

SPONSORSHIP. To enhance its public image and develop its corporate culture, Safran is sponsoring ocean racing in an original way: by commissioning its own ocean racing yacht, incorporating several of the Group's distinctive technologies.

SAFRAN AROUND THE WORLD



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In November 2007, the Safran Open 60 monohull racing yacht finished second in the Transat Jacques Vabre race. Charles Caudrelier joined Marc Guillemot as co-skipper.

When it was formed in 2005, the new Safran Group wanted to establish a solid global reputation and develop a dynamic corporate culture, based on a passion for performance, team spirit and total quality. Sports sponsorship was identified at the time as one way to achieve this end.

Since technological expertise is the Safran Group's trademark, it sought a sport that could use advanced technologies – and sailing immediately became an obvious choice. It is also a discipline that encourages going beyond one's normal limits. In the words of corporate vice president for communications Françoise Descheemaeker, "It's a sport whose values of commitment, courage, team spirit and innovation are in keeping with our own."

To get the sponsorship project going as early as possible, Safran raised its pennant in 2006 on a leased boat, the former Kingfisher which Ellen MacArthur had sailed into second place in the last Vendée Globe round-the-world solo race. This preliminary phase enabled Marc Guillemot, an experienced multihull skipper, to refamiliarize himself with monohull sailing. In the meantime Safran set up its project team, helped draw up the boat's specifications and confirmed the technical choices to be embodied in the future *Safran*. Two naval architects were chosen: Guillaume Verdier, a monohull specialist, and Vincent Lauriot Prévost, an expert in multihull design. The result was a highly innovative prototype, drawing on expertise in both areas. Construction of the IMOCA Open 60 class boat (International Monohull Class Association, an ocean racing class for 60-foot boats) was assigned to the Larros shipyard.

All hands on deck!

Employees from different Safran companies were deeply involved in this project over a period of a year. More than 70 engineers and technicians pitched in to help the naval architects and the shipyard. Embodying the dreams of Safran and Marc Guillemot alike, the 60-foot (18,28 meter) monohull is a distillation of theoretical expertise,

practical know-how and state-of-the-art technology. For instance, it uses a lithium-ion battery developed by Sagem Défense Sécurité for the Félin integrated equipment suite for tomorrow's infantry soldiers. Another example is the boat's canting keel system, which benefited from the hydraulics expertise of Messier-Bugatti. The hull itself also took advantage of the Group's know-how, industrial facilities and experience with large-scale high-tech projects (see box on right).

This unique partnership has an intrinsic logic, the skipper Marc Guillemot is convinced: "Aeronautical techniques are often close to the sort of requirements we have with boats. I'm especially thinking of composite materials, electrical generators and the design engineering needed for certain parts. This help was invaluable to us; in fact it was a dream come true to have access to all those skills and long may it continue! At every meeting or even every phone call, the Safran teams were always there with new solutions. The whole crew has always felt like we had very solid support."

Transat Jacques Vabre, an exciting debut

After a year of unflagging efforts, *Safran* was launched in August 2007 and formally christened at Le Havre on September 1, in a ceremony for 500 Group employees (from 17 companies) and their families. Two and a half months later, *Safran* finished second in the Transat Jacques Vabre transatlantic race, after a tense, suspenseful

VIEWPOINT



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When engineers set sail

GUILLAUME VERDIER

GUILLAUME VERDIER, ONE OF THE TWO NAVAL ARCHITECTS WHO DESIGNED THE OCEAN RACER SAFRAN, RECALLS THE SPECIAL BONDS ESTABLISHED WITH THE GROUP'S ENGINEERING TEAMS AND THE SHARING OF EXPERIENCE THAT LIE BEHIND THE BOAT'S CONCEPTION.

What did Safran contribute to the boat's design?

Safran contributed extensive advice, expertise and technologies, but above all it provided a rigorous approach to the work process. The traditional design sequence with its three stages – sketch, first draft and finished design – was refined with a system of meetings to review each step and record the reasons for each decision.

What are the advantages of this work method?

The fact that decisions can be traced prevents accidental interference with

decisions taken earlier, and also helps avoid time-wasting by rehashing choices already made. When a doubt or problem arises, a glance at the database is enough to explain why a particular decision was made.

What is it that makes Safran special as a sponsor?

Safran embodies an engineering culture, something that is quite rare among sponsors. Nevertheless, they haven't interfered at all. The teams got along very well, so we had time to do things properly. I think that helps explain the quality of the results.

contest during which it consistently showed a good turn of speed. No wonder its rivals have dubbed it "the fighter plane". This heady start makes it one of the leading contenders for the next Vendée Globe in November 2008.

Meanwhile, the project has already helped to promote awareness of Safran: "We got a lot of media attention emphasizing the Group's high-tech image," confirms Françoise Descheemaeker.

Enthusiasm for the project has seized the Group's employees, thousands of whom crowded into the traveling exhibition of photos shown at 14 Safran plants... not to mention the hundreds of others who followed the Transat Jacques Vabre hour after hour on the website set up by Safran for the occasion (www.safran-sixty.com). ■

G. SEQUEIRA-MARTINS

MILESTONES

- **DECEMBER 2005:** Safran announces its partnership with skipper Marc Guillemot.
- **NOVEMBER 2006:** Marc Guillemot finishes 6th in the Route du Rhum in the boat leased by the Safran Group.
- **AUGUST 2007:** Launch of the ocean racer *Safran* designed by naval architects Guillaume Verdier and Vincent Lauriot Prévost with the help of Safran companies.
- **NOVEMBER 2007:** After 17 days at sea, Marc Guillemot takes second place in the Transat Jacques Vabre. The Safran Sailing Team is already working on plans to make the boat even faster.
- **NOVEMBRE 2008:** Target "Le Vendée Globe".



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