

SOLO SAILOR THRIVES IN 1,000 MILE TEST



Solo: Barry Hurley

Ireland's love affair with shorthanded sailing continues to grow, with Cobh native Barry Hurley finishing runner up in both classes of the bluQube solo 1000, single handed yacht race. The race qualifies Hurley for automatic entry into the OSTAR transatlantic in 2009. Hurley skippered 'Dinah' (a modified JOD35) was second over the line and second overall on IRC.

The bluQube Solo 1000 involved three legs: Falmouth to Kinsale (185 miles), Kinsale to Santander, Spain (525 miles), and Santander to Camaret, France (290 miles), covering a total of 1,000 miles.

Twenty boats competed in the race which set off from Falmouth on 29th June 2008.

Hurley said: "I am delighted with my performance in what is one of the most challenging races I have ever participated in. During the winter my friend Bob Hobby and I gave my boat Dinah a complete refit. Everything inside was rebuilt to make her lighter, stronger and faster."

"The preparation really paid off. During the race the storms were appalling, especially on the second leg. I had everything thrown at me

with winds blowing over 40 knots, but Dinah stood up incredibly well. Conditions were so bad in fact that more than half the entrants did not complete the course."

Lack of sleep is a major problem for competitors who often have to resort to power-napping for ten to 20 minutes at a time. Sleep deprivation can also lead to hallucinations, and Hurley admitted: "At one point, Yoda from Star Wars was sitting at the bow of the boat giving me directions!"

He continues, "During the trip I had many high and lows, the lowest point was when I had to drop all the sails during a massive storm in the Bay of Biscay and lost my autopilot remote control over the side of the boat. However, leading the fleet 24 hours into the last leg, ahead of much bigger and more powerful boats was exhilarating and more than made up for the earlier problems."

The 31-year-old, a former GP 14 sailor, has been sailing for over 20 years and spends every moment he can on the water, when not working for O2 Ireland.

He concludes, "Completing the bluQube 1000 Solo means that I have gained automatic entry into next year's OSTAR. At 3,000 miles, it is one of the most testing single handed Trans-Atlantic races. I am really looking forward to this new challenge."