

Alinghi members strengthen SYZ & CO's hydrofoil catamaran team

Geneva, 19 May 2010 – Luc du Bois, the «performer» of the Alinghi Design Team, is joining the SYZ & CO hydrofoil catamaran. A performance analysis expert, Luc du Bois is also the co-inventor of 3DL sail technology and is one of the world's top A Class catamaran sailors. He brings with him Alinghi colleague Daniele Costantini, a fibre optics technology specialist. The objective for the coming year: to analyse and improve the boat's performance, in order to take part in the main regattas and beat all of the lake's speed records!

The « SYZ & CO » hydrofoil catamaran was relaunched at the end of April in her new white colours for a season that appears full of promise, with a new configuration and above all a new team for the prototype conceived by Alex Schneider, Patrick Firmenich and Jean Psarofaghis and designed by naval architects VPLP (Van Peteghem – Lauriot Prevost).

Alex Schneider has known Luc du Bois since they were students. « We spent many good times together sailing and mountaineering, and we continue to take the opportunity to share these two passions whenever we get a chance to do so.» Since Alinghi's future remains uncertain, Luc is currently available to strengthen the team. His role: to accelerate and optimize the tuning of the hydrofoil, providing the team with the benefit of his lengthy America's Cup experience. The first step will be to collect a full set of data with Daniele Costantini, in order to analyze the boat's performance, in particular with the help of the optical fibre placed in the foils. This technology provides measures of the stress and loads undergone by the catamaran during sailing. The data will allow Luc to be able to determine how to improve the boat's performance. « *You need to sail for hours and hours to optimize an experimental boat like the SYZ & CO hydrofoil catamaran* » explains Luc du Bois. « *We have to devote a lot of time to sailing, in particular to establish the boat's polars with precision.*»

The priority sailing objective for the season is to optimize the boat and its performance, then to tackle the lake's speed records, and potentially also to take part in the main regattas. Patrick Firmenich explains : « *SYZ & CO represents an important technological challenge and the first step remains to tune up the boat and increase its reliability. It is very fast but we need to improve consistency and versatility. It's relatively easy to make a boat fly nowadays, but to ensure that it is fast across all wind angles and speeds remains a major challenge from a technological point of view. We still have a lot to learn and a lot of work to do in order to optimize her. Moreover, the wind conditions in the early summer are rarely conducive to flying. During the second part of the season, we'll tackle the speed records and are aiming at one or several of the SYZ & CO Léman Sailing Speed Records.*»

The hulls, which had been extended at the end of last season and one of which had broken during a strong wind record attempt, have been rebuilt during the winter. Simplifications have permitted a significant weight loss, particularly in the hydraulic system. Finally, a new mast which is 2 metres longer than the previous one will be put into place at the end of the month and will thus allow an increase of the sail area, in order to improve light wind performance. « The idea is mainly to make the most of the region's wind ranges and not necessarily to push the top performance further. » declares Luc.

The catamaran will sail with a crew of 4 people, still including Alex Schneider and Patrick Firmenich. Luc du Bois, an exceptional sailor and a several-time European and World champion, will naturally be on board, since Arnaud Psarofaghis is focused on D35s this season. The fourth crew member will change depending on the event, but the idea is to significantly increase the number of tests and of hours spent on the water.

« Foil boats are still experimental. The only boats of this type which have achieved comprehensive results and which are fast both upwind and downwind are the foiling Moths. For all the others, a lot of analysis still needs to be undertaken and a lot of sailing hours have to take place. Many boats fly, but they are not necessarily fast or only in certain specific points of sail. Adding the vertical dimension to sailing, i.e. flying, means the start of a new era. We are still in its early days and find ourselves just at the beginning of the learning curve. » concludes Luc du Bois.

« We are proud to support this adventure, which is both human and technological, helping to write sailing history in real time. Going off the beaten track to invent a new way of sailing is obviously a challenge that cannot be overcome in one day. On the contrary, it requires a large degree of perseverance in order to solve all the problems that inevitably occur. » says Ricardo Payro, Head of Communications at SYZ & CO. « Luc du Bois and Daniele Costantini's involvement clearly shows the interest this project arouses among top specialists. »

For additional information, please contact:

Sandra Mudronja

Sandra Mudronja Consulting & Co
Tel : +41 (0)22 320 95 00
Mob : +41 (0)79 445 87 92
E-mail : sandra.mudronja@smc-co.ch

Ricardo Payro

Banque SYZ & CO S.A.
Tel. : +41 (0) 22 819 98 05
E-Mail: ricardo.payro@syzbank.ch

www.syzfoiler.com

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