



Info presse – 3 JUIN 2026

FOUR ERIC TABARLY'S PEN DUICK, EXCEPTIONAL GUESTS AT GRAND PAVOIS LA ROCHELLE 2026!

The Pen Duicks and Eric Tabarly, Eric Tabarly and the Pen Duicks: an inseparable and truly incredible story. It is therefore a genuine honour for Grand Pavois La Rochelle 2026 to welcome four Pen Duick yachts, with the support and collaboration of the Eric Tabarly Association, as part of the Heritage & Know-How Area. A magical and truly exceptional occasion!

Moored at the end of Pontoon 7, four of Eric Tabarly's iconic yachts — Pen Duick, Pen Duick II, Pen Duick III and Pen Duick V — will be on display throughout the show, from Tuesday 22 to Sunday 27 September. Managed by the Eric Tabarly Association, created specifically to maintain the Pen Duicks in sailing condition, operate them at sea, and continue Eric Tabarly's maritime and educational legacy, the Association promotes maritime culture while encouraging interest, research and innovation across the various sectors of recreational boating. Like Grand Pavois La Rochelle itself, the Association is rooted in a non-profit spirit, and the two organisations share many common values, notably the desire to promote sailing in all its forms and to showcase prestigious vessels that have shaped — and continue to shape — the history of French boating and international sailing. With the presence of the Pen Duicks, Grand Pavois La Rochelle also wishes to highlight the work of the Eric Tabarly Association, whose efforts allow these legendary boats to keep sailing and offer unique experiences on board to all generations.

Looking Back at Their Story...

Pen Duick

Pen Duick is the original yacht of Eric Tabarly's legendary fleet. This wooden gaff cutter was built in Ireland in 1898 by the Fife shipyard and was originally named Yum. Eric Tabarly's father purchased her in 1938, and young Eric discovered the sea aboard her from early childhood. Deeply attached to the yacht, he renamed her Pen Duick, meaning "little black head" in Breton — the local name for the black tit bird. After the war, the boat deteriorated severely and came close to disappearing altogether. In the 1950s, Eric Tabarly personally undertook a remarkable restoration, replacing the wooden hull with a moulded polyester hull — a first for a classic yacht of this size. Thanks to this rebirth, Pen Duick returned to the sea and became the symbol of the entire Tabarly adventure. Still sailing regularly today, Pen Duick remains one of the most celebrated yachts of French maritime heritage.

More information: <https://www.asso-eric-tabarly.org/les-pen-duick/pen-duick>

Pen Duick II

Pen Duick II is the yacht that propelled Eric Tabarly into legend. Built in 1964 specifically for the solo Transatlantic Race, this 13.60-metre aluminium ketch was light, fast and highly innovative for its time. In 1964, Tabarly won the famous Plymouth–Newport Transatlantic Race aboard her after 27 days at sea. This historic victory marked the first time a French sailor had won this mythical race, previously

dominated by Anglo-Saxon competitors. Upon his return, Tabarly became a national hero and played a major role in popularising offshore racing in France. Pen Duick II therefore marks both the beginning of the Pen Duick saga and the rise of modern French offshore racing.

More information: <https://www.asso-eric-tabarly.org/les-pen-duick/pen-duick-ii>

Pen Duick III

Pen Duick III is undoubtedly the most famous of the Pen Duicks. Built in aluminium in Lorient and launched in 1967, this yacht designed by Eric Tabarly was revolutionary for its era, distinguished by its black schooner-like silhouette and exceptional performance. From her very first season, Pen Duick III dominated the major British RORC championship races, notably winning the Fastnet Race and several offshore classics, earning the nickname “the cathedral of sail” from the British. That same year, she also claimed victory in the prestigious Sydney–Hobart Race in Australia — an unprecedented achievement for a French yacht. Following Tabarly’s triumphs, the yacht continued a long international career under renowned sailors such as Philippe Poupon and Éric Loizeau. Still sailing today thanks to the Eric Tabarly Association, Pen Duick III remains one of the enduring symbols of French offshore racing.

More information: <https://www.asso-eric-tabarly.org/les-pen-duick/pen-duick-iii>

Pen Duick V

Pen Duick V is one of Eric Tabarly’s most emblematic yachts. Built in Lorient in 1968, this aluminium monohull was designed for a solo race between San Francisco and Tokyo. Highly innovative for its time, she featured a wide hull and, most notably, the first water ballast system — a concept that later became standard in offshore racing.

In 1969, Tabarly brilliantly won the Transpacific Race aboard Pen Duick V, finishing more than ten days ahead of his nearest competitor. This victory confirmed his genius as a sailor and established Pen Duick V as a precursor to the modern “open” racing yachts of today.

More information: <https://www.asso-eric-tabarly.org/les-pen-duick/pen-duick-v>

More information about the Eric Tabarly Association: <https://www.asso-eric-tabarly.org/>

For Grand Pavois La Rochelle, Alain Pochon (President of Grand Pavois Organisation) stated:

“What an honour it is for us to welcome this year four of Eric Tabarly’s most prestigious yachts and some of the greatest vessels in French maritime history. Let us remember that Eric Tabarly was one of Grand Pavois La Rochelle’s loyal supporters, and we still recall seeing him walking the pontoons and observing the construction of one boat or another — always ahead of his time, yet equally full of admiration for the work of shipwrights, spending hours leaning over and studying the finest wooden hulls.

Having these four yachts with us will undoubtedly be one of the highlights of this edition. It will also be a wonderful tribute to our Guest of Honour country, Japan, since Pen Duick V, with Eric Tabarly at the helm and sailing solo, won the 1969 Transpacific Race whose finish line lay in... Tokyo Bay.”

INTERVIEW REQUESTS: +33 (0)5 46 44 46 39 – PRESS OFFICE

Key Facts...

Venue: Port des Minimes, La Rochelle, France

2026 Dates: Tuesday 22 September to Sunday 27 September 2026 - 10:00 am to 7:00 pm (Sunday until 6:00 pm)

Attendance: 70,000 visitors expected over six days

Guest of Honour: Japan

Thematic Areas for Every Passion : Boats ashore and afloat, Multihulls Area, Equipment Area, Services Area, Charter & Cruising Area, Heritage & Know-how Area, Fishing Area & Grand Pavois Fishing, Grand Pavois Beach, Sea Trial Area, Guest of Honour Pavilion, Eco-Boating & Sustainable Innovation Area with EDF, Boat trip experience Area (NEW), Tourism Area (NEW)...

More information: www.grand-pavois.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/GrandPavois

Instagram: @grand_pavois_official

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GRAND PAVOIS ORGANISATION, CREATOR AND ORGANISER OF NAUTICAL EVENTS!

Grand Pavois Organisation (GPO) provides the nautical events industry with tailor-made expertise, consultancy, know-how and unique experience in France and internationally.

Thanks to its non-profit association status, GPO enjoys genuine proximity to the international marine industry and has built a recognized expertise in nautical event management, including offshore racing, corporate events and boat show organisation.

References : Organiser of Grand Pavois La Rochelle International In-Water Boat Show since 1973, Nice Boating Tomorrow 2026 (France), Salao Nautico de Salvador (Brazil, 2023 & 2024), "Les Nauticales" Boat Show, La Ciotat (France, 2013–2021), Shenzhen China International Boat Show (China, 2009–2011), Partner of the China Qinhuangdao Aranya-Westport (Grand Pavois) International Boat Show 2025 & 2026, Rallye des Îles du Soleil (since 2017), Défi Atlantique Guadeloupe / Horta / La Rochelle (2019, 2023 & 2027), Class40 World Championship (2010 & 2022), Transat 6.50 Charente-Maritime/Bahia – Mini Transat (France/Brazil, 2001–2011), Naming ceremonies for Imoca 60 *Maître CoQ* V of Yannick Bestaven (2022), *Macif* of François Gabart (2011), Class40 *Le Conservateur* of Yannick Bestaven (2014), Inauguration of Chantier de l’Arsenal / Yacht Concept (La Rochelle, 2026)

More information: www.gpoevents.com

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