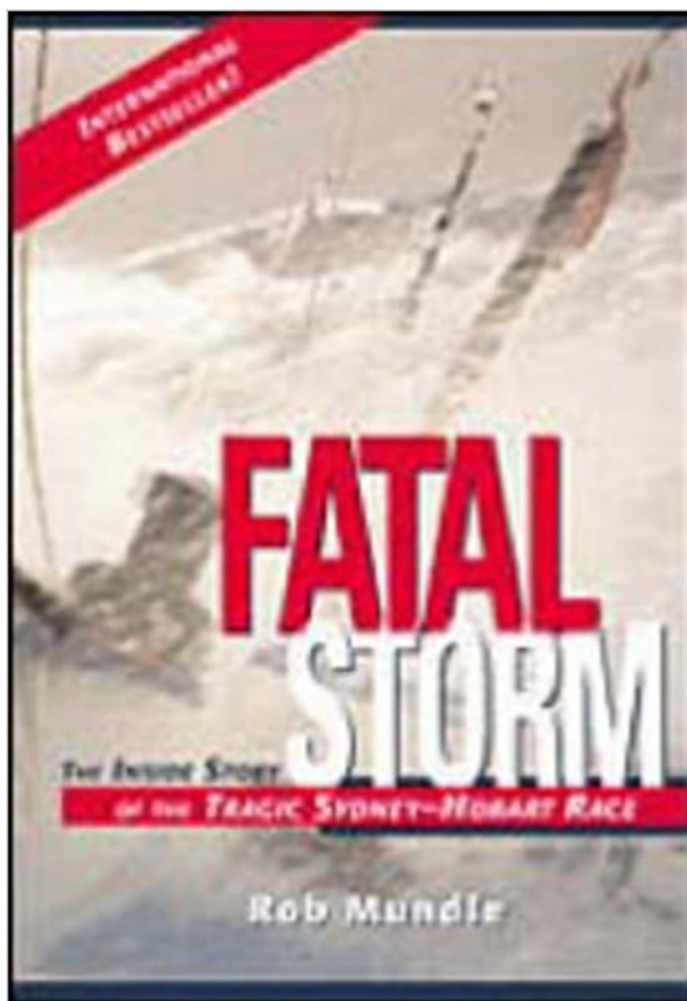


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# Fatal Storm: The Inside Story Of The Tragic Sydney-Hobart Race



## Synopsis

"Harrowing shoreside reading." [Booklist](#) "Should be required reading for all ocean sailors." [Library Journal](#) The first book to recount the disastrous events of the 1998 Sydney to Hobart yacht race, *Fatal Storm* is sure to be a popular paperback selection. Rob Mundle takes readers through every white-knuckling hour of the gale that descended in the predawn hours of December 27, stretching over 900 miles from Australia to New Zealand, bringing with it hurricane strength winds and five-story waves. In all, 57 sailors were rescued, plucked from the decks of broken boats or from the sea itself under impossible conditions. Six sailors died. A Sydney-Hobart Race veteran himself, Rob Mundle had total and unequaled access to the people behind the story. The result is a tale of extreme adventure, extraordinary will, and the overwhelming emotional tales of survivors, rescuers, and the bereaved.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In the world of competitive off-shore sailing, Christmas Day is thought of as Boxing Day Eve--that is, the eve of the annual Sydney-to-Hobart Race. One of the world's three major offshore races (along with the Fastnet out of England and America's Newport Race to Bermuda), the 630-mile course from Sydney, Australia, to Hobart, Tasmania, is a test of skills, guts, and endurance in notoriously unpredictable, fickle waters--and in any weather. On Boxing Day, 1998, the 115 boats jockeying at the starting line off Sydney's Nielsen Park Beach had been warned that low-pressure weather systems were conspiring to guarantee a wild and chancy race. Yet few sailors anticipated the

ferocity of the storm that descended around two o'clock the next morning, whipping up gale-force winds and waves tall enough to send 25-ton yachts "spearing into midair," then "plunging down into the trough ... like repeatedly launching a truck off a 30-foot ramp and awaiting the crash." The race quickly devolved into the worst sailing disaster in recent memory. Seven crews abandoned their boats. Over 50 sailors were rescued under near-impossible circumstances. Seven died, and five boats sank. Journalist Rob Mundle follows the dramatic struggles in *Fatal Storm*, skillfully re-creating from firsthand accounts the stories of bravery, luck, and folly that left a handful of sailors convinced they'd never go near the Hobart again. Yet as one veteran yachtsman lived to point out, "It's something you just have to do.... You can't be under the illusion at any time that it is safe." --Svenja Soldovieri --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Joining the summer's books on the treacherous Vendée Globe sailing race (Derek Lundy's *The Godforsaken Sea* and Pete Goss's *Close to Wind*), Mundle's effort is the first of three forthcoming titles about the 1998 Sydney-Hobart yachting race (Pocket is publishing Martin Dugard's account in September; Little, Brown will offer Bruce Knecht's next year). In that race, seven boats were abandoned, five sank, six people died and 55 sailors were hoisted by rescuers from the impetuous seas. Seasoned journalist Mundle, himself a three-time Sydney-Hobart veteran, writes a knowledgeable account of the 115 boats and 1135 competitors that left Sydney Harbor on December 26, having precious little warning about the brutal cyclone that awaited them in the perilous Bass Strait. When the seas began towering to the height of five-story buildings, sailors were tossed about their yachts like rag dolls in a malevolent washing machine. Mundle, who covered the race for Australian television, deliberately sails around the tempest of controversies that followed the event, preferring to treat the story as a straight job of blow-by-blow reportage. While his careful plotting of a dozen boats' travails is certainly of interest, a surreal sense of dispassion pervades the text like an eerie calm found in the eye of a storm. Nonetheless, moments of poignancy stand out. One strung-out sailor hallucinates a monkey sitting atop a jagged stump of mast, while several others vow that spending hours in a wrecked cabin full of vomit, diesel fuel and salt-water convinced them to change their lives. "I've been a pretty selfish bastard," says one chastened survivor. "Just ask my wife." 40,000 first printing. Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

There's now an extra reason for looking forward to the holidays, the Sydney to Hobart, Australia race that begins on December 26. Our winter is Australia's hurricane season, and the '98 race was

caught in a maelstrom. There's pictures in the book and also on You Tube. If you are a fan of The Perfect Storm you'll love this book.

Way too much detail about arrivals on dock for race and other races to keep the attention of a non sailing reader but I waded through that and got to the guts of the story. Could not put it down. Still struggled with descriptions only a sailor would understand about what happened on the boat and why but the rescues were so clear I could smell the salt spray.

Anyone who is a sailboat skipper has nightmares over situations like this. Why did yacht "a" survive, and yacht "b" did not. Some of it has to do with construction - a number of the sailboats were of untried or unproven design. Perhaps because I'm a traditionalist, I like a deep displacement hull, with proven capabilities - problem is, that won't sail fast.

My second reading of the book. The follow up 10 years later was more than worth the second purchase price. Having experienced extreme weather at sea I can vouch for the human stories. And have partaken rum from the keg of Canon Maris in Hanalei Bay Hawaii in 1980 and respect the skipper's background. This is truly a story for the ages...thanks.

The author was both involved and connected with many of the people involved in this horrific event, providing a very real perspective.

When I decided to read this book, I actually started with another book on the subject recommended by Sports Illustrated. Based on reviewers I selected this one and wasn't disappointed. Mundle attempts to show the personal side of the individuals as well as the intense struggle on each boat and helicopter. This is a spellbinding story which he did a good job of relaying. I learned about sailing but more importantly, I learned what it felt like to confront your worst nightmare come true. This is a great subject correctly described by the author and as a bonus, the pictures in the book are good also. Off-coast sailing? Not for me after this book.

Very well organized story telling. Understandable by non-sailors. A documentary giving inside views on and off the boats, as well as on the rescue crafts.

I had read Fatal Storm many years ago in hardcover & was enraptured. In kindle i can still feel as

though I'm there!

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