

# Solo sailor Paris enjoys dream crossing

By Matt Westcott

Bermuda's very own Cape-d crusader, Alan Paris, is close to completing the latest arduous stretch of his global conquest.

Paris and *BTC Velocity* are taking part in the Around Alone sailing race, a single-handed round the world event.

The *Islander* is currently bringing up the rear in Leg Three of the event between South Africa and New Zealand but is now within sight of the finish.

"As I write this, *BTC Velocity* and I are passing Cape Reinga, the north-western most mark of New Zealand," said Paris in an e-mail to *The Royal Gazette*.

"It has been an amazingly quick trip after my Hobart pit stop for repairs, only six and a half days. In fact I have had the best crossing of the Tasman Sea, weather wise, of any of the competitors – no punching into head seas like Kojiro and no light airs, just winds ranging from 35 to 15 knots all from behind giving me fabulous reaching conditions."

Paris said the Around Alone was measured in many ways.

"I remember when just crossing the Atlantic seemed a major milestone," he said. "However, there was crossing the Bay of Biscay, flying down the Trades, negotiating the Doldrums, crossing the Equator and then dipping below 40 degrees south for the first time and getting a taste for what has been an eventful Leg Three.

"After leaving Cape Town, the rule of measurement changes as we all do a three-quarter circle around Antarctica, and that rule becomes counting the capes."

The first Cape to pass was the Cape Of Good Hope, the south western most point of the African continent, known affectionately as the Cape of Storms, then Cape Leeuwin on the Australian land mass.

"Today is Cape number three in the race, that of New Zealand's Cape Reinga," Paris said. "I did not see either of the other two Capes, but I feel as though I could reach out and touch this one which is only four nautical miles away on a sunny summer's day.

"It has always been my way in this race to enjoy the small achievements in search of the true goal, a solo circumnavigation.

"However, there is one more Cape to 'bag', so to speak, that of Cape Horn. Just typing the words, gives me cause to think.

"This last of the Cape group is by far the greatest one of all, with more history and awe associated than the others."

The Around Alone skippers

will sail towards this Cape from the west and make their way around in a variety of conditions.

"After rounding Cape Horn there will, I am sure, be a feeling that the race is winding down," he said. "But as in previous races, we know that this is far from the truth with lots of sailing still to go and many more stories to be told.

"In 48 hours or so I will be crossing the finish line of Leg Three. Thank you all very much for following me and for all the wonderfully supportive e-mails during the last 42 days as well as for the whole race so far.

"I am looking forward to seeing my family and friends and having a little time on land."