

Hasso Plattner's Enthusiasm for the 505

By Lynn Fitzpatrick

Malcom "Pip" Pearson, 505 Class President, said, " There is no question that the Class has benefitted tremendously over the years as a direct result of Hasso's involvement." Pearson continued, "He's a damned good sailor and, of course, Alarie is a great asset." Thanks to Plattner, SAP, is the title sponsor of this year's 505 World Championship hosted by St. Francis Yacht Club.

It is clear that the 65-year old Hasso Plattner has every intention of learning as much as he can from his 505 team. Once ashore, Plattner, a former 470 and FD sailor, questions Roo Stevenson and Skip Whyte, who follow the racing closely from Plattner's launch and Peter Alarie, who has been his crew for the past five years. A very competitive person, Plattner, is always eager to discern how they could have held off or passed more boats on different legs of the course.

For Plattner, sailing two man dinghies and jumping off his 505 into chest-high water to prevent it from getting racked on the beach at Crissy Field is a far cry from having a professional crew guide a Farr 40 or his MaxZ yacht into a slip at Porto Cervo or another yachting Mecca. "The 505 is a great boat and it offers the most competitive racing available. I love the 505," said Plattner.

As for Alarie, sailing with Plattner for the past five years has added another dimension to his sailing career. Alarie won the 505 North Americans a handful of times and raced with Howie Hamlin in three 505 World Championships. He and Hamlin placed second in the 2004 Worlds in Santa Cruz. After analyzing the time and resource commitment required to win a world championship, particularly when the partners live on separate coasts, Alarie began working with Plattner.

"We are capable of having single digit performances," said Alarie. In a regatta in which some teams will be happy to finish a race unscathed and others set their goal as finishing all races, Plattner and Alarie have their performance measure too. "Our goal is to sail a race that we can both feel good about in end," said Alarie.

Coming down to the end of the 2009 505 SAP World Championship regatta, the energetic and very busy Plattner, recalls a 505 race in Santa Cruz about six weeks prior to this world championship. "We won a race and beat Mike Martin. That made me very happy," said Plattner. "

Plattner and Alarie in the same league as just about every other boat in the 2009 SAP 505 World Championship. They are not a threat to Martin and Jeff Nelson, the pre-regatta favorites, who are performing to expectations. Throughout the regatta Mike Holt and Carl Smit have been the only other team to challenge them.

Peter Alarie with more to think about than looking good for a photo.

2009-08-28