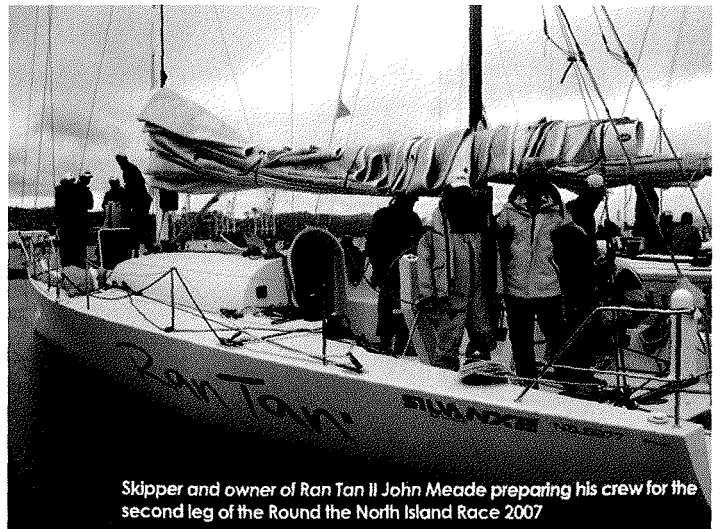
The most memorable feature of the first twenty-four hours was the number of sail changes. There was one watch when it felt as if that was all we did. Rounding Cape Maria van Dieman was awkward – the tide had changed, and in the light wind very little progress was made.

Off Hokianga, V5 hit something and suffered significant keel damage. Wired answered the flare, and went back to assist. This left us racing against Outsider and Pussy Galore, who both chose to take the rhumb line to Cape Egmont. Our navigator, Brian Petersen called us inside the rhumb line, so we could take advantage of the forecast south-easterly. This never really eventuated, but it turned out to be a good call, as the other two found it very slow going.

Although we didn't know it, we rounded Cape Egmont in the lead. From there it was hard on to Stephens Island, where the race amongst the fifty footers restarted again, and Outsider got away on us. We crossed Cook Strait as the tide turned against us, and ended up rock hopping around Karori Light in generally light variable winds. The other two had not done well in the tide, and followed us in. Yet again, the race restarted.

Positions swapped coming up the harbour in very light winds. We all parked up at Point Halswell. It took us eight hours to get from Karori Light to the finish, which we won by 1 minute 39 seconds from Outsider, with Pussy Galore a further 7 minutes further back. This finishing order was a bit of a lottery which we were lucky enough to win, but the local knowledge did help. The crew worked right through the race and was very focused. Without this we would not have been in a position to finish as well as we did. Wired was awarded 2nd equal on the line to allow for the time they lost assisting V5.

Ran Tan II's overall results for the race were 2nd on line behind Outsider, 1st on PHRF and 5th on IRC.



Skipper and owner of Ran Tan II John Meade preparing his crew for the second leg of the Round the North Island Race 2007