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# Race France to France: Leave Antarctica to Starboard: An American in the Vendée Globe, Racing Solo, Non-Stop, Around the World

*Rich Wilson*

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“The Vendée Globe is even a greater challenge than climbing Mt. Everest.” …Sen. John Kerry, in U.S. Senate Tribute to Rich Wilson “The Vendée Globe is a race that is almost beyond belief.” …Gary Jobson, ESPN Commentator In 2008-9, Rich Wilson became only the second American to finish the Vendée Globe, deemed the “most grueling and dangerous prolonged competition on the planet.” (Garry Emmons, HBS Bulletin, 2009) The senior skipper at age 58, and a severe asthmatic, Wilson finished 9th of 11 finishers of 30 starters, racing 29,000 miles over 121 days in his 60’ boat Great American III. He endured broken ribs, a bloody facial gash, a climb up the mast on his run to Cape Horn, sleep deprivation, exhaustion and fear, while ten gales battered his trusty GA3 on her 4th race around the world. Wilson’s tenacity, perseverance, determination and skill inspire and motivate: that we can all do more than we think. Written intensely, engagingly, and humbly, Wilson’s book brings you onto his boat in the heat and doldrums of the tropics, in the gales and cold of the south, to see the beauty of the flying fish, albatross and southern stars, and to feel his fear, fatigue and emotions in the unending stress of a global ocean race. Life lessons abound: the camaraderie among competitors (the defending champion sacrificing his own race to rescue a fellow skipper); a French boy on the dock declaring “the important thing is to participate”; and the attitude of the engaged French public saying simply “if you finish this race, you’re a winner.” A lifelong educator, Wilson also achieved a primary goal of his race: to excite and engage K12 students about science, geography, and math in the real world, via a program published online, and for 15 weeks by Newspaper in Education departments in 50 US Newspapers, including 25 in our Missouri heartland, a thousand miles from ocean in any direction. Reaching 7 million readers weekly, and 200,000 students, Wilson and a Team of Experts (doctors, professors, merchant mariners, artists and authors) wrote essays for students and answered their questions. Within this human story of adventure, challenge and perseverance, there is something for everyone: sailors, adventurers, seniors, asthmatics, K12, and France lovers. All will be engaged by Wilson’s remarkable story. “Haven’t put your book down since receiving my copy this morning! What a thrilling story! Your drive and passion to overcome all obstacles, including chronic severe asthma, is an inspiration to everyone struggling with breathing difficulties. Let’s go 2016!” …Bill McLin, CEO, Asthma & Allergy Foundation of America "Reading RACE FRANCE TO FRANCE put me through the vicarious terror and exhilaration of your voyage. I applaud your efforts both in sailing the course and writing the book. A hearty 'Bravo!' and 'Bien fait!'“ ...Dava Sobel, author, Longitude

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