

● Get to know

them (1)

WHEN two owner-skippers share the same boat, how do they divide their territory?

In the case of Robin Knox-Johnston and Leslie Williams who own Ocean Spirit, the world's largest glass-fibre, factory-built sailing yacht, which is busting along out in the front, like this. Robin is top dog on the port side, while the starboard is Les's . . . and woe betide anyone who smokes in his domain, he abhors smokers. All would-be puffers, including Robin, light up on the port side only.

However, Barbara Buxton,

who sailed in Ocean Spirit from Malta to Cape Town but unfortunately missed the race because crew numbers swelled to formidable proportions, says it is usually fairfooted Les who treads in the ashtrays sending smelly stubs and ash flying around the saloon. On his lone voyage across the Atlantic in 1968 in which he came fourth to Bruce Dalling, he also sat down in a pot of hot stew by mistake.

Couldn't sit down for a week.

Both men are first-class yachtsmen, but in temperament different. Les, who has just retired from the R.N.,



although only in his late 30s, is easy going, sometimes a bit indecisive when it comes to crew, and has a droll sense of humour.

Robin, the only man to have sailed single-handed non-stop around the world, a voyage which took him 10½ months, is the brisker, more efficient of the two.

Don't know about Robin's cooking abilities but Les makes a very good dish of spaghetti bolognese, commonly called "spaghetti nosh".

And talking of pasta reminds me of the consolation telephone call I had yesterday:



"Never mind about Albastros's mast looking like a stick of macaroni. It could be worse . . . like a stick of spaghetti or even vermicelli."

Smoking is frowned upon on the starboard side of Ocean Spirit, Les Williams's side — he is left — but permitted on the port side, the domain of bearded Robin Knox-Johnston.