

# Solo skipper lets out dream yacht's secrets

## Pretoria Correspondent

South African solo yachtsman John Martin is determined to skipper his way to new world records — and he believes a new hi-tech dream racer will help him do it.

Martin offered a first 'peek' of the sleek vessel, under construction at naval dockyards in the Cape.

## DREAM

"I've decided the next BOC round-the-world challenge will be an all-or-nothing race," Martin said. "And I need a one-go yacht to do it."

The sponsors, Allied Bank, agreed and Martin was given an unlimited budget and free reign to design his dream boat.

At a cost of R1,5 million — Voortrekker II cost only R250 000 to build — it will be faster, lighter and easier to handle than anything else in the water.

The boat will be 18,2 m long, 6 m wide. "A floating pancake", Martin said. "I'll have only 1,4 metres headroom below decks, I'll only be able to stand

upright in the cockpit."

An all-South African project, some stages of construction were done under laboratory conditions, with the aid of the Atomic Energy Board.

Martin's considerable experience of ocean racing has gone into the design.

The boat will be able to reach speeds of more than 14 knots as opposed to Voortrekker II's 12 knots, while it will be able to cover a distance of more 320 nautical miles a day as opposed to Voortrekker's 290 miles a day.

Construction started in March and the boat will be launched on Martin's birthday — October 8.

## BREEZE

"We tried to keep it as secret as possible but its already causing a buzz overseas," Martin said.

The yacht has been designed to make handling a breeze — "a special cocpit will allow me to spend 60 percent of the time strapped into a comfortable seat designed by BMW, snug as a bug — no more steering on a wet, exposed deck."