

# Paris is put through his paces Down Under

By **KYLE HUNTER**  
**Sports Editor**

ALAN Paris, Bermuda's first sailor to attempt the gruelling single-handed around the world race; just returned to the Island this week after putting his boat – and himself – through tests in Australia.

Paris, who will be sailing the yacht, named BTC Velocity, said his main reason for going Down Under was “to spend two weeks with David Adams”.

He said: “David is a previous competitor in two Around Alone races and the winner of the 50-foot class in the 1994-95 race. I have always admired David and knew that a week or so with him acting as my coach would be beneficial to the overall campaign.”

However Adams did not make it to Sydney as he had run out of time and instead flew up to Brisbane.

Paris said: “We set sail for Mooloolaba, a coastal resort 65 miles north of Brisbane. This seven-day period entailed day sails out of the port of Mooloolaba and a return passage to Brisbane.

“The time was well spent. David had me climbing the mast unassisted with the aid of ‘mountain climbing’ apparatus, doing sail handling drills, tacking with the use of water ballast which was a new skill for me.”

Also on the training schedule were solo gybes of the spinnakers under autopilot, safety discussions, repairs discussions, engine maintenance, weather routing discussions, diet and “generally sharing his knowledge on race management both personally and in terms of performance”.

Paris added: “If funds allow I will be having David come to Bermuda for a week prior to the start of the Around Alone Race for some final work and testing. He pushes very hard, yet gives a constructive guide to weaknesses and development points. He is a good coach.”

Paris also said that while in Australia modifications were made to the yacht – “just like the America's Cup!”

The Bermudian explained: “In the America's Cup the teams have about three or four keels and as many masts during the new yacht's commissioning process with which to experiment in order to attain the fastest combination. Unfortunately the Bermuda Solo Campaign budget is not quite \$100 million! However, it became clear during the sea trials that BTC Velocity is a very powerful boat in the light wind velocities. In a true wind of four knots we were sailing at six and a half knots on a close hauled tack. This is very, very fast for a 40-foot yacht, but as the wind increased it became equally apparent that we would be down to very small sail areas when only in 30 knots of wind. Although 34 knots is technically tropical storm strength, the wind strengths to be experienced in the Around Alone race will be much higher, thus we felt that we were just under 10 knots too low on the scale. This means that with minimal sail area the wind velocity should be 40 knots, not 30 knots.

**Continued on Page 12**

**Continued from Page 9**

“So in consultation with the designer Scott Jutson, sailmaker Bob Fraser, builder Jon Sayer and also my coach David Adams along with the data from the sea trials, we have decided to add a further 285 kilograms to the bulb (600 lbs) and take six feet off the top of the mast.”

Paris said: “Although these measures may sound quite radical, they are in fact very basic and simple changes. The action of adding more ballast will make BTC Velocity ‘stiffer’.”

BTC Velocity was in fact built to be able to handle a further 330 kg of ballast if required.

The team also lowered the draft of the boat to 10-feet, six-inches from 10-feet, four-inches adding to what is called the righting moment. Reducing the mast height has the effect of further lowering the centre of gravity and this will enable the ‘reef’ points to go in at higher wind speeds, yet still keep the incredible power of this yacht. Reducing the mast actually saves some 40 kg when combined with effects of windage, rope lengths, etc. The net effect of adding weight

to the keel will be approximately 220 kg (450 lbs) when the mast savings are taken into account. Out of the five sails made for the launch only two will have to be modified and only one of those was an actual ‘race’ sail. The main will have a mid section removed and the ‘mast-head’ spinnaker will be reduced.”

Paris said it was determined that these changes should be made by the builder in Australia, based on the first class build of the yacht, and then BTC Velocity will be shipped as originally planned, although two months later. Sail changes and design measurements for the race sails will be delivered in April next year.

Paris said that C & S Shipping Australia has graciously agreed to allow the postponement of the initial shipping date until the modifications can be completed. The new shipping date is mid December, with an arrival date in Wilmington, Delaware USA on approximately January 15. BTC Velocity will then be re-commissioned in its new format and ready for a great test in late January 2002 when Paris will deliver the yacht to Bermuda – alone.