

# Three-year odyssey ends in Durban for lone yachtsman

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SAILOR Trevor Osben relaxing in Durban after three years of sea drama

A LONE British yachtsman who has already sailed half the world during his three-year-long travels arrived in Durban yesterday with tales of adventure on the high seas and close encounters with death.

Bachelor Trevor Osben (28), of Essex, has eaten boiled rice for days after food supplies washed overboard, has cheated death off the Australian coastline as his 6m radio-less yacht capsized, has been chased by "waving and shouting Portuguese" and harassed by drug-peddlars in Venezuela.

And he spent 45 helpless days at sea when his mast broke in a storm.

But Trevor does not regret a single moment since he impulsively quit his job during September, 1986, to go on his "crazy adventure". At least that's what his boss said at the time.

Trevor said that he would stay in South Africa for several months before heading back for England — to his worried mother.

On a clear day, Trevor left Dartmouth in his yacht which he had built from a do-it-yourself kit. Before that, he'd never sailed in his life except during a crash course on how to use the sextant.

"When I arrived at the Lisbon yacht mole, people shouted and waved their hands at me — I don't know why and I couldn't ask because I couldn't speak Portuguese — so I just moved out of their way."

After several days he sailed to the Canary Islands. From there the lonely mariner crossed the Atlantic to the islands of the West Indies, then to

Venezuela, Panama, the Galapagos Islands, Tahiti, Cook Island, New Zealand, Australia, Mauritius, Reunion, and to South Africa.

Travelling on a shoestring budget, Trevor lived on about £100 (R400) a month, also finding casual jobs when he could.

"I picked kiwi fruit in New Zealand and worked as a maintenance man at a few hotels in Australia to fund my travels."

One night, his mast broke in stormy seas and his sails were ripped to shreds en route to Tahiti. For 45 lonely days, the yacht averaged between 30 and 80 miles a day.

He spent time preparing food in the yacht's tiny hold or just lazing on the deck.

When his yacht limped into port at Niku Hiva in the Galapagos Islands, he stocked up with plenty of fruit and vegetables which he said were extremely cheap — as "cheap" as in South Africa.

At Margarita Island, a Venezuelan territory, Trevor said he was harassed by scores of drug dealers who called out to him: "Hey, I got good stuff man..."

His most frightening moment came when his yacht rolled in a storm and was capsized by a gigantic swell about 500 nautical miles off the Australian coast.

"I was terrified, but hung on. Miraculously, the next big wave swung the vessel back into position."

But most of the food washed overboard.

Arriving in Durban, Trevor walked into a restaurant and ordered a large juicy steak.