

# SHOSHOLOZA



ARCHBISHOP Desmond Tutu, Capt Salvatore Sarno and Leah Tutu take the helm of the Shosholoza RSA 83 in Valencia, Spain, on Saturday

PICTURE: SUPPLIED

11/6/2007 MERCURY

## Shosholoza has given SA a new face, says Tutu

MERCURY CORRESPONDENT

IN ONE stroke, Team Shosholoza – South Africa's first challenger for the 2007 Americas Cup – had been able to present a visual image to the world of what the country hoped to become, Archbishop Emeritas Desmond Tutu told a press briefing hosted at the South African base in Valencia, Spain on Saturday.

"In the past, people were alienated and separated from each other. They couldn't work together, live or play together and Shosholoza, in one stroke, has been able to present a new face to the world.

"It is a different image and a dream of what we want to become.

"Suddenly, with Team Shosholoza, the nation has discovered sailing. We didn't know anything about sailing before Shosholoza. These guys did so very, very well. I want to congratulate all of them," said Tutu, patron of the team in May last year.

Tutu was visiting the South African base for the first time. He donned a Shosholoza "18th man" sailing jacket and confidently tried out the wheel of yacht Shosholoza RSA 83 – albeit dockside.

Accompanied by his wife, Leah, team Managing Director Salvatore Sarno and members of the crew, he even ventured to the tip of the narrow bow, constantly asking questions.

"What Shosholoza has done is a superb thing for our country. It is a sport where we never thought we would even have a chance, but you have shocked the sailing world," he said.

"You have demonstrated that the black community is able to integrate itself into this world and to be competitive in this sport," Tutu told the crew.

Tutu was unable to visit the crew while they were racing earlier this year, as he himself was at sea on a round-the-world lecture cruise.

"Sport has been a powerful agent for our nation that was for so long divided. When we won the 1995 Rugby World Cup, it did more for South Africa than the speeches of the politicians or even of archbishops.

"We were not the better side on that day, but the side that desperately needed that victory. It was very important for the evolution of our country."

### Evolution

On Saturday evening, Tutu was honoured at a VIP dinner hosted by Louis Vuitton, the principle partners of the Americas Cup.

The dinner was also used as a fundraising event for the restructuring and development of Tygerberg Hospital's children's section.

Special guests at the dinner included Princess Irene of Greece, the sister of Sofia, the Queen of Spain, and President of the Madrid-based organisation, World in Harmony, who spoke about her close friendship with the Tutu family, her visits to the hospital and subsequent work in procuring funds for it through the Spanish city of Seville.

The princess urged everyone to give generously to support the hospital.