

Quentin Vlamynck stands ready to skipper his new Multi50 Arkema 4

27 year old Quentin Vlamynck is preparing to take the helm of the future Arkema 4. The youngest skipper in the history of the Multi50 class is taking on this challenge eagerly and with a cool head. Quentin is fully aware of this opportunity and of the hopes vested in him, and he also knows that he can count on the expertise of his mentor, Lalou Roucayrol, and on the many skills of the Arkema Group and the Lalou Multi sailing team. Plenty to look forward to throughout two seasons in the run-up to the legendary *Route du Rhum* solo race in late 2022.

We went to meet Quentin in the Lalou Multi Composite workshops where the construction of the Multi50 is now on the home straight.

The sound of a hoist can be heard, and he looks up from his screen. But Quentin Vlamynck is not yet at the helm of Arkema 4. The hoist he has just heard is the device raising the linking arm mold. The carbon piece is taken across the workshop of the new Lalou Multi project, in Verdon-sur-Mer, to the heat chamber that will impart its final rigidity. Quentin painstakingly checks the lists of fittings of his future trimaran; since the launch of the project, he has been an integral part of the construction team, some fifteen or so people milling around the molds of the future trimaran. *"Being in constant contact with the worksite, helping those actually building the boat keeps you humble. For me, it's absolutely part of the job"* explains the former student in composite materials at the *Lycée de la mer* in Gujan-Mestras, where back in 2010 he crossed paths with a certain Lalou Roucayrol...

Assembly

The jigsaw puzzle laid out in front of him maps out the outlines of a new story. Nothing to be scared about for the young 27 year old sailor, promoted skipper of this new Multi50; this is not the first boatbuilding project for him. Starting in 2013, he followed the entire construction of the trimaran Arkema 1, and of the Arkema 3, the very first 6.50 meter prototype fitted with foils and made from the Elium® recyclable thermoplastic resin.

Determined, talented... and patient!

Well known in the sailing community for skippering for the first time, in 2017, this highly innovative Mini 6.50 to the other side of the Atlantic (and finishing in an honorable sixth place), Quentin has now been thrust into the big league. *"Ocean racing is my passion and I now make my living from it. After the Mini, most other skippers went for Figaro Class or Class 40. I'm the envy of many for being able to take the helm of a Multi50. I know full well how lucky I am!"* Lucky indeed but also deserving: *"I've been patient. I've always been involved with the team, and I've made the sacrifices and the choices that were needed when it mattered. Ocean racing never plays out as expected, and your working week is not over by Friday night!"*

Transmission

Hard working, determined, talented... These are the qualities that were quickly picked up by Lalou Roucayrol, who has watched Quentin develop over the last nine years. *"He skippered a Mini that was a complex prototype before opting for the Multi50. We've never been so committed or working so hard with these trimarans. After experimenting for two years in 2018 and 2019, it was decided that we should persevere, and it's no coincidence."* Last November both sailors set off for the Canary Islands to train for a month as a double-handed crew, and they even set a new record time sailing around Gran Canaria. *"I was back on the ocean, which I had left behind after the Mini 2017, Quentin explains. We did 25 knots every time we went out, it was physical and very good training. We only took 4 days to get back in challenging conditions, doing up to 40 knots, and we were taking turns at the helm in two-hour watches!"*

No respite

The next few weeks promise to be just as busy. To be at the start line of the Transat Québec Saint-Malo race on 12 July, the boat will need to be launched in the water before the end of May, with no last minute need for adjustments. This will then be followed by three Grand-Prix in August and September, with a larger Multi50 fleet and new talented competitors.

Before putting on his oilskins again, Quentin is busy swimming regularly, cycling along the estuary roads, and continuing the groundwork started 18 months ago with Emmanuelle Fouillet, his mental coach: "In winter, we work on Quentin the "land man", his ability to run the team, take a lead role, manage communication. And when spring returns, the psychological side of multihull sailing takes over. Then it's Quentin the "seaman"!" the skipper says.

Although he has thrown himself 100% into the arrival of his future trimaran, Quentin Vlamynck has also noted his first triathlon in May in his diary. Sailing a Multi50 is technical expertise and proficiency, but it is also above all a sport!

Multi50 season:

- **Quebec Saint-Malo:** Departure 12 July
- **Trophée Multi50 Lodigroun** (in Saint-Malo): 24, 25 and 26 July
- **Trophée Baie de Saint-Brieuc** (in Saint-Quay Portrieux): 21, 22 and 23 August
- **Grand Prix de Brest:** 4, 5 and 6 September

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