

PRESS RELEASE

BARCOLANA 56 PRESENTED BY GENERALI: PLAY-BY-PLAY AND PROTAGONISTS' STATEMENTS

Trieste, 13 October 2024 - **The Barcolana 56 Presented by Generali goes down in history as one of the greatest and most spectacular ever. Arca SGR, with Furio and Marta Benussi at the helm, finishes first in 1 hour, 28 minutes and 14 seconds**, followed by Claudio Demartis and Pompeo Tria's Prosecco DOC with Mitja Kosmina at the helm, and by Fiamme Gialle's Nice, with Ruggero Tita on board and Paolo Cian at the helm. The regatta provided excitement, a great show, and lots of fun, and was very challenging in terms of strategy for the boats aiming to cross the finish line first and sailing with an unprecedented south-westerly wind blowing in Trieste. The city welcomed two two-time Olympic medallists, Ruggero Tita and Caterina Banti; four ocean sailors, Giovanni Soldini, Alberto Riva, Alberto Bona and Ambrogio Beccaria; many professional sailors; the Frecce Tricolori team, almost in full, on board the 'Io sono Friuli Venezia Giulia'-branded Solaris 60; and, above all, the great people of sailing. The regatta included 1,757 boats at the start, more than a thousand boats crossing the finish line (time limit: 5:30 p.m.; rankings are being updated), the presence of Wendy Schmidt, who chose to participate on her 52-metre ketch, Elfje, which is the largest hull that has ever crossed the finish line of the Barcolana, and which finished in 36th position with two women at the helms, underlining once again the role of women in the Barcolana. The Generali Cup - Women in Sailing, which honours the first skipper in a mixed crew, was awarded to Giulia Leghissa, Anywave Jr's skipper, which finished the regatta in 113th position.

*"It has been one of the most technical Barcolana regattas in history, and also one of the greatest," commented the **President of the Società Velica di Barcola e Grignano** (Sailing Club of Barcola and Grignano) **Mitja Gialuz**, who stayed at sea until the time limit to approach the last participants and thank them for being part of the celebrations by offering them local food and wine products by throwing them into their boats. "The libeccio is a rare wind that brought all of this edition's positive energies to the finish line, including an enthusiastic public on land, and a lot of joy at sea. I would like to thank all the sailors for taking part and creating a unique regatta and ten-day event. We are grateful for the presence of so many champions and for the support of sponsors and institutions – it is a privilege to be at the helm of this event."*

The **Chairman of Generali, Andrea Sironi**, said: *"Every year, Barcolana renews a spectacular experience in the Gulf of Trieste through the common denominator of sailing, which combines competition, participation and fun, encouraging team spirit. For this reason, raising awareness of the value of creating mixed teams plays an important role and, with the Women in Sailing by Generali and Barcolana project, we are committed to making it grow. We are delighted today to award the Generali Women in Sailing 2024 Trophy to Giulia Leghissa, who was at the helm of a team of young sailors and will be rewarded with a coaching and leadership course customised to her needs by Generali Academy, so that the value of this recognition will be reflected in all the aspects of life."*

*"The Barcolana," said the **Governor of Friuli Venezia Giulia Massimiliano Fedriga**, "has once again exceeded expectations, with an extraordinary popular participation that amazes us edition after edition. Its magic invariably repeats itself and captivates those who come from all over the world to live this experience. This is also a festival of sailing, but it is first and foremost the festival of a city and a*

community that manage to promote our local area at international level. As the regional administration, we want to continue working together for the development of this unique event."

PLAY-BY-PLAY - The favourite on the eve of the race, **Arca SGR**, chose to start halfway along the Barcola side of the starting line, where the 'made in Trieste' sailors always try to catch the residual gusts of the morning easterly wind. Mitja Kosmina made an excellent start on **Prosecco Doc Shockwave 3**, which crossed the line with perfect timing ahead of Arca, which had to shake off a few small boats before getting some space and adjusting the trim. They were starting sailing close-hauled when some other contestants appeared from Miramare: **Woodpecker Cube - Generali**, helmed by a very fierce Jana Germani, **Fiamme Gialle Nice**, helmed by Paolo Cian, and immediately further an incredible 33-footer, the Swiss boat MSC, an extremely light prototype competing with giants. While the big boats of the regatta were converging towards the first buoy – with less than 3 knots of wind in their sails – the smaller, more festive hulls were still at the back and only cleared the starting line 40 minutes after the start, joyfully tacking in search of wind.

Leading the fleet were Furio and Marta Benussi, father and daughter, defending themselves from Mitja Kosmina and arriving at the first buoy at 11:05:45. The wind continued to turn, and furlers and staysails were fitted for a long reach towards the Miramare Castle, where positions were reinforced. At the first buoy, the placing mixed together big and small boats – **Arca SGR** was in the lead, followed by **Prosecco Doc Shockwave 3** and **Woodpecker Cube - Generali**, which would hold their positions until the second buoy. Jana Germani, at the helm of the Swan 90 fitted out by Generali, showed great determination to deliver the hull's best performance and keep it in the top positions.

The side towards the third buoy offered the opportunity for some overtaking and reinforced Arca SGR's first position, but at this point the race turned into something unique – the first boats crossed paths with the last ones, those sailing up towards the first buoy and those going down towards Miramare paraded side by side, in a great celebration that embodies the truly unique spirit of the Barcolana.

At the third buoy, being in the lead was decisive for the race – the last leg was a windward leg presenting many difficulties, including the boats acting as obstacles along the route; there began the long ride that would lead to the finish line, clearly visible from land along the coast of Trieste. The fourth buoy arrived fast after they had been sailing for an hour and a half. **Arca SGR** headed straight for Piazza Unità and won the race in 1 hour, 28 minutes and 14 seconds; **Prosecco Doc Shockwave 3** finished second two minutes later; **Fiamme Gialle Nice** finished third, with Paolo Cian doing his magic and getting a podium position after getting Nice to do magic tricks and defeating **Woodpecker Cube - Generali**, which still finished heroically, with Jana Germani making the Swan 90 fly and seizing fourth position. Trieste is overlooking its Gulf and celebrating all the Barcolana's participants – the Rive are overflowing with spectators cheering for all the sailors, and the celebrations will continue until the evening.

THE PROTAGONISTS' STATEMENTS

GIULIA LEGHISSA, WINNER OF THE 'GENERALI WOMEN IN SAILING' CUP (ANYWAVE JR)

"I am happy to have won this Cup together with my team. I firmly believe in the training and the value of mixed teams. Sailing requires more than mere physical strength. You need reasoning, patience, technical skills. Our crew, made up of six females and three males, is proof of this."

FURIO BENUSSI (ARCA SGR)

"Winning this regatta always has a special flavour that you never get used to, because this is a truly unique competition, which never ceases to excite us who take part in it and the people around us"

ashore. This victory showed the maturity of my team, which has grown so much over the last two seasons, and of a boat that we have improved over time to its truly great level today. I am proud of all the great work that every single sailor in the team has done today and throughout the season. Looking to the future, we will certainly be here again next year as the defender, but we intend to open the doors wide to younger talents in order to foster a renewal that looks far ahead, so I will leave the helm to those who represent the future of the team."

MARTA BENUSSI (ARCA SGR)

"It was a beautiful day, full of emotions. I am very lucky because I have the opportunity to sail with my father on such an important boat. I am learning a lot about how to manage the crew, how the tacticians and strategists work. I could not be at the helm for the whole race – I cannot take on that responsibility, I do not have enough experience – but I think I have done my part."

[Link to the press kit](#)

[Link to the selection of photos and videos](#)

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