



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

Saturday 4 October 2025

A finale filled with contrasts

After the elaborate fireworks display, which lit up the Gulf of St Tropez yesterday, followed by an ostentatious crew soirée, it was market day this Saturday in St Tropez. Up for grabs from 11:00 am was a frenzy of last-minute bargains fought over by the 3,000 sailors at Les Voiles invited to contest the final day of racing in this 27th edition. The magic of Les Voiles was evident once again, a sentiment echoed by the Maxi fleet, which had its prize-giving this evening before honouring the Modern and Tradition yachts tomorrow. Due to a tight schedule, the Tradition yachts missed out on one last race but their skippers readily admit that they've had an exceptional week.

Maxis: Very evenly matched with some fine champions

Competing in two windward-leeward courses for the Maxi 1 and GP classes and a coastal course for Maxis 3, 4 and 5, the finale for Les Voiles de Saint-Tropez was played out in Pampelonne Bay. This week saw a stunning line-up of 41 yachts vying for supremacy in this the largest gathering of Maxis, alongside that of the Maxi Yacht Rolex Cup. Measuring over 60-feet, the two big boat classes competed in six races, while the other three classes took part in four or five. Furthermore, in four of the five categories, the top two performers were a maximum of one or two points apart, an indication of the very close racing and the suspense all the way to the wire this evening.

In **Maxi 1**, battling for the **Edmond de Rothschild Trophy**, there was still everything to play for yesterday between Karel Komarek's Wallycento V and Alessandro del Bono's 82 Judel-Vrolijk *Capricorno*. However, posting two wins today, the crew of V have had a virtually flawless regatta this week (4 victories out of 6 races) to secure a well-deserved overall victory. Joost Schuijff's *Leopard 3* completes the podium and Pascale Decaux's mixed crew on *Tilakkhana II* finish in fourth place after an excellent week on the ex-*Magic Carpet Cubed*.

In **Maxi GP**, the Wallyrocket 71 *Django* dazzled in this edition of Les Voiles, confirming that she is the one to beat after her victory in September's Maxi Yacht Rolex Cup in Porto Cervo. Lighter and able to plane more easily than her rivals, she proved to be very quick in this week's light conditions, which were often accompanied by some chop in Pampelonne Bay. However, Giovanni Lombardi Stronati's Italian crew really had their work cut out against the American *Vesper*, which is always on the pace but today fell just one point short of their goal in the overall ranking.

In **Maxi 3**, yesterday's hierarchy, which stood the test of time throughout the week, remained with victory going to yet another Italian team, that of *Twin Soul B*, helmed by Fédérico Lunardini. The Mylius 80 successfully managed to hold off the Wally 77 *Lyra*, the reigning champion in this class, which was just two points shy of the win.

In **Maxi 4** however, the Italian Vismara 62 *Yoru* has retained her 2024 crown. Penalised by an OCS today, Luigi Sala's crew almost fell at the final fence after a superb start to the week punctuated by three consecutive victories. However, by striking out this last race from the final scoreboard, she has saved her place on the top spot, just one point ahead of *Seaquill*, Alessandro Doria's Swan 60. Equally, the latter finished just one point ahead of the Belgian yacht *Kallima II*, which rounded off the week in style with a first place in today's coastal course. Finally, the **Maxi 5** category boasted the most clear-cut victory. *Crazy Diamond*, Enzo Pelizzaro's Solaris 60, enjoyed a clean sweep to secure the crown ahead of runners-up *Viva la Vida* and *Saida*, which were just a point apart on the podium.

Modern yachts: downwind starts

In today's SW'ly breeze, the five categories of Modern yachts were released with a downwind start to the Portalet Tower in front of an excited crowd thronged along the Jean Réveille jetty. As such, timing was crucial so as not to overshoot on the starting line, whilst also preparing to hoist the spinnaker, which must not fill beforehand.

In **IRC 0**, the thrilling match expected between *Vesper* and *Zen* more than delivered and the two contenders for outright victory were sticking to one another like glue. However, the Australians on *Zen* could not keep pace today. As such, despite their poor showing when racing kicked off on Monday, it is *Vesper* which gets her hands on the **BMW Trophy** thanks to a consistent performance for the rest of the week by the American crew.

Nanoq Final Final, winner of today's race, completes the podium but leaves behind her crown this year after four consecutive victories in this class. Often at the front of the pack, the yachts with high ratings, *Daguet 5* and the Wallyrocket 51 *Kilara II*, never managed to pick their way to the top of the leaderboard with the light conditions and fairly short courses. As a result, it was the TP 52s which snatched the top five spots out of six participants.

The light airs are not necessarily detrimental to those boats which must pay the heaviest taxes however. This is evidenced by the victory for *Give Me Five*, which is the smallest yacht in **IRC 2** but also has one of the highest ratings. On the podium in every one of the five races contested, including two wins, Adrien Follin's crew lamented precious few errors and always managed to turn things around whatever the situation. This was true today when they finished second despite starting out in the chasing pack. Consistency may well have rewarded *Zappys* in **IRC 1** too, but in the end the Ker 40 *Vito 2* snatched the big prize thanks to a stellar second place today while *Zappys* only finished ninth.

Meantime, **IRC 3** witnessed a resounding victory for *Pride*, which absolutely shone all week long, her lowest score being yesterday's second place. For the second year in a row, the famous Swan 44, which was involved in the 1981 duel with the 12mR *Ikra* that kickstarted the Nioulargue, bags the cup. The Graves family, who have been cosseting their black Swan since 1973, this year took on the services of Steve Benjamin, world Etchells champion and Olympic 470 medallist in 1984.

The honed team left the competition for dust in **IRC 3**, the largest category with some 33 boats competing. Finally, in **IRC 4**, today's victory for last year's overall winner *Expresso*, Guy Claeys' JPK 10.10, was not enough to make up her deficit. Instead, it was the Italian Michel Colasante's *Corto Maltese*, a First 34.7, third today, that was the champion. A logical conclusion then for a crew that won three of the five races contested this week.

Tradition yachts: For fun and for glory

It was past 3:00 pm by the time the Race Committee was ready to get the Classic yachts under way, which was the deadline set out in the Sailing Instructions for Les Voiles de Saint-Tropez. As such, there was no race today for the 81 Tradition yachts, most of which remained out on the water keen to make the most of being part of this extraordinary fleet for the last time this season. *Chips*, *Olympian*, *Corinthian* and *Joyant*, the four P Classes which compete year-round in an informal championship, took on a final speed test, the 12mRs continued to put on a show whilst they awaited their tender, and *Lelantina*, the Alden design gaff schooner, glided along in front of the jetty to the delight of the spectators. Elsewhere, the crew of Patrick Gibert, a member of the SNST, were able to savour their victory on home waters in the **Cruiser** category, whilst the two three-masters, *Adix* and *Atlantic*, performed a perfectly choreographed ballet in the golden light of the Gulf of St Tropez.

Among the **Big Boats** vying for the **Rolex Trophy**, which celebrates its 20th edition this year, *Cambria* pockets the win just one point ahead of *Elena of London*, with the schooner *Atlantic* completing the podium. It's fair to say that this trio were a majestic sight at this 27th edition of Les Voiles de Saint-Tropez.

In the **Grand Tradition** and **12mR categories**, there were resounding victories for the New York 50 *Spartan* and *Kiwi Magic*, which left their rivals empty-handed.

In **Epoque aurique**, *Kismet*, Sir Richard Matthews' Fife design, took the crown this year ahead of *Oriole*, last year's winning Herreshoff design. Another Fife design, *Viola* completes the podium on her return to Les Voiles. It's worth noting that Sir Richard Matthews took victory last year too, albeit at the helm of his 12mR *Crusader*!

In **Classique Marconi**, *Argynne III*, the Cornu design built at Bonnin brother in Arcachon in 1955, was a firm favourite throughout. Built before 1950, the **Epoque Marconis** are split into two rating categories. In **A**, the prize went to the Sparkman and Stephens *Varuna VII* and in **B**, honours went to one of the two *Sonnys*, this one skippered by the Briton Tobias Brand. Lastly, in **IOR**, the two Frers designs *Il Moro di Venezia* and *Matrero* finished tied on points but the former secured the win after finishing first in two races compared to just one for her Argentinian rival, which has really raised her game since her event debut last year.

Three questions for Charles Caudrelier:

The winner of the Route du Rhum and the Arkéa Ultim Challenge was in St Tropez this weekend as a visitor and kindly agreed to answer a few questions about the future *Gitana 18*, which flies the flag of Edmond de Rothschild.

Are you sailing at St Tropez?

I'm just visiting actually. I'm accompanying Edmond de Rothschild, which is partnering the event and with winter on the horizon at home in Brittany, it's rather nice to rediscover the sunshine here! I did one race at Les Voiles with Mike Sanderson in the noughties on the famous schooner *Mari Cha IV*, which is a stunning boat. It was sweet but very short!

There are a lot of boats here that you never cross tacks with in the Atlantic. Is it inspiring?

Yes, I've never actually sailed a Classic yacht! When I was young, it didn't really appeal but I look at them differently today. The crew aspect and the manoeuvres really interest me. One thing that I thought was fantastic in the America's Cup was the manoeuvring, the choreography. I love what they do today. I'm not someone who thinks that things were better in the past but we have lost a little bit of this aspect that I like. When I competed in the Volvo Ocean Race, organising a whole crew was something I loved. I know how complicated it is with 11 sailors so I imagine that it can't be easy with 20 on the Maxis or Classic yachts!

You're not taking part in the Transat Café l'Or now; where are you at with *Gitana 18*?

We're going to try to launch the boat incorporating all the ideas that Guillaume Verdier has come up with. It's all very interesting on paper but when you set about turning them into reality, it's often more complicated than planned! The teams have a huge amount of imagination and I'm pretty impressed with the solutions they've found. We're fortunate in that we have a digital twin and we spend a lot of time on a simulator as we await our initial sea trials. Our first race will be the Odysée Ultim in the Mediterranean on 28 May 2026. We're all really looking forward to that, even if the boat has been primarily designed for transatlantics and round the world circuits.

SAINT-TROPEZ PROGRAMME

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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