



QUIN BISSET

Green teams gear up for the first Solar1 Monte Carlo Cup

▶ Green energy will take centre stage in the yachting capital of the world this summer, with the first Solar1 Monte Carlo Cup.

The solar-powered race series, running July 10-12, was founded by superyacht broker and designer Sergei Dobroserdov and brings together experts and enthusiasts from the worlds of solar energy, green technology and competitive sport. 'The solar power industry is expanding at such a rapid pace that there is a gap in the market for an event of equal magnitude, to unite and represent its stakeholders,' says Dobroserdov.

The Cup will be based at the new Norman Foster-designed clubhouse of the Yacht Club de Monaco and hosted by the club's president Prince Albert II – whose own Foundation fosters environmental aims that chime with the ethos of the series. 'As a location Monaco can undoubtedly deliver thrilling and exciting sporting events,' says Dobroserdov, 'but its commitment to sustainable development and projects aiming to protect the environment mean it is the perfect fit for Solar1 races.'

The Solar1 Monte Carlo Cup will involve teams from all around the world competing in boats powered purely by the sun, under one of three class categories based on differing technical specifications, solar panels and crew. The races will comprise slalom, fleet and sprint races in front of Port Hercules and in Larvotto Bay.

The Dutch design studio Vripack, Solar1's technical partner, is responsible for the V20 Class, which will race at the Cup and be available

to buy. 'It is incredible to see these boats fly across the water. The sea trials left us in no doubt that solar boats are capable and seaworthy enough for tough races,' says Marnix Hoekstra, director of Vripack.

Gerard van der Schaar, a member of the Private Energy Solar Boat Team, which will compete under the Open Class, also found the sea trials a success. 'The waves in Monaco are higher than in the Netherlands so I had to work harder to sail stable,' he says. 'However, we were successful in reaching speeds of 40km per hour. The reaction was so positive – people were stopping me on tenders to ask where they could buy a boat like ours. I think we attracted more attention than the superyachts.'

Solar1 also has educational aims and involved masters students from the International University of Monaco in planning the Cup. The students presented business plans and recommendations for the event, then three teams were selected to work across Solar1's marketing, sponsorship and events departments. 'We chose these three teams as they shared the same passion, vision and drive of Solar1,' says Dobroserdov.

The Cup looks set to be a highlight of the principality's summer events, and will be covered by Eurosport, which reaches 130 million homes across 54 countries. Thirty-one teams have already confirmed their places, with crew ranging from undergraduates to professional boat crews, and applications are still open. Boat International Media is proud to be official superyacht media sponsor of the Solar1 Monte Carlo Cup.