



MERCURY 28/11/2005

PICTURE: SHELLEY KJONSTAD

SINDISWA Dinangwe of the Inhlansi dance group entertains the crowd which gathered at the Point Yacht Club to watch the start of the next leg of the Clipper 05/06 Round the World Yacht Race yesterday. The 10 yachts, seen in the background, now make their way to Fremantle, Western Australia

Emotional farewell for yachts

BONNY VERWEY

THE clouds parted for about two glorious hours yesterday, exposing blue skies and sunshine as the 10 yachts taking part in the Clipper 05/06 Round the World Yacht Race left Durban, leaving behind thousands of well-wishers who waved and cheered as they sailed off.

The event was an exciting day out for families and friends, and a tearful occasion for the loved ones of those who set sail on the 4 000 nautical mile journey to Fremantle, Western Australia,

which will take about four weeks.

The vessels left the Point Yacht Club at two-minute intervals. The Durban yacht was last to set sail. As the brightly coloured yacht made its departure to the song *The Lion Sleeps Tonight*, spectators waved and cheered in an emotional but joyful farewell.

Thousands of people had gathered at Thirsty's restaurant and along the banks at the harbour mouth to watch the vessels sail past.

Western Australia, which is

leading the race, had a sheep strung on the rear of the vessel, which the crew were said to be drying out during the race.

Majestic

Caroline Smart, the "Lady in White", sang old war ballads as the yachts passed the same spot from which Perla Siedle Gibson had serenaded troop carriers during World War 2.

Spectators joined in the singing old favourites like *It's a Long Way to Tipperary* and *Wish Me Luck as You Wave Me Goodbye*.

The yachts made their way to North Beach where sky-diving and aerobatic displays were performed and final goodbyes signalled before the start of the journey to Australia. Olivia Jones, of the Durban Clipper media team, said the event in Durban had been "amazing".

"The feedback from everyone has been fantastic.

Everyone was impressed with our facilities and adventures in and around Durban," she said.

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