

FLYINGNIKKA: READY TO FLY IN SEVEN MONTHS

CURRENTLY UNDER CONSTRUCTION IN VALENCIA, AT KING MARINE, THE NEW ROBERTO LACORTE'S BOAT WILL BE THE FIRST FOIL MINI MAXI EVER BUILT. LAUNCH PLANNED IN MAY 2022.

September 28, 2021 - The future is now. Nineteen super-technological meters to navigate flying at maximum speeds. And to beat the mileage records of the main offshore regattas, starting with the great Mediterranean classic races.

It's the anticipated, futuristic challenge of FlyingNikka, the first Mini Maxi category full foil sailboat, a project strongly desired by the visionary Roberto Lacorte, entrepreneur and sportsman with a passion for speed - double, since he is also a committed pilot in the World Endurance Championship and in the 24 Hours of Le Mans at the wheel of a Ferrari 488 GTE - which was presented last week at the Breitling Theater of the Genoa International Boat Show.

Designed by a team of naval architects and foil experts coordinated by Irish Mark Mills of Mills Yachts Design, already alongside Lacorte in the design of the legendary and winning SuperNikka, and currently under construction in Valencia, at the well-known King Marine shipyard, FlyingNikka it will be 19 meters long and thanks to a series of latest generation appendages, it will be able to sail in full foiling at 50 knots of speed.

Ready to go into the water by the first half of 2022 - the technical launch is scheduled in Valencia for the end of April, the official launch in Punta Ala for May - FlyingNikka is the result of an intense and thorough 360° work that involved, in addition to designers coordinated by Mills, also the sailors of the team currently working with Roberto Lacorte in the Persico 69F circuit, then the Team Manager and head of the Sails Project Alessio Razeto, Lorenzo Bressani, Enrico Zennaro, Lorenzo de Felice and Andrea Fornaro.

A working group that during the presentation, in which Mark Mills himself, the Project Manager Miki Costa and an exceptional guest, the Luna Rossa skipper Max Sirena participated remotely, illustrated the first, important steps in the project of this incredible boat.

"FlyingNikka will be the first of a new generation of foil monohulls to be launched and this is already a source of great pride and satisfaction. It is a truly innovative boat, very complex both to design and to build, which represents a challenge never faced before", says Lacorte. "In recent months we have worked tirelessly, we will continue to do so in the next few months, intensifying the activity if possible in view of the next steps. Waiting, spasmodic, to see her in the water, ready to sail and to begin the series of tests that will lead us to face the regattas flying at 50 knots of speed".

"The challenge set by Roberto for Flying Nikka is a new one in the history of sailing, not just to have a foiling sailboat, not just to foil long distances offshore, but to do so within the framework of the existing rules, which have no experience of handling foiling boats", says Mark Mills. "This brings many challenges, as does the requirement to keep the project broadly accessible, using the best of the America's Cup experiences in a project with the costs and sophistication more in line with a Grand Prix inshore boat like a Maxi 72. I think these practical requirements make the project much more interesting and rewarding as we are forced to solve problems in robust and realistic ways.

Because this type of boat is so new and challenging it was clear we needed to create a team of experts in each of the specialist areas. Working with our R&D partners KND in Spain, we became one of the first users of the TNZ dynamic VPP Gomboc outside the AC arena, combined with the latest North Sails VPP producing foiling VPP solutions. We brought in AC and IMOCA foils specialist Nat Shaver, North Sails designers Gautier Sergent and Michele Malandra, and the expertise of Pure Engineering led by the relentlessly innovative Giovanni Belgano for engineering. From the clients side project manager Micky Costa has been a crucial member of the team managing the huge complexity of systems and construction at King Marine, along with AC mechanical engineer Thiha Win solving the detail control challenges of such a complex and high performance design", declares Mills.



“In order for a foiling boat to perform across the widest range of conditions and wind angles in a venue like the Mediterranean Sea it is necessary to have better light air and upwind performance than a sliding foiler like an IMOCA can provide. This pushed us towards the AC75 type articulating foil solution which allows the windward foil to lift out of the water and thus reduce drag in light airs”, continue Mills. “The adjustable wing at the bottom of the arm allows us to alter the amount of lift much more rapidly than a sliding foil, allowing us to handle every regime from displacement to takeoff to foiling in the optimal way. Similarly the adjustable rudder elevator allows real-time trim control to deliver the stable ride height that is required for safe high speed flight. Racing in some of the worlds great races under Offshore Special Regulations brings an additional stability requirement that AC75's do not have to meet, so for the purposes of race entry Flying Nikka also has a keel and bulb, providing the stability especially at large angles that also brings some peace of mind when offshore, especially at night.

The sail plan similarly reflects a practical approach to high speed, with a short chord rotating mast which does not require runners due to the 35 degree spreader sweep. With weight so disproportionately important to performance every simplifying step that reduces systems or crew numbers pays back in performance many times over. The removal of runners greatly simplifies the handling and system requirements allowing the 6 man crew to focus on steering, jib and main trim, pit and navigation respectively. With no headstay adjustment headstay tension is achieved as a function of mainsheet load, with the North Helix structured luff sails taking a significant proportion of the forces.

With very high quality predictive tools being managed by Roland Kleiter at KND we have confidence in meeting the original promise we made to the client to achieve takeoff in less than 10kn true wind speed. Once fully powered up we expect maximum boat speeds approaching 50kn, delivering an upwind VMG close to 30kn and downwind VMG close to 40kn.

King Marine have their very experienced team working at full speed on construction in Valencia. The hull and bulkheads are being laminated, and the deck will follow shortly. Cariboni are building the hydraulics and Donati racing and FaRo Advanced Systems are working on the electronics and flight control, ready for final assembly of the components in Spring 2022, a complicated process under the guidance of Micky Costa that alone will take nearly a month, before test sailing can begin in early summer”.

Once ready, FlyingNikka will participate primarily in the most important regattas in the Mediterranean with the flag of the Yacht Club Repubblica Marinara di Pisa and with the support of Cetilar, brand of the pharmaceutical company PharmaNutra S.p.A.

Further information on the new site: <https://flyingnikka.com>

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