



Yachties arrive for 18th event

ABOUT 100 entrants in seven different classes will start racing at the 18th annual Meridien Marinas Airlie Beach Race Week tomorrow.

The town has been invaded by nautical types for a week of sailing and social gatherings at what is now one of Australia's foremost regattas.

Airlie Beach Race Week was started in 1990 by Hog's Breath Cafe founder Don Algie.

Mr Algie arrived in the Whitsundays in 1987 aboard his classic 55' sloop Storm and in conjunction with the launch of his first Hog's Breath he decided to sponsor a major regatta out of Airlie Beach.

This event was to be called the Hog's Breath Cruising Classic to cater for the influx of coastal cruising yachts that visit the Whitsundays during September, when the race was held.

Over the years the regatta has changed faces many times - from a cruising classic to a full race week, which first included both multi and mono hulls and then changed to cater only for mono hulls.

It has also faced challenges from external competition, with the Hayman Big Boat Regatta at one stage being held on the same week as Hog's Breath Race Week. It has continually risen to these challenges though and is now one of the most professionally organised race weeks on the sailing calendar.

Mr Algie is still a big part of the regatta and this year he will attempt to defend his 2008 title as Cruising Class championship with Storm 11.