



Les Voiles de Saint-Tropez – Saturday 26 September to Sunday 4 October 2026

28 September 2026

Sun, sails and smiles at Les Voiles

After two days sizing up the competition and getting in some final training, it is showtime out on the racetrack! In a light breeze, a first race was run and validated in each of the ten competing categories. A gentle introduction to proceedings then for the Maxi and Modern yachts, with the Tradition fleet set to join the fray tomorrow. Already the racing has been hotly contested, and all the favourites are making their presence felt

The J Classes in action

There were America's Cup vibes in the bay of Pampelonne this afternoon with weather conditions reminiscent of Newport in the 1930s, when these giants battled it out for yachting's ultimate silverware. The three J Classes, *Svea*, *Hanuman* and *Rainbow* competing in this year's Voiles de Saint-Tropez are really creating a stir in this 28th edition. Their clashes are few and far between and their one race today did not disappoint. Of this enchanting trio, *Svea* (pronounced ZVAYA!) is the favourite and true to form she scored a bullet in the 6-mile windward-leeward race just ahead of *Rainbow*.

The Tore Holm design, discovered in the archives of the Swedish naval architect after his demise, with her exterior styling by Andrew Hoek, was built in 2017 at Vitters in Holland. She is the longest and most powerful of the J Classes! Her world-class crew hail from Niklas Zennström's Rán Racing team and she has been constantly optimised since her launch.

Today and throughout the coming week though, they will have to contend with the expert team brought together by the new owner of *Rainbow*, Peter Harrison, who finished less than two minutes astern after an hour-long sprint. Harrison also just so happens to be the owner of the Maxi *Jolt*, winner of Les Voiles in the Maxi A category in 2024, with none other than Ed Baird calling tactics. As for *Hanuman*, a replica of the 1937 *Endeavour II*, she has been newly purchased by Italian Giovanni Lombardi Stronati, who delivered an absolute masterclass in Maxi 2 at last year's Voiles de Saint-Tropez on his Wallyrocket 71 *Django*.

It's safe to say then that there are some real movers and shakers on these boats and the rapturous applause they received as they docked out this morning revealed that they were a firm favourite among spectators. Indeed, it's hard to remain indifferent in light of the seemingly endless overhangs of these slender hulls and the elegance of the 30-strong crews eager to give their all on these jewels of history.

Modern yachts: Prêt à porter and haute couture

The extravaganza of Modern 'haute couture' yachts set off down the runway at the Portalet mark at 1pm today. The eleven IRC 0s vying for the Trophée BMW got off to a showstopping start. Always poised for action on the starting line, *Nanoq*, which has already won three editions of Les Voiles, led the fleet for two laps of a course comprising three geostationary buoys, "a new device designed to avoid the return legs and overlapping of the fleet of years gone by," according to Principal Race Officer Georges Korhel. The code zeros on *Daguet 5*, Frédéric Puzin's awesome Carkeek design,

competed against the genoas of the TP 52s and Botin 44s. Geared up for inshore racing, these prototypes showcased their agility as they hotfooted it out of the gulf.

Next up, it was over to the three other IRC classes to nail the start phase on the same course, albeit with just a single lap of the racetrack. Trading prototypes for beautiful fleets of superbly optimised production boats, IRC 3 boasted the largest fleet with 35 participants. In IRC 0, it was *Daguet 5* which took line honours, but the TP 52 *Spirit of Lorina* secured the win in corrected time.

Results for IRC1, 2, 3 and 4 can be viewed at www.lesvoilesdesainttropez.com

Newcomers among the Maxis

A fresh contender is gatecrashing this year's party in the Maxi family. The newbie, *Northstar III* owned by Peter Dubens, strutted into St Tropez on the back of a resounding victory at the recent World Championships in Porto Cervo, just three months after her launch: "It's rare to see a new boat perform so well so quickly," acknowledged James Dadd, head of the International Maxi Association's Technical Committee. "*Northstar III* isn't reinventing the wheel and she's not exploiting any measurement loopholes, but she does have a highly innovative way of making use of the performance tools. They've clearly got something special!"

In essence, the Judel Vrolijk design is equipped with a canting keel, seen on boats like *Magic Carpet e* or *My Song*, but rather than using it to maximise her righting moment, the focus is on sailing with less heel angle (between 10 and 15°), which enables her to maintain excellent leeway for minimal drag. There are no canard or ballast tanks on this boat, emphasising her lightweight design and particularly refined aerodynamics, with a deck layout akin to that of a sports dinghy. Despite her excelling in light airs on flat seas today, ultimate victory went to another Maxi GP, Sir Peter Ogden's famous *Jethou*, which was always in the match and has maintained a supreme standard since her launch in 2012. The third spot on the podium on this very closely fought triangular course (7 boats within two minutes of one another on the finishing line after an hour of racing) went to *Balthasar*. Suffice to say that the three Maxi GPs, which form part of the Maxi 1 class, made a clean sweep of the prizes in this first race. In conditions such as these, where lightweight designs and smooth manoeuvres are a prerequisite, the largest craft were never in a position to make the most of their waterline length, a fact that was reflected on the scoreboard. As a result, last year's winner Wallycento *V*, only managed sixth place today, while *Magic Carpet e* was tenth.

With regards the Maxis 2, 3 and 4s, they were able to complete an 18-mile coastal course to Cavalaire.

2026 Les Voiles de Saint-Tropez Schedule

Tuesday, September 29: Races for the Maxis, Moderns, and Classics, including the Rolex Trophy

Wednesday, September 30: Races for the Moderns and Classics, including the Rolex Trophy. Day-off for the Maxis, Club 55 Maxi Yacht Cup

Thursday, October 1: Club 55 Cup, Gstaad Yacht Club des Centenaires Trophy (staggered starts), Challenge Day for the Moderns and Classics, Wallynano37 Challenge
Races for the Maxis

Friday, October 2: Races for the Maxis, Moderns, and Classics, including the Rolex Trophy

Saturday, October 3: Races for the Maxis, Moderns, and Classics, including the Rolex Trophy. Prize-giving for the Maxis, including the Edmond de Rothschild Trophy
Presentation of the Rolex Trophy

Sunday, October 4: Prize-giving for the Moderns and Classics, including the BMW Trophy and special trophies

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www.societe-nautique-saint-tropez.fr

Instagram: [les_voiles_de_saint_tropez](#)

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