

The construction of Arkema 4 is on track!

The current health crisis spares nobody, and every single company is impacted to some degree. Initiated last year by the Arkema Group and the Lalou Multi team, the construction of the new Multi50 Arkema 4 in Verdon-sur-Mer has also felt the fall-out from this crisis: loss of staff, problems in procuring materials, and sanitary measures put in place on a construction site where over 20 people would normally be working. Despite the delay, the construction and assembly of the new trimaran are making steady progress, and the launch of this new machine, under the watchful eye of Quentin Vlamynck, has been rescheduled for July 2020.

Crisis management

Even before the French government's announcement, Quentin Vlamynck, the future skipper of Arkema 4, was already in lockdown. Fabienne Roucayrol, manager of the Lalou Multi team, made this decision in early March as cases of Covid-19 were suspected within the team.

"Several employees have been diagnosed - but not tested - as carrying the virus. For their protection and that of everyone else, I asked Quentin and other employees to go into confinement for three weeks. At the time we had about 20 operatives on the construction site, almost a third of whom were British nationals. The confinement measures, given each person's family situation, forced us to rethink our workforce completely, but we never actually halted construction work. The admin and the design offices are now in teleworking mode, and 7 operatives are currently busy working on the construction of the trimaran. Admittedly, we have fallen behind, but we will be in a position to launch Arkema 4 in July."

With the Transat Québec - St Malo race cancelled, Arkema 4 will be all set for the various grand prix races of the Multi50 trimaran circuit in late summer, before no doubt taking part in outings on the Mediterranean in the autumn.

Progress on the trimaran Arkema 4

The fruit of technology and joint work by Arkema R&D personnel and the Lalou Multi team, Arkema 4 will also be an innovative and cutting-edge boat.

"The central hull is almost fully assembled, both beams will be assembled in early May, and the floats are being completed," explains Quentin Vlamynck, the future skipper of this new Multi50. "The boat is taking shape and now, as soon as you step into the workshop, you can visualize what it will look like. The shape of the body is beautiful, the hull is unique, and we love this kind of originality with Lalou Multi. We are very happy with the design, and we are now endeavoring to turn it into a solid and lightweight reality."

A versatile skipper, Quentin is currently busy with the lamination of the various interior bulkheads of his future boat while also working with the rest of the team on assembling all the components.

"It's very satisfying to make nice pieces and see the boat making progress, but there's still work to be done!" he acknowledges. "We have three very busy months ahead of us, fitting out the boat and making sure it's up and running as soon as it's in the water. Especially since a number of suppliers have halted work, and we are working to ensure that everything is delivered without delay as soon as the easing of confinement permits."

Virtual training and sports preparation

In parallel with the construction, within the constraints of the current regulations, Quentin Vlamynck is also focusing on his physical preparation. As soon as the confinement measures were put in place across the country, Quentin acquired a home trainer and now pedals daily, in his bedroom! *"I'm lucky to be living 900 meters from the construction yard and so I cycle there every day. As I need to physically exercise every day, I don't feel like a caged lion at all."*

As far as sailing is concerned however, Quentin has to bide his time, and, like many professional skippers, he takes part in many virtual regattas made available in recent weeks. *"I first competed in La Grande Évasion in Virtual Regatta in Ultim and finished first professional skipper, in 12th place. I am now taking part in the Transat AG2R La Mondiale virtuelle in Figaro Bénéteau. It takes time to get it right, properly analyze weather and routings, and*

come up with a strategy. It's good theoretical training and I put a lot of committed effort into it." So, a little theory and tactics before switching over to the real thing in the summer!

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