



MICHAEL PINYANA

**Shipmates:** Parisians Hervé Olinge and Brice Monegier du Sobier are on a three-year voyage around the world to create awareness of cerebral palsy.

# Cabin fever opens up world of opportunity

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THEY have been living in a cabin of a yacht for two years, sailing from port to port around the world to inspire those who suffer from cerebral palsy.

Two French sailors were set to leave Table Bay Harbour for Hermanus this morning in the next leg of their voyage around the world to create awareness about the difficulties faced by young adults with cerebral palsy.

Skipper Brice Monegier du Sobier and crew Hervé Olinge and Eric Bellion, all 28 years old and from Paris, started their mission on the yacht Kifioune (the searcher) in July 2003.

Bellion recently decided to return to Paris with a woman he met in Tahiti.

Inspired by his two cousins who have cerebral palsy, Monegier du Sobier decided to involve other young adults, who do not have the pleasure of enjoying frequent sailing, to experience the freedom of being on a yacht.

Their journey started off the coast of Spain and continued on to Africa, across to the Caribbean, through the Panama Canal to the north-west of South America, on to the South Pacific and then back to touch the southern tip of South America before venturing into the South Atlantic in March this year and on to the Cape of Good Hope.

They sail home via the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea.

Over the past two years, once docked in port, they fly out five young, cerebral palsied adults, each with a volunteer, from France to join them.

**NATASHA PRINCE**  
Staff Reporter

“Brice prefers that their parents not accompany them as volunteers as it gives them the freedom to express themselves and to be more open to exploring the world,” said Veronica Pronk of the Western Cape Cerebral Palsy Association, who assisted the two sailors while they were in Cape Town.

The 10 people – a new group in each port – are entertained and visit various tourist attractions, meet others from local cerebral palsy associations and get to sail on the Kifioune.

They also automatically form part of the Association des Voiles Pour Passeraile (sailing for the gangplank), which was founded by the three friends.

The association, which is the foundation of the mission, has its headquarters in France and the men use a virtual boat, the L’Espoir Ré-Alizé, as an imaginative mechanism to race to raise awareness of cerebral palsy.

The trip will cover 50 000 nautical miles, with each mile covered earning one euro from organisations in France. The proceeds – €60 000 have been raised so far – are used to cover the expenses of the trip.

When Du Sobier and Olinge arrive home, hopefully in nine months, they plan a huge party for all those who contributed to or were part of their epic journey.

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