

Arkema 4 trimaran: driving today's testing towards tomorrow's innovation

Testing, understanding, adapting, innovating... in order to make materials more efficient, more reliable, safer, faster. These are the values shared by Lalou Multi and the Arkema Group over many years, and the future Arkema 4 Multi50, due to be launched next Spring, reflects this continuity. While the boat's construction is ongoing, Lalou Roucayrol continues to train its future skipper Quentin Vlamynck through countless real-life training experiences during which the two sailors take on the role of 'beta-testers' on many fronts, in particular by working closely with sailmakers Incidence.

Intensive training

After clocking up close to 6,000 nautical miles since July, Quentin Vlamynck continues his training alongside Lalou Roucayrol, in particular following an intensive stretch in the Canary Islands last month. *"We got back last week after spending almost a month over there", explains Quentin. "We had big sailing sessions, and even set two new records, one for Gran Canaria and the other for the archipelago's seven islands. It was super interesting to analyze the behavior of the boat in the swell and in strong, steady winds. The sailing was highly technical and very instructive. We encountered challenging conditions when we ferried the boat back home, and experienced a few technical blips with the automatic pilot. It was useful training to make the repairs at sea and talk with the technicians to correct the fault. It's all part of my ongoing training with Lalou."*

These outings, which are all an integral part of Quentin's training in his future role as skipper of a multihull, are also an opportunity to test a wide range of equipment, including the items that are paramount to the performance of the boat, namely the sails.

Innovation bridge

Lalou Roucayrol has been testing equipment for sailmakers Incidences for years. The boat was fitted with a test sail – a Strong Luff gennaker – in the three Grands Prix of the 2019 season, and the trials involving this new innovative sail from sailmakers Incidence Sails were clearly conclusive with three wins assuring the title of French Champion 2019. Pierre-Antoine Morvan, Head of R&D at Incidence Group, explains the specifics of this sail: *"It's a sail without halyard, in DFi®, with many novel features. The major asset of the Strong Luff, as its name suggests, is the performance of the luff, but also a significant improvement in overall performance. We have had excellent feedback from Lalou and Quentin on this sail in the wake of their grands prix. As well as the gennaker, Quentin was already able to test the new J3 when training in the Canary Islands. It's lighter, more versatile and more dynamic. Marketing of this latest technology will start at the Nautic 2019 Paris boat show."*

In order to extend the innovation of this new sail, Lalou Multi has decided to go ahead with manufacturing various fittings for these sails from the Elium® resin developed by Arkema. César Dohy, Master Sailmaker at Incidence, explains: *"To hold these sails, there are two highly specific fittings called lugs. These are triangular aluminum parts measuring about 10 cm² with head and tack that literally secure the sail. Made from the Elium® resin, they are therefore lighter, with softer contours, and are now recyclable. Quentin and Lalou tested them in the Canary Islands, and the initial feedback was convincing."*

Construction progress report

Whilst the story of the Arkema 3 Mini 6.50 is coming to an end, that of the Arkema 4 Multi50 is about to get underway when it is launched in the water next Spring. Back from the Canary Islands, Quentin Vlamynck sums up the progress of the construction of his future trimaran: *"Construction is progressing at a good pace. The components are beginning to take shape, in particular those of the central hull which are now finished. Foam components are currently being glued in place, and the hull as a whole should be put together in the course of December. The teams are gaining more and more experience, and production of the components will follow on thick and fast over the next few weeks. The daggerboard is ready, and we are finalizing the orders for fittings and rigging and electronic equipment. We are saving a lot of time on these points as we have acquired data collected in situ with the Lalou Multi Multi50. Everybody in the team can't wait to see it taking shape."*

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