

The “Beluga Racer”

The Class 40 yacht “Beluga Racer“ is a standard Akilaria type boat. It was completed by the German-French wind converter and yacht builder Mediterranean Composites Technologies (MC-TEC s.a.r.l.) in Tunisia in spring 2007 as the eighth boat in the series. “MC-TEC is a guarantee for the highest level of professionalism and quality. In addition, Marc Lombard is the best designer in the scene in my view,” says Skipper Boris Herrmann, who is absolutely convinced of his boat and the Class 40 concept.

Boris Herrmann has already sailed more than 10,000 nautical miles on the “Beluga Racer“ and was one of the top sailors in the “Artemis Transat“. However, colossal efforts were necessary to prepare the vessel for the challenges posed by the Portimão Global Ocean Race.

In the past two months a five-member team worked around the clock on the “Beluga Racer“ at the V1D2 shipyard in Caen, France. All critical points, such as keel mounting, rudder bearing and rigging, were broken down into their individual parts, checked meticulously and, if necessary, replaced. Furthermore, the systems required for coping with the enormously long legs were installed, including solar panels, a wind generator for the power supply, a seawater desalination unit as well as a number of safety-related systems.

As a result, individual sections of the ship can be closed off watertight by means of additional bulkheads and additionally installed high-performance batteries function reliably even under water or when the boat is upside down. In the event of the vessel capsizing, a flooding system ensures that the “Beluga Racer“ rights itself using pumped seawater. Survival suits and inflatable life-rafts are on board. Moreover, transmission antennas can be shifted by means of special devices in the hull so that Boris Herrmann and Felix Oehme are able to contact the outside world if they happen to drift upside down at sea.

Familiarising oneself with this equipment and, in particular, accepting the notion that one might urgently need these emergency antennas, the flooding system or the survival suits and inflatable life-rafts at some point are among the indispensable elements of the preparations for a regatta around the world.