

Press release, 14 April 2024

100 sailors set a course for Martinique

To note in this press release:

- The Cap-Martinique race set sail today
- The competitors are expected to reach Fort-de-France from 4 May
- This transatlantic passage is reserved for amateurs
- 100 sailors are competing in the race
- **HD photos and videos are available**



Photo: JM Liot / Cap-Martinique

“I’ve never seen anything like it!” says a regular visitor to the port, staring wide-eyed at the spectacle. It is the first time that such a huge crowd has gathered in the port to bid the Cap-Martinique competitors a fond farewell. Though vast, the main pontoon is utterly packed, visitors having to pick their way through the crowds to wish a competitor well. Those who are not on the pontoons are massed along the Môle Loïc Caradec amidst a joyful atmosphere, one and all admiring of these heroes setting sail on the adventure of a lifetime. As with the major offshore races, they cast off one after the other to make for the Dream Yacht starting line.

Thibaut Derville, co-organiser of the event, is very pleased with the start. “The 60 boats docked out in a very festive atmosphere. Emotions were running high, even for those who are well-honed in such procedures. It was the same scenario on the pontoon. People are always emotional and cheer on all the participants.” The starting gun on the French Navy ship, La Garonne, is fired by Vice-Admiral Jean-François Quérat of the Maritime Prefect at 15:00 hours local time on the dot.

A transatlantic for amateurs

This Cap-Martinique is rather unique in the world of offshore racing. Indeed, it is the only non-stop transatlantic race for amateurs. For the participants, it is often a lifelong dream, like a little Route du Rhum for Corinthians. Adrian Kuttel has come from South Africa to be a part of this adventure: “It’s a great course with some fine boats and the fleet is fabulous. There are some amazing people and some great sailors. I’m addicted to the Cap-Martinique,” says the sailor, who is competing single-handed this year after participating in the last edition double-handed.

PHOTOS





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Photos: JM Liot / Cap-Martinique.
HD photos available on request.

VIDEOS





Videos: Nefsea / Cap-Martinique

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Jean-Philippe Cau, co-organiser:

“We are overawed by the spectacle ourselves! There are 100 of them and they are clearly eager to get going. For us, this is something truly epic. We know we’re going to see them again in three weeks’ time, but they’re going to experience the whole gamut of human emotion during that time. It’s quite a momentous occasion, even for us. It is one of the high points of this race and there will be others.”

Thibaut Derville, co-organiser:

“We began the day with a backdrop of grey and now the weather is fabulous. It’s reminiscent of Martinique already. The 60 boats cast off from the pontoon in a really wonderful atmosphere. Emotions were running high, even for those who are well-honed in such procedures. It was the same scenario on the pontoon. People are always emotional and cheer on all the participants. For us, it is the culmination of two years of work, but we’ll be really relieved once they get to the other side in Fort-de-France.”

Adrian Kuttel (Sentinel Ocean Alliance):

“I’m ready to go, I’m well prepared and I’m eager to get going. There have been lots of storms since the start of the year and we finally have some sunshine now. We’re setting sail in some great conditions and we’re going to get across the Atlantic very quickly. That means we can gently get into the swing of the competition. It’s a fantastic race. The organisers are very professional. It’s a great course with some fine boats and the fleet is fabulous. There are some amazing people and some great sailors. I’m addicted to the Cap-Martinique. I wanted to do the last edition single-handed but COVID prevented me from doing so. In my view, it is the solo sailing which makes this such an extraordinary adventure. It is a spiritual journey, where you have to be in tune with what is going on in your mind. You have to get a feel for the boat and get a feel for nature. It’s fabulous and such a privilege. I love sailing single-handed.”

Even Job (Epilepsie France):

“We’re trying to empty our minds. We’re thinking back to the moments of preparation. The emotion is beginning to take hold a bit, along with the stress, but I’m keen to set off, to cast off from the pontoon and have some fun, because that’s essentially what we’re here for. I’m eager to perform well and, if that’s reflected in the ranking then so much the better. The most important moment is casting off from the pontoon, giving those in our entourage a big hug and realising that we love them.”

Harold Baseden and Thaïs Cathelineau (Vaincre la mucoviscidose):

“We’re so happy to be setting sail. We’ve just left our two young daughters behind us and we know that we’re not going to see them again for a month, which is the toughest thing of all. We’re going to try to make a good crossing, to be careful and to get back together with them in a month’s time. We’ll soon get into the spirit of the competition and that will be all-consuming for the next month.”