

ALUBAT

50 years of sailing excellence!

Half a century old and still thriving, Alubat, the Vendée-based shipyard, is not content with just being one of the world's benchmarks in ocean cruising with its iconic Ovni yachts. Instead, with the enthusiasm of youth, it is preparing to launch three new monohulls over the next two years.

Text : François Tregouet

The name Alubat has been synonymous with full-aluminium lifting keel boats for 50 years. And yet, in 1973, the very first Ovni, a 25-footer christened "Vodka", was indeed made of aluminium, but with a fin keel. The evolution began with its big brother, the Ovni 31, a ballasted centreboarder, before finding the winning formula in 1978 with the Ovni 28, an aluminium lifting keel boat with hard chines. 1,600 boats later, the saga is still ongoing, as the shipyard has emerged like a good sailor, even stronger from the calms it has weathered, as well as from the violent storms.



AN OVNI 430 with a sea view

The first new model to emerge from the Sablais workshops this summer is the Ovni 430. Only four years after its launch, which marked a radical renewal of the brand, but without betraying its core principles, the Ovni 400 assumes the well-deserved name of 430. With an overall length of 12.90 m, its initial name, which likened it to a 40-footer, was overly modest and at odds with industry practice. But the revolution it is bringing about goes far beyond this mathematical readjustment. Given the success of the raised "deck saloon" version of its little brother, the Ovni 370, the shipyard had to respond to the demand for such a pleasant layout, taking 100% of its orders for the latest model. While the classic saloon is still available, the Ovni 430 also offers this "saloon with a view", a favourite in the opinion polls. But a structural change of this kind doesn't just happen with a stroke of a light pen. The consequences quickly became apparent, and given the volume of modifications to be made, the shipyard has taken the opportunity to completely revise its design. Paradoxically perhaps, to accommodate this more airy saloon, it is the hull that has undergone the most changes: an additional chine refines the line and adds volume. Raising the floor allows the lifting keel case to be fully integrated, thus improving the hydrodynamics. It is worth noting that

the keel can now be manoeuvred with a hoist, a return to greater simplicity that is perfectly in tune with the reliability you're looking for when sailing far afield on your own. The same logic applies to the bow thruster, which is now positioned in a tunnel rather than retractable. Last but not least, we like the toe rail integrated into the planking, offering a secure footing whenever it is needed. On deck, the roof opens out to offer a panoramic view to saloon occupants, and the sheet track moves forward in front of the textile or rigid dodger, allowing the boom to be lowered slightly, significantly increasing the sail area. Moreover, the genoa tack point has also been moved forward to the solid bowsprit, which accommodates a double anchor roller for consistently secure anchoring. This cruising yacht is ready for the third millennium, with thicker aluminium for greater structural strength!



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490 THE LARGE OVNI

In 2025, the new flagship of the range will see the light of day. The trusty Ovni 450 will be topped by an Ovni 490, more in tune with the smaller 370 and 430. The same design team is working alongside the shipyard, namely Mortain-Mavrikios naval architects and CBA-Brouns. The shape of the roof, the bow volume, and the hull side design - the modern version of the Ovni family will be instantly recognisable. But the fifteen-metre hull will provide an additional feature, much appreciated by extreme-latitude enthusiasts: a completely sheltered pilot house at the junction of the saloon and the interior. This wheelhouse is elegantly designed and practical, protected by a watertight door. The inverted bow adds dynamism to the overall lines, with the panoramic saloon roof taking centre stage. Just three steps from the pilot house take you into the interior without losing your view of the outside. Your gaze remains at perfect porthole height



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whether you're seated in the slightly raised saloon or standing in the starboard galley. The 360° view promises a source of both visual pleasure and incomparable navigational safety. The Ovni 490 will be available with two or three cabins, and the large volume of its modern bow ensures it will always have a separate sail locker.



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CIGALE 15QR : around the world at high speed

On the same horizon, in the spring of 2025, a second major innovation is on the way, with an all-new Cigale 15 QR. As with the first generation of high-performance aluminium yachts, Finot-Conq was the naval architecture firm responsible for the design. But three decades after the first-generation Cigale 14 launched in 2003, the new model replaces its slightly controversial aft saloon with a perfectly protected cockpit behind an elegant hardtop enclosure. Looking at the features and lines of the future racer, protection will be welcome because the performance could be explosive: the Q and R stand for Quille Relevable, lifting keel in French, the mast will be carbon as standard, the width is 4.70 m over a good half of the length, and the future racer is announced at just 11 tons for 140 m² of minimum sail area upwind. And the speedo's double-digit ambitions won't be denied by her inverted bow, and Imoca-style sculpted hull side design. Inside, on the other hand, the discreet panoramic roof ensures everything is bright and airy. The combination of long-distance cruising with performance is a rare cocktail, yet one that could delight many enthusiasts.



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SIX QUESTIONS FOR LUC JURIEN, CEO of Alubat ?



Alubat is 50 years old. Looking back over the past half-century, what do you think?

"Fifty years is definitely a milestone. Even for me, as the owner of an Ovni 56 with which I chartered for eight years all over the world, Alaska, the Bering Sea, Japan, the Aleutians... it's an iconic shipyard. In terms of the number of units produced, around 1,600, it's the benchmark for full-aluminium lifting keel craft, the true 4 x 4 of the seas, and the shipyard that has enabled so many people to achieve their dreams of exploration."

What has remained constant at Alubat since its establishment?

"It's the uncompromising 100% aluminium sailing boat with a lifting keel, with an extremely shallow draught that lets you reach every possible and apparently impossible corner, including cyclone holes and sheltered spots upstream in rivers, providing safety when you're seeking refuge from heavy weather, without the impediment of a fixed keel. On the contrary, the craft will glide along and be much more tolerant of helm or pilot errors."

How would you characterise the new generation Ovnis, the 370, 430 and soon the 490?

"Alain Mortain and Yannis Mavrikios have revived the Ovni range. They brought us an innovative design, starting with the Ovni 400, with its inverted, relatively cylindrical bow, which develops significant volume in the forward third and is as interesting in terms of performance as it is in terms of living space. And then there's the panoramic roof, which brings an enormous amount of light and visibility into the boat."

With the Ovni 370, you went even further, didn't you?

"Yes, when we teamed up the Mortain-Mavrikios duo with Jean-Pierre Brouns and CBA, we switched to semi-thick aluminium. And we're so convinced by the result that we're developing the 400 into the 430 using the same construction method, with numerous modifications: hull, chines, rudders, raised saloon... So it really is going to be a new boat."

With the future Cigale 15QR, what kind of sailors will you be targeting?

"We know aluminium sailboats are a niche market, and in this market, we have the heirs of the ULDBs (Ultra Light Displacement Boats),

including the Cigales, whose adventure began in the early 90s with Finot-Conq. With the same company, we are returning to the roots of the concept with a racy boat that is more demanding for the sailor and also more efficient. Originally, Cigales were keelboats, but there are a number of destinations where this is a problem. Hence the idea of going for the lifting keel, a key point in the specifications, which also led to the carbon mast as standard, to reduce constraints and be consistent throughout."

How do you see Alubat's future?

"We're fortunate to have had loyal shareholders since 2013. They have systematically reinvested everything in the shipyard, in the development of new models, in the tools and in the people, with a team that has grown to 47 employees. The order book takes us through to summer 2025, with the production of 14 boats scheduled for this year, representing sales of 6.1 million euros in 2022, over 70% of which will be exported. So the momentum is there, and with all these new models, the shipyard's revival is assured."

