



## Les Voiles de Saint-Tropez 2023 – from Friday 29 September to Sunday 8 October

Thursday 5 October

### Nioulargue Nostalgia!

- Two Club 55 Cups no less!
- Spartan wins the Centenarian Trophy
- Galatea victorious in elapsed time, Cannonball in corrected time for the Maxis

No two days are ever the same at Les Voiles. Enjoying a thundering start to the week, with each of the three large groups of Maxi, Modern and Classic yachts validating races every day, the wonderful week of competition in Saint Tropez is catching its breath in the happy nostalgia of its past. Indeed, Challenge Day offers sailors the opportunity to relive what proved to be the catalyst for Les Voiles, the Club 55 Cup, with the challenge between the Swan *Pride* and the 12 m *Ikra*. The 23 centenarian sailboats competing here this year also made the most of the occasion to have their own original regatta, in the wake of not one but two versions of the Club 55 Cup. Indeed, the 12 m *France* challenged the Bermudan yawl *Hermitage*, swiftly followed by a dozen or so individual challenges with two or three boats of different construction and type. Meantime, the large Maxis continued their championship along the eastern fringes of the gulf, validating another fiercely contested race.

#### Club 55 Cup

There were two Club 55 Cups on today's menu. First up were the two legendary yachts which in 1981 took on a challenge that would go on to become the Nioulargue, the Swan *Pride*, with Pierre Roinson, President of the Société Nautique de Saint-Tropez aboard, and the 12 m *Ikra*, in a replay of a match that has coloured the history of Les Voiles. This mighty duel marked the symbolic return of the US boat, which had not been seen racing in Saint Tropez since the September 11 attacks of 2001. At the same time, within this same context, the 12 m *France* challenged the Bermudan yawl *Hermitage*. Victory went to *Ikra* and *France*, the 12mRs triumphing in a face-off punctuated by wonderful friendships and memories of times gone by.

#### The battle of the Centenarians

23 centenarian yachts accepted today's invitation from the Gstaad Yacht Club to all race together, regardless of size, with a specially created measurement enabling the fleet to set sail with staggered starts. The Société Nautique de Saint-Tropez and its Principal Race Officer Georges Korhel offered them a pretty windward-leeward across the gulf from Le Portalet and back via a mark outside the gulf. Spanning 9 miles in all, the fleet was a veritable feast for the eyes, the magic of seemingly eternal yachting utterly transporting. Ultimately it was *Jap*, the 1897 Fife design which led the way, 6 minutes ahead of her first pursuer, *Dainty*, with the light and hence rapid 15mR *The Lady Anne* (Fife 1912) bringing up the rear, 33 minutes after *Jap*. The first boat back to Le Portalet would be declared the winner. The 3 nearly identical P Classes *Corinthian*, *Chips* and *Olympian*, set sail neck and neck. Close hauled in 6 to 7 knots of breeze, the venerable centenarians quickly got up and running as they latched onto a building SSE'y breeze flanking the gulf. Holding off the Herreshoff designed New York 50, *Spartan*, for a short while, the latter gained an edge after the Verhugue mark to snatch victory after just over 90 minutes of racing. *Olympian*, the P Class (Gardner 1913), narrowly missed out on four wins in a row, but finished ahead of her virtual sisterships *Chips* and *Corinthian*. Note the astounding performance by Monaco's 15mR *Tuiga*, which managed to squeeze herself in between the two P Classes.

Charlie Ryan, owner of *Spartan* (Herreshoff 1913): "The idea of getting the Centenarians racing together is fantastic. I adored it! It's not often that you get to compete against the 15mRs. It was fabulous to see Barbara (Nicholson 1923) join the fray and sail with us for the first time too."

## Over to the Maxis!

Whilst the Modern and Classic yachts chose to either get some rest, sail for fun, or take on a challenge within the context of Challenge Day, the Maxis got back down to action off Pampelonne. On offer was a course stretching eastwards to Fréjus of around 23 miles and, just for a change, there was a passage off Les Issambres and a spectacular finish off Le Portalet. Keen to make the most of the lovely S'ly breeze of around 7-8 knots at midday, set to increase later, the Race Committee released the 4 groups, B, C, D and E towards the windward mark just off the beach. From there, the Wally Cento *Galateia* was the fastest to head offshore and on to Fréjus, sheets slightly eased with a mild chop. Winner in elapsed time, *Galateia* had to yield her crown in corrected time to the Botin 80 *Deep Blue*, which is now chasing down outright victory after closing on Peter Harrison's *Cannonball* and Peter Dubens' Maxi 72 *North Star*, respectively first and second after 4 validated races.

Of note was a slight misstep by the Wally *Lyra*, third today after a blissful reign in the first three Maxi B races. The Wally *Rose* now has her sights on outright victory after scoring a bullet ahead of *Aragon*.

Benoit de Froidmont's *Wallyno* ticked off her fourth win of four, relegating *Lady First 3* to 4 points behind in the overall Maxi C ranking. Finally, in Maxi D, *Stella Maris* and *Saida* are continuing their pas de deux, *Saida* taking the win today to move up to within two points of the Starkel 64 in the provisional ranking.

## Today's partner: Highfield - Suzuki

Pascal Eric Montazel, Highfield France:

"Highfield France has decided to partner Les Voiles this year. Our range of boats fulfils the needs of Mediterranean seaside leisure activities to perfection. Les Voiles is a fantastic platform for our brand in the Mediterranean. We're very well represented in the Atlantic thanks notably to the Vendée Globe and the Route du Rhum. As such, we're here in the Mediterranean showcasing our very special deep aluminium V hulls (26 degrees)! 15 boats from the Mediterranean sports range are available for use by the SNST."

*Suzuki Marine - Pierre Palé*

"Suzuki Marine has partnered Les Voiles since 2016. To ensure the event runs smoothly, we are providing the engines for the safety boats, press boats and Race Committee boats... The 15 Highfield RIBs are powered by Suzuki. We're here in the Village showcasing our technology and our sterling efforts to preserve the marine world with the Clean Ocean project. Suzuki is doing a massive amount of work to develop increasingly economical and less polluting engines."

## Programme 2023 (all results and race information online on Les Voiles website)

**Friday 6 October:** regattas for the whole fleet,

Prize-giving for the Maxis

**Saturday 7 October:** regattas for the Modern and Classic yachts,

**Sunday 8 October:** Prize-giving for the Modern and Classic yachts

## Voiles de Saint-Tropez Partners

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