



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

29 September 2026

### Les Voiles pulls out all the stops

**With a lovely breeze and sunshine, 251 crews hit the water determined to give the very best of themselves and their boats. Clearly, it was a day of celebration in the Gulf of St Tropez and the Bay of Pampelonne this Tuesday.**

**With some 77 Tradition yachts joining the fray and the start of the Rolex Trophy, a glorious new chapter in the wonderful Voiles de Saint-Tropez storybook opened in style. Keen to make the most of the perfect conditions, the three Race Committees launched the maximum number of races, providing crews and spectators with a sumptuous spectacle and only a tiny number of glitches.**

#### **Tradition yachts: Lights, camera, action!**

77 pieces of history came together for this 28th edition of Les Voiles de Saint-Tropez. From the most senior participant (*Sky*, 1890 Epoque Gaffer) to the youngest (*Resolute Salmon* 1976 competing in the IOR class), a truly exceptional fleet hurried after the Modern yachts to take the start of their first race. The staggered starts saw the 12mRs and IOR yachts grouped together due to their similar performance potential, and they had the honour of being the first fleet out on the racetrack, followed by the Epoque Marconi yachts. The 4 P Classes vying for the Rolex Trophy had the luxury of their own start, just before the Big Boats. The starting procedure for the latter group was extended “to give yachts like *Elena of London* and *Atlantic* of course, the necessary time to power up,” explains Georges Korhel, the Principal Race Officer.

There was a battle royal between the 7 competing categories, with the wind continuing to build throughout the afternoon. Indeed, there was a fierce duel between *Varuna* and *Baruna*, the two Bermudan yawls (EMA), which were only a letter apart in name and also had precious little separating them at the windward mark. A fine match race coloured play among the 12mRs *South Australia* and *French Kiss* too, with Marc Pajot on the latter boat trying to bag the inside lane all the way to the La Moute mark, only to admit defeat in the end.

#### **Modern yachts: Giant slalom in the Gulf**

With the world’s largest luxury sailing yacht, the all-new *Orient Express Corinthian*, and the replica of the three-master *Seacloud Spirit* sitting at anchor, the Gulf of St Tropez was like a nautical stadium this morning, with some of the stands in the middle of the field of play. With a favourable line to the left and better breeze beside the historic marine cemetery, the focus was on locating the favourable corridor of breeze to avoid any wind shadows. In this first rather special slalom, *Nanoq*, which got off to a great start, took charge and fought valiantly against the other three TP 52s, including the tenacious *Knutte*. Ultimately, it was the latter boat that narrowly managed to pocket the win on the line. Thomas Andersen’s German team, who already scored a podium finish yesterday, bagged the top spot in the provisional overall ranking for the Trophée BMW. The American Botin 44, *Interlodge*, fourth yesterday, was runner-up in corrected time.

In IRC 1, two Ker 46s gained a spot on the podium, with *Lisa R* scoring the bullet, while Jérémie Lagarrigue’s Nacira 47 *Prétexte 2*, first yesterday, was not far off the pace in sixth. In IRC 2, it was the Melges 32 *Fremito d’Arja* which triumphed ahead of the J133 *Jwow*, demonstrating the wealth of diversity in this 25-strong category. Meantime, in IRC3, the three Farr 30s totally dominated the podium, the Swedish craft *Letto di Pletto* topping of the leader board.

#### **Maxis: NorthStar III, the north star of the Maxi fleet**

Mirroring yesterday’s action, where the Maxis 2, 3 and 4 set off on a coastal sprint to Cavalaire, the race to watch in the Bay of Pampelonne surely had to be the Maxi 1s, with the 13 boats competing for the Trophée

Edmond de Rothschild. Since the Worlds in Porto Cervo and the first race here in St Tropez yesterday, it has been evident that the Maxi GP *Northstar III* is able to make extremely light work of light airs. Today's race in 15 to 20 knots of breeze was a prime example of this. Indeed, in conditions such as these, which shouldn't really favour the Judel-Vrolijk design, she really holds her own against the honed Maxis and is able to sail lower and faster downwind... As a result, after one lap of the course, Peter Dubens' new 76-foot Maxi took control of the fleet and never let go. Flying in the face of corrected time, she took the win in elapsed time ahead of rivals with much higher ratings! Suffice to say that this prototype, which is more reminiscent of a big TP 52 than a traditional Maxi, is trouncing the competition. The secret? "A whole set of parameters, admitted her strategist Wouter Verbraak yesterday. She boasts a keel that maximises righting moment and power and generates intense hydro-mechanical lift, without the need for extra drag-heavy appendages, an aerodynamic package with a rotating mast and a vanishing deck." Longer but far heavier, there was some solace for the large Maxis like the Wallycento *V* as she beat the other Maxi GPs today, with *Capricorno*, another Judel Vrolijk design, securing third. Three races were contested in all today.

### **Trouble brewing among the Js**

The 15-20 knots of E'ly breeze in the Bay of Pampelonne really churned up the water for the Js. Spectators and photographers alike relished the spectacle of the 180 tonnes of the three J Classes slicing through the sea with their endless bows countering their pitching with such beauty. However, just after the starting gun, *Svea*'s genoa hook gave up the ghost, a timely reminder that behind this grace some titanic loads are at play. Following the retirement of yesterday's winner, the battle-format switched to a match race between *Rainbow* and *Hanuman*. And what a cracking race it was! On the 3-mile upwind leg, the crews put in a series of twenty tacks or more with a sequence of attacks and counter-attacks. *Hanuman* had the upper hand as far as the windward mark and during the whole of the downwind leg, where keeping control of the 600 m2 symmetrical spinnakers was clearly a tough ask. After a marking error at the leeward gate and a chaotic spinnaker drop, Peter Harrison's team let *Rainbow* slip by to her first race victory. Revenge was sweet for *Hanuman* in race 2 however.

With three races in two days and three different winners, these J Classes are showing no signs of age!

### **3 questions to Paul Cayard**

**A familiar face at Les Voiles de Saint-Tropez, the multiple America's Cup finalist and winner of the 1997 Whitbread, Paul Cayard is calling tactics on the ClubSwan 80 *My Song*. The American gives us the low-down, in excellent French, about the difficulties of racing in Maxi 1, where he placed sixth today...**

#### **What is your first recollection of Les Voiles de Saint-Tropez?**

I came here for the first time in 1993, when I helmed *Tuiga*. Known as the Nioulargue back then, it's still a special regatta with all these very beautiful classic yachts mixing it up with the race boats. It's a wonderful late-season gathering for some very fine sailors. The climate is perfect and St Tropez is still as charming as ever. The day before yesterday, we watched the J Classes in training. I had the opportunity to step aboard *Endeavour* once. They are extraordinary boats with sails from bow to stern and as beautiful as ever.

#### **You're racing on *My Song* in Maxi 1. Where does the boat sit in relation to the rest of the fleet?**

There are big 100-footers like *Magic Carpet e*, *Galateia* and *V*, which race together year-round but we're only 25 metres long. They are a bit quicker than us and you have to sail a bit differently than you do in a race on an equal footing and try not to get boxed in. What is making things trickier this year is the presence of three Maxi GPs, which are thoroughbred racing machines more geared towards inshore racing than us so it won't be easy to win!

#### **You're calling tactics so you're kind of shouldering the responsibility?**

Kind of, yes (laughs). I'm not helming as the IMA's rules require an owner-helmsman set-up. As such, I'm calling tactics. The onus will be on making the right choices and playing smart if we're to secure ourselves a top spot. Sometimes you end up having to go where you shouldn't just to avoid colliding with the fastest boats. It's pretty special but we're having a lot of fun aboard. It's always nice to come here for some great racing.

### **2026 Les Voiles de Saint-Tropez Schedule**

**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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## **Organisation**

Société Nautique de Saint-Tropez, President: Pierre Roinson  
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Registrations: Frédérique Fantino  
Marine Safety: Gilles Doyen  
Logistics and Procurement: Alice Coquant  
Communications and External Relations: Chloé de Brouwer

## **Websites and Social Media**

[www.lesvoilesdesaint-tropez.fr](http://www.lesvoilesdesaint-tropez.fr)  
[www.societe-nautique-saint-tropez.fr](http://www.societe-nautique-saint-tropez.fr)  
Instagram: [les\\_voiles\\_de\\_saint\\_tropez](#)  
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