

## OUTSTANDING PODIUM FOR THE FIRST 40 AND 45! ROLEX SYDNEY HOBART 2011



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*Two First 45s on the top steps of the podium in IRC3 and two First 40s tying for third place in IRC4: the last Sydney-Hobart confirms, if still needed, that with the renewed high-performance cruisers range, Beneteau is still very much in the big league of offshore racing.*



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In their own way, the owners, Darryl Hodgkinson on *Victoire* and Paul Clitheroe on *Balance* (First 45), have repeated the double win of 2009, which already brought two First 40s to the top steps of the podium. By winning the IRC3 category for the 2<sup>nd</sup> consecutive year, *Victoire* and her crew have again achieved an impressive double. As for the astonishing tying finish of the two First 40s, *Lunchtime* and *Two True*, this is the first time this has happened in a race against the clock.

Like the Fastnet or Giraglia, the Sydney-Hobart is one of the legendary ocean races that unite the most experienced crews in the world at sea, in extreme conditions. It is a challenge for the crews but also for the boats, often severely tested throughout the 628 miles that separate Sydney (Australia) from Hobart (Tasmania). Of the 87 boats at the start of this 66th race, there were no fewer than 14 Beneteau.

The harshness of the weather on the evening of Boxing Day in Australia - the first night of the race - forced racers to contend with a sudden 180° wind swing with gusts of 40 knots, combined with the swell created by the tail end of Hurricane Fina, and made Gordon Maguire, the winner of this tough race, comment: *"It's not an easy race to win. Admittedly racing with the best boat in the world is necessary, but you also need all the luck in the world! "*



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With this first place, Darryl Hodgkinson and *Victoire* win the famous Australian CYCA blue water pointscore (offshore racing championship) after winning the Australian Audi IRC championship in Class B.