

Sponsorship for Cape to Lisbon yacht race

Yachting Reporter

THE Dias yacht race from Cape Town to Lisbon is to be sponsored by the newly-commercialised South African Harbours, now known as Portnet.

Portnet is a division of the newly formed public transport company Transnet, formerly the South African Transport Services.

The Dias race was first sailed last year as part of the 500th anniversary of Portuguese sailor and explorer Bartholomew Dias's epic journey around the Cape.

TABLE BAY

Last year it started in Lisbon and finished at Cape Town, but this year it will start in Table Bay on March 31 and finish in Lisbon some 40 days later.

Organisers say 22 yachts, mostly cruisers, have already entered the race.

It will be sailed along the romantic old 6 000-mile spice route mostly in trade winds and seven foreign-registered yachts have entered to give it an international flavour.

Portnet has sponsored the event because it wanted to show its support for national and international trade, a spokesman said.

South Africans should realise that their history was strongly based on the sea, he said.

STRONG TIES

Portnet, by managing harbour infrastructure and maritime and cargo services in the country's eight commercial ports, had strong ties with yachting, both locally and with visiting international yachtsmen.

The company also believed the race was historically important as it highlighted the classic maritime links between this country and Portugal.

The race will be sailed in two classes — the open class for unrated racers and cruisers and the International Measurement System class for rated racers.