

Chris the cocktail king switches to ocean racing

THE face was unmistakable but what was Christian Lenferna doing at the Grand Bay yacht club in Mauritius last week on the eve of the 1991 **Crytic Beachcomber Crossing?**

It turned out that the man who launched a thousand cocktail parties

Wanda Hennig

with Stephanie's, the Durban-based catering company he once owned, was this time launching a yacht. Called Shandrani, it is competing in the Beachcomber race and is expected to cross the fin-

ishing line in Durban today — if wind and weather run their expected course.

Shandrani, a Cape Town-based Mystique L43, is being skippered by Springbok yachtsman Ian Martin, brother of the legendary solo around-the-world sailor

John. It has been sponsored in the race by the Mauritian Beachcomber Hotel Group in honour of their newest hotel, Shandrani, which opened at Blue Bay on the southern tip of the island this month — with Mr Lenferna at the helm.

He has been in Mauri-

tius for a year and has followed the construction of the hotel from the start.

He says that while he misses the friends he made during his 12 years in Durban, he hasn't had time to miss the city itself.

"When I went to Durban, there were few opportunities in Mauritius but the economy on the island has strengthened over the years. It was always my intention to return when the time seemed right, and to get into hotels here."

Mauritius has grown visibly more prosperous. Once every taxi driver was scanning the famed cobalt horizons for better work opportunities, today



Familiar Durban faces at the Shandrani hotel . . . Natal University graduate and Beachcomber marketing director, Robert de Speville (left) and the hotel's general manager, Christian Lenferna, with two of the welcoming hostesses.

unemployment is virtually non-existent.

Whereas once you could find only sarongs to blow your holiday money

on, the clothing industry is booming. But sugar remains the economic backbone of the island.

French tourists now outnumber South Africans but Mauritius remains a popular destination from our shores.