



Mark Craig
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SOLUTIONS

JEANNEAU 45

First MARION BERMUDA RACE
2011

WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO DO THE RACE IN THE FIRST PLACE?

All of us have been racing our entire life, one of our crew members has participated in the race several times many years ago (both the Marion and the Newport to Bermuda) and kept telling us how much fun it was.

Most of my racing has been in fresh water and I have always wanted to do a long distance ocean race on my boat. I have sailed in the Virgin Islands and Bahamas for years but that certainly is not the same challenge and adventure as an ocean crossing to an island in the Atlantic.

I have visited Bermuda several times and love the island. I realized that if I didn't "race there" I probably would never motivate myself to do the planning and boat preparation for a "cruise". So, since my boat is really a "cruiser" and not a true racing boat, the Marion to Bermuda race fits our profile perfectly!

HOW ARE YOU PREPARING?

We are preparing for the race by first delivering the boat to Newport RI from Harbor Springs MI this fall (2010) and wintering it there. We had a wonderful trip with 70 degree weather and following seas for almost three weeks. Hope our luck lasts for that kind of weather in June! I started preparations a year ago adding an inner forestay, SS Band radio, upgrading my life raft, new gel batteries, heavier gauge lifelines, installing a CAT 1 EPIRB, adding a storm trysail track and new storm trysail, and screwing everything down that moves to meet the requirement for a CAT 1 race! Lots of fun (although somewhat expensive!) installing all of the equipment necessary to change my Jeanneau 45 Sun Odyssey from a boat equipped to race in the Michigan Port Huron to Mackinac race to one satisfying the requirements of the Marion Bermuda race.

Also, two of the crew will be attending the Safety at Sea seminar at MIT in March and the rest of the crew will be attending one at Bayview Yacht Club in MI before the race. I have attended these before and would highly recommend that all crew members attend, not just the 30% as required by the rules. You learn something every time and get refreshed on safety equipment usage.

We are looking forward to 20 knots on the beam all the way to Bermuda to share a few of those Dark and Stormy's with the family and fellow racers on the island.

