

Hydroptere unveils new testbed for ocean records

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Picture taken in 2009 off Hyeres, southern France, of the "flying boat" Hydroptere, a high-speed multihull prototype skipped by French Alain Thebault. Thebault on Monday unveiled a new prototype of the 'flying' yacht as a first step towards ocean-going records.

Alain Thebault, the French skipper of the world sailing speed record holder Hydroptere, on Monday unveiled a new prototype of the 'flying' yacht as a first step towards ocean-going records.

The 60-foot (18.3 metre) experimental Hydroptere trimaran, which uses foils to lift itself above the waves at speed, broke the mythical 50 knot barrier (93 kilometres per hour, 58 mph) off the French Mediterranean coast last year.

The "Hydroptere.ch" [catamaran](#) unveiled at a western Swiss boatyard in Ecublens on Monday is just 35 feet (10.8 metres) long, with two main hulls instead of three used so far.

Thebault said the new testbed designed with a Swiss technical university would develop new sail and hull configurations for promised 30 metre "maxi crafts" that would attempt Transatlantic, Pacific and round-the-world speed records.

"The aim of this first hybrid sailboat is... to sail almost as fast as classical yachts in archimedean (standard) mode and to achieve a much faster speed in flight," he added in a statement.

Thebault said last year that he was aiming to do the round-the world trip in 40 days.

The prototype will sail on Lake Geneva and in the [Mediterranean Sea](#).

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