



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

Tuesday 5 October 2021

### 45 Maxis in the Mistral: Champagne sailing!

- **Comanche** puts on a show!
- Duelling giants: **Topaz vs Velsheda**
- **Jethou – Vesper – North Star**; heavenly 72-footers

As if it wasn't enough to gather together the most sublime line-up of Maxis in the most beautiful port in the world, the Mistral also decided to join in the festivities today to kick off the week in grandiose fashion. A W'y breeze welcomed the 45 Maxi Yachts competing in the very first event of this second week of Les Voiles de Saint-Tropez 2021. The most stunning Maxis, J Classes and Wallys have chosen to take up residence in the bay on the kind invitation of the Société Nautique de Saint-Tropez and they fully intend to round off their Mediterranean season in the most dazzling of manners. Pushed around by 20 knots and a bracing wind on exiting the bay, with a more pronounced swell offshore, conditions were ideal for Race Management, skilfully led by Georges Korhel, (Principal Race Officer at Les Voiles), to launch these speed demons off around La Fourmigue, a rock located in front of Le Lavandou, on the longest of the coastal courses at Les Voiles, which entails a wonderful 40-mile looped circuit. With sunshine, glittering sea and a solid breeze, all the ingredients were in place to give these magnificent chargers and their international crews everything they could possibly need to put on a fantastic show and satisfy their competitive yearnings.

#### 4 groups, 4 starts, but 5 rankings

4 groups of Maxis set sail shortly after midday at regular 10-minute intervals from Le Portalet, within sight of the large crowds. The 'big boats' of the IR1 fleet led the way towards the far end of the bay and a windward mark and it came as no surprise that record hunters *Comanche*, *Rambler88* and *Leopard 3* were straightaway embroiled in an almighty tussle. On a beat towards Le Lavandou making over 17 knots, the wind picking up considerably in the gusts and creating foamy seas, the three large prototypes clashed horns in the spray. However, they didn't have the racetrack to themselves as there were a number of other protagonists keen for a share of the action and honed in the exercise of racing in the breeze, starting with a very familiar presence on the podiums, *Magic Carpet Cubed*, as well as *Deep Blue*, the Botin 85 and *Odin*, the large Swan 115 which was really firing on all cylinders today. Geared up for downwind sailing, *Comanche* literally flew past the mark at La Fourmigue in a Mistral that increased to nearly 30 knots at times. Boasting a peak speed of over 26 knots, the VPLP/Verdier design managed to steal a bit of a march on *Magic Carpet Cubed*, which was very at ease in the breeze and on pretty much every point of sail. *Rambler 88* posted a great race, in contact with *Comanche* for a long while but she too was somewhat powerless against the blistering pace of the *Comanche* 'sleigh', which is seemingly unstoppable as she flies along downwind... Leading by a sizeable margin at the finish, *Comanche* was however unable to make up for her terrible rating. As such, it was *Deep Blue*, which secured the race win ahead of *Magic Carpet Cubed* and *Rambler*. It's worth noting here that several Trophies will be up for grabs this week, together with 5 rather than 4 official rankings, the 72-footers (21.90 m) eager for their own chance at the podium! Indeed, at the request of the owners of the latter, the IRC3 group has been split into two subdivisions, IRC A and IRC B. Within the daily rankings will be 4 yachts, *Ambersail*, the VOR 65, and the three 72-footers *North Star*, *Jethou* and *Vesper*. A fight within a fight then between four yachts with very similar ratings and hence a guarantee of a cut-throat battle throughout the week.

#### Saint Tropez, the perfect arena for the duelling giants *Topaz-Velsheda*

The rivalry between the two large J Classes still in action in the Mediterranean, *Velsheda* and *Topaz*, is set to continue apace through the week within the context of Les Voiles. Racing within the group of Super Maxis, IRC 2, the crew of *Topaz* designed by Frank C. Paine and launched in 2015, is eager for revenge after being thrashed

by *Velsheda* last month during the Maxi Yacht Rolex Cup in Porto Cervo, in Sardinia. The competition for the J Class yachts at Les Voiles de Saint-Tropez will be raced under IRC in a group of six IRC 2 boats whose designs are radically different and range from the Swan 82 *Kallima* to the 32.9 m Wally *Green Eyes*, the 33.83 m Dubois design *Silvertip* and the Swan 80 *Umiko*. Francesco d'Angelis is calling tactics again on *Topaz*, whilst the British sailor Jules Salter, former Volvo Ocean Race winner and world TP52 champion, was keen to get back out on the water on *Velsheda*. Today's race will certainly have more than lived up to expectations with a sumptuous *mano a mano*, which lasted all the way into the entrance of the bay, at which point *Velsheda* was sadly forced to retire after ripping a sail, *Topaz* gaining the upper hand.

### **The beguiling, brawling 72-footers**

It proved to be a demanding day for the crews and for the gear, which was really put to the test in gusts of nearly 30 knots. Race Management opted to shorten the course for the smallest Maxis grouped into IRC 3 and 4. A lot of the fleet preferred to head into port rather than compromise the next instalment of what promises to be a fine week of racing. The 72-footers reigned supreme within these IRC groups, *Jethou* managing to keep pace with the Super Maxis, just a few minutes ahead of *Vesper* and *North Star*. Evidently, it's set to be a very hotly disputed week for these brawling beauties.

### **Quotes from the boats:**

Danny Galichan, Boat Captain *Magic Carpet Cubed*

*"We're a little disappointed by the end result (2nd in corrected time), as we were within contact of the top players, Comanche and Rambler, as far as Cap Camarat. A minor issue stopped us in our tracks and we lost a lot of time. It was a fantastic race with slightly tough sea conditions on the approach to Le Lavandou, albeit with good breeze and great speeds. All in all, everyone's very pleased this evening..."*

## **Programme 2021**

### **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

## **Partners to Les Voiles de Saint-Tropez**

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**NORTH SAILS**

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INTERNATIONAL MAXI ASSOCIATION

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