



THIS is one Rio race trophy which will be won before the starting gun is even fired. It is a pure silver model galleon in full sail, and it will be awarded to the yacht which is judged to be best prepared for the race in the concours d'elegance. Admiring it in a Cape Town jeweller's shop is Mrs. Doreen Waddington, of Pinelands.

*Mercury 22 1270*

## 'Full speed ahead' at race HQ

THE naval base adjoining the Royal Cape Yacht Club in Cape Town, SAS Unitie, has become fully operational as Rio race headquarters, and from this base the race committee is now feverishly preparing for the 3 600-mile international competition.

The event has sparked off tremendous interest in yachting circles throughout the world, as can be judged by the number of starters — 64 firm entries have been received, half of which have been attracted from foreign countries.

When the idea of the world's longest conventional yacht race was first mooted, the Cruising Association of South Africa estimated that a total of between 40 and 50 yachts might take part. But the response, particularly from overseas, has been overwhelming, in spite of a clash of dates which has limited entries from yachts in South America.

### CLASSIC

The classic yacht race from Buenos Aires to Rio de Janeiro is being held at the same time as the Cape to Rio race, and the only South American entry is Fortuna, the Argentine Naval Academy's 19-metre masthead yawl.

Future Cape to Rio events are likely to attract far more entries from these parts once a firm timetable for international races in the Southern Hemisphere has been worked out.

Yachtsmen converging on Rio in January from Cape Town, Buenos Aires and Salvador will hold the first South Atlantic yachting congress to arrange timetables in such a manner as to prevent future overlapping, and to enable yachts from the Northern Hemisphere to enter these races while their own areas are being swept by winter storms.

The rules governing the Cape to Rio race are those of the International Yacht Racing Union, with some modifications to meet the rigorous safety standards demanded by the race committee.

### THREE CLASSES

The yachts will be divided into three classes, according to their waterline lengths, and a handicap system will allow each yacht to compete on equal terms with other yachts in her own class as well as yachts in other classes.

Today, the yachts that pull off the coups in ocean racing are those which have been designed specially to take advantage of the new International Offshore Rules.

Any yacht which complies with the new rules in all respects, including hull shape, stability and sail area, is rewarded with a more favourable handicap — which greatly enhances her chances of carrying off the big prize, even if she is not first across the line.

Many of the yachts taking part in the Rio race have not been designed to the rule, and their handicaps will vary considerably, according to how closely they come to the ideal requirements.

### NO CASH

Their skippers are determined, however, to press their craft as hard as they can, for sometimes skill, seamanship and endurance count for far more than favourable handicaps.

As this is an amateur sport, no cash prizes are awarded, only trophies — but there are plenty of them. Each class will be fighting for line honours (first over the finish line) and each will also come up with a handicap winner. The biggest prize of all goes to the overall handicap winner — which could be a yacht of any size, from any class.

The Rio race promises to establish South Africa firmly in international yachting, and it seems likely to become a major three-yearly event.



## MERCURY READY TO GO

MERCURY is ready to go. After months of crew trials and deep-sea practice, the 13-metre (42ft) ocean racer which will represent the Province of Natal in the Rio race, is ready to leave for Cape Town next weekend.

With her she will carry the best wishes and hopes of the Natal Ocean Racing Foundation, her sponsors, and all the people of Natal, including the patron of the Foundation, Mr. Ben Havemann, the Administrator.

Under skipper Bobby Nuttall she has been carefully tuned and prepared for the long haul to the Cape for the race thereafter.

With her speedy, Van de Stadt-designed hull, she stands an excellent chance of being among the big prize-winners in Rio, and she is already one of a select group of South African yachts which are being considered as possible Springbok entries in the important Admiral's Cup series in England in July.

### GOING WELL

According to Mr. Arthur Jones, honorary treasurer of the Foundation, fund-raising for the Mercury is going very well. The target is R75 000 and almost a third of that has been contributed already by members of yacht clubs and Natal firms.

The Mayor of Durban, Councillor Raoul Goldman, has been elected a life member of the Natal Ocean Racing Foundation as a result of a personal donation to the Mercury fund.

The Foundation plans to keep Mercury racing — with different skippers and crews — for three years in the international circuits, showing the flag of Natal to the world, and bringing the Province prestige and goodwill.

Your donations will help keep Mercury ahead. Please send them to: The Treasurer, Natal Ocean Racing Foundation, 136 Victoria Embankment, Durban.

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### Renamed

LISE JANE, the 34ft Lello-designed sloop entered in the Rio race by a Johannesburg syndicate, has been renamed City of Springs as a result of a donation from the Springs City Council.