

This unbroken Reed set for '93 Rio race

By DALE GRANGER

JUST months after being in danger of losing his right leg, South Africa's famed yachtsman Bertie "Biltong" Reed has announced a fighting comeback to sailing by entering the Cape-to-Rio race.

Reed — who just weeks ago was given "no chance" of being medically fit for the race — was given the green light by doctors last week.

During the 3 500-mile race in January he will celebrate his 50th birthday at sea.

The legendary sailor said at the weekend he will be sailing Grinaker, the same racing yacht he used in the BOC Challenge in 1991.

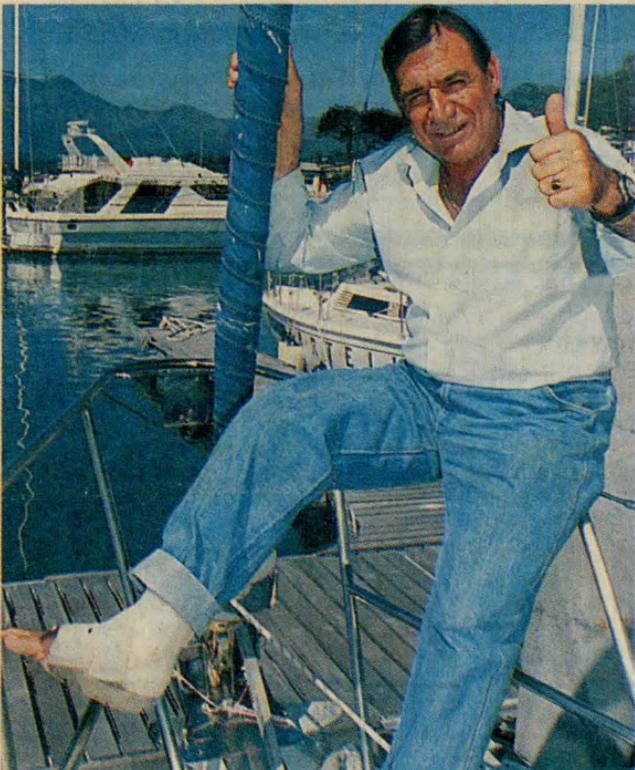
This was when he became the fourth man to race single-handed around the world and was widely praised for his rescue of compatriot John Martin.

Reed, a popular figure in harbour taverns all over the world, has not sailed since last October but is walking for the first time in over a year without crutches.

Reed had seven operations to his right leg to mend a complicated compound fracture he sustained in an accident near his Gordon's Bay home.

"It was touch and go," Reed said, "but I heal fast and when the X-rays showed I would be alright I was over the moon."

Reed said a recent bone graft was successful but he still had four screws and a 10mm rod in his leg. He does not believe further surgery will be necessary and is now committing himself to a get-fit programme for the race.



BERTIE'S BACK . . . Legendary yachtsman Bertie Reed will compete in his fourth Cape-to-Rio race in January.

Picture: ALAN TAYLOR

"The boat will be called Harbour Island and will have a crew of four. I have only selected two of them but don't tell anyone that or my phone won't stop ringing," a beaming Reed said.

For Reed, who has sailed all three previous Cape-to-Rio races and won line-honours on Voortrekker in the race that was sailed in 1976, it was a case of "not wanting to stay at home and miss all the fun".

A question of whether Reed had reneged on his prior decision to retire from yacht racing was answered by his wife Pat. "Bertie said he had retired from single-handed sailing".