Saltwater Stone

CLIENT NEWSROOM

Pip Hare and Paul Larsen on board 'Superbigou' at Poole Boat Show

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Pip Hare and Paul Larsen team up for Fastnet Race

Vendée Globe entrant Pip Hare and world sailing speed record holder Paul Larsen have teamed up to campaign Pip's IMOCA 60 *Superbigou* in the Rolex Fastnet race. Starting from Cowes on Saturday 3rd August 2019, they join a fleet of 27 IMOCA 60s, 23 of which have been entered for the Vendée Globe race in 2020. With that much talent and commitment on the line, competitors and bystanders are in for an exciting ride.

With 20 years of ocean racing experience and several transatlantic races to

her name, some of them single-handed, Pip Hare is no beginner, but this is her first Vendée campaign and she is clear that the road to success is never to stop learning. Asked about her Fastnet partnership with Paul Larsen, Pip said: “Paul’s experience is diverse and includes several world records, two circumnavigations and a recreation of Shackleton’s incredible journey from Elephant island to South Georgia. I am both humbled and happy that someone with Paul’s experience would want to race with me, a relative novice in the IMOCA class.

“We are going to have some great competition and it will be a fast and furious race. Double-handing with the king of speed is going to be epic. Prepare for the *Superbigou* to fly.”

Paul first met Pip at the Poole Boat Show in June. Impressed by Pip’s commitment and determination, he said: “When I ventured on my own journeys I’d been helped by people I never knew when I started. I never took it lightly that they believed my passion and thought I was worth the effort.

“I shook her hand and signed on for the Fastnet. I’m not at all bothered that this won’t be the fastest boat out there. I think of how special it might be to see her tired arms held aloft as she crosses that glorious finish line in Les Sables d’Olonne. But it will be all the more special for having shared a small part of the journey. I want those sort of memories in my life. My decision was easy really.

“Now Mr Fastnet… what have you got in store?”

Racing from Cowes to Plymouth via the Fastnet Rock, the 608-mile Rolex Fastnet is a sprint rather than a marathon for these ocean-girdling yachts. However, as one of the world’s premier sailing events, it’s a must in the sailing calendar. And for those of us onshore, the opportunity to watch the world’s top sailing talent battle for supremacy on our doorstep is utterly unmissable.

Powerful women

Over 20% of the skippers in the IMOCA 60 fleet for the Rolex Fastnet are female, approximately double the average figure for the Fastnet fleets. Pip explained: “It’s amazing to see women being represented so well at the top

levels of sailing. With these boats, no-one has the muscle power to handle the sails alone, so it's more about good technique and quick problem solving. It's a level playing field, and that's what makes it so exciting. What makes you competitive is your mindset and your tactics."

About Paul Larsen

Paul is best known as the holder of the 500m and one-mile sailing speed records. Set in 2012 on his foiling *Sailrocket II* in Walvis Bay, Namibia, he smashed the previous record by nearly 10 knots to hit 65.45 knots. A self-taught sailor and natural innovator, Paul has an exceptional talent for sailing boats fast, and for challenging the accepted technology to push the boundaries of the possible.

Australian-born Paul is now based in Weymouth and continues to pursue his passion for sailing at speed. A regular crew member and helm on the MOD 70 *Concise 10*, he is equally at home racing with Weymouth's A-Class catamaran fleet.

About Pip Hare

Pip, 45, grew up near Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, and learned how to sail on the River Deben. Her father comes from Woodbridge, so Waldringfield and the east coast were a natural choice for the family sailing holidays. First exploring the east coast rivers as family of six squeezed into a 25ft Folkboat surviving on Smash, sausages and peas, they later upsized to a Moody 33 and spent their summers in Holland.

Pip's passion for sailing took root when she went on holiday with the Seamanship Foundation aged 16, sailing around the Cornish coast. She built offshore experience sailing tall ships with the Jubilee Sailing Trust and, by 2008, was living aboard her Lightwave 395 *The Shed*, cruising the coast of South America. She was still there when she secured sponsorship to take part in the 2009 Original Single-handed Transatlantic Race (OSTAR) and fulfil her dream of single-handed ocean racing. With just six months until the start she sailed solo back to the UK, repairing her worn-out mainsail almost nightly and arriving in Levington, Suffolk, 10kg lighter but having proved to herself she had what it took to cross oceans alone.

Since completing the OSTAR, Pip has sailed in multiple offshore events including the Mini Transat, a madcap race single-handing 6.5m (21ft) boats across the Atlantic. For a woman who never ceases to challenge herself, her Vendée campaign is a natural goal. “I’m doing this because it’s the hardest yacht race in the world,” she said. “And because I’m good enough.”

For more information, visit www.piphareoceanracing.com.

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