Over three-quarters of a century ago, before the automobile was anything more than an interesting toy and the edge of Houston was at Main and Lamar, the original Houston Yacht Club was born. A handful of sailing enthusiasts got together in the old Rice Oyster House near Allen’s Landing, where Buffalo Bayou flows under Main Street, and organized the state’s first official sailing club in 1897. The racing sailboats were anchored in the Bayou near the original capitol of the Republic of Texas. Members’ boats had to be towed the thirty-odd miles down the Bayou to the Bay before sailing could begin.

The arrangement, which was something less than convenient, along with other factors, fostered the rise of power boats to dominance during the Club’s early life. The name was changed to “The Houston Launch Club” in 1908.

But the traditional mystique and appeal of sailing persisted, and when sailing craft rose to new popularity in the 20’s, the Club moved to the north end of Galveston Bay, near La Porte, Texas, and in 1925, built the Clubhouse on its present site — an ideal location for both power and sail. HYC is one of the few yacht clubs in the country where you can arrive in your car and be sailing in deep water within a few minutes. The original architectural style of the Clubhouse, referred to by many members as “1920’s Hollywood Mediterranean” or “The Pink Palace”, has been preserved, even though the building was extensively modernized and enlarged in 1953, and further additions and remodeling completed a few years ago.

Today, HYC is the South’s finest and most distinguished yacht club — and has produced more than its share of yachtsmen of national stature. The Club is considered one of the handsomest, and its boating facilities among the best in the country. There are some 500 members. Some are older, but there are plenty of young marrieds and bachelors, too. And there’s no shortage of teenagers and youngsters.

The main Club building consists of three stories. On the top floor are 13 guest rooms, each with individual bath, plus two guest suites. On the second or “Main” floor are the Ballroom, Cocktail Lounge, Card Room, Dining Room and informal dining area, with a full view of the harbor and Galveston Bay. The dressing rooms, youth and teen areas, offices and an informal cocktail grill are all on the ground floor. An adjoining terrace covers the area between the building and the swimming pool.

Tradition runs deep at HYC. It is one of the few Clubs in the country which observes yachting protocol — with all the color and ceremony that go with it. For example, when a Flag Officer comes onto Club property, his flag is hoisted. When he leaves, it is lowered. Although most of the Club’s social activities are informal, traditional events, with all officers and guests in proper uniform and dress, are held during the year. For example, the Commodore’s Ball, with its traditional grand march and pageantry, is an annual event.

HYC is also host club for several district and North American Championship Regattas each year. Added to these is a full Club racing schedule. HYC’s neighboring waters, with prevailing southeasterly winds, contain a full Olympic Circle — ideal for sailing events of all types and a favorite harbor for members of other yacht clubs along the Gulf Coast. And HYC has reciprocal agreements with most major clubs, both here and abroad.
The sailing is good all year long on Galveston Bay. The weather is mild in winter, and the year-round breeze (usually southeasterly from March to November) keeps things cool, even in mid-summer.

The annual Commodore's Ball has been going on at HYC every fall for longer than anyone can remember. The Ball honors both past and present Commodores. The Grand March is the colorful highlight of this formal dance, and appearing in it are the Commodores in full dress with their partners.

Sing-alongs are part of the Saturday night Oyster Bars, held during the fall season. Members and their guests join in at the piano during these informal Club gatherings.

Oysters, fried or on the half-shell — fresh from Gulf Coast waters — are served along with HYC's other famous seafood dishes, buffet-style in the Porthole Bar.
Traditionally, Houston Yacht Club has been a strong racing club. During the last decade, HYC has come to be recognized as the racing leader in the Gulf Coast and Southern Region.

As a member of the North American Racing Union (NAYRU) and Texas Yachting Association (TYA), Houston Yacht Club has sponsored many events for both organizations. HYC has also been host for the Gulf Coast Olympic Trials, the Texas Olympics, numerous North American Championship events, as well as local and area events.

In addition, HYC has a full club racing schedule, with races every week of the year from February through November, for One Design classes and cruising classes. Everyone gets to participate.

During the year, HYC holds three Open Regattas which anyone can enter, and three Closed Regattas for members only. Usually, they are held in February, April, July, August and November.

The racing year starts off with the "Revognah" (spell it backwards) or "Morning After" race on New Year's Day after the formal New Year's Eve dance at the Club.

One of the reasons for HYC's busy race schedule is its location. Prevailing southerly breezes across the convenient Olympic Circle make for ideal racing conditions for any type of boat and any race length or duration. HYC's Olympic Circle is the only one in the United States with permanent markers, recognized by the U.S. Coast Guard.
But most of the credit for HYC’s reputation as an active racing club goes to the energetic and dedicated Race Committee, all of whom are enthusiastically involved in organizing and running the races. The members pass the responsibilities around, so that HYC has a large cadre of experienced, competitive racers who are good sailors and who know how to run every kind of race.

“Misfire”, HYC’s familiar Committee Boat, is kept busy all year long. It is equipped with two-way communications to maintain contact with stake boats and picket boats, and to coordinate races with the Coast Guard. The USCG patrols all open regattas to help keep HYC’s perfect safety record intact.

The active Junior Program keeps the youngsters busy during the three summer months with two races a week, and has produced several National Junior Sailing Champions who have competed for the coveted Sears Cup. At summer’s end, Club trophies are awarded to Juniors at a special Labor Day Awards ceremony.

Whatever type of racing you prefer — Olympic Class or cruising a la family style — you’ll enjoy HYC’s race program. Even if you don’t own a boat, you won’t have any difficulty finding an open berth with another member.
There’s a lot to do at HYC

Everyone can enjoy the large swimming pool, especially non-boat owners and children. There’s a big wading pool for the little ones, deck chairs for tanning, and covered tables and chairs for outdoor snacks and drinks. Badminton courts and shuffleboard are nearby.

Someone’s going to find the golden egg! Each year, the pre-teens hunt Easter eggs on the Club grounds in what usually turns out to be the most enthusiastic egg hunt anywhere. Lots of prizes — and lots of fun.

We call our sailing youngsters the “Ragnots”, and there is a summer-long planned and supervised program to give them a taste of real racing. Several national champions learned the ropes as HYC Ragnots.

Fish and crabs bite all year long off HYC’s many docks and piers — and catching them is a favorite pastime for members and guests of all ages.
When there’s a holiday, a race or a regatta, there’s usually a shrimp peel, barbecue or steak cookout. There are ample outdoor cooking facilities including barbecue pits, charcoal broilers and fish fryers, for serving almost any number, located on the harbor side of the Clubhouse by the pool.

If sport fishing is one of your favorite things, power boating from the Club offers easy access to where the big ones are biting, either out in the bay or in blue water of the Gulf.

One of HYC’s past Commodores and his wife own the Cathy ‘B’, always present at major races and regattas, and a popular vantage point from which to watch the action.

The regular Luau party gives everyone a chance to dress island style and enjoy polynesian food and exotic drinks. Along with a traditional “Las Vegas Nite”, it’s one of the best attended – and most fun – parties of the year.
JOINING HYC...

For prospective members, application blanks and membership descriptions and costs are available at the Club office. You may pick them up there, or if you prefer, give the Club a call, and we will mail them to you.

Generally, Junior memberships are for young people. Older candidates who own boats or plan to do so usually apply for Senior memberships which carry voting privileges. Those who do not own boats often prefer Social Memberships. HYC also offers memberships for Companies. Each type is tailored to the prospective member’s individual needs, and new members in any category receive a warm “Welcome Aboard”.

FACILITIES

HYC is a truly carefree bay home for all its members. The Club staff handles all maintenance, deals with all the operating problems, and keeps the Club running smoothly. All you do as a member is come and enjoy.

Boat storage facilities are the best and most convenient on the Bay. Available are covered slips, open slips, dry storage on trailers, and board boat lockers. There is also dock space for visiting boats.

More than 200 boats are in wet storage in the harbor, nearly a hundred sailboats in dry storage plus eighty board boats in lockers.

HYC’s Olympic Circle race course is the only one in the United States recognized by the U.S. Coast Guard as having permanent markers. The course makes HYC the center of many sailing activities all year long.

The deep harbor accommodates sailing and power craft 40 feet in length and larger. At most, there is a 300-yard broad reach from the “T-head” pier to open water. All craft in the harbor are watched by the Club’s full-time staff. There are also watchmen from dusk til dawn.

Swimming pool and well-appointed and maintained grounds add to “landlocked” pleasures. Besides a wading pool, there is a fully-equipped playground for small children. Teenagers have their own special area in the clubhouse which is “off limits” to grownups, with music, table tennis and game equipment.

The Clubhouse is large, modern and completely air-conditioned, with three stories, verandas, balconies and terraces. Food service is excellent, with a complete menu that ranges from hamburgers and snacks to continental buffet and full formal service. Bar service is available in all adult areas of the Club.

The Club’s Banquet and Ballroom comfortably accommodates over 300 for seated dinners or for formal and informal dances.

Shower and locker rooms on the ground floor serve both the pool and sailing members.

HYC is the only private club on the Gulf Coast with so much to offer. Your membership will provide you, your family and your guests “Good Anchorage” for many years — and has been doing just that for almost four generations of leading yachtsmen and local residents.