

Swiss Family Schwörer's amazing decade of daring

Cruising and climbing for the planet

Dave Savides

THEY are literally sailing the seven seas and climbing the highest mountains, as they spread the message that global warming is threatening our planet.

Climatologist Dario Schwörer, his nurse wife Sabina and their four children - all born during their decade-long scientific adventure cruise - have arrived in Richards Bay ahead of the Cop17 Summit.

Sailing under the patronage of the United Nations Environment Program and the Swiss Government, they limped into the Zululand Yacht Club last week after their autopilot broke down en route from Mauritius.

But their spirits have been lifted by the warm reception they received and they are keen to share their experiences with local schools, service clubs and other organisations.

Life on board their vessel 'Pachamama' (the Incan word for 'Mother Earth') has been eventful, to say the least, over the past 10 years.

To date, the TOPtoTOP Global Climate Expedition has sailed 42 613 nautical miles, climbed over 400 000 vertical metres (Dario is a mountain climbing instructor), cycled more than 18 000 kilometres and

visited over 50 000 students.

'We have chosen adventure as the means to get across the message that we must protect this beautiful earth that gives us all these wonderful opportunities for sport and recreation,' says Dario.

'We must search for ways to find lasting, environmental friendly answers to issues such as global warming and the planet's dwindling resources.

'Great goals and progress can be achieved in balance with nature.'

Leading by example, his boat - which entered the classic Sydney to Hobart race - boasts only 'clean energy' and is equipped with 11 solar panels and two wind turbines.

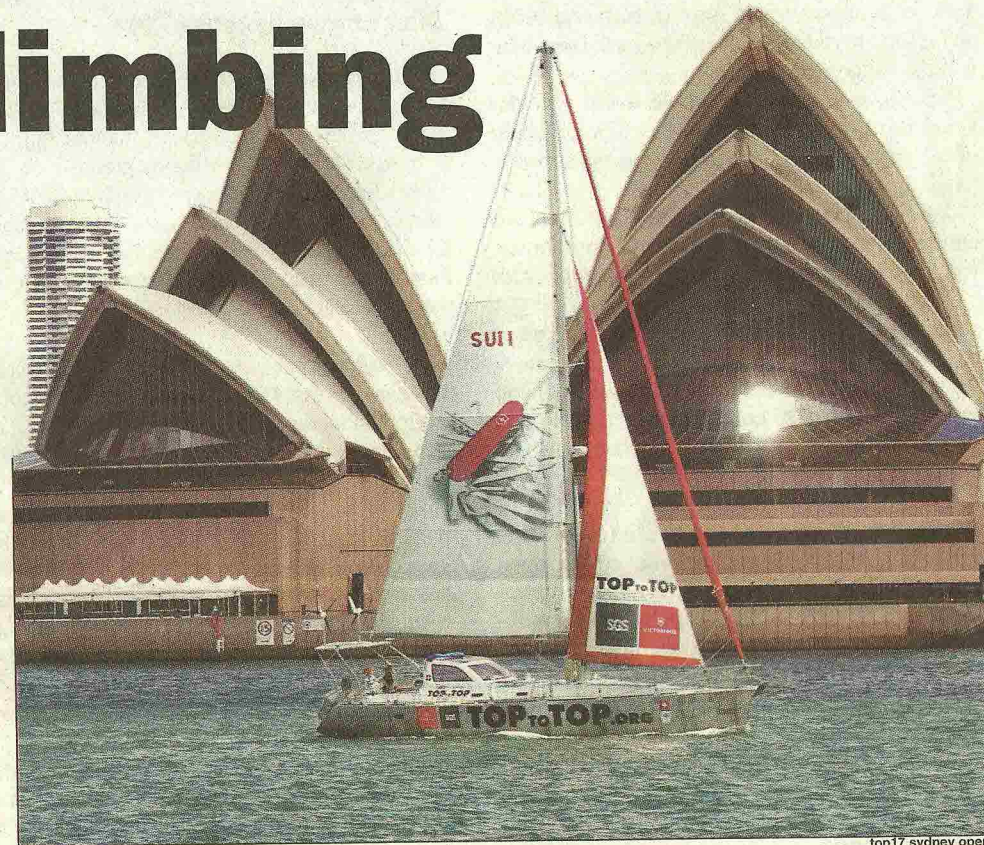
'Besides gathering scientific data along the way we are also helping manufacturers of electronic and other equipment to design the most green-friendly appliances.

'The boat is in fact a testing facility for our sponsor, SGS.

'We have a strong message to share, especially to the youth, who we want to inspire to achieve a better future.

'We challenge them to come up with ideas and projects that will protect and benefit the planet.'

• To arrange for a presentation on the expedition, email dario@toptotop.org



top17 sydney opera

'Pachamama' sails by the iconic Sydney Opera house



top9 india

Everywhere they go, such as here in India, the expedition promotes clean-ups of the environment