



Les Voiles de Saint-Tropez – Saturday 27 September to Sunday 5 October 2025

3 October 2025

Sun, spray and suspense

Yet more sunshine at Les Voiles de Saint-Tropez today with the maritime air mass counterpointed by an E'ly breeze enabling the 19 categories competing in the Maxi, Modern and Tradition categories to dance to a new tune. The suspense remains high among a dozen classes in the battle for outright victory, which will be decided tomorrow, Saturday, as racing rounds off at this 27th edition of Les Voiles de Saint-Tropez, where more boisterous conditions may well be on the menu.

Tradition yachts: Spartan and Kiwi Magic confirm, Elena of London at her peak

"This was the most beautiful day of Les Voiles!" gushed photographer Guilain Grenier this evening after returning from his reporting. When the wind and light play ball, with *Elena of London* teasing the three-masted schooner *Atlantic* on a reach in a good medium breeze, and every element aligned at the rounding of La Sèche à l'Huile, the ballet of classic yachts is a sight to behold. For the Rolex Trophy, which this year rewards the Big Boats, the competition is very close between *Cambria* and *Elena Of London*, who are just one point apart, with the schooner securing the last podium spot. Suspense also colours play in Epoque Marconi B between *Sonny* and *Dan*, in the Cruiser category between *Lelantina* and *Eugenia IV* and in IOR where *Matrero* and *Il Moro di Venezia* are tied on points. Meanwhile, *Spartan* in the Big Racer category and *Kiwi Magic* in the Twelves both scored their third bullet in a row.

Maxis: Windward-leewards and coastal courses

This Friday, the Maxi 3 and 4 categories were treated to not one but two windward-leeward courses after the Race Committee launched a second start.

Meantime, the Maxi 1, Maxi GP and Maxi 5 categories competed in the 18-mile coastal course No.5. In Maxi 1, tactician Ken Read made the right call once again enabling Karel Komarek's Wally Cento V to make good her escape on the scoreboard and remain in contention for outright victory tomorrow in the Edmond de Rothschild Trophy. The same was true for *Yoru* in Maxi 4 and *Crazy Diamond* in Maxi 5. However, for the other two classes, there is still everything to play for. Indeed, in Maxi GP, the Wallyrocket 71 *Django* remains at the top of the scoreboard but today's victor, *Vesper*, clearly has yet to have her final say just one point behind. *Twin Soul B* also stands a very good chance of snatching victory after winning two windward-leewards and taking the lead ahead of *Lyra*, with just two points between them. Verdict tomorrow, Saturday.

Modern yachts: Suspense in three of the five classes

Once again, the boats with high ratings, *Daguet* and the Wally Rocket 51 *Kilara II*, suffered on the coastal course, despite a more boisterous breeze for these speed demons. After victory

went to *Vesper* and *Zen* posted a poor performance, the deal has changed for these two IRC 0 leaders, with the Turkish *Arkas Blue Moon* now laying in ambush. However, the top two would need a very bad race for the latter to improve on her current third place.

In the other classes, the Race Committee very wisely shortened the course to make good use of a subtle W'yly airstream. An incorrect reading of the finishing gate led to the disqualification of the German Melges 32 *Heat* but it was a smooth operation for *Give Me 5*, Adrien Follin's Cape 31, which took the win today. In so doing, she joins the former at the top of the provisional ranking, although there is a protest procedure under way.

In IRC3, the Swan 44 *Pride*, second today, is continuing to hang onto the top spot and is on track to take the crown. In IRC 1, the Swan 42 *Zappys* can also taste the sweet success of outright victory now with a five-point lead in the ranking, as can *Expresso*, the leading JPK 1010 in IRC5 which was already victorious last year.

One day, one boat: Albator 3, the pocket-sized TP, which can cut it among the best

Those following the IRC 0 starts since Monday cannot have failed to notice this boat, which bears a striking resemblance to a scaled-down version of a TP 52 with a red phoenix gracing her bow. *Albator* is a 2021 Botin Partners design racing in the colours of the Société Nautique de Saint-Tropez. There are but two examples of this boat in all the world. One French sailor is particularly smitten. "I was looking for a boat the same size as the boat I had so I pressed the owner of the American Botin 44, who had no desire whatsoever to part with his. We bought the other one, which was in Brazil!" says Philippe with a shrug. "We repatriated the boat from Santos, an operation which was not without its share of administrative complications in Brazil and then from Antwerp to St Tropez. It took a lot longer than planned so we're delighted to debut her at Les Voiles!"

Entirely dedicated to racing, she might well appear to be uncluttered initially but she's actually fairly complex with multiple hydraulic rams for adjusting the rig tension and a spider's web of lines inside. "All the lines lead down below, like on the TP 52, with an infinite number of blocks, a device for taking up the slack, as well as cleats, which you can't see!" explains Benoit Briand, her boat captain, who has three America's Cups and a Jules Verne Trophy to his credit. "Every kilo of equipment aboard the boat is dedicated to performance or the stiffness of the platform. The very shallow cockpit is vast. It's a practical set-up and everything is to hand, whatever the point of sail or the breeze," he adds. So far, her only fault seems to be that she is quite a wet boat and originally had no fewer than six electric bilge pumps. On board, the crew "tries to be focused and relaxed", an approach which seems to be working out as she's lying in 6th place in the overall ranking this evening in IRC 0, behind the TP 52s.

All change among the Twelves

It is quite the match among the four 12mRs led by the Dane Marianne Petersen's *Kiwi Magic*. For the moment, she's managing to stay ahead of *South Australia* and *KZ5*, two other 12mRs from 1985-87. *France 1*, designed for the 1970 America's Cup, is bringing up the rear, whilst *French Kiss*, which is celebrating her 40th anniversary in 2025, is sadly a no-show at Les Voiles this year after her mast buckled during the recent Régates Royales de Cannes.

The class, which boasted seven 12mRs GPs at the World Championships in Porquerolles, seems intent on coming together around a more structured schedule that is set to include 6 to 8 regattas in the Mediterranean next year with the Worlds in Imperia, Italy. Patrizio Bertelli, who owns *Kookaburra* and *Azzura*, presently in Trieste, would like to repatriate them to Italy's other seaboard, whilst *Kiwi Magic* will remain in the Mediterranean and the new owner of *KZ5*, which is very much in competition mode at Les Voiles de Saint-Tropez, is Italian. If we add to that *France 3*, whose restoration has begun in Concarneau and which may ultimately head to the

Med, a line-up of 6 to 10 boats might well compete regularly in the future.

SAINT-TROPEZ PROGRAMME

Saturday, October 4: Racing for Maxi, Modern and Classic yachts, including the Rolex Trophy, Prize giving for Maxis

Sunday, October 5: Prize giving for Modern and Classic yachts, including the Rolex Trophy

The full programme for Les Voiles de Saint-Tropez is available online at

<https://www.lesvoilesdesaint-tropez.fr/en/presentation/program>

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Organisation:

Société Nautique de Saint-Tropez President: Pierre Roinson

Principal Race Officer: Georges Korhel

Regatta Coordinator: Frédérique Fantino

On-Water Operations: Gilles Doyen

Communications & Executive Assistant: Chloé de Brouwer

Editorial Content: Pierre-Marie Bourguinat

Websites: www.lesvoilesdesaint-tropez.fr ; www.societe-nautique-saint-tropez.fr

Social Media: Facebook: les Voiles de Saint-Tropez officiel;

X (formally Twitter): @VoilesSTOrg;

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Photos: Gilles Martin-Raget

Press Relations: Maguelonne Turcat