# Voortrekker I hoping to bow out gracefully

By HENRI du PLESSIS
Yachting Reporter

**THE end of an era is drawing near as the "grand old lady of the sea" — Voortrekker I — prepares for her last race before being put on permanent display in a city museum.**

The stout wood-and-glassfibre yacht is on the hard (as yachties call land) in Simon's Town for a refit to prepare her for the Diaz Trophy Race from Cape Town to Lisbon this month.

The South African Defence Force crew are hard at work trying to get her ready for action under the caring eyes of skipper Navy Lieutenant-Commander Rob Shelley.

The crew are hoping to win the race and are seeking sponsorship urgently.

Commander Shelley said: "To really get the boat in shape and also to give the crew their much-needed break at the stop-over in the Azores, we'll need money.

## Expensive lady

"The Navy's been good to us — somehow, they have found money and men to help prepare the yacht, but this is not enough.

"Voortrekker is 24 years old, but she's not being retired because of her age — she is very expensive to keep in racing trim because of the way she was built.

"Voortrekker II is much more cost-effective because the materials used to repair her and her construction method are cheaper."

The 15,04m Voortrekker I became famous under the hands of such illustrious South African sailors as Bruce Dalling, Bertie Reed, John Martin and Hanno Teutenberg.

She was built by Thesens in Knysna to a Van der Stadt design and her glassfibre-coated, blackwood-and-mabogany hull first tasted the brine on June 12 1968.

The force behind her construction was industrialist Dr Anton Rupert, who had hoped to see South Africa enter the international yachting arena.

His plan was an immense success, as Dalling sailed the yacht to second place in the Observer Single-handed Trans-Atlantic Race (Ostar) from Plymouth to Newport in the year of her launch.

Since then, she has sailed the equivalent of five times around the world.

In her last international race, she beat all but one of the new, high-tech yachts in the 1987 Ostar Class 2 for monohulls in Reed's able hands.

Not only was she second in Class Two, she came fourth overall among the monohulls.

She also performed exceptionally well when Teutenberg skippered her into second place in the 1988 Diaz race from Lisbon to Cape Town, close on the heels of Reed in the much larger, high-tech Prestige Krost.

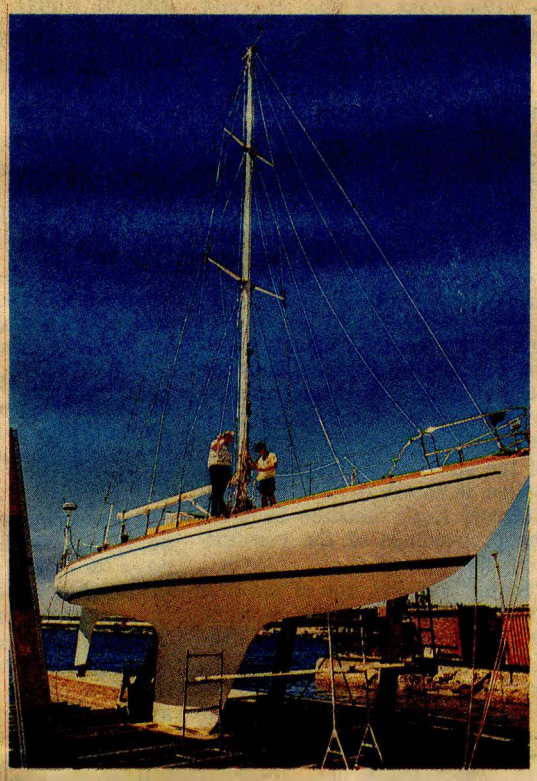
She was joint winner of this race on elapsed time.

Most recently, she took a creditable third place overall in the Anglo-Alpha Agulhas race from Hout Bay to Mossel Bay and back to Simon's Town under Shelley's command.

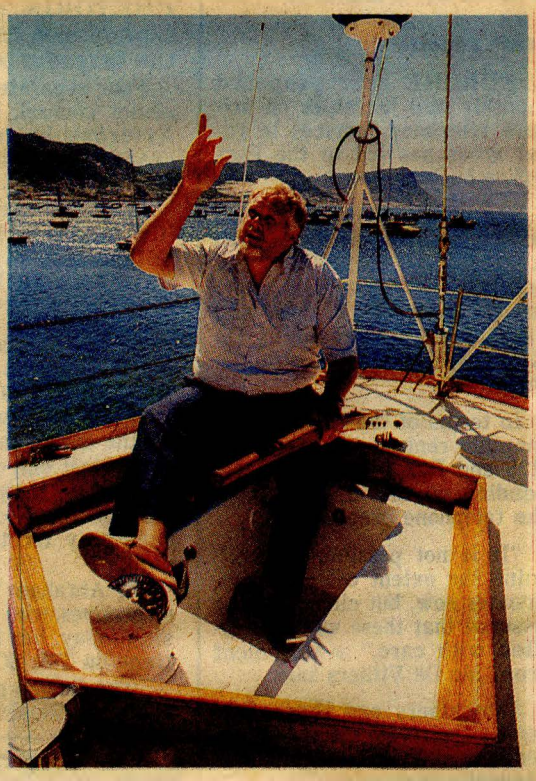
Voortrekker's crew in the Diaz race will be Commander Shelley, watch captain Justin Foox, navigator Midshipman Phillip Lamprecht, Seaman David Kain, Air Force Captain Gert Uys and seaman Chris Hathaway.

Commander Shelley said: "We'll be going, whether we find a sponsor or not.

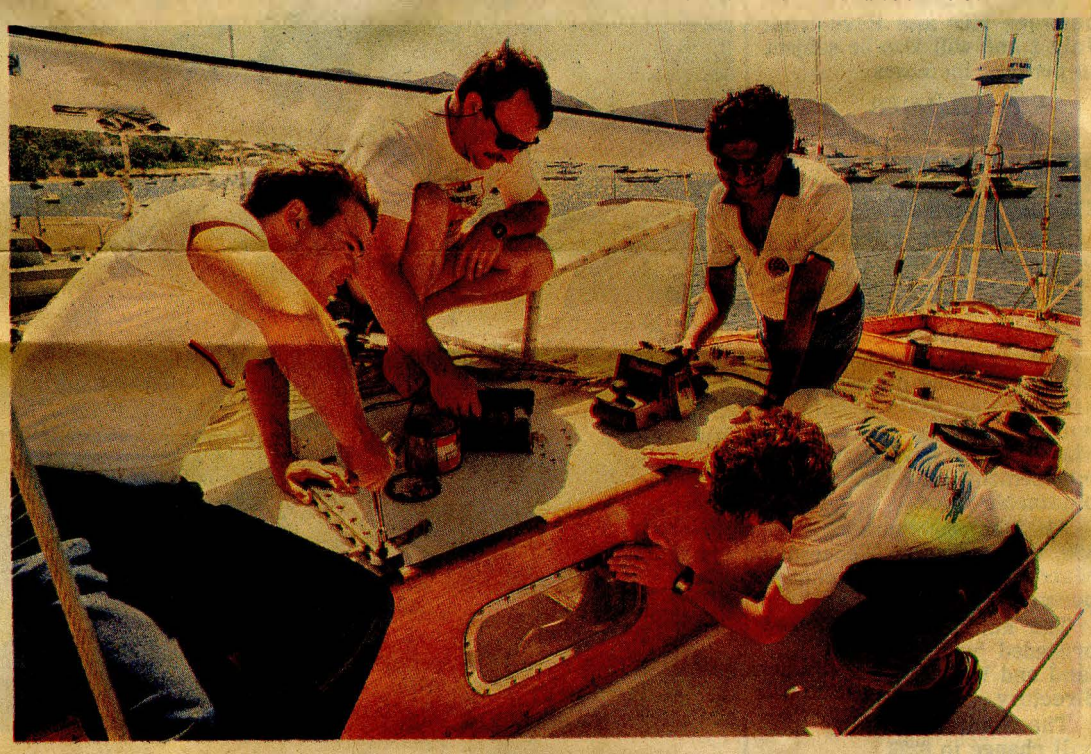
"But, it would be nice to win her last race and also to afford the living costs of the crew without them having to stay aboard at the stop-over in the Azores and after the finish in Lisbon."



**ON THE HARD:** Voortrekker I lies on the slipway at SAS Simonsberg. Her gleaming hull is ready for relaunching, but work is still being done inside.



**AT THE HELM:** Lieutenant Commander Rob Shelley shows where he will be spending many hours skippering Voortrekker I in the Dias Race.



Pictures: DANA LE ROUX, The Argus.

**HARD AT IT:** Workmen and crew of Voortrekker I prepare the yacht for the race with the little money they have at their disposal.

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# Blaze gives Martin a scare

Yachting Reporter

A FIRE in his yacht Allied Bank's electrical system gave lone sailor John Martin a scare soon after he left Cape Town at the weekend bound for Plymouth, England, for the start of the Two-STAR transatlantic race.

He sailed at 2pm on Saturday after lunch with friends and supporters. Yachts from the Royal Cape Yacht Club followed him out.

Martin told his support crew by radio yesterday that one of Allied Bank's alternators had caught fire. It had taken three fire-extinguishers to put out the flames.

The alternator had been destroyed but there had been no other damage. Martin said he was satisfied with the yacht's performance.

Support crew spokesman Mrs Jeanne van Rooyen said: "He sounded very chirpy. He said he was averaging about 11 knots under the main sail and three Genoa foresails.

Martin was expected to reach Plymouth in 42 days. He was headed first to St Helena and then would make his way to the Azores before making a dash for Plymouth.

But Mrs Van Rooyen said the support crew would have to keep their heads down once Martin had reached his destination.

"We forgot to pack his kettle — and coffee is all John uses to keep warm at night."

The Two-STAR race starts on June 10.