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The sleek Ilse-Bell being prepared by her crew for a cruise off Durban.

# Yacht race record predicted

## Mercury Reporter

DURBAN yachtsman George Ilse has predicted that this September's 2 800 km Mauritius to Durban Crystic Beachcomber Crossing will be completed in a record time of under seven days.

His prediction hinges on the fact that at least 10 fast maxi or mini-maxi craft with lengths varying from 15 m to more than 21 m are expected to enter the race, their superior speed giving them a considerable edge over the 60 or so other participating yachts.

The present record of eight days, 15 hours and seven minutes is that set by a yacht on which Mr Ilse crewed, the 15,4 m Cape Town-built yacht, Royal Palm, in the 1987 crossing.

This year he hopes his yacht, Ilse-Bell, will take the line honours from the larger Cape

yachts.

The 1987 race experienced both upwind and downwind conditions with two sizeable gales and the Ilse-Bell has consequently been remodified at a cost of R50 000 in order to improve its mixed-weather capability and its ability to handle large ocean waves.

The expenditure seems to have paid off with the narrow-hulled yacht winning in record time both the 425 km Vasco Da Gama race from Durban to East London and the 250 km Durban to Richards Bay return race within the past year.

Mr Ilse is open-minded about the possible outcome, however, saying that it is 'a big ocean and anything can happen'.

'A lot depends on navigation and on being in the right spot to make the best of the weather.'



George Ilse