

Press Information

16 January 2007

## **BMW ORACLE Racing Sails USA 98 in Auckland** Racing Phase of Programme Starts 90 Days to Louis Vuitton Cup

**Auckland, New Zealand.** USA 98, BMW ORACLE Racing's new race yacht for the 32<sup>nd</sup> America's Cup, sailed for the first time today after being launched at the team's training base here. The team is conducting sea trials this week before starting an in-house racing programme to prepare for this year's Cup competition in Valencia, Spain.

BMW ORACLE Racing CEO and Skipper Chris Dickson was at the helm for the maiden voyage of USA 98. "In a four-year campaign, it is only twice that the team has the thrill of taking a new yacht on its shakedown sail," Dickson said. "Certainly this day is a milestone in our programme as we enter race mode and the final stretch to the Louis Vuitton Cup."

USA 98's first sail consisted of structural and technical tests on the Hauraki Gulf in Auckland. The team will first confirm the structural soundness of the new boat before race training begins. "The report card comes when we sail with the boat fully-loaded in race mode but for sailing right out of the box, 98 feels pretty special," Dickson said. "We will start putting USA 98 through the paces later this week."

### **About USA 98**

Like USA 87, the team's first 2007-generation America's Cup Class yacht, USA 98 is the product of the BMW ORACLE Racing Design and Build teams. BMW engineers are integrated into the 38-person international design team, bringing expertise in structural engineering and load analysis from the German premium car manufacturer.

Both USA 87 and USA 98 represent collaboration between two of the world's leading yacht designers – Bruce Farr and Juan Kouyoumdjian. "Bruce Farr and Juan K are a formidable team – both in the diverse experience and strengths they bring to the programme as well as the professional working relationship they have forged over the course of this campaign," said Ian Burns, BMW ORACLE Racing Design Coordinator. "They have a great mutual respect for each other's work and their individual styles have brought the best out of the design team. Bruce and Juan worked closely together on

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both boats in a very similar process, bringing an interesting perspective to the design approach.”

The design team’s strategy called for each boat to have its own special strengths and distinct features rather than building two identical boats. “We incorporated all we learned from the innovative platform of 87,” Burns said.

The USA 98 design was brought to life by the 25-person team of boat-building experts led by boat construction managers Mark Turner, Tim Smyth and Mark Somerville. The carbon fibre composite hull of USA 98 was from a different mould than USA 87 which was also built at the team’s custom facility in Anacortes, WA, USA. BMW ORACLE Racing can elect to race either of their two latest-generation race boats in the 2007 Louis Vuitton Cup and there is also an option to substitute boats in between racing rounds. The Louis Vuitton Cup starts in 90 days.

### **About BMW ORACLE Racing**

BMW ORACLE Racing is the Challenger of Record for the 32<sup>nd</sup> America’s Cup representing Golden Gate Yacht Club in San Francisco, and the only American entry in the contest for sailing’s most prestigious prize and the oldest trophy in international sport. Team owner is American Larry Ellison, founder and CEO of Oracle. Partner of the team is German premium car manufacturer BMW. Sponsors include Allianz, leading global financial services provider; Girard-Perregaux, Swiss manufacturer of high-class mechanical timepieces; Henri Lloyd, Technology Partner and supplier of team clothing and Network Appliance, Inc. (NetApp), a world leader in unified storage solutions. The Louis Vuitton Cup, the Challenger Selection Series for the 32<sup>nd</sup> America’s Cup, starts 16 April in Valencia, Spain. Eleven teams from nine nations are vying for the right to Challenge for the America’s Cup. The winner of the Louis Vuitton Cup will face the Swiss Defender Team Alinghi in the 32<sup>nd</sup> America’s Cup Match starting 23 June in Valencia.

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