

V for Vendetta – AUS1079

James Bacon

How did you get into sailing?

Sailing started for me with my family in a trailer sailor on the Gippsland lakes. Later progressing through to Sabots from age 7, then as a teenager I transitioned into Lasers, i14 Skiff, various sports trailable, as well as competing in several J24s championships.

Keelboat sailing started at the early age of 14 under the guidance of Don Jones and his crew onboard Cadibarra. Competing in various ORCV sprints across Bass Strait, Sydney to Hobarts plus winning the Melbourne Hobart in 1999 (which was my first major ocean race).

I have also sailed in Europe having competed in three Cowes Weeks in the UK, Cork Week in Ireland and various SP3 and one-design events. The highlight of my sailing in Europe was trimming onboard the 140ft ketch Hetairos during the 2008 Maxi World Championships in Porto Cervo in Sardinia.

We beat the British J-Class Velsheda and came in second place to Ranger, the 135' historic replica of Harold S. Vanderbilt's J Class yacht that won the 1937 America's Cup who won the World Cup that year.

Why did you choose to sail Etchells?

Having sailed on various dingy classes and keelboats locally from Sandringham notably on Sydney 38s and TP52. It wasn't until I was 30 before deciding to focus on a single class of One Design sailing.

The Etchells was the perfect boat to fit in a program around having a young family and work commitments.

It also attracts the best sailing talent from around the globe and is consistently the best tactical racing to be involved with in Australia.

Cost of entry into the class is approachable for a 30ft keelboat. Of course you can choose how much to spend depending on whether satisfied with competing at club level or travel to state championships.

Otherwise at the other end of the cost spectrum, you can travel overseas and compete in World Championships at Cowes UK, Miami US or Hong Kong.

Having said that, now is a terrific time to step into an Etchells to prepare your boat and crew for the World Championship event that will be held at Royal Brighton Yacht Club in January 2025.

A great opportunity to compete in an event in our local waters that will attract many of the biggest names in sailing from around the world!

What is a highlight of you time in Etchells so far?

Sailing in the Nationals at Metung in March of this year was great after such a long break from regatta sailing due to COVID.

We placed 4th, 5th and 6th in three races of the eight race regatta series, which was a pleasing result when competing against a fleet of Etchells sailors that included past World Champions, Australian Champions, current Olympic gold medallists and many other very talented sailors.

What are your plans for the season?

Royal Brighton Yacht Club is hosting the Victorian Championships for the Etchells class this season. Racing should attract sailors from other Victorian fleets including Geelong and Metung, plus travellers from NSW, QLD, possibly even WA as their fleet prepares for the World Championships in November 2023.