



Les Voiles de Saint-Tropez – 28 September, 6 October 2019

Anniversary edition: 20 years

30 September

Free as birds

- The Mistral rocks up at Les Voiles
- The Maxis love Saint Tropez
- French Kiss, America's Cup, Jacques Chirac: nostalgic overtones in St. Tropez
- Ester, a miraculous survivor of the Baltic

For the 4,000 sailors in the 20th edition of Les Voiles de Saint-Tropez, the message is clear, racing is on tomorrow's menu. Indeed, today's scenario was penned by the all too familiar Mistral, leading to a brief but brutal breeze blowing across the race zone at over 30 knots, picking up a short and choppy seas until this evening. *"The Special Weather Report from Météo France runs through to 17:00 hours local time"*, explains Georges Kohrel, Principal Race Officer at Les Voiles. *"The gale covers the exact footprint of the zone where our boats were set to race today, between the Levant Island and Pampelonne. The sea is building offshore and conditions are neither safe nor fair to launch our races."* Instead, the fleets of Modern boats had to make do with honing their weapons with the Classic yachts, offering the many onlookers a joyful festive spirit and the most wonderful showcase of 150 years of boating. - Tomorrow, Tuesday, everyone will hit the racetrack, Modern craft, Wallys and Classics!

The Maxis love Saint Tropez

For the first time, the Maxi Yachts, one-design boats measuring from 60 to over 100-feet in length, are sailing in Saint Tropez under the aegis of a dedicated Race Committee, with specially tailored courses. They appear in the IRC A rankings, but their results at Les Voiles will ultimately rank towards their own Inshore championship, which comprises 6 meetings and will be decided here in Saint Tropez at the end of the week.

Benoit de Froidmont, President of the IMA

"I've been sailing since I was a child and for the past ten years or so I've been on the Maxis. We race for fun and we challenge ourselves in competition, which is how I've quickly integrated the big Maxi crews. Already 40 years old, the IMA was notably created by Edmond de Rothschild. There are over 60 members today and we cover the whole of the Mediterranean circuit and a large section of the Caribbean. I was offered the role of president last year for a 3-year term of office. We have 10 new members this year. Our role is notably assisting with the organisation of races from various angles including the organisation of committees, logistics, coordination of the regulations, so that the members of the IMA as well as non-members sail according to a fair set of rules. We guarantee the harmonisation of the race rules for our Maxis. We want a high-quality label. The IMA is breathing new life into the Maxi yacht domain. It's the first time we've properly collaborated with Les Voiles, thanks to Tony Oller, Frédérique Fantino and Georges Kohler, who can

testify to the added value we bring to bear. This week, we're sailing with our own distinct Race Committee for safety reasons and to have courses geared specially towards the Maxis. Les Voiles is now part of our championship and constitutes the final race of the season. On Sunday, we'll award the Inshore Championship Trophy which features 6 races in all. Les Voiles is magical. There's nothing else like it in the Mediterranean in terms of conviviality. We'll see more and more Maxis in Saint Tropez..."

Jacques Chirac and sport...

Finding his 12mR *French Kiss*, the legendary semi-finalist in the America's Cup in Fremantle in 1987, abandoned in an Italian yard, Marc Pajot was inspired to refit her and sail at Les Voiles with the bulk of the crew who were a part of her historic Australian saga, including Albert Jacobson, Stan Dripaut, Marc Bouet and Denis Vanier. "We're all delighted to return to *French Kiss*", says Marc Pajot, "She's back 'in her own juice' weighing in at 24 tonnes and kitted out with a winged fin keel and trim tab... we're all happy to be back together again, accompanied by our partner back then, Mr Serge Crasnianski." In light of recent news from French soil, America's Cup fans will be quick to remember the key role played in 1992 by the then Mayor of Paris, one Jacques Chirac, who was very much in favour of backing a new French campaign in the America's Cup in San Diego, managing to raise half the funding for the next boat. Marc remembers him fondly: *"The sea wasn't his universe, but he spontaneously liked sailors, top-level athletes within the context of the America's Cup, and immediately bonded with the team. It was the Human that inspired him, getting men working together as one."*

Extraordinary yachts;

***Ester*, 52 metres under for 76 years!**

Competing in Saint Tropez tomorrow will be *Ester*, the gaffer that miraculously survived the Baltic! *Ester* is the story of the exceptional resurrection of a gaff sloop, which in many ways was revolutionary in her time. Indeed, back in 1901, Swede Gunnar Hellgren was tasked with designing a yacht capable of winning the Tivoli Cup. The result was both unique, thanks to her numerous innovations, and wonderfully elegant. A decade of resounding success ensued for what some would hail as the most beautiful boat in the world! *Ester* vanished from sight after 1915 and only reappeared again in 1935. She excelled again in Ulvoen in 1937, before suffering a terrible fate. A fire ripped through her in late 1937. The damaged yacht was towed towards Ornskoldsvik, but sank en route before reaching Normanön. It wasn't until 2012 that Swede Per Hellgren managed to locate the wreck using sonar. In 2016, the hull was raised up out of the water. It was the start of an incredible renovation project, the dazzling outcome of which can be admired throughout the week in Saint Tropez in the expert hands of her captain, one of the rare women in this position, Laurence Rames de Moer.

"Back in 2012, I said to myself what an emotional experience it would be sailing Ester at Les Voiles de Saint-Tropez. 7 years on, the dream has become a reality," explains Bo Ericsson, one of the boat's owners. *"We've brought together the cream of the international technicians around this renovation of the hull, frames, rig and sails. Naturally, a fair amount of the boat had to be rebuilt from Swedish pine and spruce. However, thanks to some very precise documentation discovered in Sweden, we followed the original build to the letter. It's been a fantastic adventure. The result has exceeded even our craziest expectations..."*

Today's partners:

BMW -

20 years of Les Voiles, and 13 editions with BMW present alongside it, at the heart of the event in Saint Tropez. The Bavarian automobile brand boasts some great resources in the port and in the race village, enabling it to showcase its new additions and innovations in terms of motor cars as well as electro mobility. BMW shares many of the values

associated with sailing, including technology, performance and the art of living. As such, the race village features a BMW lounge, which favours quality contact with the racers. The propeller logo brand has also invested its energy in the Harbour Master's Office in Saint Tropez, with an exhibition dedicated to electro mobility. The new BMW X5 with its hybrid engine is on display with the electric scooter and the i8 coupé, which boasts a unique livery and exceptional paintwork. BMW is also showcasing its electric bicycles and child scooters. Place de l'Annonciade is hosting the new M8 cabriolet, one of the brand's latest additions, whilst the Société Nautique and its club form an exceptional backdrop for the BMW concept car, a futuristic vision of the brand, in what is only its second appearance in France. In all, BMW is offering no fewer than 14 vehicles for the general public to test drive, from both the M range and electric range. Some 18 cars are also doing the rounds between the region's stations and airports bringing guests and partners to the heart of the action at Les Voiles.

WALLY -

The Wallys in Saint Tropez

They are the modern expression of the inventive and sporty spirit of yachting, which has graced the construction of yachts for nearly 150 years. They feature beautiful, elegant hulls and sails and are at the cutting edge of today's technology. The Wallys, born from the imagination and the desire of an experienced yachtsman, Italian Luca Bassani, satisfy very similar criteria to those that guided the designs penned by great naval architects like William Fife and Nat Herreshoff. Performance, speed, elegance, habitability and luxury are all common factors... though size has a greater bearing on these modern creations. Luca Bassani's driver for these Wallys back in 1991 was to create a big boat he could take his family away on, though one which he could helm, steer and manoeuvre on his own. The Wally was sculpted by the talents of top architects like German Frers, Javier Soto, Bill Tripp and Bruce Farr. Over 40 maxi yachts have been created using this approach, ranging between 20 and 50 metres in length. In 1998, the Wally Class even secured its own rating and ranking. Les Voiles de Saint Tropez is the only French event for the class, and they can enjoy their very own course here, offshore of Pampelonne. Over the years, Wally has naturally become a loyal partner to the event.

PROGRAMME

MODERN YACHTS

Saturday 28, Sunday 29 September: Registration and inspection

Monday 30 September, Tuesday 1, Wednesday 2, Thursday 3 (J. Laurain Memorial Day, Challenge Day), Friday 4 and Saturday 5 October: Inshore races, 1st start 11:00 hours

CLASSIC YACHTS

Sunday 29 and Monday 30 September: Registration and inspection

Sunday 29 September: arrival of the Yacht Club de France Autumn Cup feeder race from Cannes
Tuesday 1, Wednesday 2, Thursday 3 (J.Laurain Memorial Day, Challenge Day, Club 55 Cup, GYC Centenary Trophy), Friday 4 and Saturday 5 October: Inshore race, 1st start 12:00 hours

Prize-giving for everyone

Sunday 6 October, from 11:00 hours

Sponsors of Les Voiles de Saint-Tropez

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LORO PIANA

WALLY

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FRENCH SAILING FEDERATION (FFV)

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Gilles Martin-Raget

Video:

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