

20^{ème}
ÉDITION

MINI transat

ÎLES DE
GUADELOUPE

DOUARNENEZ ► LANZAROTE
► POINTE-À-PITRE

STARTS
19TH OF SEPTEMBER 2015

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media guide - mai 2015

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On the 19th of September 2015, 84 solo sailors will leave Douarnenez for the 20th edition of the **MINI transat**. It is only the second time that the Douarnenez Races will detain the heavy task of accompanying all these solo sailors in their Trans-Atlantic crossing which will have, as it's final destination, the Guadeloupe Islands.

For this 2015 edition, the organisation team has the challenge of conserving the high points of the 2013 edition, whilst amending all that can be improved upon. The start date at Douarnenez has therefore been bought forward to the 19th of September in order to ensure that the crossing of the perilous Bay of Biscay is achieved in the safest possible way.

Meanwhile, the start date of the second stage is maintained for the 31st of October in order to shrug off all risks of tropical storms when arriving on the French Antilles. This would imply a longer stop in Lanzarote, in the privileged surroundings of the brand new Marina Lanzarote of the Arrecife port. This second edition, under the aegis of Douarnenez Races, has also enabled to re-enforce links with our Guadeloupean friends who have also contributed greatly to the organisation of the event. They therefore hope that the **MINI transat** will become the second major nautical event of the island after the mythical Route du Rhum - Destination Guadeloupe.

However, we will also stick with everything that contributed to the great success of the 2013 Edition; the 84 Minis will figure once again, tucked into the backdrop of the Port Rhu, the animations on the quays will be re-enforced. Finally, the competitors will once again be able to count on the voluntary participation of the Douarnenistes, the traditions of welcoming and conviviality, one of the hallmarks of this town.

Similarly, we wish to maintain the core of the organisation committee which contributed to the 2013 Edition, therefore capitalising on their acquired experience of the race. With a strengthened organisation and re-enforced means, this 2015 Edition should therefore assemble all the factors needed for a sumptuous celebration.

Bertrand Nardin,
Président of Douarnenez Courses.



The Guadeloupe region is honoured to welcome the **MINI transat** which will take the denomination « **MINI transat - ÎLES DE GUADELOUPE** » for this 2015 edition. This follows the uncontested popular success, sporting and mediatised, of the Route du Rhum - Destination Guadeloupe. In fact, studies following the Route Du Rhum Guadeloupe diligently showed that the race had benefited the archipelago economically. Therefore, the 20th edition of the **MINI transat - ÎLES DE GUADELOUPE**, is another strong marker of the strategic choices taken by the regional community, to show the priority of the nautical promotion plan.

The main objective is to maintain the incredible dynamic generated by the Route Du Rhum - Destination Guadeloupe 2014 and to prolong its effects in order to benefit our touristic appeal with this event which has a global reach.

In addition, the **MINI transat** distinguished itself from other offshore races by the more modest size of its boats and its greater accessibility to emerging skippers. This is what makes this particular race above all a unique sporting challenge.

It also encourages the practice of other solitary offshore races on board "Minis", as well as favouring innovation and an improved security of the smaller monohull boat whilst allowing them to access the open seas within a prestigious competition.

Within this setting, Guadeloupe Grand Large, initiated by the Guadeloupe region, is developing training programmes for sailors from Guadeloupe and more generally, employment in the marine sector.

In 2013, the regional council accompanied and supported French skipper Francois LAMY with his boat "Guadeloupe Espace Ocean" on the event. This support therefore affirmed its wish to give opportunities to our best equipped local competitors.

It is therefore with great impatience that the Guadeloupe Region is preparing itself to welcome the **MINI transat - ÎLES DE GUADELOUPE 2015** and its participants in this renowned competition.

M. Victorin LUREL,
MP, President of the Guadeloupe Region



Every two years, the **MINI transat** marks the completion of a long journey for all those who have chosen to be a part of this great adventure. It is the moment when the skippers will be rewarded for all their efforts, amongst qualification sails and obligatory participation in a number of races. This is obviously excluding the endless hours of preparation, training in the hope of being the most efficient as possible on the starting line.

Indeed we could say: to present yourself at the start of the **MINI transat**, you need unshakeable drive, the conviction that to complete a Transatlantic crossing warrants a few terrestrial sacrifices, all of which the “Mini Class” deems necessary.

For the past 15+ years, the “Mini Class” has sought to ensure that all those who present themselves at the starting line are 100% ready to undertake this challenge. This does not mean that all participants will be high-level skippers and that all will be able to fight it out for a spot on the podium. However, our wish is that all those who take part in the event will know how to react to all types of situations with a “good sailor” instinct; they should be able to manoeuvre their boat with complete autonomy. This is, in many ways, the one guarantee that we can offer organisers; the cornerstone in the relationship of trust that we have to share.

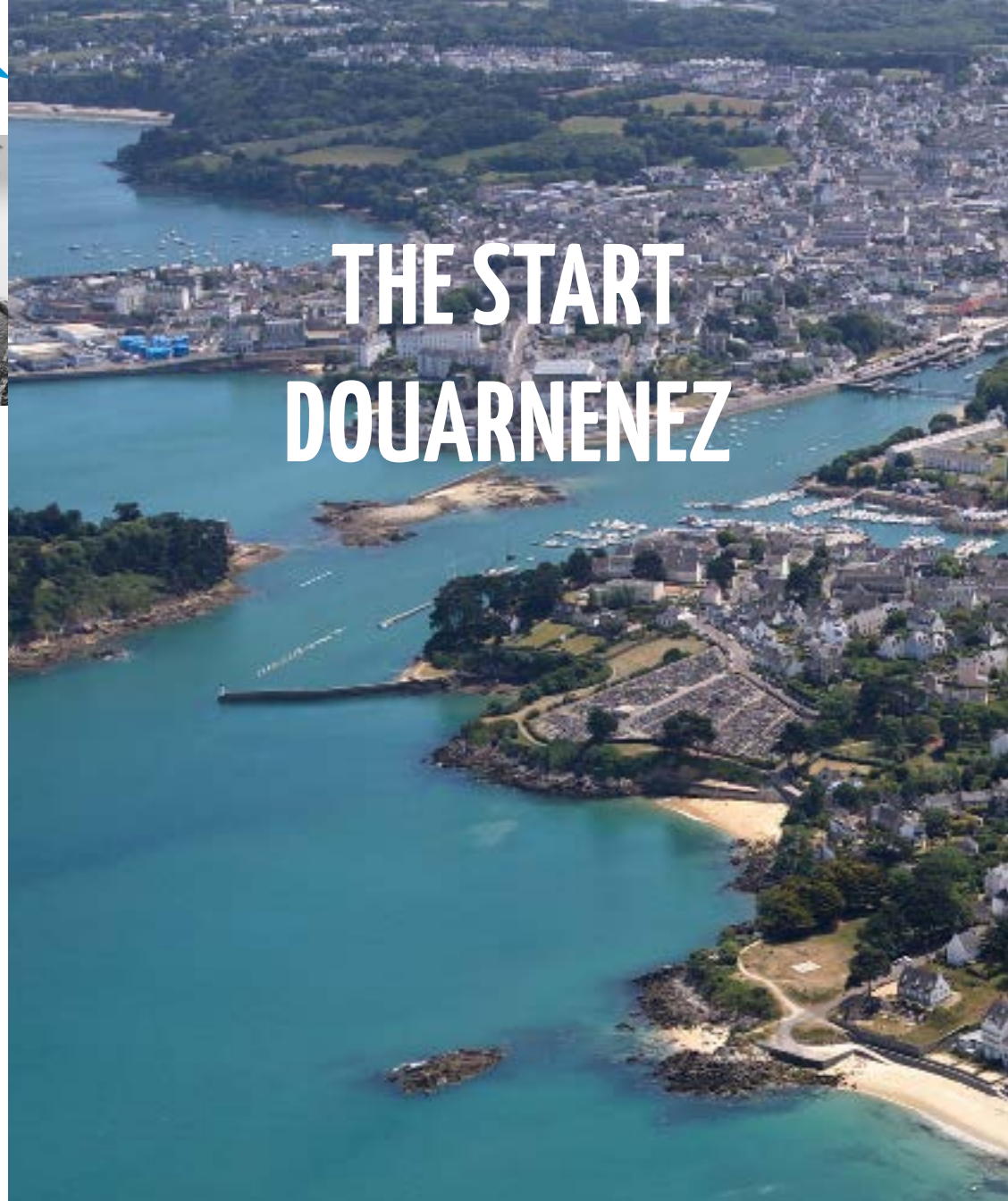
A **MINI transat**, is also the end of a cycle. As a result of the **MINI transat – ÎLES DE GUADELOUPE 2015**, the gauge will be profoundly modified to allow the exploration of new approaches, notably the possibility to equip our monohull boats with foils or other appendices likely to make our boats “fly”. We did not want to carry out these modifications before the **MINI transat** to avoid penalising those who had engaged themselves for two years in a repairs process. However, we guess that from the start of 2016, these projects will bear fruit.

Preparing in the best possible conditions ten or so candidates for adventure, promoting innovation and research, ensuring the safety of the skippers, the “Mini Class” is well and truly in its preferred element.

Stan Maslard,
President of the “Mini Class”



THE START DOUARNENEZ



It is not today: Douarnenez, a town with three ports, has always been looking outwards towards the sea. Its history is irrevocably intertwined with the ocean. How could it not be when it is home to a bay, one of the most beautiful in the world, and its jewel, Tristan Island?

The town intends to continue taking advantage of this unique maritime asset for its economic and touristic development. Yachting and sailing occupy a large part of this approach, which encouraged last year's obtaining of the label «region of classified tourism».

Thanks to charities and yachting clubs which are particularly dynamic and implicated, there will be a string of events succeeding one another throughout the season. The starting point of the **MINI transat - ÎLES DE GUADELOUPE** on the 19th of September 2015 will constitute the climax.

In 2013, the return to Douarnenez, after 22 years of absence in this unique race which creates such a distinctive link between the sailor and his boat, has provoked a strong, popular enthusiasm within the local population.

Therefore, we are waiting with great impatience, and look forward to this 2015 edition, which is shaping up to be formidable thanks to the implication and motivation of all involved.

I would like to pay tribute to the efforts of the public and private partners, without whom this event would not have been possible. I would also like to say a particularly big thank you to the local yachtsmen who, four years ago, were able to convince the Mini Class to entrust the town of Douarnenez with the organisation of this mythical trans-Atlantic race.

Naturally, the town is present with them in order to ensure that the 2015 edition of the **MINI transat**, is a success, and to offer a warm welcome to the competitors and members of the public on the quays of Douarnenez.

The town will also accompany this «nautical force» by improving its infrastructure, such as the new Nautical centre, or the services proposed at the Port de Plaisance, placed in the first rank of the ports of Southern Brittany by a specialised magazine.

During the opening of the Village, on the 11th of September, rendez-vous in Douarnenez to see the starting point of this **MINI transat - ÎLES DE GUADELOUPE** which promises to be as exalting and closely contested as previous editions!

We look forward to welcoming you !

Philippe Paul
Sénateur-Maire de Douarnenez



The Maritime Spirit: The Voluntary Streak

For a long time, Douarnenez has lived in tandem with the sea. If the fishing port has lost some of its grandeur, the fact remains that the town is profoundly attached to its maritime history. There are still vivid memories of the times dating back to the start of the 20th century when sardine and tuna "fleets" were a regular sight. We can find these fishing and maritime traditions at the heart of huge maritime demonstrations which regularly animate the bay. At the heart of all these attractions, the volunteers.

Each and every one of the Douarnenez ports marks a part of the town's history. Le Rosmeur, located in the east, is still home to a small fleet of fisherman boats. It is at the bottom of these old houses that the fisherman boats would unload, before the construction of the new port, better protected, as well as the new auction house. Today, the Rosmeur rediscovers its golden touch with the Grand Prix Gruyader where trimarans accomplished in off-shore races and kite surfers battle it out on the jetty of the port. It will also be the case in 2016, when the theatre of the «Temps Fête» (in continuity with the maritime celebrations), will welcome the fleet during the parade.



The 'Port Rhu', rehabilitated through the sheer will of a few pioneers, is home to the Port-Musée of Douarnenez, recognised today as one of the major elements in the safeguarding of the maritime heritage. In fact, it is not down to fate if the lighthouse keeper of the «Phares et Balises», Roi Gradlon recently retired alongside some lobster boats, barge of the Thames and various other lightships. It is in the Port-Rhu that the Mini Transat-Iles de Guadeloupe fleet will be welcomed, like a direct link between the past and the future.

Finally, on the other side of the Pouldavid river, the port of Tréboul is at the heart of all the sailing activities. It is from here that each year, the Minis who have come to compete in the Mini-Fastnet and the Trophée Marie-Agnès Péron (two of the major races in the circuit), depart. Once again, it is from Tréboul that the Dragon Fleets will leave; this monotype still as appreciated as is shown by the hundreds of crew members who come each year to admire it at the foot of the Menez Hom.

The power of attraction

Is it its rebellious character, the beauty of its scenery, its urban setting permanently open to the sea? Nevertheless, Douarnenez has a long history of attracting a number of exceptional personalities. It is here that Jean-Marie Le Bris attempted to fly his winged boat, forerunner of future aircrafts. Anita Conti, a great photographer and author of the sea, had settled here like Georges Perros, author of the "Poèmes Bleus".



An exceptional associative contribution

Finally, all these sporting and cultural events of Douarnenez could not have taken place without the powerful voluntary tradition which is able to rally hundreds of people to organise and carry such an event.

During the 2013 edition, competitors were able to witness first hand the dedication of the volunteers; whether it was giving directions, moving a boat, or giving a helping hand to the skippers there was always a Douarnenez volunteer available and more than willing to help out.

Without all these friendly and hard-working volunteers, Douarnenez would not have enjoyed the same success.

Important Dates for Douarnenez

Friday 11th September: Opening of the **MINI transat – ÎLES DE GUADELOUPE** Village on the quays of the Port Rhu

Sunday 13th September: Prologue "Everything Starts at Finistère"

Saturday 19th September: Start of the first stage Douarnenez- Lanzarote (visible from the Rosmeur port)

THE STOPOVER LANZAROTE



It is a real honour for the “Marinas Calero” to welcome the 20th edition of the **MINI transat** in the Lanzarote marina. It is an event which has captured the attention and admiration of the international “offshore racing” community and represents some of its best values. Concerning my team, I can assure you that we will do everything in our power to ensure that the stay of the Arrecife skippers is as enjoyable as possible.

The “Mini” spirit is so contagious that we will not be alone in our joy. The race now benefits from a fervent and sincere following in Lanzarote. Here, the locals will be more than happy to welcome and take good care of the skippers; proposing various services, advice and assistance.

The “Marina Lanzarote” will be an unprecedented destination for the **MINI transat – ÎLES DE GUADELOUPE** which had seen its previous editions stop at Puerto Calero. This new facility on the town’s sea front is ideally placed within proximity of the shops, nautical manufacturers and the historic and cultural centre of Lanzarote.

The amateur yachtsmen will find within walking distance; the ancient fortifications and the traditional fisherman bars of Arrecife. The fleet will be perfectly placed in the marina which benefits from access to the following facilities: boatyards, information centres with car hire and tourism office as well as a superb fitness centre and swimming pool. The numerous bars and restaurants will satisfy all your expectations and will contribute to the fantastic and joyous autumnal atmosphere when the migration of amateur yachtsmen from northern Europe begins.

A sporting island in essence, Lanzarote is a permanent invitation to return and taste the ideal conditions needed for surf and windsurf. In addition, cycling has recently benefited from a spectacular infatuation with various accessible-to-all mountain bike routes which are equally ideal for long hikes.

We are incredibly proud of Lanzarote’s status, classed “Biosphere Reserve” and we hope that you will appreciate the austere beauty of the island’s only volcano; its vines which are so unique and its nature reserve.

With my family, we have a profound respect for the amount of investment required when taking part in this race, as well as the fair-play spirit of the participants. It is a real pleasure to know that we are also part of the “Mini family” in all these years the race has come to Lanzarote.

Our greatest wish is that the **MINI transat – ÎLES DE GUADELOUPE** continues for at least the next 20 years, to promote its values: the desire to push yourself to your limits, courage, innovation and technique, all whilst conserving the same spirit of camaraderie and solidarity of sailors.

D. José Calero,
Director of Calero Marinas



The different Island

The most eastern of the Canary Islands cultivates its special features. Situated a mere 80 miles away from the African coast, it benefits from a particularly pleasant climate with an annual average temperature of 21 degrees. However, this volcanic island is unique in that it is a summary of man’s capacity to adapt to an often hostile environment. In Lanzarote, the locals have learnt to farm on the volcanic ashes. The island has also benefited from a flourishing fishing economy in the mid 20th century when the island’s trawlers could track the fish along the coast of Mauritania.

A biosphere to explore

In particular, Lanzarote has successfully adopted the “environmentally-friendly tourism” model under the guidance of the painter and sculptor Cesar Manrique who, after an international career, returned in 1966 to his native island and never ceased to advocate the virtues of sustainable tourism, preserving the natural and cultural heritage of the island. His efforts reaped huge rewards as, in 1993, Lanzarote became a UNESCO biosphere reserve. Finally, Lanzarote is also home to the Timanfaya national park which covers almost a third of the island’s surface area. In addition, more than fifteen different museums bear witness to the island’s history and culture

A new marina to pamper

It is in the newly constructed Marina Lanzarote that of the Arrecife port that the participants in the **MINI transat – ÎLES DE GUADELOUPE 2015** will be welcomed. Within walking distance of the town centre and all its conveniences, the marina will be the focal point of the Ministes’ stay at Lanzarote. The port of call should last three weeks, before the fleet heads off towards the West Indies.

Lanzarote Dates

Start of the first stage: From the 16th of September

Presentation of prizes for the first stage: Friday 9th of October

Departure of the second stage Lanzarote- Pointe-à-Pitre: Saturday 31st of October



ÎLES DE GUADELOUPE

**A dream destination,
a constantly developing hotbed**

THE ARRIVAL GUADELOUPE

Towards the end of the Trans-Atlantic crossing, Pointe-à-Pitre will offer to the **MINI transat - ÎLES DE GUADELOUPE** skippers all of its authenticity and generosity. One year after the arrival of the Route du Rhum- Destination Guadeloupe, the regional council of Guadeloupe wished to send a strong message out by becoming a major partner of the **MINI transat**. First and foremost, it is about re-affirming that Guadeloupe is the ultimate nautical destination. From Pointe-à-Pitre to the anchorage of Bouillante, whilst not forgetting the Saintes archipelago and the primitive beauty of Marie-Galante, the Guadeloupe Islands know how to play a varied musical score. A paradise for water-sport enthusiasts, the islands are also renowned for the quality of their sea water which regroups exceptional fauna and flora. Thus, it is not a complete coincidence if divers from around the world come to explore these especially beautiful waters. However, the Guadeloupe Islands have also chosen to register themselves in a resolutely sporting perspective. In this regard, the **MINI transat - ÎLES DE GUADELOUPE** offers very real opportunities for young Guadeloupean skippers who wish to integrate the world of off-shore sailing.

Accessible budgets, an exceptional human adventure and motivation to finish at home are all persuasive arguments for the Guadeloupean skippers. More so than its older sibling, the Route du Rhum, the **MINI transat** proposes tangible and accessible objectives and aspirations. And, Pointe-à-Pitre does not forget that from Michel Desjoyeaux to Lionel Lemonchois, Ellen Mac Arthur, Thomas Coville and Bernard Stamm, a great number of those who have monopolised the podiums of the Route du Rhum have passed through "square one" that is the Mini- Transat.

The participants will be welcomed at the Bas-du-Fort marina which disposes of all the equipment of a modern yachting port and a number of shops within walking distance. It is in this same Marina that the participants of the Route du Rhum are welcomed; ti-punch (with moderation of course), West Indian restaurants and "zouk" will await the skippers at the end of their trans-Atlantic crossing.



Guadeloupe skippers in the Mini Transat

Once again, this year, a skipper from the Guadeloupe Islands will start the **MINI transat - ÎLES DE GUADELOUPE** crossing. Carl Chipotel, 39 years old, firefighter officer and et native to Sainte-Anne will fulfil his dream by following the trail of a few renowned Guadeloupean skippers such as the brothers Claude and Bruno Thélér, Luc Coquelin or even François Lamy who participated in the 2013 Edition. Thus, François will make Carl profit from his experience in order to allow him to be quickly in the thick of all the action.

The sailing pathway is developing more and more in Guadeloupe. Notably, it relies on the revival of traditional regatta boats: the races are very closely contested and the crew have nothing to envy the other skippers. In 2013, the crews of the Mini Transat had been invited to a demonstration regatta on board traditional guadeloupean dinghys. An opportunity to discover machines which were not always of a great sequacity.

Dates in Guadeloupe

Arrival of the second stage: From the 14th of November

Awarding prizes for the second stage Lanzarote- Pointe-à-Pitre: Saturday 28th of November



The official transporter



Air Caraïbes, a regular French airline company, specialised in the Caribbean region, has renewed its partnership with the **MINI transat - ÎLES DE GUADELOUPE 2015**.

A regular, French airline company specialised in the West Indies and Guyana, Air Caraïbes employs around 900 associates. In 2014, the affiliate company of the Vendée group Dubreuil, transported approximately 1,228,000 passengers.

Air Caraïbes operates around 33 weekly flights from Orly South Airport (Paris) towards Guadeloupe (Pointe-à-Pitre), Martinique (Fort-de-France), Guyana (Cayenne), Haïti (Port-au-Prince), Saint-Martin (Princess Juliana) and the Dominican Republic (Saint-Domingue).

Air Caraïbes proposes various advantages and tariff conditions specific to the boat-owners, the skippers and his/her teams, their families, race partners and the media with regards to the two-way tickets Paris Orly Sud <> Pointe-à-Pitre which take place between the 1st of November and the 15th of December 2015.

To book (from Monday to Friday/ from 9 a.m to 6 p.m) :

- Individual trips : Ludivine SONNIC- +33 1 47 83 89 75

E-mail : lsonnic@aircaraibes.com

Tour code (should be mentioned when reservation is made) : 5TX2MINIT

- Group Trips (starting from 10 adults travelling together) :

Raphaëlle BLANC et Maguy POTIERIS- +33 1 47 83 89 85

E-mail : groupes.paris@aircaraibes.com

** The proposed fares are subject to availability at the time of reservation.

Application of the public rates in effect for all departures outside the following dates:

1st of November- 15th of December 2015

For more information, please visit: www.aircaraibes.com or call 0820 835 835

Press Contact

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THE HISTORY OF THE MINI TRANSAT

OVER THE YEARS

1977 - 1981

The foundation

The idea was born following the Solitary Transat of 1976. Frightened to see monsters such as the single-hulled vessel, the Club Méditerranée, 72 metres long starting the race, a British man named Bob Salmon proposed a return to the "roots" of transatlantic racing; "a man, an ocean". The proposed idea is simple: in order to present oneself at the starting line, one will have to respect a unique rule, having a monohull boat and under 6,50 metres. The fleet will leave Penzance, at the tip of the English region of Cornwall, in order to join the Canary Islands as a convoy. From here, the start will be given with the fleet heading towards Antigua in the British West Indies.

1977, the "baptism by fire"

27 gathered in the port of Penzance for the first edition. British and polish sailors, as well as a strong contingent of French who were charmed by the concept. For them, the hardest part of the race would be to reach Penzance, with the Maritime Affairs absolutely banning the prototypes from crossing the Channel to reach their starting point.

Fantastic adventures and clandestinity were the first trademarks for this unique race. It was Daniel Gilard who imposed himself on a "Serpentaire" during the Canary-Antigua stage, the only one which would count in the rankings. The organiser Bob Salmon was also a competitor. However, he eventually finished way behind the frontrunners in Antigua. Each competitor reached the finish line alone and note their own times.

1979, the first prototype

Up until now, the prototypes tended to be a tampered one design boat. The American Norton Smith decided to take the leap. His prototype, American Express, was specially created for this edition; great width, addition of ballasts and twin forestay sails by way of sails, allowing him to beat the competition! ahead of a host of young French sailors including Lionel Péan, Didier Mundutéguy and Loïck Peyron.

1981, bad weather for the fleet

That year, the tail of the Irene Cycle provoked considerable damage during the first stage. A French competitor, Christian Massicot, perished whilst heading towards Penzance and out of the 29 participants, only 13 finished the race. Jacques Peignon won the race with a prototype designed by a young architect, Jean Berret.



Américain Express in 1979

OVER THE YEARS

1983 - 1989

1983, Bob's last one

For this last edition with Penzance as the starting point, and with Bob Salmon having already announced his desire to pass on his responsibilities, the French arrived in force. It was they who today constitute the most imposing fleet, both in terms of quality and quantity. It is Frenchman Stéphane Poughon who won the race with a prototype built within the walls of the Nautical centre of Portsall-Kersaint on a Lucas plan.

1985, the witness passage

The journalist Jean-Luc Garnier takes the reigns of the **MINI transat**. He helps her to conquer the reluctances, convincing the administration of the merits of the **MINI transat**. Like Don Quixote who had seemingly won his battles against the windmills, he obtained the support of the city of Brest and the administration accepted to break with his principles. From that moment, the security rules and regulations become more and more refined, boats that can't sink, inventories of the all safety materials also make an appearance. It's the Aquitaine-born Yves Parlier who wins the stage where now, the two stages count towards the general overall rankings. He is the first navigator to test a carbon mast, which will eventually become a rule for all racing boats several years later.

1987, l'engouement

The aftermath of the first **MINI transat**, with France as the starting point, is very much felt. There are more and more adventurous candidates. After Brest, it is Concarneau which welcomes the race, then Tenerife for the port of call, before rallying Fort-de-France in the Martinique region. At the finish line, Gilles Chiorri is the winner with the already-champion of 1981 prototype. Behind him, a certain Laurent Bourgnon finishes second with a Coco, a series boats designed by Philippe Harlé. An unknown navigator, Isabelle Autissier, for her first off-shore race, finishes in third place.

1989, a "method victory"

Still at the starting line in Concarneau, this edition marks a turning point. The Brest-born Phillipe Vicariot, an engineer, takes particular care in the preparation of his 'Finot Plan'. Whereas others are still playing with drills and screw guns with the start only a few hours away, he causes furore with an impeccable prepared boat, one he barely needs to check in the week building to the start. He is ready, and he brilliantly wins the race whilst improving by two days the reference time.



The fleet leaving Penzance

OVER THE YEARS

1991 - 1999

1991, The Technology Revolution

At the starting point, Douarnenez, this edition marks another abrupt change of direction. Among the competitors, a certain Michel Desjoyeaux, the famous icon of the Figaro circuit and future double-champion of the Vendée Globe, comes to put into practice a few innovative concepts he has thought up with the help of the CDK construction site where his brothers Hubert and Bertrand still work. His prototype is a condensation of findings: a canting keel, a carbon, pivoting mast, an asymmetrical spinnaker tacked on an outside, pivoting tip. Trapped in a port of call due to damage during the first stage, he eventually wins the second but will leave the final victory to Damien Grimont. This particularly challenging edition will tragically be remembered for two deaths: Marie-Agnès Péron who was washed up on to the coast in Asturias and the boat of Philippe Graber which was discovered empty off the coast of the Canary Islands.



Sébastien Magnen, designer, builder and skipper of Karen Liquid

1993, terrible winds

For the first time in a while, the first stage of the Mini Transat gets trapped by cold and very bad weather. The fleet endured terrible winds in the Bay of Biscay and Pascal Leys, one of the competition's most experienced participants, boat is found completely smashed up and with one one on board. The organisers decided to cancel that stage, just one competitor does not receive the calls relayed by the radio on board and the VHF and therefore continues all the way to Madeira. Thierry Dubois therefore finds himself alone in Madeira, waiting for the fleet which eventually arrives in convoy. He then went on to win the second stage in a record-breaking time. The appearance of Coco, a one design boat especially designed for the Mini Transat, leads to the first creation of a specific ranking.

1995, a return to origins

For this edition, it is (once again) Brest which welcomes the fleet of the Mini Transat. Yvan Bourgnon wins the contest following a bitter duel with Thierry Fagnent, competitor and engineer for the two prototypes at the outposts of the race. In third place, we discover a Swiss navigator who built his boat in a warehouse in Lesconil, a certain Bernard Stamm who eventually makes his return by launching the construction of an IMOCA 60.

1997, competitor and architect

Still with Brest as the starting point, with Fort-de-France the destination, it's Sébastien Magnen who claims victory with a boat he designed and constructed himself. In fact, Karen Liquid reveals herself to be particularly able on boat speed. More powerful than the other prototypes, he imposes himself in a Transat which was particularly slow, more than 31 days of racing.

1999, the first double in the Mini

In 1999, the race once again suffers from bad weather in the Bay of Biscay, the reason for many withdrawals from the competition. Once again, it is Sébastien Magnen who claims victory in a particularly difficult challenge due to the fact that half of the fleet did not arrive at Rivière Sens in the Guadeloupe Islands. In little over 24 days, he etches his name in the record books of the competition.

OVER THE YEARS

2001 - 2007

2001, a change of direction

The end of departures from Brittany ! The **MINI transat** moved to La Rochelle where it become the Transat 6,50. Its the big upheaval: a new port of departure, a new destination. For the first time, the Minis will cross the equator to reach Salvador de Bahia in Brazil.

This change in destination has other consequences: by abandoning the West Indies, the race is no longer subject to cyclone risks. So, the start can be put forward in order to guarantee a more hospitable Bay of Biscay. However, the crossing will now integrate a passage through the doldrums and will be less open to navigation options than a crossing of the Atlantic with the trade winds. Once again, it is a Magnen Plan who prevails in the hands of Yannick Bestaven.

2003, entries grow

Since 1999, the candidates for the **MINI transat** outnumber the available places. In addition, the new route seems easier to access with the possibility of mastering the crossing of the Bay of Biscay. The number of participants on the start line is 72. Despite the increasingly strict qualification rules, a many are those who enter the adventure. That year, Armel Tripon, the favourite, was victorious.

2005, the sporting logic

Corentin Douguet dominated the pre-season races. For two years, the openly ambitious sailor trained constantly on board his Manaurd Plan. A determined and well-trained sailor, a fast and well-built boat, not much more was needed in order for him to claim a clean and fuss-free victory.

2007, a surprise victory

In 2007, two sailors stood out above the competition. Isabelle Joschke had dominated her pre-season races when Yves Le Blévec who benefited from an undeniable experience with two **MINI transat** races and a world-crossing record to his name alongside Bruno Peyron.

It is Isabelle who will emerge victorious in the first round at Funchal, the end-point of the first stage. However, she breaks a rope in the second round and stops at the Cap Verde Islands in order to carry out the necessary reparations. Her rival therefore dashes towards the finish line but, without any means of communication, does not know where his rivals are situated. It will therefore be a divine surprise at the finish line in Salvador de Bahia.

Yannick Bestaven wins the Mini Transat in 2001



OVER THE YEARS

2009 - 2013

2009, the man from the North

It is a man from Dunkirk who claims victory in this new edition. Perfectly prepared, Thomas Ruyant who bought Isabelle Joschke's boat, ramped up the pressure during the first two years preceding the **MINI transat**. In series, for the first time, a foreigner was victorious in the **MINI transat**. It was the Portuguese navigator Francisco Lobato, who had the upper hand over his rivals.



The Magnum designed by David Raison won in 2011

2011, the revolution of Reason

David Raison, navigator and architect, designed and built a strange-looking boat in 2010. The Magnum, with a rounded bow like the Scows from North America, demands a certain clarification, different ways of navigating.

When he arrives at the start in La Rochelle for Salvador de Bahia, the architect skipper is at the heights in terms of mastering his art. His race is a real demonstration, and maybe a sign too, of an architectural revolution.

2013, a turbulent return to origins

For his return in the traditional route, with the West Indies as the final destination and Douarnenez as the starting point, the **MINI transat** undergoes a rather strange catastrophe. The starting point of the race is changed three times, the dips don't stop in the Bay of Biscay.

Finally, the fleet will leave from Sada, at the tip of Galicia after a crossing of the gulf in convoys. Due to the delays, the stage of Lanzarote is cancelled and it will be a direct race in the West Indies, passing through the Canary Islands. On this course, the superiority of the "Plan Raison", raced by the Italian Giancarlo Pedote, is not as obvious and it is Benoît Marie, a total outsider, who claims the final victory with the same boat used by Thomas Ruyant in his 2009 victory

THE 20TH EDITION OF MINI TRANSAT ÎLES DE GUÂDELOUPE



THE ROUTE



MINI TRANSAT

The Instructions

What is a Mini?

It is a small monohull boat measuring 6,50m in length, that is to say nearly three times less than the Vendée Globe boats, a maximum width of 3 metres. With too much sail up, they are extremely powerful boats and particularly winged with a high speed range (when sailing downwind).

There are just a few square metres of deck, the most comfortable place on the boat when the sea is calm. Inside the boat, the area is cramped where the headroom height (the distance separating the bottom of the boat and the ceiling of the cabin) can sometimes be less than 1,40m.

Why the **MINI**?

For many skippers, it's a mandatory "rite of passage" before making a start on a professional sailing career. «Get through the Mini first», some people say. For others, it is a childhood dream that becomes reality. Above all, it is an exceptional maritime adventure; approximately four weeks of solo navigation in two stages, a trans-Atlantic crossing without exterior assistance, and most importantly, some great friendships are forged, a hallmark of the Mini Class spirit.

Why two rankings?

In Mini, there are two very distinct and different rankings: the prototypes constructed individually, created for the race and the one design boats which are used for racing or cruising. The prototypes are the heart and soul of the Mini Class. Genuine laboratories, they are often the fruit of personal investment on the skipper's behalf who set out in the construction adventure, sometimes even going as far as creating their own boat drawings.

Technique, demands; the prototypes are also at the forefront of off-shore sailing. It is in Mini that the following was launched: canting keels, swivelling bowsprits and asymmetrical spinnakers are also available for bigger boats.

Today, the series boats have become real racing beasts. However, they also have to be built in identical fashion with a minimum of 10 models in order to acquire this status. In addition the series boats are less sophisticated than the prototypes: carbon is not allowed, fixed keel measuring a maximum of 1,60m, ballasts are not allowed, etc. Today, the skippers that commit to a series boat are often people who have an additional professional activity and so do not have the time to invest in the preparation of a prototype. The series boats also attract more and more regatta sailors who, first and foremost, come for the (almost) equal "fight for armour".

Who sets the rules?

The Mini Class is entirely managed by its members who are, in the large majority, still active sailors within their class. It is the Mini Class who fixes the rules, defines the qualification conditions for the different challenges and presents the sailing instructions detailing the course which is then given to the race organisers. Today, the Mini Class represents around 300 skippers from some 20 different nations. Its boards of directors is renewed by half every year.

MINI TRANSAT

Alone in the world or not...

It is both the magic, and the most gruelling trait of **MINI transat**. On board these minis, the solo sailors are only allowed the VHF as a means of communication with the outside world.

That is to say, a tool which allows them to communicate from ship to ship within a perimeter spanning approximately ten or so kilometres. If, during the starting phase or the first days of navigation, the contacts are frequent, and as they move away from the starting point, the disparity between the boats increases and the possibility to exchange a few words with one's neighbour become increasingly scattered and infrequent. The only updates from solid land will be those broadcast daily by the race management via the intermediary of the SSB transmission: the weather forecast, a ranking with distance to finish and a few personal messages distilled sparingly by the race director.

It is particularly tricky during the second stage, when the adventurous candidates ready themselves for the big jump; almost three weeks without possibility of a stopover, when the ultimate objective is to reach the other side of the Atlantic Ocean.

For those who are discovering the **MINI transat**, for the first time, it is often after 5/6 days that the race takes on a totally different dimension. You need to be mentally resilient in order to avoid yielding to self questioning when you know full well that contact with others will be random and unpredictable and that some have to endure a week with no communication with the outside world.

The testimonies of those who have passed through the **MINI transat** are enlightening: without VHF contact for almost a week, the winner of the 19th edition Benoit Marie learnt of his victory when the first press boat came to meet him a few hours before going over the finish line.

In a world where we are constantly connected, it is a real journey that awaits the 84 solo sailors on the **MINI transat**.

Herding Dog

Within this scheme, the "guiding boats" play an important role. There are eight of them, and they lock down the whole fleet along their crossings. They gather the secrets of the participants, make the link with the Organisation, give information on the troops morale, potential race incidents, anecdotes which are the thrills of the **MINI transat**. Finally, they can be called into intervention under the order of the race director should there be a need for assistance. They are therefore the ears of the race, as well as the shepherd dogs of this transatlantic adventure.



MINI CLASS

The look-out

Association law of 1901, the Mini Class is the expression of the skippers involved in the Mini circuit. With more than 350 members, the objective is to encourage the practice of off-shore sailing in 6,50m, but also to ensure the security of the sailors. Finally, the role of the Mini Class, Finally, the role of the Mini Class is to encourage technological innovation and performance in offshore sailing whilst ensuring the safety and security of the boats and sailors.

To help sailors develop, to be aware of their responsibilities, their sense of solidarity and mutual assistance; these are the primary objectives of the Mini Class.

Every year, the members elect their administrative council which is made up of 11 administrators, all are, by definition, volunteers. Every year, the Class edits the "Mini Guide" which lays down the rules and regulations, takes an inventory of the races for the Mini 6.50, defines the prototype rules and the series boats. Today, the Mini Class co-ordinates a circuit consisting of 15 events at national or international level and which are organised by clubs in France, Spain, Italy and Great Britain.

It is also the Mini Class who produces the race guidelines for their iconic event, the **MINI transat**. For the 2013 and 2015 editions, Douarnenez has run the event.

With members coming from 17 different nations, it is without a doubt unquestionably the largest and biggest and most international race. Another factor which has surely contributed to the success of the Mini Class is the diversity in age and social/geographical backgrounds of its members.

The Class keeps its members regularly informed about the evolutions in the rules and regulations and programming of the races. The Class acts as central point of call for the event organisers and the sailors and is present at the starts and finishes of all events. It also organises measure sessions and maintains a regular contact with the institutional bodies (maritime affairs, sports federations etc).

The FFVoile has coordinated, alongside the Mini Class, the organisation of the French Championships of Off-Shore Solo Racing - Mini 6.50. In 2015, the chosen events are the Pornichet Select 6.50 (coef 2), The Trophée Marie-Agnès Péron (coef 2), the stage Douarnenez- Lanzarote on the Mini transat – ÎLES DE GUADELOUPE (coef 1), the stage Lanzarote – Pointe-à-Pitre (coef 1) and the general overall ranking of the Mini Transat – Îles de Guadeloupe (coef 2).

In 2014, Italian skipper Giancarlo Pedote, for the second consecutive year, earned the title of Champion of France in a prototype whilst Tanguy Le Turquais was declared champion in the series boats section.



FROM PRE-ENTRY...

... to qualification

Taking part in the **MINI transat** has to be earned... Today, to hope to be on the start line, the participants have to follow a qualification cycle which is, if some rumours are to be believed, harder than the actual race itself. These rules were introduced progressively, first and foremost to develop active security of each participant and to ensure that the hopefuls for the race have the required skills.

"There is nothing anodyne about crossing the Atlantic solo. It is a real, personal engagement, an experience where one takes charge of one's own destiny; in the middle of the ocean where they cannot rely on anyone but themselves. And the qualification, specially the proposed races, are there to prepare you. That is why we would strongly recommend you to not undergo the qualification course with a fleet. The volunteers of the Qualification Commission, which checks over your qualification file, are not there to punish but to accompany you in your preparation for the race.

Some people see in this qualification events an "extra" obstacle on the path that is littered with pitfalls which eventually leads competitors to the **MINI transat** line. Others, many of whom have already participated in the qualification events, have appreciated it. They learn a number of important things during this qualification process. Often, they return transformed". This extract from the rules and regulations of the Mini Class lays out clearly the stakes. Following the **MINI transat** of 1999, which because of bad weather, had seen a large part of its fleet abandon and a number of participants activate their distress beacon, the Mini Class has re-enforced hugely their selection criteria.

Today, to participate in the **MINI transat**, a sailor must have covered over 1000 'racing' miles- with at least a solo passage, on one of the different Mini circuit races, as well as one qualification round of 1000 miles with no port of call. Two different routes are proposed: in the Atlantic, the participants have to complete a loop between the l'île de Ré, the plateau of Rochebonne and the Coningbeg buoy off the Irish coast. In the Mediterranean, they will have to bypass the Gorgone Islands (just off the Genoa coast), the Porquerolles Islands, passing between Minorca and Majorca, bypassing Sardinia, then the Island of Zannone, not far from the Gulf of Naples. Each participant can enter one of these events and pick his/her preferred starting point.

The participants, having already taken part in a solo race covering more than 1000 miles, are dispensed from "re-taking part" in the qualification event. For a participant using the same boat with which he raced a 1000 mile race within the previous three years, the only obligation is to participate once again in a pre-season race.



An informative and educational action

The “Blue Label” is part of the Mini Class traditions. The operation, which was created in 1989 by a small group of racers already concerned with the preservation and protection of the oceans, has since been a part of every **MINI transat** edition. The objective is twofold: on the one hand, it is about offering schoolchildren an educational booklet about the boats of the **MINI transat**, but also about the oceans, the fauna and flora, and meteorology. In addition, it is a twofold engagement for the solo sailors setting off on their crossing of the Atlantic. The first of which is: establishing a link with a primary school class, becoming the children’s point of reference throughout the race. At the same time, all the participants commit to completely respecting their environment: conserving rubbish on board their boats, avoiding wastage and transmitting positive messages promoting the preservation of our planet.

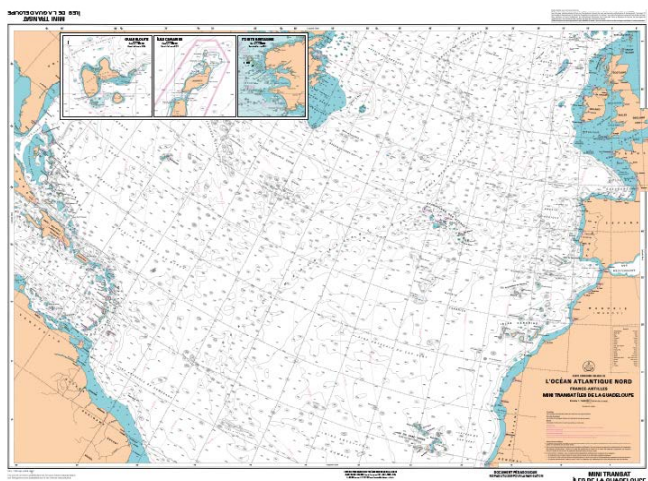
At the end of the day, these solo sailors are the best possible ambassadors for school-children. This is because they live an exceptional adventure which, as often takes place, they recount following the end of the races. For these reasons, they push virtuous behaviours and why not, a few vocational aspirations.

In 2015, it is estimated that around 1,500 school-children will be associated with this campaign.

SHOM lays its cards on the table

For the “Blue Label” operation, the Douarnenez Race organiser has passed a convention with the Hydrographic and Oceanographic Service of the Navy (SHOM). The SHOM will thus provide maps of the Atlantic where the schoolchildren will not only be able to see the various positions of the sailors, but also learn to be able to distinguish latitude and longitude, positioning using the key passages such as the Bay of Biscay, the Canary Islands archipelago, the trade winds, and the Guadeloupe Islands.

The SHOM maps, apart from their great graphic quality, remain today the only usable, official documents for navigation. On board the Minis, the map of the Atlantic is the indispensable support where each participant can jot down his/her daily position and measure the advance of his/her navigation.



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