

2021: Year 1 of the Quentin Vlamynck and Arkema 4 duo

2021 will undoubtedly be a year of discovery for Quentin Vlamynck, the promising young skipper of Arkema 4, a new trimaran of the Ocean Fifty class launched a few months ago. Under the guidance of his mentor Lalou Roucayrol still, Quentin has kept on building up his confidence on his new racing craft. After sailing for several months, the boat was checked over in the Lalou Multi boatyard in mid-February, and returned to the water last week. The skipper and his crew are about to embark on a training and racing program for this first season on the brand new Pro Sailing Tour, before the major event of the year, namely the Transat Jacques Vabre Normandie Le Havre race.

Launched in the water on 23 September at the foot of the Lalou Multi boatyard in Verdon-sur-Mer, the Ocean Fifty Arkema 4 did not wait long to put in its first tacks in the Gironde estuary. *"The first outing was a tremendous occasion," skipper Quentin Vlamynck says. "When you follow the construction of a trimaran day in day out, you really understand that it's a huge puzzle. So, the first thing that was confirmed was that everything was indeed in place. After the initial checks, we went over every single maneuver."*

Conclusive initial outings

With Lalou Roucayrol, boat captain Raphaël Lutard, and Keni Piperol, a young talent in the team, by his side, Quentin has completed around thirty daily outings to learn the ropes of this new racing craft. *"These confidence-building outings were soon very conclusive. The boat is sound, aerodynamic, and I'm at ease on board. It's an incredible feeling to be able to sail it without trouble at more than 30 knots and know that I'm completely safe. The boat performs really well. We're particularly pleased with the work that was done on the aerodynamic tarpaulins. At times, the boat barely touches the water, all pitched up and supported by its foils. It's an incredible feeling to experience that. Before the boat's winter check-over, we also had a 48-hour outing in strong winds. The conditions were not easy with heavy squalls now and then and a cross sea, but the boat performed well to our greatest satisfaction!"*

In mid-February, the boat was taken out of the water for a 4-week express check-over. It was structurally intact after these inaugural outings, and the purpose of this exercise was above all to check all the parts and make sure that no component showed any sign of premature wear and tear. It was returned to the water on 9 March 2021, and Quentin will now continue his on-board training before setting off on his first season on the Pro Sailing Tour at the helm of his new Arkema 4. With 5 inshore and offshore regatta events between Brest, La Rochelle, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria and Marseille, the 2021 crewed sporting schedule promises to be the best preparation for the Transat Jacques Vabre Normandie Le Havre to Martinique due to start on 7 November.

Quentin rising to the occasion

Becoming skipper of an offshore racing trimaran is not something you can learn overnight. Quentin Vlamynck, who has been training alongside Lalou Roucayrol for almost 10 years, knows this full well. In addition to learning to take the helm of the boat, Quentin has also benefited from a wide range of training: electronics, weather, mental and physical preparation. The young skipper is determined to leave nothing to chance: *"You have to be an all-round sailor", Quentin sums up. "The job of a skipper has never been confined to just knowing how to handle or steer a boat. You have to know how to use electronics and computer technology on board, be able to analyze the weather and routings, not to mention stay in good physical shape and be well prepared mentally too, because these boats are very demanding. I really want to wrap my mind around all of that and know how to do everything, all by myself. So, I'm a little less in the boatyard now, and I'm learning to delegate to free up some time. I feel confident, with the help of Lalou and his support and experience."* A big advantage to start this new chapter in his career!

Arkema 4 2021 program

Pro Sailing Tour:

1st event: Brest 5-9 May
2nd event: La Rochelle 26-30 May
3rd event: Las Palmas de Gran Canaria 30 June-14 July
4th event: Marseille 21-25 July
Final event: Brest 1-7 August

Transat Jacques Vabre:

Departure Le Havre 7 November 2021

Arkema 4 Team

Lalou Roucayrol: coach and technical and sports director
Raphaël Lutard: boat captain
Keni Piperol: sailor and preparer
Etienne Carra: rigger and sailor
César Dohy: sail maker and sailor
Greg Havel: preparer
Dominique Labeyrie: preparer

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