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# Rio trio did it the hard way

Cape Times Chief Reporter

**W**ITH minimal cash and sea experience, but with enormous enthusiasm and determination, three young Johannesburgers spent six years scrimping, saving and slogging in a suburban backyard to build the 14-m (47-ft.) cruising ketch Eshowe, now in Table Bay harbour for the start of the Cape-to-Rio race.

They have raised funds in various ways to enable them to take part in the race—and they were given a rousing send-off by the people of Eshowe, in Zululand, before they sailed to the starting point from Durban.

Eshowe, which cost R24 000 to build, is clearly no racing yacht—but the Transvaal trio make no bones about entering the race across the South Atlantic “just for kicks”.

Before I boarded Eshowe I was told by one of her co-owners, Martin McLachlan, 27: “We may not get to Rio first—but at least we’ll get there in comfort.” Below I found teak panelling and furnishings, fitted carpets, comfortable cabins fore and aft and two combined washroom/toilets.

## TOOK SIX YEARS

McLachlan said the steel boat took him and his colleagues Len Barrow, 28, an electrician, and Neil Maytham, 29, a fitter and turner, six years to build in the backyard of Len Barrow’s mother’s home in Parkwood, Johannesburg. The interior fittings, mostly from wood “scrounged” from the demolishers of the old Carlton Hotel and other buildings in Johannesburg, were made by the trio.

“Basically, all we had to finance the project was our savings, which we were able to put together by going without entertainment and the other things young people spend their money on.”

With less than 100 hours collectively of sailing experience to their credit, the crew of Eshowe made a 6 000 mile cruise to the Seychelles and back to get the feel of ocean cruising—and of their boat. Eshowe’s severest test was in a vicious four-day gale off Beira in October—and the ketch stood up to it well.

In the race to Rio she will carry a crew of seven.



In the saloon of Eshowe, the yacht they built in a backyard in Johannesburg, are the three men who scrimped, saved and slogged for six years to translate their dreams to reality. Next month they will be among the starters in the Cape-to-Rio race. From left: Len Barrow, Martin McLachlan and Neil Maytham. On the table is their ship’s mascot.