

The Great Outdoors

Lee's 'Merlin' To Make Debut Saturday

By ARNOLD WECHTER
Sentinel Boating Editor

Thirty of the hottest racing machines in Northern California will be on the line Saturday — but all eyes will be on one boat, Bill Lee's spanking new Merlin.

Merlin, all 67 feet in length and 1,850 square feet of sail, is undoubtedly the star of this year's Ano Nuevo Race.

We have described Merlin in previous columns and we will only say that she should be the

hottest boat ever from Lee's Soquel boat yard.

Lee built the boat to garner "first to finish" honors in the upcoming Transpac. But the Ano Nuevo is a different sort of test for Merlin — and a shakedown race may get rid of some of the gremlins that any new racing boat encounters.

The Ano Nuevo Race, sponsored by the Monterey Peninsula Yacht Club, kicks off the ocean racing season in the north state. It is regarded as one of the toughest ocean races

in the area. Weather conditions are usually heavy and the 39-mile beat from Monterey to Ano Nuevo quickly separates the men from the boys.

If Merlin can go to weather well she could become a "wonder" boat.

Knowledgeable observers believe Merlin will surprise the yachting world with her ability to point. Everybody agrees she should run and reach like a banshee. Some experts believe the boat will be capable of planing — a feat unheard of in a

large monohull.

There is only one doubt — she may be underwinched for a race such as the Ano Nuevo which features a long, tough beat. Lee set the boat up for the long reaches which occur in the tradewinds en route to Hawaii and the primary winches may not be quite enough for a heavy weather event. And Saturday's crew members could find themselves worn to a frazzle by the time they reach the light off of Ano Nuevo.

There will be four classes: IOR MK III A; IOR MK III B; PHRF A and PHRF B.

IOR A will start at 10 a.m. IOR B goes five minutes later followed by PHRF A and B.

The split in the IOR Division will be made the night before the race. The PHRF A will consist of boats with ratings of zero to 210. The B division will be 211 and above.

A cocktail party will be held the night before at the MPYC clubhouse with a skippers' meeting set for 7 p.m. Friday.

IOR entries are as follows:

John Pomoroy-Bill Riley, MPYC and St. Francis, respectively, Wild Turkey, a Peterson half tonner; L.W. Taylor, St. Francis, Racy, a Peterson 32; Doug Olson-Art Sutton, MPYC, Wham Bam, a Moore 24; Bill Lee, SCYC, Merlin, a Soquel 67; Lawrence B. Carr, St. Francis, Lightning, an S/8 57; Ann Callahan, MPYC, Hocus Pocus, a Santa Cruz 27; Charles T. Reid, Richmond Yacht Club, Chalene, a C&C 35; Terry Drew-Howie Spruit, SCYC, Prince Charming, A home built boat designed and constructed by the owners; John F. Whitsett, St. Francis, Rolline Stone, a 35-foot one-tonner; T.H. Wylie, Stillwater YC, Too, a Gemini 30; George Gianandrea, Paradise Harbor YC, Quadri, a C&C 38; Larry Burgin, SCYC, Nalu IV, a

Lapworth 47.

PHRF entries are as follows: Syd Kalmbach, MPYC, Happy Phon, Santana 22; Al Ward, SCYC, Boop, Santana 22; Jack Thomsen, MPYC, La Atrevida, Cal 30; W.G. "Bud" Chrisman, MPYC, Etude, Santana 25; Jeff Clark, MPYC, Moonduster, Colombia 29; W.R. Brockhoff, SCYC, Mira, Ranger 33; Wayne Bonesteel, SCYC, Tehuan-tepecer, Ericson 23; Ron Gross, SCYC, Tungeha'o, Santa Cruz 27; David Hoisington, Serendipity, Cascade 42; Randy Repass, SCYC, Blew, Cal 29; Paul Fage, MPYC, Patient Lady, Ranger 29; Jim Wynne, MPYC, Santyamo, Santana 22; Bob Paravicini, MPYC, Pace, Spaulding 33; John Neighbors, Flying Circus, Moore 24.

The IOR Division winner the past two seasons, Poltergeist, Dr. Robert Wade's sleek grey Moore 24, will not be on hand to defend its crown. But another Moore 24, a new boat jointly owned by SCYC's John Hawk and Bill McMurray, has indicated it plans to enter — but at this writing had not officially entered.

While on the subject of ocean racing the plans for the upcoming Monterey Bay Yacht Racing Association season have been announced by MBYRA Commodore Jerry Hansen.

Hansen was re-elected to the post for the second straight year.

Other MBYRA representatives are Caesar Fiammina, Elkhorn YC; John Neighbors, MPYC and Al Ward, SCYC.

Hansen announced the following race schedule:

April 16 — Santa Cruz-Natural Bridges-Moss Landing-Santa Cruz, 39.3 miles

May 21 — Santa Cruz-Ano Nuevo-Moss Landing, 56.4 miles.

June 18 — Moss Landing, Pt. Pinos, Monterey, 26 miles.

June 19 — Moss Landing-Santa Cruz-Moss Landing, 26.6 miles.

Aug. 20 — Monterey, Pt. Pinos, Moss Landing, Santa Cruz, 18.9 miles.

Sept. 17 — Around the Buoys, Moss Landing, Santa Cruz, Monterey, Moss Landing, 44.1 miles.

Hansen said current plans call for two divisions, IOR and PHRF. But he indicated that if the turnout continues to be small in the IOR division then MBYRA will become all PHRF.

Skippers wishing applications to enter the ocean racing series should contact Hansen by writing to: Jerry Hansen, 116 Fourth Ave., Santa Cruz.

Two Santa Cruz skippers, Bill Fieberling and Gary Boyden, finished second and third in the Santana 22 class of the San Francisco Bay Midwinter series.

Bob Tellefsen of the Richmond Yacht Club, and a frequently Santa Cruz competitor, won the series.

The all-new Pacific Boating Almanac (formerly Sea Boating Almanac) for 1977 is now available in three separate regional volumes covering every public and private marine facility from Mazatlan, Mexico to Skagway, Alaska.

Expanded to 416 pages, these are the largest and most complete books to appear in the history of the popular cruising guides.

Edited specially for the small boat owner, the guides provide ready answers on where to go, how to get there, where to stop overnight, refuel, or get repairs. Whether one's interest lies in power or sail, racing, cruising, trailerboating, water skiing or houseboating, this series has something of interest.



'Merlin' Christening

The crowd gathered around Bill Lee's new Merlin during the christening party at the Elkhorn Yacht Club. That's Harvey Kilpatrick, a veteran of Monterey Bay and

Transpac ocean races, sitting on the cabin. Harvey is scheduled to be a key member of Lee's crew during the coming campaigns.