



Press release n°1  
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### The Transat B to B: the battle ahead

**A single-handed transatlantic race reserved for Imoca monohulls, the new race between Brazil and Brittany - The Transat B to B – looks like bringing together over half of the contenders from the forthcoming Vendée Globe. More than 4000 miles to sail between Salvador da Bahia and the port of La Forêt-Fouesnant, as winter arrives...**

With seventeen new prototypes built over the last few months with the Vendée Globe 2008 in mind, the Imoca class is very active, but all these skippers and those, who already had a 60-foot monohull in their possession for the next single-handed non-stop round the world voyage, must first of all qualify. The rules oblige all newcomers to take part in a race, which is more than 2700 miles long and all the contenders must have carried out a single-handed qualifying run aboard their boat. What better way could there be than to set sail on a transatlantic return crossing from Brazil with just a year to go before the starting gun is fired in November 2008?

#### A warm up

To follow on from the two-handed Jacques Vabre, where the 60' monohulls will be reaching the port of Salvador da Bahia sometime between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> November, Mer & Projets, a firm based in Port la Forêt run by Gaëtan Gouérou, was chosen by the Imoca class to organise a single-handed return voyage across the Atlantic. Logically, the start will be from Brazil, with the finish in the port of La Forêt-Fouesnant expected after just over two weeks of sailing.

What is really special about this voyage between the two hemispheres is the crossing of the Equator and the route through the Doldrums, that inter-tropical zone characterised by light, irregular winds, alternating with violent and sudden squalls. The distance as the crow flies of around 4100 miles will in fact be somewhat longer, as the skippers will have to make their way around the north of the Azores high, with the aim of picking up the westerly flow, which is usually blowing at this time of year between America and Europe. Throughout this difficult route, Philippe Facque, the race director and an experienced sailor, will be very attentive to the single-handed yachtsmen, as they go from the tropical spring to the northern winter, pushed along by the Atlantic lows, which can sometimes be very nasty in December... There is the prospect of some rough and cold weather, which will closely resemble the conditions that the same sailors will have to face a year later during the final leg of their round the world race...

**That is where the interest lies in this Transat B to B, which has certainly convinced a number of sailors to line up for the start: fourteen of them have already expressed their desire to take part**, to qualify of course, but also to test out their machine, not sailing in a two-handed event or with a crew or on a training session, but in the same configuration as for the Vendée Globe. A warm up to get into the swing of things, and a way to check things over, this race will also be an occasion to confirm technical choices, to check the monohull, to define what needs to be done during the winter overhaul, to measure the potential of the skipper-boat partnership, as it faces extremely strong competition, as eight new prototypes and six monohulls that are already fine-tuned, representing seven different designs, are going to be battling it out in the Atlantic, which looks like being stormy...

**With the start scheduled for the 25<sup>th</sup> November** (with the possibility that the date will be put back to the 30<sup>th</sup> November according to the finishing times in Bahia), the Transat B to B will thus be taking place at the same time as the Paris Boat Show (1<sup>st</sup> –10<sup>th</sup> December), and there will be an opportunity to follow the race on the Brittany-Finistère stand with live daily reports

from the single-handed yachtsmen. At the pace at which these 60' monohulls go, they should be approaching the Azores just as the Boat Show is closing its doors and be reaching La Forêt-Fouesnant in Brittany, the end of the voyage, at around the 15<sup>th</sup> December.

### A deep water port

With a draught of 4.50 metres, the Imoca monohulls cannot moor up in every harbour, but there are many boatyards and technical bases in Southern Brittany. Inaugurated in 1972, the La Forêt-Fouesnant Marina, with its fabulous location at the centre of Concarneau Bay, has begun carrying out an important works programme in order to enable these prototypes to anchor in this harbour, which is the home port to many skippers: Michel Desjoyeaux, Jean Le Cam, Vincent Riou, Armel Le Cléac'h... The Transat B to B will thus be the occasion to inaugurate this new technical area with its deep-water port, specially designed for larger boats with around ten berths. This extension to the marina was backed by the Finistère Council and the Breton Regional Assembly, the first partners of this new event. The single-handed yachtsmen, who are expected from mid-December, will thus be able to take advantage of a warm, friendly welcome within the framework of a structure, which is aimed particularly at pleasure craft. It is also highly competitive with boatyards, chandlers, riggers, sailmakers... and the French base at the Finistère Ocean racing centre.

### Confirmed registrations (14 entrants)

- \*Akena Vêrandas : Arnaud Boissières (Groupe Finot 1998)
- \*Artemis : Jonny Malbon (Owen Clarke 2003)
- \*Aviva : Dee Caffari (Groupe Finot 1998)
- \*Brit Air : Armel Le Cléac'h (Groupe Finot 2007)
- \*Cheminées Pujoulat : Bernard Stamm (Farr 2003)
- \*Ecover : Mike Golding (Owen Clarke 2007)
- \*Foncia : Michel Desjoyeaux (Farr 2007)
- \*Generali : Yann Eliès (Groupe Finot 2007)
- \*Great America III : Rich Wilson (Nivelt 1999)
- \*Groupe Bel : Kito de Pavant (VPLP-Verdier 2007)
- \*Pindar : NC (Kouyoumdjian 2007)
- \*Spirit of Canada : Derek Hatfield (Owen Clarke 2006)
- \*Roxy : Samantha Davies (Groupe Finot 2000)
- \*Safran : Marc Guillemot (VPLP-Verdier 2007)

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