

Multi50 Arkema 4: modern architectural lines for a powerful boat

Initiated in September 2018, the construction of the new Multi50 Arkema 4 is progressing on schedule, and the first components are taking shape in the new infrastructures of the Lalou Multi shipyard in Verdon-sur-Mer (33). Designed by Romaric Neyhousser in close cooperation with Lalou Roucayrol and the future skipper Quentin Vlamynck, this latest generation trimaran will have different architectural lines from its predecessor. It will be more versatile, and also benefit from ergonomics adapted to its skipper and focused on performance. Another major asset: just like the Mini 6.50 Arkema 3, it will incorporate innovative solutions drawn from collaboration between the Research & Development and Business hubs of the Arkema Group and Lalou Multi. This prototype is due to be launched in spring 2020.

Contemporary and ergonomic architectural lines

Naval architecture has seen a turning point in recent years. Fitting foils on ocean racing boats allows them to achieve increasingly faster speeds, but requires greater effort on the sailors' part. *"The architectural principle we have adopted is based on a strategic sporting choice which is to have a boat with ergonomics that is more in tune with the skipper and his performance",* explains Lalou Roucayrol. *"It will be a Multi50 trailblazer where everything has been thought through so it can be more aerodynamic while affording optimum protection to the helmsman. We also decided to build a more versatile boat than the previous one: by this, I mean delivering as much performance in inshore events as in solo ocean sailing. We have put much thought into the masses and improved the aerodynamic brakes. It's going to be a powerful boat!"*

Quentin Vlamynck, the future skipper of Arkema 4, is very much involved in the construction, and he explains why his future boat will be different. *"I benefit from the vast experience of Lalou and his design team and so I'm incredibly lucky. Drawing on the experience and practice of the current Multi50, we decided to optimise comfort on board and the overall ergonomics, while ensuring safety. A great deal of work has also gone into the shapes of the hull and the overall height to improve its behavior at sea."*

Using innovative materials from the Arkema Group

Initiated in 2013 and highlighted in particular during the construction of the Mini 6.50 Arkema 3, collaboration between the Arkema Group and Lalou Multi continues, with the ongoing objective to use innovative materials on this Multi50.

Gilles Galinier, Vice President External Communication for the Arkema Group, explains: *"This partnership has proved its worth in the past, and, drawing on our experience in building the Mini 6.50 Arkema 3 in 2015, we decided to pursue our collaboration, in particular with this latest project. The work we undertook then with the Elium® resin is wide-ranging and complements developments in other markets such as wind power. And the construction of Arkema 4 will be an opportunity for us to demonstrate the recyclability of composites made from this thermoplastic resin. This latest trimaran is also a superb showcase for other products from our Group, including structural adhesives from Bostik which contribute a lot in terms of lightweighting, toughness and durability. We have dedicated R&D teams working on this construction project to identify materials that can already be used and others that can be considered over the longer term. A racing boat like this new trimaran is a tremendous driver of brand image, but it's above all a full-scale laboratory that allows us to show and test the performance of our materials in real-life sailing conditions. A "materials demonstrator" that can be applied to other application sectors... In short, we are delighted to be involved in this innovative adventure with Lalou Multi."*

A busy shipyard!

Some twenty people are currently engaged on a daily basis in the construction of this new 50 ft multihull. *"Every item of equipment is ready",* comments Fabienne Roucayrol, in charge of the Lalou Multi stable. *"Every mold has been manufactured: floats, central hull, boom, main sail track, and we're now busy manufacturing various other components. We now have an oven that's large enough, in our new workshop, to build all components in situ. By the end of the year, all the parts of the boat will be ready and we'll be able to start putting them together."* Arkema 4 is due to be launched in spring 2020.

Focus on Quentin Vlamynck's training program

A member of the Lalou Multi team since 2012, with two transatlantic solo races under his belt, 27 year old Quentin Vlamynck is actively preparing for the sporting challenge involved in taking the helm of a new trimaran. Which is the reason why Lalou Roucayrol has concocted a solid training program for him: "We have clocked up almost 50 days sailing since the Multi50 Lalou Multi went back on the water last July", explains Quentin. "As we don't have to prepare for any particular race this year, we're free to sail whenever the conditions are right."

After crew sailing in mid-season and their three victories in the Multi50 circuit Grands Prix, Lalou and Quentin are now busy chalking up two-handed outings back to back. "The idea is to put Quentin through his paces in the most diverse training conditions possible, in a breeze, in light winds, at night... We're testing reef systems, sailing upwind, sailing downwind, to make sure he experiences situations he hasn't encountered yet. So we have prepared a two-month round trip, sailing two-handed, and we'll be heading off for the Canary Islands at the end of October. There we'll meet up with Raphaël Lutard on his Arkema 3 for the departure of the 2nd leg of the Mini Transat-La Boulangère, and we'll be doing plenty of sailing in that area. This should give us great sailing conditions, less challenging than in the Bay of Biscay at this time of year."

The pair will be back in the Médoc region in mid-December!

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