

Durban contingent bent on spoiling Cape charge

SOUTH Africa's only J33, MSC Donna Mia, imported from the US eight months ago, and a Simonis 35, Zing, which took to the water only two weeks ago, are among entries from Durban's Point Yacht Club for the Rothmans Week regatta.

A one-design off-shore racer, MSC Donna Mia, has already proved her mettle in the short time she has competed in South African water. She won her class in Crystic Week, came fourth in Opel Week and also took part in the **Crystic Beachcomer** crossing.

"She's extremely fast," says co-skipper Harry Ellens, whose crew includes British woman sailmaker, Jo Liddel, and her boyfriend Ken Robertson,

who has come from UK to take part in the regatta. Both have extensive yachting experience.

Although Rothmans will be Zing's first major regatta, her owner, Jannie Nel, and skipper, Fred Viljoen, are in no doubt that she will be hard to beat.

Viljoen is unfazed by competition from top Cape yachting names such as Geoff Meek, Chris King, Greg Davis and Etienne van Cuyck who will all be going for victory on Simonis 35's, this year's favourite class.

"We're going to take the Rothmans trophy back to Durban. That's for sure," says Viljoen.

He will have the backing of a crew of seasoned L34 sailors, which

includes Cape Town yachtman Dave Alcock. "He knows the Cape waters better than any of us so will be a wonderful help," says Viljoen.

Another Durban force is the J27 Donna Mia owned and skippered by Gavin Smith.

"I bought her from Salvatore Sarno who now owns MSC Donna Mia. She competed in Rothmans Week last year and we're going all out to prove her speed this year," says Smith, a yachtsman with more than 30 years sailing experience.

Calibre entries from Point Yacht Club are L34's AFI Fibreglass Warrior, skippered by Ernie Shaw, and Point Blank, skippered by Ed Broadbent.

Shaw describes AFI Fibreglass Warrior,

which came second in her class in last year's regatta and finished seventh overall, as "the most active boat in the fleet."

"She came second in the L34 national championships this year and pulled off a hat trick last year with her third successive win."

He rates the chances of the L34's against the Simonis 35's high. "With heavy down-wind sailing we will give the bigger boats a good run for their money," he says.

Shaw will have a sound Durban crew to help him. They include ex Zimbabwean sailing champion Peter Morgan and women yachties Maureen Geall and Jenny Anderson.

Luck could run in threes for Point Blank which turns three this year and will be competing in her third Rothmans Week regatta.

Broadbent says Point Blank is going faster than ever and that her seven-strong crew have been working hard. The yacht is set to improve on last year's performance when she finished fifth in line for the L34 trophy.



FULL AHEAD: Farr 38 Foretech, skippered by David Yourieff in last year's Rothmans Week regatta.

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