

## When it's more than just sailing – Team Barry.

For the Melbourne quartet from a boat called Barry, going yachting offers many opportunities to see just why, life happens.

At the Howth Etchells World Championships they were the first Corinthian crew, yet again and third overall, as well. Although it was a smaller fleet than Brighton, it was still AAA rating competition. Sitting down to talk with James Ware, he started with "Etchells, where else do you get pro, Olympian and amateur all together?"

Good point. You see James manages DJs and Producers, Damien King is a Restaurateur and Property Developer, Simon Cunnington a Stockbroker and Andy Butler is the CEO of a non-woven textiles business. That's a pretty diverse lot, but they have had eight years all together, which is a major strength. "It's still a thrill to be in there with the kinds of names an Etchells fleet produces", James said.

"In fact, it has to be fun and we make it a bit of a holiday, as well. Andy and Simon have new babies, so it's hard to be away and you have to make it worth everyone's while." This year, there was an added impetus for Team Barry to go to the World Championships, for they were very close to the late, Peter 'Spike' Dorien.

"We did it for Spikey. Something of his was with us at all times. It was important for all of us to be there, but especially so for Damien", James added. Noel Drennan came and coached Team Barry for a few days, too. Nitro simply said, "Boys, I'll be there!" And he was. The whole event was more of an unsaid pact, than a notional tribute, however. "Everyone knew he was with us and so we didn't need to dwell on it."

Of the calibre of competitors one sees being involved in the Etchells game and why they're drawn to it so much, James reflected on the technical difficulty of "getting the minutiae correct and going that little bit faster. The low barrier to entry and that everyone can join in and yet not be spanked all around the park, is wonderful. They're a classic and it's all about the intricacies."

Our overall aim is "to be competitive with the pros". So how then, does James interpret the three-man versus four-man crew configuration? "The biggest plus is that it makes the class more accessible to light weight men and female crew members. In terms of performance it's marginal and this last world title proves that it really is irrelevant. It's horses for courses, as it is far more about crew work than anything else."

"For sure it's getting harder for us to weigh-in, as we get older. Three months out we have to be aware of our weight and our target, but it means we keep fit and look after ourselves, so that has to be a good thing", James finished that point with.

Team Barry actually shipped Barry the boat, over to Ireland. As for the sailing, it was all about focussing on the process, not the outcome and try for a top five placing in every race. On the last day, they were four points down on Jake Gunther, but still stuck to their plan. "Consistency paid off", was how James put it. "Here's an analogy for you, that we used a lot over there. You have a gymnastics beam on the floor, versus atop a 20-story building. It's still the same beam, just higher off the ground. So, focus on crossing the beam and not it's location."

Ireland was beautiful. It's a great club and environment. "OMG, was it cold. What's this summer stuff?" James commented with wry smile. "They were challenging conditions, with up to three knots of tide and every sort of wind condition from what seemed like every direction, too!"

"One of the best things to watch was John Bertrand, Andrew Palfrey and Tom Slingsby going downhill aboard Triad. Here was a team at the very top of their game and it demonstrated the absolute benchmark in Etchells to all. I'm not sure anyone has ever sailed Etchells as well. Pure crew work and Tom's reading of the wind was sensational", James confided.

"As an all amateur outfit, we're delighted for the winners and so proud of our own achievements, which occurred without the need for any pros or coaches boat to be with us during racing." I asked James why he thinks they do well, "I think it is the great uphill speed we achieve, due to a technique we learned from Adrian Finglass", about whom James says, "Great coach" and he must be, for they are the proof.

You know, I think there must also be something to do with their crew work, as well. Andy Butler is their onboard master strategist and fleet position observer. Simon and James have the two sails to keep it all in balance, under the supervision of Damien, who has a tremendous feel for getting Barry to go faster. "He just knows how to tweak it", James said.

It was interesting to learn how they manage the life happens thing, given they are four man crew, which makes it even cosier in the cockpit. "Friendship is the key – we're always finding something to improve upon. You also have to factor in passion for the sport and friendship with each other and our fellow crewmembers' other (better) halves."

During this last trip, Andy and Simon's Bec and Bec went to Sweden to see Bec Butler's family. "You know, we all want to thank our families for making it possible and can I make a special mention to Robert Ware (International Umpire), as this is the first regatta where we have not had to call him mid-regatta to seek rules advice", James managed to get out in between chuckles.

They are all busy and life certainly is happening for all of them, so you would be forgiven for wondering where to from here. James is in no doubt, however. "We are keeping on going with it. We're still having a blast. The more you do, the better you get at it."

All of which leaves me just wanting to say, Onya Baz!