

Dream conditions for the start of the Cap-Martinique

To note in this press release:

- Sunshine and light airs for the start, Sunday 14 April at 15:00 hours local time
- The first days of racing are shaping up to be quick
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Group photo from the Loïc Caradec jetty.
Photo: JM Liot / Cap Martinique

Blue skies, summer temperatures, Creole music and the odd glass of rum.

There is already a definite Caribbean vibe in the Cap-Martinique race village in La Trinité-sur-Mer in Brittany. It has to be said that Fort-de-France has never been so close to the Morbihan. The 60 boats entered in this transatlantic race are due to set sail in balmy conditions then, with light airs and flat seas. The winner of last year's double-handed category, Ludovic Gérard, is racing single-handed this time aboard Pure Ocean and is relishing the little nudge in the right direction from the weather after weeks of wind and rain. "It's nicer for the family and friends coming along to support us," beams the sailor from the south of France. Race meteorologist Christian Dumard also sees an express descent where the competitors may well get the chance to fly their entire range of spinnakers. The passage around Cape Finisterre is likely to be more boisterous with heavy seas and stronger breeze, though there is nothing likely to worry the seasoned sailors in this Cap-Martinique. Once the front has rolled through, tactics and strategy will likely take centre stage again. "There are several options for getting down to Portugal," explains Ludovic Gérard, who is already setting his sights on the trade wind, which is on track to settle into position. As we said before, Martinique has never seemed so close.

START INFO

The competitors will dock out on Sunday from 11:00 hours. The general public can watch the parade with live commentary from the Môle Loïc Caradec.

VERBATIM

Christian Dumard, meteorologist:

“We’re predicting a rather pleasant start on Sunday, with a relatively light N’ly wind. The boats will set sail with only a little breeze on flat seas. The skies will be fairly clear and even sunny. The wind will gradually pick up as it backs round to the north-west in the Bay of Biscay. This will enable the boats to make fast headway to the middle of Biscay and then a small ridge of high pressure will have to be negotiated with the wind clocking round to the north, then the north-east, building as the fleet closes on Cape Finisterre. The breeze will fill in quite sharply along the Portuguese coast with 25, 30 knots, gusting to 35, likely with 3.5- to 4-metre waves for a few hours after rounding Cape Finisterre.”

François Seruzier, Race Director

“Luck is shining on us because we have a zone of high pressure, which is in the process of climbing up over Europe and France in particular. This anticyclone has been a long time coming as we’ve had difficult weather to deal with since October. We’re now just days away from the start and we’re starting to get some fairly reliable forecasts. We know that the competitors will be keen to take the start. There won’t be any delays and they’re due to set sail in some fine conditions with medium winds on the beam. They’ll have a bit of breeze, especially in the Bay of Biscay and at Cape Finisterre, but nothing terrible, which is excellent news in terms of the quality of the racing.”

Ludovic Gérard (Pure Ocean):

“It’s very nice to be setting sail in fine weather. The family and friends who are coming along to support us will be able to make the most of the day. It also means we can quickly get into the swing of things and we are likely to make Cape Finisterre fairly quickly. Next up, the wind will be a little stronger, but nothing like the conditions we experienced two years ago. The situation will become more complicated as we get down towards Madeira as there are several options. We’re fortunate to be able to set sail in these conditions. If the race start had been last week, things would have been more complicated.”

Christine Mora (Un palier deux toits):

“We’re going to get the chance to really discover the boat in the waves and surf of the open ocean in the hope that conditions are favourable for that. We discovered the waves as we pulled into La Rochelle (on the delivery trip). We had fairly powerful waves on the nose, which is different, even though the Mediterranean is complicated too. Above all we want to have some fun and put all our energy into what we know best. I haven’t been sailing and racing for long. I have no aims of a podium place. I’m a real amateur, a novice. It’s my first time and I’m incredibly happy to be here. This race is incredible. There are very few races like this for amateurs that are so big. This is the holy grail.”

Thierry de Fougerolles and Nicolas Grimaud (Institut Pasteur):

“For me, this is the culmination of something I’ve always aspired towards. I

grew up in Auray, right next to La Trinité-sur-Mer and I've seen a massive amount of offshore race starts. For the pair of us to experience a moment like this together is quite magical. Everything we've been working towards for the past year and a half is taking shape now. We're really lucky to be here. If I've learned anything in the races we've done together, it is that things don't go to plan. You have to keep your cool, take things one step at a time and roll with the punches. That's how you come good because you can't plan for every eventuality. We know how to sail fast, we have the means to do that, so now we have to be rigorous and not make mistakes."

Pierre-Antoine Tesson (Sauvegarde 56):

"The idea began to form in my mind during the last edition. We were at the start watching our friends setting sail. A few weeks later, we said to ourselves that it would be good to do it together ourselves. We got the green light from our wives fairly early on and that's how we're here today. It's an opportunity to give our all, to push the envelope and to do it for a good cause. I've already done some transatlantic passages but they are all different. Some have been voyages with friends, others have been races. This is a new experience with a new pairing. We're expecting to make it to the other side as quickly as possible and to enjoy ourselves along the way."

Régis Vian (Ecole Jules Verne):

"The first edition of the Cap-Martinique was great, albeit for 4 days, because I broke my rudder offshore of Lisbon. I'd set sail on a boat with a single rudder, so I managed to make it into Lisbon and then that was the end of the race for me. It was a bit disappointing of course. If you set the competitive aspect to one side, it's still a great opportunity to gain experience."