# Tahiti Douche:
## the last of the big proas is sailing again!

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## A little more than two years ago now, we dedicated an article to this mythical proa, the last example of its kind. The title was 'The last of the big proas must be saved'...

Photos: Zack & Stuart Rogerson

*In the 80s, the ocean racing world was in turmoil… The skippers were ready to do anything to win, including the unthinkable and the unreasonable! Thus some very improbable racing boats were created, including...the proa, Tahiti Douche.*

*The fate of this superb, Daniel Charles-designed proa was hardly any different from that of its competitors at the time (Eterna, Funambule / Lestra Sports, Rosières, Azurex, Fumée Noire…). Their collective misfortunes without a doubt contributed to the image they unjustly carry nowadays of being more trouble than they are worth. Yet it was so beautiful! Starberry's construction was a bit rough and had many defects, but the competent French builders were snowed under, and the budget was insufficient! This boat tormented Alain Gliksman (its skipper), gave out of the ordinary excitement to its crews, but allowed Halvard Mabire, Vincent Lévy, Christine Capdevielle and Denis Gliksman to flirt with the highest speeds of the time. Tahiti took part in the first edition of La Baule–Dakar and came close to Funambule's record (23 knots over 500m) at Brest. Rebuilt and modified by Christian Augé (Éterna), the proa started in the 1983 Lorient- Bermudas-Lorient (abandoned for lack of insurance), tried its luck again in La Baule – Dakar, then Quebec-St Malo, entered by the Tellier brothers. "They passed me as if I was standing still," Bruno Peyron recounted later, aboard his Jazz... But the beautiful proa then lost its mast in the Saint Lawrence!*

*Located by the Golden Oldies Multihulls association, whose aim is the protection of these former wonders with several hulls, the boat was purchased in St Martin, in the West Indies. Strengthening work was quickly carried out locally, and the exceptional machine has just crossed the Atlantic in the (expert) hands of its new owner. And the best part of the story is that the accompanying boat for this Atlantic crossing was none other than the trimaran VSD (ex-Riguidel).*

*The proa is now anchored next to VSD in the Balearics, its new home port...*

*Legends never die!*

***For more information: www.goldenoldies.biz***

*1 : Leaving from St Martin, the once again splendid proa crossed the Atlantic, with the trimaran VSD as its guardian angel.*

*2 : VSD and Tahiti Douche: two legendary multihulls at anchor. Just like 30 years ago!*

*3 : The proa in its racing prime. Note the motorbike helmet one of the crew is wearing... The proa is athletic!*