

Gran takes on world

JEANNE Socrates has given herself one year to complete a solo round the world sailing trip.

Last week, the former British mathematics teacher berthed at Marlin Marina after a nine-day voyage from Vanuatu.

And while sunny skies have greeted her since arrival, she admitted the trip from Vanuatu, sailing into the wind, was anything but pleasant.

The sailing grandmother does not come from a sailing background and never had the urge to hit the open seas until 1994.

Her first sailing experience was in 1990, when she tried out dinghy sailing and wind surfing, but it was not until four years later she took up yachting.

The retired teacher and her late husband, George, took delivery of their boat *Nereida* in Sweden in June 1997 and set sail.

"I've never missed it (work), not one moment. I've been too busy learning about boating," Jeanne said.

"She (*Nereida*) is a good sturdy boat, and as long as I don't do anything

stupidly ridiculous, she's going to take care of me." In 2003 Jeanne's husband George died as a result of cancer, but Jeanne carried on alone.

"My husband died of cancer and I have had so many friends die of cancer recently," Jeanne said.

"So I started thinking, I'm not getting any younger, so how much longer am I physically going to be able to sail solo on my own boat?"

"So I thought, blow it, I am just going to go for it."

On March 26, Jeanne set off from Zihuatanejo in Mexico with a simple, but well-thought out plan in mind to circumnavigate the globe.

From Mexico she sailed via Tahiti, Bora Bora, Tonga, Fiji and Vanuatu before setting foot on Australian soil for the first time last week.

Next week she will head to Darwin and on to Indonesia, before trying to reach South Africa by early-mid November. She intends to leave Cape Town in early January, head to Panama and cross back into the Pacific Ocean and complete her trek.



ONE WAY TICKET: Jeanne Socrates, on her boat *Nereida*, is circumnavigating her way around the world.
Picture: Romy Siegmann