

This account is from a client who has made an Atalantic crossing and cruised with his three sons to Bermuda. He just participated in the Texas 200. I made a similiar run in August several years ago in August up the Intercoastal from Port Isabel to Port Aransas. I was eager to get into the Gulf to resume the trip to Galveston.

Driven by an Independent Spirit

by Dan Griffin

'Driven by an Independent Spirit' is embossed on the coffee cup I keep on my sailboat. Every day when I'm on my boat, I read it while drinking my morning coffee. All I can do is just smile and feel a little selfish and self indulgent. I get to enjoy the simple pleasures and satisfactions of a sailor. That inscription embodies for me the essence of the sailor's soul: freedom, self-sufficiency, adventure and the appreciation that it is the simple things in life that satisfy the most. Never more did these become more manifest than while I was participating in the Texas 200 this last June.



The Texas 200 (texas200.com) is an annual six day event usually held during the first two weeks in June. It is a combination endurance test, test of seamanship, good judgment and an exercise in self reliance all disguised as a series of back to back pocket cruises. Most boats in the event are open cockpit homemade boats under 22 feet accompanied by a few production boats. This year the T-200 started in Port Isabel, Texas and ended 200 odd miles downwind in Seadrift, Texas.

There were 36 boats that started the T-200 this year. Only 19 or so made the entire trip. Everything

from rigging failure, booms in the face, broken limbs, groundings, sails ripping, over estimation of one's abilities, lack of high wind experience and just plain poor judgment thinned the fleet. The fleet was scattered out during the day making the transits solitary affairs. Rescues by fellow fleet members were sometimes not possible and pushed some participants to their self sufficiency limits. The release that captains and crewmen were required to sign states very clearly that is adventure is not for the faint of heart or spirit:

“If you drop out of the event anywhere, you are on your own and no effort will be made to transport you. Repeat, you will be on your own. If you do not notify officials that you have dropped out, you could be liable for search and rescue costs.

This warning cannot list all hazards, dangers, or other safety considerations. Assume this is a very dangerous event that can cause your injury, death, or mental anguish. By entering this event, you are asserting that you are an expert and you take full responsibility for your own actions.”

If you would like to read the entire Release go to [this link](#). It makes for some interesting reading.

The completion of the Texas 200 was an accomplishment. It was a thorough test and demonstration of each sailor's abilities. However, more than a test of skills and mental toughness, it was proof positive that each sailor who participated was 'Driven by an Independent Spirit' that only challenges of the sea and the sight of driving sails could satisfy.

