

# Sailing into Boston

## Anna & Ellen

**G**rey skies, a 20-knot headwind and a light drizzle that turned into a torrential downpour accosted the 37 competitors as they crossed the Transat start line off Plymouth, England, May 31. The cantankerous weather continued to plague the fleet as they headed the hard way across the Atlantic to the finish in Boston.



The 11th running of the former OSTAR race had a new lease on life breathed into it by Offshore Challenges, the British-based company headed by Ellen MacArthur and Mark Turner. The fleet was one of the best and most competitive, but gone, to the chagrin of some, were the Corinthian efforts that for the last three decades have provided the drama and human interest. Replacing them were cutting-edge 50- and 60-foot monohulls and multihulls raced by some of the most skilled sailors in the world.

But it didn't take away from the drama as the four classes saw closely fought battles in the 2,800 mile slog across the Atlantic. The most anticipated competition was in the Monohull 60 class as this was the last time these skippers would square up against each other before the nonstop Vendee Globe in November. The eventual winner, Britain's Mike Golding on *Ecover*, scrapped for every mile until finally beating multiple circumnavigator Dominique Wavre on *Temenos* and "the other Mike," Mike Sanderson on *Pindar/Alphagraphics*, by just a couple of hours. Sanderson and Golding raced within sight of each other for much of the race until a damaged daggerboard scuttled Sanderson's chances of victory.

Some say it was a win by attrition as two of the most anticipated entries, Roland Jourdain on *Siff* and Jean le Cam on *Boudelle* never made the start because of keel problems on their brand new boats. Jean Pierre Dick on *Virbac*, the early leader, was dismantled as was Vincent Riou on *PRB*. Golding's most

**T**ennis star and Internet darling Anna Kournikova hopped a ride on an Open 50 racer for a private sailing lesson with solo-racing diva Ellen MacArthur during the pre-start festivities of the Transat 2004 at Plymouth. Race sponsor Omega brought in its sexy spokesperson to kick off the event and spark a little extra publicity for the event. Kournikova fired the starting flare at 1 p.m. May 31, in less than pretty conditions, with pouring rain and 13-foot swells.

The single-handed transatlantic race lived up to the pre-start hype, with plenty of offshore action and a number of records—and boats—being broken. Six of the 37 starting boats had to abandon the race due to damage.

