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Boats emerge from bygone era for Yorke Peninsula's Saltwater Classic

Stansbury and Port Vincent will be the destination for a fascinating "voyage" of boating restoration and preservation with Yorke Peninsula's Saltwater Classic on the weekend of 9 and 10 April.

An amazing fleet of old-style vessels will participate in the event that embraces a bygone era in boating while celebrating the maritime history of coastal communities in the region.

With support from the South Australian Tourism Commission and Yorke Peninsula Tourism, the event has grown in stature since its inception in 2003 to become a significant tourist attraction for people around Australia.

Yorke Peninsula's Saltwater Classic Chairman, Colin Germein, said the event allowed local communities to welcome classic boating enthusiasts and families to enjoy the diverse tourism assets of Yorke Peninsula.

"The Australian Maritime Museum defines a classic boat as any vessel with unique and enduring qualities," he said. "We welcome boats of wood or fibreglass – indeed anything that fits into the classic style where beauty is in the eye of the beholder.

"The Saltwater Classic is about preserving our historic links between farming land and sea and showcasing the skills of early boat builders.

"It demonstrates the growing interest in the restoration of these old-style boats while providing a springboard for people to enjoy the wider attractions of Yorke Peninsula."

A fleet of around 60 vessels is expected to participate in the Saltwater Classic, which involves parades in the waters off Stansbury and Port Vincent and a leisurely steam and sail between the two towns on the Saturday afternoon.

Participants are coming from far flung places including interstate, the length of the River Murray from Mildura to Goolwa and other parts of South Australia. Classic vessels from the Royal South Australian Yacht Squadron, the Cruising Yacht of South Australia and the Wooden Boat Association of SA will also be involved.

Some of the vessels date back to early last century and many have fascinating histories of professional fishing, pleasure cruising and voyaging on coastal and inland waters. Others are boats that have been built more recently along classic lines.

The action will centre on Stansbury on the Saturday (9 April) in association with the award-winning Seaside Markets and displays of vintage cars, stationary engines, craft and produce, along with performances by the Royal Australian Navy Band.

The focus will shift to Port Vincent the following day with the wooden and classic boats on display in the marina before a blessing of the fleet at the town wharf and a range of on-water activities.

Port Vincent will also feature appealing foreshore activities including markets, arts and craft, the Navy band and members of the Y3P group proudly promoting a wide range of Yorke Peninsula foods, products, art talents, accommodation venues and services.

Caroline Bonnett, Chairperson of Y3P, said the group was delighted to participate in the event to "bring Yorke Peninsula's premier producers, people and places together."

Yorke Peninsula Tourism Manager, Brooke Liebelt, said: "Yorke Peninsula's Saltwater Classic provides a great array of diverse activities within the townships of Port Vincent and Stansbury. The activities take place both onshore and offshore and provide entertainment for the whole family.

"It is a fantastic event incorporating everything from classic to modern boats, vintage cars, markets, regional produce, children's activities, live music by the Royal Australian Navy Band and much more.

"I encourage people of all ages to visit the Yorke Peninsula and experience this wonderful regional event."

Yorke Peninsula's Saltwater Classic is supported by the South Australian Sea Rescue Squadron and the Australian Volunteer Coast Guard.

For more information, refer to the program on this page of the Yorke Peninsula Country Times or go to the website www.ypsaltwaterclassic.org.au

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