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Photos: transpacrace.com

## Kiwi flyer smashes record

KIWI Neville Crichton's Reichel Pugh 100 *Alfa Romeo* smashed the Transpac Yacht Race monohull record by more than a day, in early July.

Crichton's 16-man crew – including TeamOrigin America's Cup helmsman Ben Ainslie – completed the 2,225nm Los Angeles to Honolulu race in 5d, 14h, 36m, beating *Morning Glory's* (Hasso Plattner) 2005 record by 25hs 27m 51s.

"At the start we decided to steer a course north of the rest of the fleet to look for more consistent wind, and then come back down with a good push behind us," Crichton said.

"The tactics paid off and the yacht and her crew responded as they always do – in

other words, giving their all."

This was the Australian-built super-maxi's 141st line honours victory and came despite all the sails having to be dropped six times throughout the race while fishing nets, sheets of plastic and seaweed were removed from the keel or rudder. Each drop cost *Alfa Romeo* at least 30 minutes.

Crichton is now looking forward to the 65th Rolex Sydney-Hobart starting on Boxing Day.

"The Sydney to Hobart is a very different race to the TransPac, and although this win must place us as the front-runner in December, there are still some five yachts that could reach Hobart first."

## Column: Mini Transat countdown

### Against the clock

Kiwi rookie solo sailor Conrad Colman has joined the *Boating* crew to give readers an insider's view to September's Mini Transat.

IT'S COMMON knowledge that the challenge of getting to the start line can equal that of the race itself, and never has that been more true for me. Having decided to compete in the Mini Transat, I have been juggling the need to prepare my boat and train for races with the search for sponsorship and the challenges of life abroad, in France.

It has all been worth it, as I am now qualified for the Transat in September and, in my first year in the class, will be hurtling off to Brazil with 83 other solo competitors.

Since coming to the home of the Vendée Globe, my learning curve has been vertical; I have learnt that flying the big spinnaker single-handed in 25 knots is normal, that a phosphorescent bow wave can provide enough light to trim by and that just 10 minutes of sleep can be wonderful.

Short on time and money, I have had to work harder than my competitors to develop techniques and experience in solo racing in order to compete with those who have been racing Minis for years. Early



results are promising: I came fourth in the last leg of my second race, recovered from a bad start in the Mini Fastnet to take back 30 places, and was leading my last race, the UK Mini Fastnet, when I had to abandon in order to preserve the boat for the Transat.

Everything this season has been leading up to the start gun in September and it will be nice to finally race at 100% without thinking that I need to back off early in order to make it to the next qualifier. For many here, the Transat is the pinnacle of a two or three year campaign and everyone will be ready and motivated to show what they can do.

While re-fitting my boat this month, I am working to extract the rest of its potential from it and myself. Australian professional sailor Nick Moloney told me I need to "treat every race like your life depends on it... because in a career sense, it does."

I can't wait. ■

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