



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

Anniversary edition: 20 years

5 October 2019

Happy Birthday to Les Voiles!

- **Sumurun** the ballet master
- **Cippino II** triumphs at Les Voiles and wins the Rolex Trophy
- **Velsheda, Vesper, Solte** merciless!
- Prize-giving and awarding of the Trophies tomorrow, Sunday, at the Citadel at 11:00 hours

This Saturday saw yet another massive day of racing for the 300 competitors in this anniversary edition, the likes of which is only possible at Les Voiles de Saint-Tropez! Tomorrow, 4,000 sailors will come together at the village Citadel for the traditional prize-giving and one last opportunity to congratulate one another and recall the magical moments out on the water and celebrate this extraordinary and timeless festival... to which they are sure to return next year. Under the leadership of Georges Korhel, the Race Committees have skilfully managed to contend with a very varied forecast, that has included gales and zones of high pressure, to set the courses at the far side of the bay as far as Pampelonne and Cavalaire. Bathed in sunshine, these same, wonderful courses will be enough to see the racers' appetites for close-contact racing and beautiful seascapes through to next year. On a competitive front, the changeable wind conditions throughout the week delighted the favourites in each group, Classic and Modern boats alike, and the list of winners for 2019 not surprisingly pays tribute to those yachts which have performed amazingly well throughout the season.

Big boats and large schooners

The large gaff and Bermudan schooners are one of the main attractions here and there has been an abundance of them for this anniversary edition of Les Voiles de Saint-Tropez. Their races within the Grand Tradition group amazed even the most indifferent observers. First in line was the Fife-designed Bermudan ketch (1914), *Sumurun*, which underwent a fabulous renovation last year at the Guip yard in north-west Brittany, and really made her mark in this exceptional 20th anniversary edition. She triumphed by a whisker against a yacht that is a very familiar sight on the podiums of Saint Tropez, the 15mR *Mariska*. Though *Elena of London*, the immense (51m) gaff schooner built according to a Herreshoff design, has often gained the edge in elapsed time, on this occasion she had to bow down to the lightning speed posted by the gaff cutter *Moonbeam IV* (Fife 1914). However *Black Swan* (Nicholson 1899), *Halloween* (Fife 1926) and *Tuiga* (Fife 1909) won large as the most photographed yachts!

The sprint specialists!

Two groups gathered together the gaffers in Saint Tropez. Among them the latest representatives of the sportier, more fine-tuned racing classes in their respective centuries. The P Class, the Q Class, the metre rule boats of 7, 8, 10 or 12 metres, the sloops, the cutters and the yawls... these are the true sprinters in this nautical jousting. Small, stocky and explosive, they are tough and supremely seaworthy. No swell is too steep, no chop is too short to discourage them. They put on a show throughout the week in the bay and topping the charts are *Chips* (P Class designed by Burgess in 1913), *Olympian* (P Class, William Gardner 1913), *Viola* (Fife 1908), *Kismet* (Fife 1898) and *Oriole* (Herreshoff 1905), all fabulous ambassadors for yachting, which have excelled for more than a century in their ability to combine style and performance.

Cippino II a cut above the rest at Saint Tropez

The undisputed leader since the start of the week in the very coherent and very uniform group of Epoque Marconi Bs, a prestigious Rolex Trophy craft, the Bermudan sloop from Argentina, *Cippino II*, really made her presence felt in Saint Tropez. Two victories give emphasis to her superb week. Martin Billoch and his crew really got the best out of this Frers design, which excels in this type of day racing.

Cippino II is a Bermudan sloop designed in 1948 by the Argentinean naval architect German Frers. She is a

sistership to *Fjord III*. She began her career with a degree of success in Buenos Aires before being used exclusively for family cruising by her owner. In the noughties, her owner, Daniel Sielecki introduced her to the race circuit, first in Argentina and since 2017 in Europe, much to the delight of spectators and racers at Les Voiles.

Lyra Loves Les Voiles

Lyra dominated play with real panache in the fantastic clash of the giant and majestic Wallys in Saint Tropez. Mike Atkinson's Wally 77 posted two fine race victories to assure her domination against the formidable WallyCento *Magic Carpet3* and *Galateia*. Indeed, by repeating her 2017 performance, she's proven the true depth of her love for Les Voiles and its subtle playground.

Velsheda, Vesper, Solte et al...

The huge fleet of Modern yachts racing at Les Voiles is divided up into 10 uniform groups, each determined by the boats' respective measurement rules. The winners of each of these classes will be rightly celebrated tomorrow. This evening, it's worth highlighting the stellar performances of those whose wake has coloured this anniversary edition. Perhaps we'll start with the J Class *Velsheda*, which left her competition empty-handed after posting three wins. The Mini Maxi *Vesper* owned by American Jim Schwarz matched this performance in IRCA4. *Nanoq*, helmed by the Prince of Denmark, has also been utterly dominating IRC C. *Solte*, the Swan 53, which was the unlucky adversary of *Ikra* in the Club 55 Cup, can also take some consolation in nailing a grand slam in IRC B.

Fabrice Payen gives us the low-down on Ester

Fabrice Payen, 50, spent nearly 20 years working as a captain in the Merchant Navy and as a professional skipper. Originally from Saint Malo in Brittany, he's sailed a number of legendary boats and is a familiar face at Les Voiles. This week, he joined the crew of *Ester*, the hundred-year-old gaffer that was miraculously rescued from the Baltic after 30 years under the sea.

Like *Ester*, Fabrice has overcome great odds to be here at Les Voiles today. Indeed, in 2012 in India, Fabrice suffered an horrific traffic accident. 4 years of operations ensued to no avail and he finally decided to undergo an amputation. Strangely freeing him of his suffering, he's since taken the start of the Route du Rhum 2018 and is planning a second transatlantic race next year. Quite an inspiration then and he's clearly enjoyed racing on *Ester* this week! "*Ester has a massive potential for speed. She has a traditional rig on what is effectively a very modern hull. Like all classic yachts, she's a character, a living, breathing person almost. I'm passionate about the history of these magnificent yachts, which are witnesses of the evolution in sailing. Ester is a spartan boat, which is still being fine-tuned after her restoration. Her flat bottom isn't too fond of the choppy water here this week, but downwind she's a luge thanks to a very high-peaked gaff rig. We won the first race here and Ester will quickly become a force to be reckoned with.*"

Velsheda

The J Class yacht, *Velsheda*, was designed by Charles Ernest Nicholson and built in 1933 by the Camper and Nicholson yard in Gosport, UK. Extreme like all the J Class yachts, she has an LOA of 39.40m with a beam of 6.60m and a draught of 4.80m. She was built for the businessman William Lawrence Stephenson, founder member of the Woolworth's chain, who named her after his three daughters: Velma, Sheila and Daphne. Between 1933 and 1936, she won numerous races. Ending up in the mud in 1984, Terry Brabant, rescued her and used her for charter with a steel mast and a simply restored interior. Still with no engine, he regularly sailed her along the south coast of the UK, occasionally going further afield to the Mediterranean and the Caribbean. Still being chartered back in the nineties, *Velsheda* ran aground on a beach on England's East coast with the tide going out. Fortunately she was recovered without too much damage and is a very welcome addition to this anniversary edition of Les Voiles.

PROGRAMME

Prize-giving for everyone
Sunday 6 October, from 11:00 hours

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