



Partners HUGO BOSS and Mercedes-Benz / Copyright: Alex Thomson Racing/Cleo Barnham

## Mercedes-Benz at the world's toughest single-handed race: with three racing yachts at the Vendée Globe

▼ November 6 marked the start of the world's toughest single-handed race from Les Sables d'Olonne on the French Atlantic coast: the Vendée Globe.

**Mercedes-Benz** is represented for the first time with three racing yachts.

In the capacity of co-sponsor and technology partner, the company is supporting British extreme sailor Alex Thomson, who finished third in this non-stop 'round-the-world regatta in 2013.

Mercedes-Benz is also once again co-sponsor of French racing yachtsman Vincent Riou, who won the Vendée Globe in 2004, and of Irish circumnavigator Enda O'Coineen, who is making his debut in this solo race.

The competitors have to sail on average 29,000 miles—non-stop and single-handed—from France past the Cape of Good Hope in Africa, Cape Leeuwin in Australia and Cape Horn in South America, back to Les Sables d'Olonne in France.

Alongside HUGO BOSS, Mercedes-Benz

has been a co-sponsor of Alex Thomson Racing since 2015 and supports the sailing team with technological know-how. This year, Thompson is competing in the new IMOCA 60 racing yacht. Key features include carbon-fiber technology from Formula One, which makes the boat five percent lighter, and an all-new black, infrared-reflective "XCool" paint finish for the hull and deck, developed by BASF in collaboration with Mercedes-Benz, which prevents overheating inside the yacht.

Thomson plans to make history with his new yacht and wants to become the first Briton to win the Vendée Globe. "The team has worked incredibly hard to develop and build the HUGO BOSS," he says. "I'm confident we now have a boat with which we can win this race. This racing yacht is the fastest and lightest we've ever had."

Riou is competing in the Vendée Globe for the fourth time. On his debut in 2004, he won in 87 days, 10 hours, 47 minutes and 55 seconds to set a new record. At

that time, Mercedes-Benz was already a co-sponsor with French company PRB.

Sixty-one-year-old businessman and circumnavigator Enda O'Coineen is the first Irishman to compete in the Vendée Globe. Together with the MSL group of automotive dealerships, Mercedes-Benz is sponsoring his "Kilcullen Voyager—Team Ireland" racing team, as well as an education program for primary schools set up by O'Coineen. The schoolchildren will be able to plot the progress of the race on a map—with live tracking, weekly videos and entertaining lesson plans.

The solo yacht race, which takes place every four years, pushes sailors to their limits. Of the total of 138 competitors since 1989, only 71 have completed the full distance. The race is open to monohull yachts conforming to the Open 60 class criteria. The race can be followed live by race tracker at [www.mercedes-benz.com/alexthomson](http://www.mercedes-benz.com/alexthomson) as well as on the Vendée Globe social media channels. ■

