

SAILING ANARCHY[®]

Dial "40"

10/18/07

Our good friend Jocelyn Bleriot files this report. Enjoy.



Giovanni Soldini and Guillaume Verdier go back a long way, since the Italian skipper and the (then very young) French designer had worked together on the Fila Open 60' while Guillaume was employed by the Groupe Finot. With that famous 60', he won the 1998-99 Around Alone, while in the process salvaging Isabelle Autissier from her capsized vessel in the Pacific - the boat recently achieved yet another circumnavigation under the name of Saga Insurance, with Sir Robin Knox-Johnston at the helm, in the Velux 5 Oceans.

For his new Telecom Italia Class 40 project, Giovanni wanted to turn to a designer who'd be able to listen to his ideas and include them in his thoughts process, and Guillaume seemed the right person for that - of course, the fact that those two easygoing guys got along great didn't hurt either. For the designer, this 40 footer came right after an extensive research period carried out for the Marc Guillemot's Safran and Kito de Pavant's Groupe Bel Open 60s, designed in association with multihull wizards VPLP, and which SA readers have read about already. Needless to say that the 40 benefits from that experience, and is like her bigger counterparts a simple, reliable and also light boat, boasting a closed cockpit area. Class 40 rules state a minimum displacement, a maximum beam and mast height, and some fixed stability criteria. The designer then has to concentrate on hull shapes, stability, sailplan and deck layout, which must both be very rationalized for single-handed races. Note the chines, definitely reminiscent of the latest 60s mentioned above.

Telecom Italia was very neatly built by the FR Nautisme yard in Lorient (now home of most of the major IMOCA and record-breaking multis teams) using glass fibre sandwich (an assembly of unidirectional cloth fully vacuum-compacted). She hit the water on September

19, but unfortunately a few days later Giovanni was hit by a fishing boat not far from the Fastnet, and dismasted ! Nevertheless, Telecom Italia will be ready for the Transat Jacques Vabre (Le Havre - Bahia), a double-handed event that Giovanni will race with fellow Italian skipper Pietro d'Ali, who's worked wonders in the tough Figaro Class, after having shone in the Star Class and taken part in the America's Cup - tough guy if you want to keep things simple.

With a staggering figure of 32 units entered in the Jacques Vabre, the Class 40 certainly thrives, and this new Verdier design is a welcome and certainly very competitive addition to this fast growing fleet.

TELECOM ITALIA CLASS 40

Designer : Guillaume Verdier
Length 12.19 m
Displacement 4.5 tonnes
Draft 3m
Width 4.5 m
Total mast height 19 m
Upwind sail area 114 square meters

Check out

<http://www.soldini.it/> (Lots of build pictures)
<http://www.guillaumeverdier.com>