

# Solo sailor unveils world-class team

By Magnus Henagulph

Solo sailor Alan Paris is almost halfway toward raising his goal of \$400,000 to become the first Bermudian to compete in the Around Alone sailboat race.

The race is held every four years and takes competitors on a gruelling 27,000 mile, four-stage circumnavigation of the globe.

At the launch of his campaign at the Royal Bermuda Yacht Club yesterday, Mr. Paris was joined by family, friends, sponsors and well-wishers as he unveiled his new boat which is being built for the challenge.

The 40-foot boat is being designed and built by Scott Jutson in Brisbane, Australia, and should be ready by early July.

Mr. Paris will spend several weeks training in the Southern Pacific, and will sail the boat to Auckland, New Zealand where he will leave it until January 2002, when he will sail the vessel to Bermuda.

Mr. Paris' primary sponsor for the epic adventure is BTC, who was given the privilege of naming the boat, *BTC Velocity*, as well as designing the hull graphics and sails.

BTC vice president of Market and Technology, Allan Sloan was on hand to say how pleased his company was to be the primary sponsor for the race.

Mr. Sloan said they had been thinking of slogans for the boat such as: "He will not be alone," as well as more humorous ones such as: "Better you than me!"

Logic Communications is also sponsoring Mr. Paris and senior vice president of Sales and Marketing, Bill Dickinson said his company was developing a web site that would keep everyone in touch with Mr. Paris' progress.

Mr. Dickinson said that at different times, Mr. Paris would be communicating with his Logicphone and said: "He will be able to describe what it is like to navigate around icebergs, or through hurricanes in an immediate way; real time, real adventures."

Mr. Paris thanked his sponsors and made a special mention of BTC who is also committing to sponsoring the J24 class of sailing boat, as well as the Bermuda Sailing Association's (BSA) children's summer sailing regatta.

Both Jon Corless of the J24 association and Timmy Patton, president of the BSA were on hand to support Mr. Paris and say thanks for the much-needed sponsorship.

The Bermuda Underwater Exploration Institute will also be involved with charity and an educational programme, whereby a curriculum will be created, based on the race and used in schools.

Martha Dismont of the Family

Learning Centre was also on hand to lend her organisation's support to the adventure which will hopefully be a symbiotic relationship whereby the charity will benefit from a fund-raising campaign next year.

Mr. Paris recently left his job as manger of Ariel Sands to concentrate fully on the race, and has already logged 10,000 solo miles at sea.

He will have the support of his wife Becky, and new son Tucker who he says he will miss very much on his long, lonely transoceanic legs.

Though the race is still over a year away — starting in September 2002 — Mr. Paris is working full-time on the project and has hired a coach, David Adams, who completed the race in 1994.

Mr. Paris will go to Brisbane Australia for the launch of his boat, and he will spend three weeks with his coach training for the six months at sea.

He is currently spending one and a half hours cycling and an hour kayaking each day.

When asked what highlights Mr. Paris was looking forward to he said without much hesitation: "Cape Horn," which he described as a sailors rite of passage, and almost compares to a mountaineer climbing Mount Everest.

The race usually starts in Charleston, North Carolina, but



Photo by David Skinner

**Solo sailor: Alan Paris, centre, launched his around-the-world alone campaign yesterday and unveiled his new boat, *BTC Velocity*. Mr. Paris is joined by sponsors Allan Sloan, left, vice president of Market and Technology at BTC, and Bill Dickinson, senior Vice-President of Sales and Marketing for Logic.**

the 30 competitors are likely to start from Europe in 2002.

The first leg will be to Cape Town, South Africa, then to Auckland, New Zealand, onto Punta Del Este, Uruguay, and

back to Europe. Each leg is known as a "sprint" and is between 6,000 and 7,000 miles.

The first Around Alone was held in 1982-83 and called the BOC race, named for the British

Oxygen Corporation that sponsored it, and it started and finished in Newport Rhode Island.

Ninety-seven sailors have completed the race since it began.