

By ISABEL KOCH

ADAMO, an 11-metre unsponsored yacht, was one of the first entries for this year's Rothmans Week, the most prestigious event on the annual yachting calendar.

Her owner, 63-year-old Mr Neville Marshall of Eversdal, Durbanville, said: "We are not in the big league, but the guy who wants to win will have to beat us. We will be sailing to win this year."

The event will be held from December 13 to 21.

The yacht was taken out of the water on Saturday to have the hull cleaned.

Bikinis

"I am fastidious and always keep her sailing-fit, but we have to clean and repaint her.

"We will be checking the mast, every shackle and everything that fastens to get her in tip-top shape for the race. She

Adamo bent on yachting honour

must be able to stand up to anything," said Mr Marshall, an accountant.

Sailing and racing was not about "sunshine and dollies in bikinis". This was an image created by the Press.

Stripped

"When one is out there at the helm against the elements — and it can sometimes get nasty — sailing is demanding. It takes a lot out of one."

Mr Marshall, who has been sailing for the past 47 years, said he had been involved in only one serious incident at

sea.

"I was about 20, sailing off the Mossel Bay coast. It was raining and the wind rose to about 60 knots.

"I thought the end had come.

"We stripped to our bathing costumes. We battled but never left the boat.

Record

"If one respects the sea, doesn't look for trouble and has a sturdy yacht, you will always get home," said Mr Marshall.

He believed "playing safe" and obeying all yachting rules and regulations had contributed to his accident-free record.

Talking about his great love, Adamo, Mr Marshall said one need not be rich to own a yacht like her.

"She cost half of what a house in Britannia Bay would.

"I derive great pleasure from sailing and believe that the people participating in all the regattas are the backbone of the sport," he said.