



# Shanks toasts 'Rager' return

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ALL it took was a few quiet drinks one night last month to pave the way for South Australia's biggest racing boat, the 56-foot *Pale Ale Rager* to make a return in the 2007 Adelaide to Port Lincoln Lexus Bluewater Classic.

"It was late in the evening and someone called out 'let's do Lincoln'. Up shot 40 hands for starters wanting to come," said David Shanks, the boat's sailing master for this weekend's event.

The boat's owner, Shanks' father Gary – a veteran offshore yacht racer – was only too happy to provide the *Rager* for another assault on the prestigious Classic, after taking line honours in 2002 and 2003.

"We've dusted off the cobwebs, checked it out and so far in practice, it has held up brilliantly. We've been very happy with its speed," Shanks said.

Taking its name from its link to sponsor Coopers

Brewery, the 20-year-old *Pale Ale Rager* was pulled out of semi-retirement and will race this weekend with a hand-picked crew of sailors from the Australian Sharpie Association.

A traditionally "wild and raw" form of racing, the inshore Sharpie skiff class personnel will make up much of the 18-person crew, a rarity for such a large boat.

"Sharpies are fast and wild – and that's the attitude on *Pale Ale Rager* much of the time," Shanks said.

Shanks will have a core group of top sailors at his disposal, including his father Gary as navigator, sister Katherine and brother-in-law Matt Young.

Most of the crew already has significant experience in major events like the Adelaide to Port Lincoln and Sydney to Hobart races.

A record 81 boats are expected to participate in the 156-nautical mile ocean race, starting this Friday.