

Figaro Bénéteau 3

The world's first production foiling monohull

Modernity, reliability and performance. By combining its expertise and the competence of naval architects Van Peteghem - Lauriot-Prévost, the Bénéteau Group is offering the Figaro class the first one-design production foiling monohull ever devised.

- The Figaro Bénéteau 3 to star in the Solitaire URGO- Le Figaro from 2019.
- A one-design monohull equipped with foils.
- Creation of the Bénéteau Racing Division Group to manage the manufacturing of the production boats.



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We just have to accept it: even the most reliable boats must, one day, fall back into line. In 2019, as the Solitaire URGO- Le Figaro celebrates its fiftieth anniversary, the Figaro Bénéteau 3 will take over from its illustrious predecessor, the Figaro Bénéteau 2, which has been sailing the length and breadth of the French and Atlantic coasts since 2003.

This Figaro Bénéteau 3 is the fruit of a stellar collaboration formed by the Bénéteau Group, with the Class Figaro, OC Sport, the organiser of the Solitaire URGO- Le Figaro and Le Figaro group. Penned by naval architects Van Peteghem – Lauriot-Prévost, whose designs won the last two Vendée Globes and are likely to be on the podium for the 8th edition, the latest of the Class Figaro one-designs is in safe hands.

A boat that is part of the current climate, with a design set to last.

«The challenge of the brief we were given, naval architect Vincent Lauriot-Prévost explains, was to create a boat that performs well and is as reliable as the Figaro Bénéteau 2. We worked extensively with the specialists from Bénéteau Group to design a hi-tech boat in terms of both manufacturing materials and processes.»

Still with a heavy emphasis on top-level performance and competition, the Bénéteau Group has gathered together the leading experts within its brands and its trades to design and build this latest iteration. In this way, they've brought their know-how into play with the creation of the one-design by VPLP.



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Foils, a mast stepped further aft and a high-performance hull

The first prototype is entering the build phase and will be ready to be launched and trialled over the course of the summer 2017. It has been established that the Figaro Bénéteau 3 will come under design category A under ISO/World Sailing.

She will wear the insignia of modernity: foils, yes, but also a more high-performance hull below the waterline that is free of ballast tanks, with a narrower and lighter keel, a mast stepped further aft and a more generous sail plan. Finally, the brief for the Figaro Bénéteau 3 was naturally to be as reliable as her predecessor. VPLP affirm that if a foil were to break in a collision, it wouldn't damage the boat's structure.

The low-down on the Figaro Bénéteau 3

The foils

In contrast to the foils on the Imoca60, the latter will have an inward-facing profile as Vincent Lauriot-Prévost explains. *«The versatile foil we've created provides more than just the dynamic power and vertical lift that is sought after in Imoca. We've designed it in such a way that it creates as little resistance as possible in the light airs and reduces leeway at full speed.»*

The hull below the waterline

Made of foam sandwich, glass fibre and polyester resin, it is in line with current designs. The most significant change is the disappearance of the ballast tanks.

The keel

Deeper, with a narrower keel fin, it will generate less drag. This will be accompanied by the reduction in leeway created by the foils.

Mast and sail plan

As is the case on the Imoca60, the mast is stepped further aft, which enables the incorporation of more high-performance sails and a bowsprit is attached. The solo sailors will sail with a fathead mainsail, a genoa and of course a jib, as well as a masthead spinnaker (measuring 105m²) and, to seek out speed in the light airs, a small gennaker.

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The manufacturing challenge of production boats

Around a hundred Figaro Bénéteau 2s have been built since 2003, which augurs well for the 3rd iteration. In order to optimise the manufacture of production boats, whilst adhering to the drastic criteria of the one-design, the Group has just created the Bénéteau Racing Division Group. It is a powerful signal of the company's desire to forge ahead with innovation that is geared towards performance. A dedicated construction site has been put in place in Nantes-Cheviré (Loire-Atlantique). This hub comprises around fifteen experts and will also be tasked with piloting and producing the Group's future racing and regatta projects.

Game on: the Bénéteau Racing Division will have to produce a first batch of 50 Figaro Bénéteau 3s for the end of 2018. At that point, the class will distribute them solely among members by drawing lots so as to retain sports equity.

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Reaction from:

Yoann Richomme

Winner of the Solitaire Bompard Le Figaro 2016

Head of the Class Figaro's Measurement and Safety Committee

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With this new Figaro Bénéteau 3, we're hoping to offer the fleet and those who are inspired to join us an exhilarating and more modern boat.

Inevitably, after 15 years of offshore racing on the same boat, you get a little tired of it. As such, it was an opportune moment to make the move and, in so doing, get in touch with the status of science. It wasn't about making the Figaro Bénéteau 2 vintage, rather it's about bringing something innovative and visible to the fore.

Foils are clearly the future, especially in a competition environment. The skippers will be able to get to grips with these tools in the Figaro and this will give them the building blocks to move onto something else further down the track should they so wish.

There are sure to be gains in speed, if only from the power of the hull and the contemporary sail plan. However, anticipating the gains isn't easy, especially for a small boat. It should equate to around 15% downwind.

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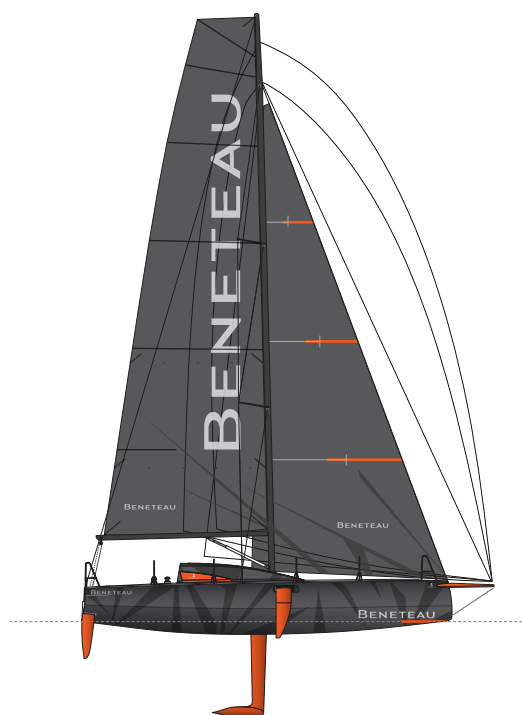
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Technical specifications

LOA	10.85 m
Hull length	9.75 m
Waterline length	9.00 m
Max beam	3.40 m
Waterline beam	2.40 m
Draft	2.50 m
Light displacement	2900 kg
Ballast	1100 kg
Mainsail area	39.5 m ²
Jib area	30.5 m ²
Large spinnaker area	105 m ²



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