

// TRANSAT QUÉBEC SAINT-MALO //

A VICTORY AND A RECORD FOR SPINDRIFT 2 IN THE TRANSAT QUEBEC SAINT-MALO

Spindrift 2 arrived in St Malo this evening (Tuesday) having crossed the Atlantic Ocean in a just over 6 days at an average speed of just over 22 knots in the ninth edition of the Transat Quebec-St Malo.

After 3212 miles of racing, Yann Guichard and Dona Bertarelli and the 12-strong crew crossed the finish line in their black and gold boat at 23h17m41s (local time), winning not just line honours but smashing Loïck Peyron's 1996 race record by just under two days.

The multihull specialists established a new race record of 6 days 1 hour 17 minutes and 41 seconds, beating the previous record set by Peyron in 1996 onboard the trimaran Orma Fujicolor II by 1 day, 19 hours 6 minutes and 19 seconds. Spindrift 2 started the race three days after the monohulls and multihulls in the race, and their line honours and record performance further underlines the potential and performance of this legendary boat.

Led by the multihull specialist Yann Guichard, the crew worked hard to maximise every aspect of the boat's performance as well as take advantage of the variety of weather conditions.

A crossing in three acts

Act 1 – Negotiating the pitfalls of the St Lawrence

The crew had to be extra vigilant as they sailed down the St Lawrence. From the start the giant trimaran was in a gybing battle with their fellow competitor, the MOD70 Oman Sail. In just 8-10 knots of wind the boats had to negotiate the narrow stretches of the river but also being aware of the sandbanks and small islands that define this spectacular stretch of water. Sailing through squalls the team was able to appreciate the natural wonders of the river as they raced towards Percé, the town situated at the mouth of the river into the St Lawrence Gulf.

Act 2 – Crossing the Atlantic on one tack

After passing Percé full foul weather gear and boots were the order of the day, as the team then found itself plunged into a short choppy sea and thick fog at the Labrador Current where the cold ocean current from the Arctic meets the warmer water of the Gulf Stream.

The giant trimaran swallowed up the miles and averaged speeds of 30-35 knots, regularly peaking over 40knots. The resulting far from comfortable conditions made life onboard difficult but, it was a small price to pay for such a direct route towards the Fastnet Rock.

Act 3 – Rounding the Fastnet and heading to St Malo

The great downwind sailing came to an end as Spindrift 2 approached the Irish Coast. A series of tacks saw the boat round the final mark of the course at the Fastnet Rock. Having spent the majority of the race in thick fog, a ridge of high pressure lay ahead of the timaran's bows. However, light winds and a strong current left no respite for the 14-strong crew.

Under a full moon Spindrift 2 made its final approach into the port of St Malo and arrived to a crowd of holiday-makers and race fans.

This crewed transatlantic, the first race of the season, has been very positive for the whole team, which has worked hard over the past months to prepare the boat to be as competitive as possible. It was also a good opportunity to trial new team members and maintain the high level of team work necessary for the next Jules Verne Trophy attempt.

They said:

Yann Guichard, skipper, Spindrift 2:

"We are super happy with our tim. Before the start we thought it might be possible and thought that we might be able to do it in under the seven days, but to have gone down to six days is pretty amazing. The whole team did a great job. I did the Transat in 2004 but unfortunately had to give up mid Atlantic so now to be able to finish, and the beat the record is great.

We had three new people onboard and everything went well. We had two English sailors [Sam Goodchild & Jack Boutelle] and they adapted very quickly to the boat and their watch systems, and fitted in well with the team. I am delighted as it will be two new people to join us around the world. They don't know that yet, so they might find out if they listen to what I am saying to you! The team spirit on board was great and we could happily cross the Atlantic again tomorrow or sail around the world!

Dona and I have managed to create a team of people like us - passionate about the sea and about performance - and this quick Atlantic crossing has further underlined this.

It was an incredible race and it was a lot of fun. I can't wait to do it again in four years time and try and beat our record as well as win the race! Starting three days after the rest of the fleet, even if the boat is big and fast, it was incredible to be able to catch up with and pass the Multi 50s the day before we won the race.

The plan is to stay here for a few days and then take the boat back to our base in La Trinite sur Mer and start our preparations for our next goal, the Jules Verne Trophy this winter."

Dona Bertarelli, helmsman & trimmer, Spindrift 2:

"It is a great sporting and human achievement and this is a race that I have wanted to do for a number of years. The course is beautiful- starting in Quebec and sailing down the St Lawrence with all it's mythical landmarks like the Percé Rock, Saint Pierre et Miquelon and the Fastnet, and then arriving into St Malo. There are many races in one race. You cannot sail fast in the St Lawrence because it is very narrow and there are also speed limits to protect the beluga whales as well as needing to be

aware of the all the other cetaceans before being able to accelerate out into the Atlantic. There are many aspects to this race, which makes it very beautiful and very special.

We are very happy to have beaten Loïck Peyron's record. It is difficult to beat records when you are taking part in an actual race as you cannot chose the best weather window to start, especially as we had lighter winds just before our arrival. But it is a good record and we are very proud of what we have done today."

"This new record shows, once again, the exceptional qualities of Spindrift 2 and its crew. This victory is special for Mirabaud as this year we are celebrating 30 years in Canada. This is a good omen for the next attempt to win the Jules Verne Trophy,"
said Antonio Palma, Associé-gérant de Mirabaud.

Aldo Magada, President and CEO of Zenith: *"We congratulate the whole Spindrift team and in particular Dona Bertarelli and Yann Guichard, for this fantastic record. We are very proud of you all. The excellent, precision and high quality of their performance have today been rewarded."*

Spindrift racing crew members for the Transat Québec Saint-Malo

Yann GUICHARD

Dona BERTARELLI

Duncan SPÄTH

Erwan ISRAEL

Erwan LE ROUX

Xavier REVIL

Jacques GUICHARD

Antoine CARRAZ

Simone GAETA

François MORVAN

Thierry DUPREY DU VORSENT

Jack BOUTTELL

Sam GOODCHILD

Chris SCHMID (mediaman)

26 teams involved in this legendary race

Since its first edition in 1984, the Transat Québec Saint-Malo (2,897-nautical mile (5365 km) course), has, every four years, drawn the best professional ocean racers from both multihulls and monohulls for the offshore race from west to east. For the 9th edition, twenty-six international teams started the race on Sunday 10th for Class40, Multi50 and Open then on Wednesday 13rd for the two maxi-trimarans of the Ultime class, Spindrift 2 and Musandam-Oman Sail skipped by Sidney Gavignet.