



Les Voiles de Saint-Tropez 2021 – Saturday 25 September to Saturday 9 October

Monday 27 September 2021

The Fizz of the Modern Fleet!

- Bottleneck at La Moutte.
- *Nanoq* takes her marks!
- 80 Classic yachts under full sail from tomorrow.

A lovely thermal breeze from the west graced the race zone early this afternoon to open this 23rd edition of Les Voiles de Saint-Tropez in style, enabling all 5 categories of Modern IRC B, C, D, E and F rated yachts to fizz out on the race zone. Timed to perfection, the five starts off Le Portalet saw the fleets launch onto a downwind sprint for the open ocean on slightly choppy waters. The first clashes are already in evidence at the head of each group, with the likes of the large sloop *Solano* and the Grand Soleil 48 *ASAP*, neck and neck throughout the course in their quest for the North Sails Trophy. Quick to get in on the action, the big players in the IRC C group, who are vying for the BMW Trophy, like the TP 52 *Nanoq*, the Ker46 *Daguet 3* and the 52-foot German craft *Rafale*, are clearly keen to tease the giants of the fleet, putting on a dazzling display of spinnakers at each key passage in the race. The joyous return to shore of the crews, with musical accompaniment from Les Voiles' Village, got the party started and naturally the crews on the Classic yachts were quick to join in the fun, having already prepared to hit the racetrack themselves from tomorrow.

Modern boats: 19 delightfully windy miles to tickle the tastebuds at Les Voiles

130 Modern yachts launched this wonderful week of competition that is Les Voiles in admirable fashion. A 19-mile course was served up by the teams managed by the Principal Race Officer George Korhel, with the crews racing to Pampelonne and back via La Moutte, a navigation mark indicating the shallows at the entrance to the bay. An acceleration in the WSW'ly breeze favoured those boats which were last to set sail, resulting in an interesting squeezing together of all the classes as they bunched around La Moutte shortly after the start. A golden opportunity to slip along, a variety of points of sail as the wind gradually clocked round to the north-west, and some long downwind sprints on seas slightly ruffled by the onshore breeze, there was plenty for the sailors to enjoy as they tried to get the best out of their steeds. *Nanoq*, the formidable TP 52 helmed by the Australian champion Tom Slingsby, was taking no prisoners today, first to cross the finish line in elapsed time and overall, outpacing another IRC C protagonist, the Swan 50 *Mathilde M* and the IRC B *Solano* by a few minutes.

The Classics to hit the racetrack tomorrow!

Nearly 80 classic yachts, 21 of which are over a hundred years old, will make up the Classic fleet competing in the bay from tomorrow. Among them, twenty or so fore-and-aft rigged gaffers, with their typical four-cornered mainsail, split into groups A and B, will kick off proceedings. The Grands Tradition category, in which certain craft feature an LOA in excess of 40 metres, boasts no fewer than 12 entries this year that really cut quite a dash from schooners to ketches, cutters and yawls. Tuesday's racing will also herald the start of the Rolex Trophy, which this year is open to the Period Gaffer A class.

The 'guests' make up a rather special class of 5 small, yet sublime sailboats with impressive rigs, all of which will be racing at Les Voiles. Each of them merit their own page in maritime history as studies in architectural imagination at the service of both elegance and performance. In this way, the gunter-rigged reproduction from nearby Marseille, *Alcyon 1871* will be competing alongside *Dainty* (Westmascott 1923), the smallest yacht in the fleet at 8.12 metres, *Djinn* (Nevis 1938), *Jap*, the Fife-design gaff cutter (1898) and the IOD Bermudan sloop *Josephine* designed by the Danish master of the metre boats Bjarne Aas, with the focus on top-level regatta sailing and pleasure with a capital P.

Quotes from the boats:

Maxime Sorel, Eileen 1938

Maxime Sorel, from Cancale near Saint Malo, was one of the revelations in the last Vendée Globe, securing a more than honourable tenth place in his race debut at 34. He's launched the build of an Imoca prototype targeting the next Route du Rhum and the Vendée Globe 2024.

"It's my very first time at Les Voiles. I'm just discovering the atmosphere that has earned the event its reputation. My new Imoca is in build so I won't be competing in the Transat Jacques Vabre, which means I have a little bit of time to accept this kind of invitation. I'm meeting lots of people with all different sail types. I'm helming a classic, Eileen 1938. The boat's very heavy but she's also a real regatta sailor in her fit-out. The sensations at the helm are amazing. You don't feel the power of the modern boats, but you steer her without electronics. Everything works on feeling. A real back-to-basics mission. All these Classics are fabulous. On shore, you see the crews calling the tune in the colours of their team and the vibes are excellent. Crewed sailing and yachting is not part of my culture, but I do a bit of sailing on the Bisquine de Cancale (a Breton fishing lugger ed's note) and love the crew atmosphere and the sheer enjoyment of racing."

Pjotr Lezhnin, J/99 Space Jockey

One of the competitors to watch this week in IRC E is the Baltic J/99 Space Jockey, skippered by the Russian Pjotr Lezhnin, winner of the Giraglia in his IRC group. *"We have a mixed crew of men and women of various nationalities. The idea is to have fun here in Saint Tropez within this highly competitive IRC E group. The J/99 performs very well on every point of sail and in all types of breeze, so we have a great hand to play. I've done a lot of sailing in northern Europe, Germany and the Baltic countries. In the Med, the season extends all the way to the start of winter and that's very pleasant. The mix of genres here is fascinating with the Classics and Modern boats..."*

Today's sponsor:

BMW, a loyal advocate of Les Voiles de Saint-Tropez

The German car manufacturer BMW and the Société Nautique de Saint-Tropez have enjoyed an agreement with Les Voiles de Saint-Tropez since 2013.

Karine Drira-Roger, head of BMW's event management department:

"Les Voiles de Saint-Tropez is very dear to us because of its influence both in France and internationally. As such, BMW Munich is supporting our presence here. We're showcasing electric engines, which will only be available in France next year, the BMW IX, I4 and the new CO4 electric scooters. They're fully electric with a range of over 500 km. In addition, we're exhibiting the Series 4 with an M4 cabriolet, which has only just arrived in France. We're also supporting Les Voiles with a shuttle service, most of which involves the Series 7, to transport celebrities between the stations and airports. Also on offer is a free electric and hybrid test centre open to all through until 3 October. Les Voiles de Saint-Tropez is one of our biggest operations and rallies together a great many of our staff. Around ten or so dealers will be in attendance on Friday alongside our ambassador, Loïck Peyron."

Programme 2021

Week 1: Les Voiles de Saint-Tropez, Modern and Classic

Saturday 25 and Sunday 26 September: **registration for all classic yachts and modern yachts up to 18.28m**

Monday 27 September: regattas for modern yachts

Tuesday 28, Wednesday 29 September, Friday 1, Saturday 2 October: regattas for modern and classic yachts

Thursday 30 September: Challenge Day-10th anniversary of the Gstaad Yacht Club Centenary Cup

Saturday 2 October: Prize Giving (Week 1)

Week 2: Les Voiles de Saint-Tropez, Maxi Yachts

Sunday 3 and Monday 4 October: **registration for all modern yachts above 18.29m**

Wally, IRCA, Maxi yachts

Tuesday 5, Wednesday 6, Thursday 7, Friday 8, Saturday 9: regattas

Saturday 9 October: Prize Giving (Week 2)

Health measures set out by the Société Nautique de Saint-Tropez

(excluding competitor directive):

Personnel and volunteers

- Health Pass

Village des Voiles Race Village

- Health Pass

- Mask wearing (*according to the Prefectural directive in place at the time of the event*)

- Access to the official North Sails shop shall be via the exterior only

All entertainment is scheduled to go ahead as usual in line with the health regulations.

Media

- Access to the press office reserved for accredited journalists upon presentation of a Health Pass

- Mask wearing (*according to the Prefectural directive in place at the time of the event*)

- Media boat boarding: Health Pass

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Organisation:

Société Nautique de Saint-Tropez

President: Pierre Roinson

Manager: Sabrina Coccia

Principal Race Officer: Georges Korhel

Race Secretary: Frédérique Fantino

Editorial Les Voiles de Saint-Tropez: Denis Van den Brink

Communication: Chloé de Brouwer

Website: www.lesvoilesdesaint-tropez.fr

Facebook: les Voiles de Saint-Tropez Officiel

Twitter: [@VoilesSTOrg](https://twitter.com/VoilesSTOrg)

Instagram: les_voiles_de_saint_tropez

Photos:

Gilles Martin-Raget

Press Relations:

Maguelonne Turcat +33 6 09 95 58 91

Email magturcat@gmail.com

<https://youtu.be/b-gGkFYjrQ>

