

Home is the sailor



Mrs Lynne Martin on a motor launch rushing out to meet her husband.

By ARNOLD KIRKBY
Yachting Reporter

IT WAS late and dark, but throughout Table Bay lights dotted the sea to mark the homecoming welcome for Cape Town's single-handed yachtsman John Martin in Tuna Marine Voortrekker II.

First on to the 18m yacht was his wife Lynne. They danced a victory jig on the deck, then opened a bottle of champagne in celebration of his record-breaking sail from Newport, Rhode Island.

Sirens

He broke the "Flying Frenchman" Philippe Jeantot's 1982-83 BOC Challenge round-the-world yacht race first leg time by about five days. Jeantot in Credit Agricole III arrived at the finish line yesterday, about 14½ hours behind Martin.

As Martin entered the Royal Cape Yacht Club, he was greeted by the sirens and horns of many ships and at the marina where his boat was to be

docked and along the quay he was greeted by at least 2 000 spectators who waited long hours for him.

The marina almost capsized under the combined weight of scores of spectators and newsmen who pushed closer to the boat as it arrived. The night was lit by television lights and photographers' flashbulbs.

Martin gave an impromptu news conference on the boat and then embracing his father Mr John Martin (snr) he shouted: "This is the man who taught me to sail."

Mr Martin snr, a retired naval officer, said he was extremely proud of the achievement of his son.

Earlier Rear-Admiral Chris Bennett, flag officer for Naval Command West, accompanied the minesweeper SAS East London to meet the lone sailor about 17 miles off Cape Town.

Martin's sponsor, Mr John Church, managing director of Tuna Marine, arrived on his cruiser, Shaka, a short while later, giving him some moral support after the winds dropped and prevented Mar-

tin's planned sunset arrival.

At a later news conference, he was accompanied by his two daughters, Tamara, 6, and Roxanne, 4.

He then told about his days at sea and praised the French yachtsmen in particular.

"When you see a Frenchman you must beat him. They are always there waiting for you to make a mistake.

"In this type of racing you can't prepare for surprises, you have to be prepared. For four years I have been racing single-handed and am in to win.

"There are, however, still 20 000 miles to go in this race," he said.

Martin said each of the 11 18m yachts in the race stood a chance of winning the race, but warned especially of Warren Luhrs on Thursday's Child on the next two stages through the southern oceans and around Cape Horn.

He was also congratulated on his win by the Commodore of RCYC, Mr Ted Kuttel, and Mr Dave Abramowitz, chairman of the South African BOC race committee.



Pictures: Jim McLAGAN and DION TROMP, The Argus

Bubbly all round as John and Lynne Martin celebrate.



Above: Some of the 3 000 strong welcoming crowd clamber on yachts to catch a glimpse of John Martin and his yacht.

Right: An emotional father and son reunion: John Martin hugs John Martin (senior).

Left: Smiles and smiles for Martin and daughters Tamara, left, and Roxanne.

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www.sailing.co.za - editor@sailing.co.za