

# Jubilant John Martin back on the water

By DALE GRANGER

JOHN Martin has abandoned his dream of sailing in the BOC Challenge race this year — but with the backing of an Australian syndicate is making a comeback to international yacht racing after three years in the sailing wilderness.

A jubilant Martin, 39, returned from Sydney, Australia, this week and announced yesterday that he will be skippering the record breaking Cape-to-Rio race winning maxi, Broomstick, with a crew of 18, including four South Africans, to try and win the famous 600 mile Sydney to Hobart race in Australia in December.

His announcement comes just three years after he was leading the BOC

Challenge race on Allied Bank in the Southern Ocean but struck a growler and was rescued by his compatriot Bertie Reed before his yacht sank.

Martin said in Australia he had discussed the Sydney to Hobart race with Australian electronics businessman, Mr Garry Yost, who had briefed him to find a yacht and launch a campaign "to win the race".

"This puts me back to where I was three years ago," Martin said, "I came so bitterly close to a BOC race sponsorship in the past two-and-a-half years. I watched some of the best years of my life going past and couldn't get a boat together, but it wasn't through lack of trying" he said.

"It's taking a bit of time to hit me, but there's light at the end of the tunnel," he added about his comeback to international yacht racing.

Martin said he has "no fear at all" of the Southern Ocean or the Bass Straits, one of the world's most gruelling seas which forced the retirement of over half the fleet in this years Sydney to Hobart race.

He pointed out that on Allied Bank he broke the Cape Town to Sydney BOC race record and made many friends in Australia where he was "well received" at the Sydney Yacht Club.

"I haven't got any plans to relocate to Australia. I'm a born and bred South African and will always be true to South Africa.



John Martin