

One week till the start!



TEMENOS has been in the corsair town of Saint Malo since last Thursday. Propelled along in steady downwind conditions as far as Ushant, the monohull made it to Cap Fréhel by Wednesday evening but had to wait until the following day for the lock gates to open.

With the surfs from first light in their wake, TEMENOS was forced to finish off its delivery in stiff, upwind conditions synonymous with the end of October, with gusts reaching 40 knots.

The autumnal grey which accompanied the boat that day won't have been able to use the solar panels to best effect, but in a race which finishes under the scorching sun of the West Indies things will soon be very different. Managing power is crucial aboard these formula ones of the seas, where a feed for the automatic pilots, computers, apparatus and navigation lights is a prerequisite.

Dominique has opted to install 12 Flexcell solar panels aboard. The latter, which today cover the deck of the new TEMENOS, will enable a reduction in the amount of onboard fuel. This fuel reduction will constitute a particularly interesting alternative to weight refinement, which greatly influences Imoca monohulls.

Flexcell, the Swiss partner to Dominique's project is very much involved in the practical and effective application of its products in the extreme conditions of the Vendée Globe.

Without going as far as to say it was a godsend, for the skipper to put the boat to the test in rough weather is a positive thing. All the breeze sails were out on deck, and there were three reefs in the mainsail. For Dominique, it was the final opportunity to rehearse manoeuvres prior to the start next Sunday.

On arrival in Saint-Malo, both the skipper and the navigator Michèle Paret, entered together in the Barcelona World Race aboard TEMENOS, were of the same mind, "The boat reacts really well, it is robust and very responsive, providing us with some great sensations. We still have a lot to learn from it.

The only slight glitch with the delivery was some slight damage to the bow of the hull following a collision with a floating object. Fortunately the 'injury' was only superficial, the boat's structure not being affected, but with less than 10 days to the start, this mishap forced the shore crew to react quickly in order not to hamper the smooth running of the final preparations on shore.

Though the technical staff originally thought they may be able to make repairs to the bow without lifting it out of the water, it was necessary to quickly face facts. Moved over to the commercial port, TEMENOS was lifted and held above the water so that the shore crew could apply the necessary coatings under the dry conditions.

Since midnight on Saturday evening, TEMENOS has been back with the other 11 Imoca monohulls, grouped together in the Bassin Vauban. The boat is not scheduled to leave the basin prior to Sunday 29th October, the date on which the 74 participants in this 8th Route du Rhum La Banque Postale, will set off for Pointe à Pitre, Guadeloupe.

