

Waited 64 years for life on ocean wave

The Argus Correspondent

DURBAN.— Mary Holt waited for 64 years for a life on the ocean wave.

"I have always wanted to sail but my husband hated sailing so I could not do it until I was widowed," she said.

Three years ago Mary, now 67, bought a 18m yacht, Ocean Gift Horse which has become her pride

and joy. And now she is on her way from Mauritius to Durban in the Beachcomber race.

"I think I am happier now than I have been in the past 40 years," she said before the race. "This is my third boat. My son and I had a small one in 1972, then we built one together."

Mary employed a skipper, fellow Englishman Tony Lyle, because a

boat that size cannot be handled by one person.

"I advertised and Tony answered. It's worked out very well. We have been sailing together for two years now. Most people think it is marvelous that I'm doing what I'm doing at my age."

From Durban Mary and Tony will sail to Cape Town, then on to the West Indies.

'Beachcomber' puts life into Indian Ocean

Staff Reporter

THE Crystic Beachcomber Crossing, with a fleet of more than 50 yachts racing for line honours, has brought the Indian Ocean to life.

The Crossing, the only international yacht race with a finish line in South Africa, started on Saturday morning from Grand Baie at the northern tip of Mauritius, and ends in Durban. It is expected to be a fast down-wind race.

Fifty-four sleek yachts embarked on the 1 600-mile epic and at least one them is reported to have returned to the island after difficulties.

Race co-ordinator Roy Close said a record time and thrilling finish are anticipated. The first yachts should take about eight days to reach Durban.

With the exciting days of the Cape-to-Rio and Cape-to-Uruguay races now something of the past, local yachtsman have focused a lot of time and attention on the Crossing ... as well as an enormous amount of money.

Compiled by MARTIN WELLS

The yachts are vying for the coveted Beachcomber Trophy, which goes to the yacht which wins on handicap.

A large contingent of Cape yachts are taking part, among them "the professionals" — John Martin, the winner of two legs in the recent BOC Round-the-World race, and "Biltong" Bertie Reed — both of whom have formidable records and are respected by ocean-racers all over the world.

Martin, a lieutenant-commander in the SA Navy, is at the helm of Two-A-Day Voortrekker II, which was renamed after its fine performance in the BOC race.

Reed, who recently won the Newport-to-Bermuda race in record time, is at the helm of Spirit Of First National with Petr Muzik.

One of the most interesting entries is that of the American yacht Camalot, which has full bar facilities as well as a honky-tonk piano!

The Crossing is organised jointly by the Grand Baie Yacht Club of Mauritius and Durban's Point Yacht Club. It is the only international race on South Africa's yachting calendar.

Inter-race needle matches a feature

ALTHOUGH the focus will be on the dash for line honours, separate "races within the race" will be contested in the Crystic Beachcomber Crossing.

The 54-yacht fleet features vessels in three classes: IOR (International Ocean Ratings), "A" and "Open".

● IOR Class — yachts with a minimum rating is 20,4ft and a DSPL of not less than 2 200kg. Internal ballast is forbidden for any yacht which displaces less than 2 310kg. The maximum rating in the IOR class is 70ft.

In the other two classes there is a minimum rating of nine metres and no maximum limit.

● "A" class yachts may not be less than 2 500kg.

● In the "Open" class the minimum DSPL is 4 000kg for monohulls and 2 500kg for multihulls.

The Beachcomber Trophy goes to the overall winner and there are prizes for the line-honour winners in each class.

Double setback for Martin before race

Staff Reporter

JOHN Martin, Cape Town's ace yachtsman, had a double setback before the Crystic Beachcomber Crossing began, apart from his yacht's "disqualification".

Two-a-Day Voortrekker will not take line honours, even if she crosses the line in Durban first as she has ballast tanks which are not allowed under the rules of the race.

On arrival at Grand Baie, Voortrekker ran aground on coral at the harbour entrance. She was pulled off, undamaged, and then had to moor almost two miles off Grand Baie.

Then thieves struck. They made off with the inflatable vessel tied to the rear of the yacht while Martin and his crew were asleep.



PREPARED: The crew of the ketch Aquarius getting ready for the Beachcomber Crossing, which started on Saturday. Aquarius, of the Royal Cape Yacht Club, is skippered by Sammy Naidu, who built her. The yacht was launched in 1981



READY TO GO: The crew of Swimline, called Assegai when it won the Beachcomber Trophy in 1985, from left: Eric Krepelka, Alex Boyé, Rick Nankin, Steve Meek and Henry Fagan. They are putting everything into the race as the yacht faces a much larger and stronger field in the present, second Crossing.

'Fun people' made Briton join the race

The Argus Correspondent

GRAND BAIE (Mauritius). — British Yachtsman Tony Walden sailed into Mauritius this week — and soon afterwards found himself an entrant in the Crystic Beachcomber Mauritius to Durban crossing.

Walden, the owner/skipper of Voyager Travel Meane Der said he had been greeted with such enthusiasm by the South African yachtsmen here that he "could not help himself" signing up.

"They even found me a sponsor," he said. "I've been sailing

now for over a year and have never come across such hospitality and fun people."

He said he had also managed to obtain an all-South African crew as he had been sailing solo for the past few months.

Walden, an electronic engineer by profession, is the only British competitor among the handful of Americans and Australians in the predominantly South African field.

He originally comes from central England — "200km from the nearest beach" — and it was

only while working in the Persian Gulf that he caught the salt bug. He now plans to sail around the world, working at various ports to keep his "head above water".

He says the only bad experience he has had in sailing was through the Straits of Hormuz during the height of the Iran-Iraq war.

"It wasn't so much rockets we were afraid of, but rather smashing into tankers who were cruising without lights at night."