

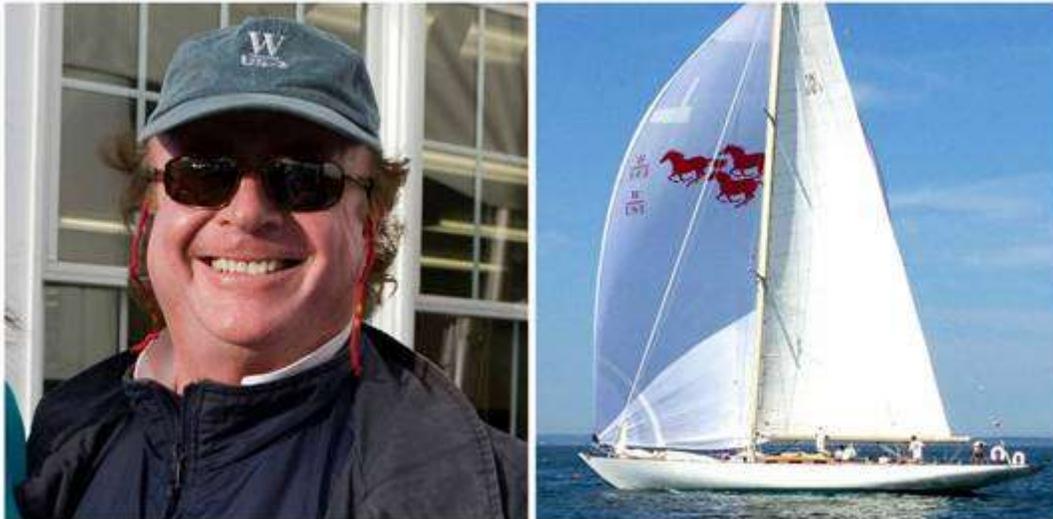


## An 80-Year-Old Tradition Starts Saturday:

### Edgartown Race Week's 'Round-the-Island Race

MARTHA'S VINEYARD, MASS. (July 19, 2018) – Edgartown Yacht Club's ['Round-the-Island Race](#) ('RTI) – one of America's oldest distance races – starts Saturday on Martha's Vineyard. The 80-year-old race originated in 1938 and except for the years of the Second World War has been an annual event since then. It is part of the Edgartown Yacht Club's [Edgartown Race Weekend](#), which includes two days of buoy racing (tomorrow and Friday) and a 'Round-the-Sound Race that will begin immediately after the start for the 'RTI.

"The race was first conceptualized to be reminiscent of the race around the Isle of Wight in England, which was the course of the first America's Cup," said EYC Big Boat Racing Committee Co-Chair, Hal Findlay. "The distance around Martha's Vineyard (56 nm) is only a few miles longer; both courses have views of cliffs, headlands, villages and open water; and the tidal currents and wind effects are important in both."



Donald Tofias will sail his 76' W-Class Yacht in the 2018 Edgartown Race Weekend, which includes the 80-year-old 'Round-the-Island Race on Saturday, July 21. (Photos courtesy Edgartown Yacht Club) [Click to download](#)

Donald Tofias, a Newporter who grew up on the Cape, has participated in the 'RTI at least 10 times, and he will compete during all three days of this year's Edgartown Race Weekend, skipping his 76' W Class yacht *Wild Horses*. "I try to get out here every year, because I love this regatta," said Tofias, who also races in St. Barths (in the French West Indies) and Maine, usually in a Spirit of Tradition class that accommodates entries like his that look like classic wooden yachts above decks but have modern underbodies.

"This race around Marthas Vineyard is the most interesting of any circular race I've ever done around an island," said Tofias. "It can be windy, light, foggy, sunny...we've seen all conditions, and it's all hands on-deck all the time. We were famous in 2000 when we raced neck-and-neck with another W Class yacht *White Wings* and set a record for rounding in six hours and 41 minutes. We held that record for nine years.

Then one year, we finished a very slow race at 10 minutes before midnight, which was the deadline for finishing.”

Tofias looks forward to sailing against *Black Fish*, skippered by Ron Zarrella, the Commodore of Great Harbor Yacht Club in Nantucket. “*Black Fish*, too, is a cold-molded Spirit of Tradition boat that’s 49 feet. We are sailing in the Classic Class, not with the other fiberglass boats.”

Starting at 0800 Saturday morning, the ’RTI fleet (split into classes for Classics; PHRF A, B and C; PHRF Non-Spinnaker and Double-Handed) can be seen sailing between Martha’s Vineyard and Nantucket along the east beach of Chappaquiddick. At midday, the fleet will be in the open Atlantic Ocean off the south coast of the Vineyard. In the afternoon, after rounding the gorgeous cliffs of Gay Head, the sailors will then head up Vineyard Sound to the finish near Edgartown Harbor. They will have passed within sight of seven lighthouses: Cape Poge, Gay Head, Tarpaulin Cove, Nobska, West Chop, East Chop and Edgartown.

If the tidal currents or wind conditions make going slow, the Race Committee has the option of finishing the race just north of Menemsha.

A smaller group of seven has signed up for the first-ever ‘Round-the-Sound Race that offers a shorter, 20 nm course around government marks in Vineyard and Nantucket Sounds.

### **More About Edgartown Race Weekend**

Edgartown Yacht Club Race Weekend traditionally attracts entrants from the Eastern Seaboard and beyond, delivering superb racing action in classes for PHRF (spinnaker and non-spinnaker divisions), ORR, ORC, IRC, Double-Handed, and Classic yachts. Professional

A Mount Gay-sponsored “Jump-Up” party on Friday night (July 20); and prize givings on both Friday and Sunday (July 22) round out the schedule for competitors entered in one or the other, or both, of the racing sessions.

For more information <http://www.rtirace.org> or contact [racer@edgartownyc.org](mailto:racer@edgartownyc.org) . On Facebook follow [Edgartown Yacht Club Racing](#).

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