



YACHTSMAN John Ball on Amatuana. He sails her for the first time on Sunday.

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Aussie John sails into his Durban weekend

**Daily News
Reporter**

JOHN Ball is looking forward to his Durban weekend even more than most people: it will be his first chance to sail the yacht he has been building for the past 5½ years.

John, who hails from Brisbane, Australia, started building the 10 metre yacht, Amatuana, an Aboriginal word for dolphin, in 1979.

Despite the good-natured jeers of friends who told him he would never finish, he kept right on building.

"However, there were quite a few times when I wished I hadn't started the damn thing.

"When you get near the end you just seem to keep building and building, but it never seems any nearer being finished. It seems like the job will go on forever.

"But I didn't want to sell and let someone else get the benefit of all my work."

He estimates that it cost him about R40 000 to build the boat, now valued at R50 000.

"But I felt she was worth every penny when I saw her in the water. I also liked seeing the surprise of some of my friends."

He intends taking the yacht from Durban to Mauritius next year, and eventually on a cruise to Australia where his parents still live.