

## **Portimão Global Ocean Race:**

### **Enjoying Christmas Stollen in the “Roaring Forties”**

Boris Herrmann und Felix Oehme celebrate Christmas amid towering waves

*Position 45°00.60 S – 44°33.07 E – near the Prince Edward Islands and the Crozet Islands  
Tuesday, 23. December 2008*

Boris Herrmann has to climb the mast. In spite of extraordinarily bad conditions, namely colossal waves and icy winds. The sailor is equipped as if he were about to climb a mountain in the Alps. He is virtually hidden underneath a massive dry suit, the safety belt is buckled. Instead of a helmet, however, he has chosen a warm hood. After securing himself with two carabiner hooks, he begins to ascend. The only illumination from which he can benefit comes from the deck lighting. Apart from this, it is pitch-dark. “Fortunately, otherwise I’d be too afraid”, quips Boris Hermann. At any rate, he moves himself carefully ahead to the foreship of the Class 40 Yacht “Beluga Racer”– reefing, cutting away an entangled sail portion and pulling it down onto the deck, checking everything and returning. Simultaneously, Felix Oehme is standing on deck in his survival suit and battling against the gusting winds and the rough seas for the ultimate control of the small boat. With only a storm jib, the “Beluga Racer” darts with a speed of 13 to 19 knots across the South Indian Ocean. The wind gusts easily reach hurricane force. It is the evening of the 22<sup>nd</sup> of December 2008. Barely an hour later, as Boris Hermann wedges himself into the scant comfort of his bunk, an enormous wave grasps the boat, dragging it and forcing it to execute a complete turn – truly 360° around its mast in the midst of stormy seas. That is nothing less than the welcoming salute of the so called “Roaring Forties”, a chilling greeting directed at Boris Hermann and Felix Oehme.

The Germans, as the leaders in the overall ranking of the “Portimão Global Ocean Race” and currently placing third along this present leg, still have more than 5500 nautical miles ahead. With this second stretch having been initiated on the 14<sup>th</sup> of December in Cape Town, the estimated arrival in New Zealand is slated for the end of January.

**Dr. Christine Keitsch**  
PR-Kontakt

Beluga Offshore Sailing Team  
P.O. Box 10 72 69  
D-28072 Bremen

M +49 (0) 151 - 11 469 360  
E [christine@beluga-racer.com](mailto:christine@beluga-racer.com)  
W [www.beluga-racer.com](http://www.beluga-racer.com)

In the meantime, one of the two-man crews was already forced to strike its sails. The South African duo Lenjohn and Peter van der Wel reversed the course of their boat “Kazimir Partners” merely a few hundred nautical miles following the start in Cape Town. Problems with the mast of the boat prevented them from moving ahead – the first duty of the “Portimão Global Ocean Race”.

Giving up, particularly at this stage, that is something which Boris Hermann and Felix Oehme wouldn't even consider. The reason is quiet simple. It's Christmas, a time for honoring old traditions. Approximately 15 000 kilometers away from their homeland, they are looking forward to enjoying original Stollen, delicious Christmas pastries which they had obtained while visiting a delicatessen shop before the start of the second stage in Cape Town. Furthermore, a USB Stick, barely a few centimeters high, is shining like a proud Christmas Tree. A few small and primarily light-weighted gifts were received from family members and friends prior to departing. “So, we are here with our Stollen, our Tree, our presents and indeed the wind and the quite frosty temperatures, having far more Christmas atmosphere as we would with 30 temperatures of degrees in the shade in Cape Town”, says Boris Hermann. Nevertheless, he does not expect unusually thrilling Christmas days, even in spite of the fact that a low-pressure area is approaching. “The family dramas which take place at this time of year are sometimes more stressful”, comment the skipper with the remarkable calmness and casual attitude which are necessary to survive sailing along the waters of the moody South Polar Ocean.

In their new Podcasts, via the Website [www.beluga-racer.com](http://www.beluga-racer.com), Boris Hermann and Felix Oehme mention their “Christmas Plans” and discuss the challenges of the current stage. The Podcasts may be downloaded as well as directly heard for free, and they are being edited in the realm of conversations via satellite telephone between the two skippers and an editor from the PR Team of the Beluga Racer. Additionally, fans and sailing enthusiasts have the opportunity to directly address their questions to Boris Hermann and Felix Oehme, and the skippers will answer them in the course of their Podcasts.

*The website [www.beluga-racer.com](http://www.beluga-racer.com) contains a constantly updated Media Center for representatives of the press. Following your registration, you are permitted to download high-resolution photos taken by Boris Hermann and Felix Oehme directly aboard the “Beluga Racer” in the course of the race. You will also regularly find new interviews made via satellite between them and Timo Cyriacks (Beluga Racer, PR)*

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