



# Abromowitz a firm favourite to win the Portnet Dias race

ing away. Then it's on to the Azores, another three to four weeks at sea, before a short hop of five or six days to Lisbon. We'll be watching their progress with keen interest, as some of our best known sailors will be competing in boats whose names have become legends.

**D**AVE Abromowitz, one of Cape Town's top skippers, has entered his 50ft chartered yacht, *Walon*, and is a strong favourite to win this year's event. Dave says *Walon* is one of the fastest yachts in the world for her size. This R6-million yacht is owned by Robin Aisher of the UK, and although she is very high-tech, Dave will have to work hard to beat Bertie Reed in *Grinaker*, as well as *Voortrekker II* and other hot boats.

Dave felt that he just had to enter, as he has not missed one South African international yacht racing event in the past decade.

This race is a true test of skill and stamina. Long distance racing can be quite an ordeal. Six weeks in a small boat is a long time. Morale can drop, concentration can lapse, food can become boring and tempers can be stretched to the limit.

The "Grand Old Lady" of South African yachts, *Voortrekker 1*, will be skippered by Richard Shelley in this year's race, and after a recent refit, she can't be discounted as a possible winner.

The newer *Voortrekker II*, skippered by Hannes Teutenberg is still a force to be reckoned with.

**B**UT, apart from these well-known racers, multi-hulls will be allowed to enter for the first time in any South African based international race. These craft are exceptionally fast downwind, but may have a problem to keep up with their single-hulled opponents when sailing into the wind.

It's a long haul to Lisbon and anything can happen, so it's really anybody's race.

The Portnet Dias Race promises to replace the Cape to Rio and Cape to Uruguay races in popularity on the local yachting scene.

Once again, major sponsorship has played a big part in ensuring that South African sailors can put to sea in well-equipped yachts able to compete with the best the world has to offer. Without this financial support, we'd have no chance of holding our own in the highly competitive world of ocean racing.

Don't miss the start on March 31. It should be a spectacular sight, and it isn't often we get to see an international race starting in local waters.

We wish all the skippers and their crews the very best of luck and fair winds.

**O**NE of the most exciting yachting events in the world — the Portnet Dias Race — will start in Cape Town on March 31.

This 6 000 nautical mile race to Lisbon via the Azores has attracted a fleet of 22 entries, and crews will be at sea for about six weeks. There are entries from the UK, Holland and the USA, giving the event a truly international flavour.

So, after we have watched the colourful spinnakers disappear over the horizon with Table Mountain as the backdrop, the crews will battle with the elements for a long time.

Their first stop-over will be at St Helena, about 1 700 miles and 10 days of hard sail-