

# MARINER

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**WIN**

**A LORUS SPORTS  
QUARTZ WATCH**

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**UK POWERBOAT  
CURTAIN RAISER**

**IN SEARCH OF BIG JULIE**

**RICHARD NOBLE**  
The Fastest Man on Earth

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# WHO CARES WINS!!!



The beautiful Riviera backdrop made a perfect setting for testing the radical designed three-pointers.

Mariner UK's Editor prepares for a harrowing experience, the French driver appeared to have a suicidal streak in him.



Powerboat crews will be smelling a lot sweeter this season thanks to a major new sponsor entering the sport. Drakkar Noir are putting their wholehearted support behind the UKOBA championship series concluding with the Drakkar Noir Challenge at Southampton during September which also includes the prestigious World 1.3 ltr championships and culminates a season of fundraising for MONITOR, a charity for the research of Motor Neurone Disease.

**T**hroughout the season at UKOBA events, the black, white and red Drakkar Noir banners will become a familiar sight as the high-profile company makes its presence felt. Drakkar Noir is the male fragrance of parfums by Guy Laroche a market leader in gents toiletries. Offshore Powerboat racing being very much a visually spectacular sport attracting the healthy macho type. Guy Laroche feel it is a perfect environment to promote their image of Drakkar Noir products.

Journalists from regional and specialist publications were invited to an

exclusive preview of the three radical race boats Drakkar Noir propose using at various locations throughout Europe to encourage non-racing enthusiasts to get the feel of speed on water. I was one of the lucky contingents who set off to the French Riviera in April to see and drive these unusual craft.

At first sight the three identical boats appeared like something out of a James Bond movie. The owner describes the radical design as monocat, a name he has patented, but to me they looked more like three-pointers. Thirty foot in length, the craft were powered by twin 4 ltr Johnson outboards fitting into the

Class 2 specification, yet there are no plans to race them in this division. Instead Drakkar Noir intend to run a series of celebrity match races where the three monocats will roar around an inshore course enabling spectators to enjoy close-up action.

Being identical, the competition would presumably be close but with various inexperienced drivers this may not be the case. The course we were shown at Cannes had several U turns and at first glance I didn't see how on earth these boats would make such a tight turn. That was the first surprise, they whipped round the buoys at incredibly fast speeds, never feeling particularly unsafe, in a straight line their top speed approached 75-80mph. Discussions amongst the experts as to why they stick to the water so well did not arrive at any conclusion. The trio's sleek black colour scheme and sporting fighter aircraft canopies, give a low mean look, but hand-throttles and lack of padding around the cockpits reveal these boats are more for fun than out and out offshore combat.

All of us who ventured into the Bay of Cannes enjoyed a liberal helping of Mediterranean water. Monocats are inclined to be a little wet, particularly for the person in the port cockpit who gets the lions share of spray as the projectile whirls round the right-handed turn buoys.

I was mildly amused and at the same time positively alarmed when the seasoned powerboaters in our party looked distinctly panic-stricken as they stepped ashore after their hair-raising demonstrations by two French pilots and the owner of the boats, Pierre Magnan. Offshore veterans Peter Bloomfield and Ray Bulman had to be guided to their seats as they frantically tried to regain their composure. Maybe it was the absence of crash helmets and life-jackets which bought about their condition. It was a different story however, when it was the turn of the ladies and gentlemen who had never

seen a powerboat at close quarters. They gamely leapt into the cockpit and ordered the pilots to 'go faster'. A perfect example of 'ignorance is bliss'.

When are we likely to see these craft in England? They make their first and only UK appearance at the Drakkar Noir Challenge in Southampton between the 26th Sept - 1st Oct. Not only will the monocats feature in celebrity races, Drakkar Noir are also organising fund-raising events nationwide. Winners of these regional social parties will be invited to Southampton to drive the craft and enjoy the power and thrills of offshore powerboating.



Monocats owner Pierre Magnan (middle) and the two young French pilots.

