

L'OCCITANE sets sail for the Mini Transat 2019 and Vendée Globe 2020: human adventure, innovation and a call-out to clean up the oceans

GENEVA, 24th April 2019 – L'OCCITANE en Provence, the leading natural beauty brand that manufactures and retails premium cosmetics and well-being products all over the world, has embarked on a new adventure with two highly talented and passionate skippers. Together, they are preparing to take on some of sailing's most demanding offshore single-handed races.

Matthieu Vincent, a 28-year-old naval architect and amateur sailor from France, who is also the current Brand Ambassador for the L'OCCITANE Men Collection, will attempt to conquer the **Mini Transat La Boulangère** in September 2019. It is an audacious challenge for the young skipper who has never previously sailed across the Atlantic, and who only recently started racing. Meanwhile, **Armel Tripon**, the esteemed French skipper, will compete in the prestigious **Vendée Globe** in November 2020. At 43 years, Armel already holds an impressive competitive track record, including victory at last year's Route du Rhum in the Multi50 category. L'OCCITANE will be supporting both skippers throughout their respective campaigns. As the brand strives to offer customers high performing, efficient and safe products, and both skippers will also set off with a clear performance-driven objective: to arrive safely, whilst securing the fastest possible finish.

With their shared values of overcoming challenge, embracing adventure and working relentlessly to obtain results, L'OCCITANE identified sailing and, most importantly, Matthieu and Armel, as a natural brand fit. The humble strength and determination required of a sailor alone out at sea resonates with the culture at L'OCCITANE, where authenticity, integrity and entrepreneurship are embedded in the brand's core values.

The camaraderie between the two sailors is obvious, notably the role of Armel to coach and inspire Matthieu, having previously won the Mini Transat back in 2003: *“Matthieu has great talent and I look forward to sharing some of my past experience to help him prepare. Solo races require tremendous mental strength: there are many times when communication with land and other skippers is no longer possible, so it's critical to know that your support team is still there, and to believe in their support.”* With more than 8,500 employees working across 90 countries, team spirit at L'OCCITANE is certainly crucial to ensure success.

Armel Tripon will depart in November 2020 from les Sables d'Olonne on the west coast of France and race around the world without stopping and without assistance on a brand new 60-foot IMOCA. The IMOCAs are one of the fastest offshore racing monohulls that exist and the L'OCCITANE IMOCA 60 should be ready for launch in autumn 2019. Architect **Sam Manuard** is managing the design of this IMOCA that is being built by **Black Pepper® Yachts**, under the experienced eye of Michel Douville de Franssu.

For the Black Pepper® CEO & Founder, Michel de Franssu added: *“This is an exciting project that brings together a number of important firsts. It's the first time that a Sam Manuard design will be used at the Vendée Globe; the first time that Black Pepper® Yachts will build an IMOCA 60; the first time that Armel Tripon will race around the world; and the first time that L'OCCITANE partners*

with sailing. Let's hope now for another first, when Armel crosses the finish line!" L'OCCITANE has a long-standing commitment to respecting the environment, a value that is also shared by both skippers, so Black Pepper® Yachts will be evaluating its choice of materials to ensure the best ecological solutions, without compromising on performance.

Matthieu Vincent, meanwhile, will endure an entirely different experience, sprinting across the Atlantic on a Mini 6.50. The Mini 6.50 is a monohull that measures just 6.5 metres, thus almost one third of the size of Armel's IMOCA! Matthieu will depart from La Rochelle before heading to Le Marin in Martinique, with one obligatory stop in Gran Canaria. Despite their modest dimensions, the "Minis" are phenomenal boats capable of incredible performance. However, the size remains challenging for a transatlantic crossing and Matthieu can expect to be tested to his absolute limit.

Speaking about L'OCCITANE's decision to get involved in sailing, Adrien Geiger, Global Brand Director at L'OCCITANE en Provence, said: *"We are excited to partner with Matthieu and Armel as they embark on these highly demanding challenges. We see great resemblance between many of their skills and the attributes that we look for amongst our staff, so we will be looking to inspire employees by making them feel part of these human adventures. Offshore racing today requires state-of-the-art technology, high-performing materials and the very latest innovations. At L'OCCITANE, we are continuously innovating to surprise our customers with new products and experiences. We may not race around the world but we do aim to innovate and novelties and performance are absolutely critical to that."*

For more than 40 years, L'OCCITANE has been making beauty and well-being products that are rich in natural and traceable ingredients. With nature at the heart of its business, L'OCCITANE is very conscious about respecting and protecting the environment and limits its impact on the environment at every possible step. L'OCCITANE will be using these partnerships with Matthieu Vincent and Armel Tripon as part of its ongoing efforts to reduce plastic pollution and clean up the oceans by driving cleaning actions in French beaches with the help of its motivated employees and the 2 skippers. For Matthieu, this was an important part of the decision to partner with L'OCCITANE: *"I have felt a duty to protect the ocean right since I was a child. I will therefore be using these two years to help L'OCCITANE spread important messages about the need to prevent plastic pollution, and share my commitment to protecting our marine environment."* Matthieu's Mini 6.50 will not have a motor, and will be one of the few Minis competing that relies purely on solar energy to recharge its on board battery.

L'OCCITANE recently signed the Ellen MacArthur Foundation's New Plastics Economy Global Commitment and will soon be announcing additional important initiatives as the brand continues to work towards achieving its CSR targets. These include using 100% recycled plastic in its bottles (currently 30%), providing in-store recycling facilities at 100% of its owned stores (currently 30%) and using 100% technically recyclable plastic (currently 84%) by 2025.

About the L'OCCITANE Group

The L'OCCITANE Group is an international group that manufactures and retails beauty and well-being products that are rich in natural and organic ingredients. A global leader in the premium beauty market, the group has more than 3,000 retail outlets, including 1,555 owned stores, and is present in 90 countries. Through its five brands - L'OCCITANE en Provence, Melvita, Erborian, L'OCCITANE au Brésil and LimeLife by Alcone – the group offers new and extraordinary beauty experiences, using high quality products that respect nature, the environment and the people who surround it.

**Mathieu VINCENT****Armel TRIPON** Photo credit: Pierre Bourras