



Jesse's Awesome Adventures

by Briar Jensen



PHOTO: BRIAR JENSEN

On 31 October 1999, Australian Jesse Martin returned home after 328 days at sea, becoming the youngest person to sail non-stop around the world solo.

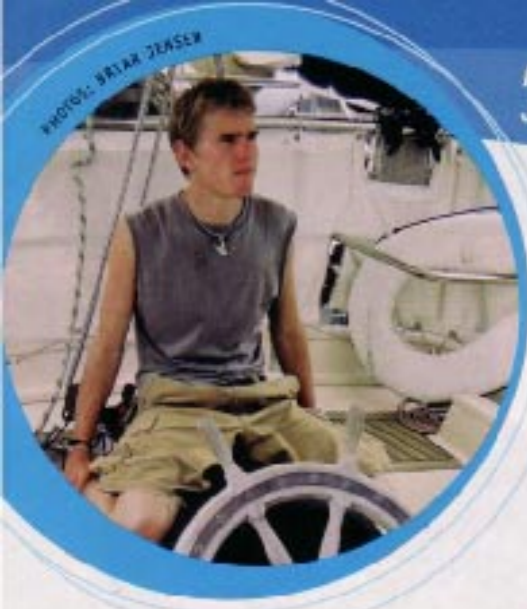
Jesse was 14 years old when he dreamed of sailing around the world by himself. 'The idea of being on my own, in control of my destiny and master of my boat was awesome,' he says. 'I wanted to become the youngest person to sail around the world.'

Making It Happen

To improve his skills, Jesse began weekly sailing lessons, learnt everything possible from **navigation** and **meteorology** to first aid, and took a job crewing a yacht from the USA to Tahiti to prepare for his voyage. Jesse had no money, boat, equipment or supplies, but he had a plan and, most importantly, determination to fulfil his dream.

Finding **sponsors** was difficult, so Jesse's mother loaned him the money to buy a boat – the 10-metre yacht *Lionheart* – and his dad covered refit costs. With eight weeks to go, Jesse finally found a sponsor, allowing him to buy equipment and supplies.

Some people thought Jesse was too young and inexperienced to be allowed to do the trip, but Jesse was confident in his own ability and was not put off by the negative comments.



Kijana's captain
Jesse Martin

Communicating by email and satellite phone helped him to overcome the loneliness. There were always boat repairs to do and a weekly news column to write, but when he had time to relax, Jesse listened to music, read books and played his guitar.

When he returned, Jesse had broken the world record. And it wasn't long before he began planning his next adventure.

Setting Sail

On 7 December 1998, 17-year-old Jesse set sail from Melbourne. A few weeks later *Lionheart* was hit by gale-force winds. Things got out of control and Jesse made some serious mistakes. But he survived, learnt from his mistakes and felt more confident.

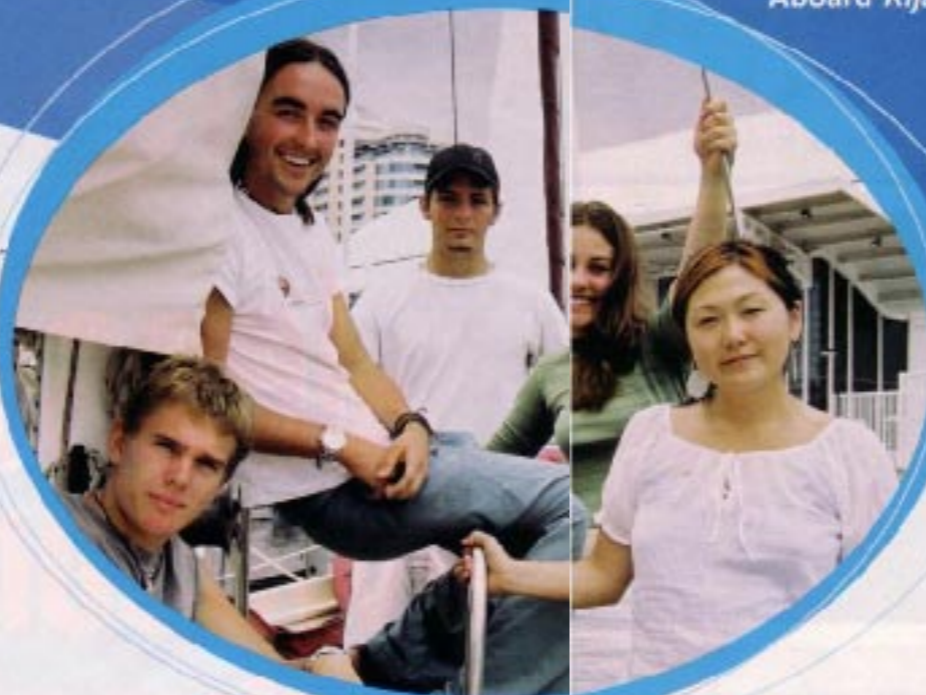
There were many more storms during his trip and Jesse experienced several **knockdowns**, but there were also periods with no wind, when *Lionheart* drifted aimlessly. After months of hectic preparation, he found life aboard frustrating, with nothing much to do.

The Journey of Kijana

In March 2002 Jesse left Melbourne aboard the yacht *Kijana* (Swahili word for 'young people') for another round-the-world adventure. Only this time he has a crew – his brother Beau and friend Josh Schmidt.



Communicating by email on *Lionheart*.



Aboard *Kijana*.






'I was just a normal kid with a dream who was serious about what I wanted to do.'

Jesse Martin

On this trip Jesse and his crew plan to sail to remote places, explore the environment and learn about local people. They will film their adventures for a 13-part TV documentary. Jesse says sailing with a crew is great: 'Having the company of people when times are hard or the wind is blowing strong makes you feel so much safer.'

Nautical Notes

On his record-breaking solo voyage, Jesse Martin:

-  used no fossil fuels; *Lionheart* was powered by wind; onboard electricity came from the sun and wind through solar panels and a wind generator
-  circumnavigated the world, sailing 27 000 nautical miles in just under 11 months
-  used only half a bottle of shampoo
-  combed his hair with a fork (he forgot to take a comb)
-  accidentally threw out his best wet-weather gear during the trip

The crew will do research and record information about culture, ecology, science and the environment for their online classroom. However, there will be plenty of time for fun and the crew plans to go surfing, rafting, snowboarding, paragliding and scuba diving.

'We're just going out there and seeing what happens and capture it all on film,' says Jesse. He hopes the documentary will inspire other young people to follow their dreams.

Glossary

circumnavigate

to go completely around

knockdown

when a yacht is knocked on its side so the mast ends up in the water

meteorology

a science about atmosphere and weather

nautical mile

1 nautical mile equals 1.852 kilometres

navigate

to steer a course

sponsor

a company who gives money or goods to a sportsperson in return for publicity

Swahili

an African language

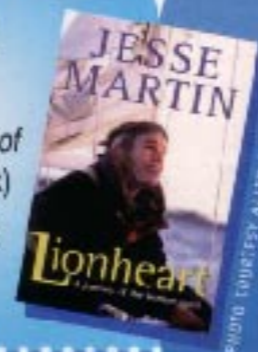
Check this out!

www.jessemartin.net

www.kijana.net

Lionheart – A Journey of the Human Spirit (book)

Lionheart – The Jesse Martin Story (video)



The *Kijana* heads off from Sydney Harbour



PHOTO COURTESY KIJANA CREW