

# SAILING RECORD BETWEEN SALDANHA AND CAPE TOWN BROKEN

By Kalla White

The annual Mykonos Offshore regatta which took place in late February between Cape Town and Saldanha Bay, saw a sailing speed record set in the 1960s broken by three competing yachts.

*Merlin* (Simonis 65), *Wizard*, (Simonis 58) and *Warrior* (Simonis 60) all beat the previous record, set by an RCOD sailing from Saldanha to Cape Town in a North Westerly gale. The record which saw the 64 nautical miles from North and South Head to Table Bay covered in 6 hours 15 minutes, was set by *Zeeslang* which was owned by well known yachtsman Kees Bruynzeel. The time taken gave her an average speed of 10.4 knots.

*Merlin* was first to reach North and South Head at Saldanha, covering the distance in 4 hours 52 minutes, shaving 1 hour and 23 minutes off *Zeeslang's* record. *Warrior* was close behind, reaching through the heads approximately five minutes later, with *Wizard* roughly 15 mins behind.

*Merlin's* Skipper Craig Middleton said, "that although the wind was strong (40 knots) at the start, it moderated later and the fleet were forced to change up to larger, lighter spinnakers towards the end. Boat speeds attained during the early part of the dash for the entrance to Saldanha, exceeded 18 knots."

*Merlin's* time means that she achieved an average speed of 14 knots over the ground.

The event was later won on handicap



***Merlin on her record-breaking passage.***

by *Warrior* with *Ballyhoo Too* Second and *Merlin* third in Class 1.

This is the first time this year that the three top Simonis designs in South Africa have come up against each other in the same event. *Wizard* recently underwent a rig and rudder up-grade, while *Merlin* has upgraded her sails and winches.

It will be interesting to see the outcome of the clash between these three during Continental Week! ⚓



Simonis 60 "Warrior" (foreground) gets blown off course beyond the start line of the Mykonos offshore in 1999 in Table Bay Cape Town. Merlin (left background) powers on at 18 knots plus. *Photo courtesy of Sailing Magazine.*