

1060 miles (statute) left to go (home)

The odyssey of MIRAGE (Hobie 33) covers 3 events in the winter months and so far we haven't been disappointed. It was winter all right during the race Ft. Lauderdale to Key West in Jan. and the St Pete NOOD mid Feb. Our crew trailered the boat first to Lauderdale and then Bill Drinkwater commandeered the car and trailer to Key W while we raced the 160 nm mostly night in a warm Gulf Stream but frigid night (40ties). It was cold despite preparing for this weather. Even a hot gumbo dinner at 2 am gave only temporary relieve. No Glühwein on that ride. Forecast was light but we broad and beam reached in 15 kts of wind with fantastic planeing next to bigger (formerly faster) boats. We were glad the race only took 22 hours. In KW it was still very, very cold and our hotel was sorry, but had no heat.

After 2 nights in KW and parties we trailered the boat to park in Jacksonville. Let me not bore you with "why the trailer wheel came off" but when it hit the shrubs at 50 mph it sure mowed several down. While getting the wheel repaired in Delray on a Saturday night, Whitney got a surplus kitten (now named Delray) from the repair guy.

Mid Feb. the racing in St Pete started with a lay day because of too much wind. The race committee was not influenced by the America's Cup rules of 15 kts (or less). However it was COLD again. Saturday and Sunday in the low 50ties with arctic wind chill on Saturday. Racing Hobie 33 one design was absolute great in lots of close quarter sailing. Compared to the AmCup at the same time ours was a LOT more exciting. Jim Williams from the other Hobie33 at BBSA helped us out as spin-sheet trimmer and even though we were close at times we didn't beat the pro-crew and ended up 2nd as the best Corinthian crew.

In high speed we made MIRAGE road ready and took off for New Orleans after the awards at St Pete YC. The Hobie33 Nationals are there in mid March. We left boat, trailer and car parked at Pontchartrain YC and flew to Norfolk after doing the Mardi Gras on Monday. In New Orleans it was cold AGAIN. Wind chill contributed and we were stuck on one side of the parade for hours thanks to more police observing our safety than parading actors.

Soon after we left St Pete we had a misfire of one of the cylinders and were about 25% slower the whole way to New Orleans. We would have loved to do w/o that hassle but at least it wasn't anything more serious. Now the car is fixed again.

March 17th we will use the return portion of our flight from New Orleans, sail the Hobie33 Nationals on the infamous lake Pontchartrain (which is wider that Ft Monroe to Charles City) and "only" drive the remaining 1060 miles back to HR to complete the full circle of our 4970 mile winter circuit.

Did I mention it was cold? Is there anything further south?

Havana next year?????



