



'ONE FOR THE BUCKET LIST': The crew of the CAN DO! Canace before setting off in the Governor's Cup race yesterday.

PICTURE: LEON LESTRADE

'Old farts' set sail for St Helena

Group of retired friends take up the Governor's Cup challenge on hi-tech yacht

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AS 20 YACHTS set sail from Simon's Town yesterday for the biennial Governor's Cup, most of the crew of the entrant CAN DO! Canace were able to tick something off their bucket list.

The crew, comprising five retired friends and colleagues aged between 53 and 70, is made up of skipper Kevin Ward, Peter van Lienden, Dave Holmes, Keith Jackson and Steve Robinson.

It is the first time these keen sailors have competed in

the event, a two-week race from Simon's Town to the island of St Helena. It takes place every two years and once the yachties reach the island, they load their boats on to the Royal Mailship St Helena, which comes twice a month, for the trip back home.

Van Lienden described the crew, three of whom are from Simon's Town, as "old farts trying to tick something off of our bucket lists".

Martin Struhmann, the only crew member to have sailed in the competition before, had to pull out at the

last minute due to illness.

Ward, from Johannesburg, said he grew up sailing, and wanted to get back into it.

Asked about his expectations for the race, he joked: "We expect to get there."

Before setting sail yesterday, Robinson said: "People keep asking me if I'm nervous; I'm not nervous at all. I have a fantastic sense of anticipation." But, he pointed out, "People don't think how stressful it can be for the family."

Van Lienden said the

technology available and the safety of their boat made the adventure much safer.

"The owner has put a lot of time, effort and money into the boat - that will make up for whatever we lack in experience.

"And the technology is what is enabling us, a group of retired people, to set off on this adventure. Our families can log on to the website every day and see exactly where we are. The boat is tracked and we have a satellite phone."

Jackson said he was excited and had some sense of

"trepidation" while his family thought he was "absolutely stupid".

"But we've all got a bucket list, and this is on mine," he said.

Each crew member has packed a "secret Santa" gift to swap and Holmes, who will be cook, has planned a special Christmas menu of roast beef, roast potatoes, vegetables, gravy and Christmas cake for pudding.

While at sea, the crew will also be celebrating a birthday and New Year.

"We've got lots of sweets

and puddings, and we'll be drinking real coffee every morning," Holmes said.

Britain's consul-general in South Africa, Chris Trott, said the race was a wonderful way of linking the province of the Western Cape with the island of St Helena.

He said this year's race was historic as work had just started on the island's first airport.

The airport, which is being built by a South African company, would allow many more people to enjoy all the island had to offer, he said.