



NEWSLETTER #4

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LATEST NEWS

Dominique Wavre, Michèle Paret and their Open 60 Mirabaud are currently in La Rochelle, busy with the boats measurement and taking care of hundreds of little details as they prepare for the Barcelona World Race.

Since they sailed to Gibraltar and back in August, Dom and Michèle have made many improvements to the rigging and electronics. Dominique tells us about those modifications and explains how preparations are going for the Barcelona World Race, three and a half months ahead of the start.



Sailing, sailing and more sailing

"We're feeling great and we are on schedule. The first positive point is that the trip to Gibraltar went well. Our goal now is to push the boat a bit harder each time we take her out in order to test her limits. Over the past few days we've been pushing quite hard in order to see how reliable certain elements are. Soon we will move up one more step in order to get the boat and her crew into racing mode. Our goal is obviously to sail as much as possible, clock up the miles and get used to everything on board. If the training is hard, the race will be that much easier. That was my way of doing things back in the days when I was in charge of the Geneva's regatta centre."

Checks from every angle

"We are currently busy with the measurement of the boat. This work is rather fastidious; it will take place over an entire day and requires a long preparation as we need to empty the boat. We must – amongst others - get the boat over at an angle of 90° so we will need fifty-tonne crane to do this. We will then do another heeling test, this time at 10 degree, before we weigh the boat. There are two reasons for doing these tests: firstly to ensure that the boat is safe and that she respects the Class rules and secondly to ensure that the fairness of the race as all boats need to comply with the same rules. In reality, the measurement is there to confirm the theoretical calculations from the engineers. There are no reasons why the boat would fail this test: she was designed with this goal in mind. But we are probably quite close to the limits and that's why there's always a bit of suspense when these tests are carried out."

Next stage: removing the mast

"Mirabaud will have her mast removed in mid October, so that we can change all the standing rigging and check all the parts under stress. This will be the final major check before the start of the Barcelona World Race. Removing the mast is a tricky operation, as there is a "natural force" of fifteen tonnes at the foot of the mast when the boat is moored; a pressure that increases to thirty tonnes when she is out sailing. So we need to ease the rig gradually, before removing it from the deck and lifting it off with a crane."

A MINIATURE MIRABAUD

The Geneva-based model maker Patrick Reymond has been building precise scale models for the past twenty years. He is currently hard at work creating ten models of Dominique Wavre's Mirabaud. He tells us more about his passion.

**Patrick Reymond, how did you become involved in this highly specialised work?**

PR: "For me, model-making began as a hobby. Shortly after getting a diploma in Arts and Crafts in Geneva (interior design), I had the opportunity to work in this area. I then met several designers, sailors, engineers and architects who gave me the opportunity to turn my passion into my profession."

What are the main stages of building models such as the Mirabaud?

PR: "A few weeks ago, I went to La Rochelle to visit the Mirabaud with Dominique and Michèle. I took a lot of photos, particularly little details, and I made all the measurements required to work on the models. Once I was back in the workshop, I draw up precise plans based on the data I had obtained. The next stage involves creating moulds for some of the specific parts, before making the model itself."

What materials are you using?

PR: "I try to use materials that are as close as possible to those used in the original object. Each case is different and requires detailed research. So, for Mirabaud, among other materials, I shall be using fibreglass, epoxy glue, cables, brass and sailcloth."

How long does it take to make a model?

PR: "It all depends on the project. In the case of Mirabaud, I'm estimating it will take around three weeks of work for each model. They will be approximately 90 centimetres long."

Is it important for you to see the object you will be modelling?

PR: "Yes, I really need to feel the object, in order to convey everything about it through the model. It was important for me to go and visit the boat and to be able to appreciate her in her space; that's how I get an overall feeling for it. I also like to meet the client and understand what relationship they have with the object and what they expect from the scale model."

What sort of objects do you prefer to model?

PR: "I've made all sorts of models of boats, but also architectural works, planes, industrial vehicles and many other things. But I've always preferred working on boats. For me, Mirabaud is a really great project that's a pleasure to work on."

ELITE OR ENDURANCE SPORTSMEN?

Taking part in a round the world yacht race, alone or with a co-skipper, means approximately three months of non-stop racing, with no break whatsoever, weather during mealtimes or even when you are recovering from an effort. To put it simply, there is no rest and the competitors are "in the race" twenty-four hours a day. How do you prepare for such a race? What physical strengths are required? Should we consider these sailors as top class sportsmen? Dominique Wavre answers our questions.



Dominique, how do you and Michèle get ready for the race from a physical perspective?

Dominique: "We spend a lot of time mountain-biking. It's a way for us to get some fresh air and we particularly enjoy visiting the Southern Alps. Around La Rochelle, it's much too flat for us as you have to drive about an hour away to find a 20 metre high bump... If we're feeling good, we go out for 5 or 6 hours over a gradient of 1000 meters.

Why mountain-biking?

Dominique: "It's a sport that enables us to do a cardio workout without hurting our back or our joints. I don't enjoy running, as it's too violent on the knees and back, whilst cycling requires strenuous effort, while remaining gentle on the limbs. We are of course very careful, as there's a lot at stake; we have to look after our health without harming ourselves."

Do you do any other sports?

Dominique: Yes, we do weight-lifting and work on the movements we will have to do on the grinder. Michèle drew up a training programme that alternates between rapid movements with light weights and exercises with heavier loads. We work in particular on the upper limbs and the back, as on a boat we often find ourselves in unusual positions, a little bit contorted, because of the heeling angle."

How important is this physical preparation?

Dominique: "You really have to be in very good shape. But whatever his physical condition, a sailor who takes part in such a race will be in a good shape after a week at sea. The fact that you're ready beforehand means you easily get into the race and also recover faster. This is an important advantage."

Should we consider you as elite sportsmen?

Dominique: "Hmmm... I wouldn't refer to us as that. If we compare ourselves to a footballer or a judoka, they train throughout the year with a coach, in order to be ready to perform well at a given moment out on the field or on the mats. We have to manage the whole project, take care of the technical aspects, the finances, the weather... We have many more things to worry about than most sportsmen. I'd say we are endurance sportsmen."



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