

# Able seawomen

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DAILY NEWS

The *Cosmopolitan* magazine crew is the only all-woman team in this year's Vasco da Gama yacht race, which runs from Durban to East London, starting tomorrow.

Van Jaarsveld grew up in Durban and was in the navy for eight years, where she trained in everything from leadership to survival management, but specialised in telecommunications.

Today she is a sales representative for an engineering company, and sails for pleasure on weekends. She has also delivered a yacht from the Seychelles via the Comores, and spent five months on a charter boat in the Mediterranean.

The Vasco da Gama will be her first experience with an all-female crew.

Kilburn does client support for Datavia, a computer company that is part of Transnet, and sails most weekends to get back to nature. She has competed in the Vasco da Gama five times.

Horning, Durban bureau chief for *Cosmopolitan* and other Associated Magazines titles, had no sailing experience until doing the Ocean Sailing Academy four-day yacht-hand course in March. She was researching a sailing piece for *Cosmo*, and the all-woman Vasco da Gama boat crew evolved with it.

Jones, an East Coast Radio personality, is another without previous sailing experience - she was press-ganged on to the Cosmo boat to cover the race for her station and will be filing daily reports.



**A**T 360 nautical miles, the Vasco da Gama is the longest yacht race between two South African ports, covering one of the most treacherous stretches of coast in the world.

The Cosmo team, with strong Durban connections, sets sail tomorrow on the Ocean Sailing Academy yacht *Ocean Standfast* - the only all-women crew in the race.

As part of its strategy to promote sailing among women, Ocean Sailing has provided a boat and training for the crew, who will sail under the *Cosmopolitan* magazine colours.

Durban-based skipper Mrs Mindy Patton-Morris has been an instructor at American ports and at Club Med villages from the Bahamas to the West Indies. She has skippered cruise and charter yachts in the Mediterranean, the Caribbean and the Bahamas.

Patton-Morris is currently an instructor for the junior sailing programme at Point Yacht Club for the Mediterranean Shipping Company.

Her crew includes seasoned sailors Dr Melissa Rossaak, Ms Avril Sellars, Ms Dew Swanepoel, Ms Marianne van Jaarsveld and Ms Patricia Kilburn and rookies, East Coast Radio personality Ms Kim Jones and Ms Glynis Horning, Durban bureau chief for *Cosmo*.

Rossaak is a general practitioner and a qualified coastal skipper. She has sailed for most of her 26 years. This will be her fifth Vasco, the third with an all-female crew.

In one Vasco, the seas were so rough that a woman was swept overboard, and after saving her they were forced to turn back. The highlight of Rossaak's sailing career has been representing South Africa at the World Team Racing Championships in 1995 and at the British Open in 1996.

Sellars began bluewater sailing with the Ocean Sailing Academy in 1984, and holds Yachtmaster tickets from the Department of Transport and the Cruising Association of South Africa. She has logged 26 000 nautical miles, and her ocean racing experience includes the 1989 Beachcomber Race from Mauritius to Durban, also with an all-women team, and the 1990 Portnet Dias Trophy Race from Cape Town to Lisbon.

Sellars is the most senior and most seasoned Vasco da Gama sailor on the Cosmo crew, having done the race eight times, skippered five all-woman crews on her own yacht, and won the Rubicon Trophy in 1992 and the class trophy in 1995 and 1996.

In 1997 she skippered the all-woman *Hot Salsa!* in the J22 World Championships.

Swanepoel began keelboat sailing as a Durban schoolgirl. Today she is a bookkeeper for North Sails yacht manufacturers and has a daughter of 16 months who she hopes to introduce to the sport soon.

She has crewed on a charter yacht in the Caribbean and on a delivery yacht from the US Virgin Islands to Cape Town, and competed in most Point and Royal Natal Yacht Club off-shore races. In 1996 she raced in the Cape to Rio.