

Crew all NSRI

by Stephen McVeigh

THE whole crew of the yacht IGI Sea Rescue, the National Sea Rescue Institute (NSRI) entry to the Rothmans Fourth Cape to Rio Yacht Race, are members of the NSRI.

The crew comprises: David Abromowitz (skipper), Bobby Bongers, Rob Sharp, Joey de Kock, Johan van Rooyen, Brian MacKinnan, Tony Chinery, Ian Wynberg, Rob Stirrat and Howard Godfrey.

Dave Abromowitz, skipper of the 65 foot Phil Southwell-designed sloop, is also the owner of this magnificent mini-maxi racing boat.

Dave has been sailing for the past 37 years and currently holds two top positions of importance in the yachting world: Commodore of the Royal Cape Yacht Club (RCYC) and vice-chairman of the NSRI National Executive. He retires as commodore in June this year and will take over the reigns as chairman of the NSRI in August.

Dave Abro, as he is more popularly known, is a man fully behind the NSRI and has its future close at heart. It was only when he became a member of the executive of the NSRI, as a representative of the yachting fraternity, that he became aware of the immense trouble the NSRI took to make their services available to those in danger on the sea.

And from that point on he has done whatever he could to promote the cause of the NSRI - to the point of offering his own yacht to take part in the Rothmans Cape to Rio to help make the NSRI more visible.

Skipper Dave has taken part in every major Cruising Association of South Africa (CASA) offshore or ocean race since 1979. This includes the last three Cape to Uruguay races where he crossed the line in the first three. He sailed in all four of the Mauritius to Durban Beachcomber Crossings and finished amongst the first three in all of these also (in fact he took line honours and second place on handicap in the 1992 race). In 1990 he took part in the race to Lisbon (6 000 nautical miles) and, once again, crossed the line in the first three.

Adding to the number three linkup: it was only three years ago that Dave was elected to the national executive of the NSRI. Today he is one of the top three members on that board. And lastly, he will be taking over as chairman in 1993.

And, if this were not enough, he had three of the most active NSRI Station 3 members help him put the IGI sponsorship together.

The three, all crewing in the current race, are Ian Weinberg, Rob Stirrat and Howard Godfrey. They were all members of Station 3 sited at the Waterfront in Cape Town Harbour.

Ian Weinberg has been an active member of Station 3 for the past 19 years and is presently a coxswain for one of their rescue craft. He already has one ocean crossing to his name - as part of the crew of Panache which came second in its class in the first Cape to Uruguay race (1982).

Rob Stirrat is both an active member of the Station, a director of the NSRI and chairman for the National Operations and Technical Committee (NOTC). As far as sailing is concerned, he has already completed two Atlantic Ocean crossings - one of which was on Kwa-Heri which took line honours in the 1979 Cape to Uruguay.

Bay: Station 3. He has been involved at the station for the past 23 years and is presently also a member of the NOTC under Rob Stirrat's chairmanship.

Bobby Bongers, the oldest member of the crew, is a household name in sailing. He says he has covered more miles on sea than he has on land. As his parents were yachting people he grew up with boating and now, at age 64, can say he really has been "...sailing all my life!"

When asked what his designation on the crew was he answered: "General dog's body and flack collector!"

This quiet but amicable semi-retired yachtsman now lives in Lymington in UK. He came to take specifically to crew on IGI Sea Rescue and to bring the boat back to Cape Town after the race before returning home.

Rob Sharp, Springbok yachtsman and one of the navigators, was previously a naval lieutenant before taking a directorship with the yacht chandlers, Central Boating, in Cape Town. He assisted John Martin in the BOAC Round the World Race and also took part in the Double Handed Trans-Atlantic Crossing (Two Star) with Martin in 1986.

In addition he has three Beachcomber Crossings and a

Cape to Uruguay (1985) in his log of experience.

Johan van Rooyen, a navigator and the communications operator, is also a qualified HAM radio operator (callsign ZSIVU). He has been sailing for close on 20 years and has sailed in all the major regattas in South Africa. He has also completed one Cape to Rio and two Cape to Uruguay races. In fact he was aboard the yacht Wheetbix that took first place, on handicap, in the first Cape to Rio race in 1971!

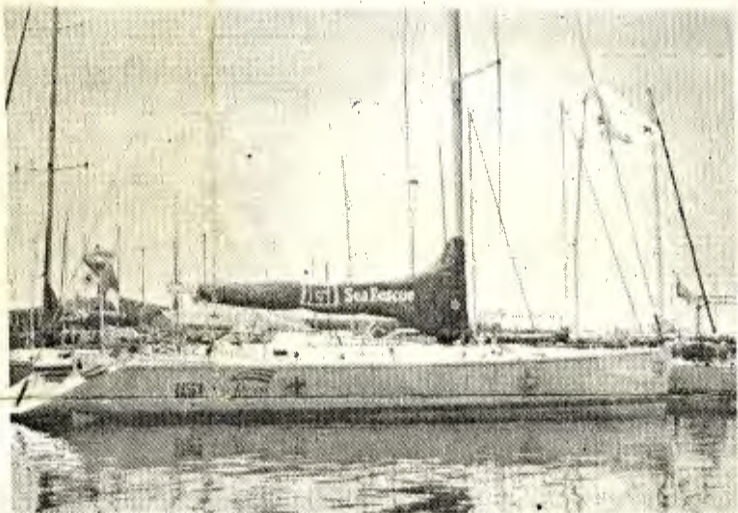
Johan also crewed in two of the World Championships: 1979 at Newport (Rhode Island) and 1980 in Naples (Italy).

Brian MacKinnan, an attorney by profession, will see his first ocean crossing as part of the IGI Sea Rescue crew.

Tony Chinery, from Durban, a company director with an insurance firm and a shareholder in the IGI yacht, has spent most of his available time on the water and has covered, he says, more than 20 000 nautical miles. This is mainly on the Mediterranean and Atlantic oceans.

The 1993 Rothmans Cape to Rio will be his first to Rio"... on a thoroughbred boat like IGI Sea Rescue," he said.

The one person were not able to interview was Joey de Kock - said to be very multi-talented and becoming more well-known in yachting circles.



IGI Rea Rescue moored in the RCYC basin before the race.



The crew (most of them anyway).



Rob Sharp and Brian MacKinnan doing a mi-