

# PILOTS, START YOUR ENGINES...

*Kevin Barker reports*

**A**S THE clock ticks down to the second Race of Champions, to be hosted once more by the Letaba Flying Club, Tzaneen, the general aviation world is abuzz with expectation, excitement and energetic, yet good natured, bets and banter.

Thanks to another long line up of sponsorships that includes free fuel for the estimated 100 aircraft, and the large scale hospitality for which the club has become famous in the flying fraternity, it seems that the 2008 Race of Champions (RoC) is ready to set the standards as far as air racing in South Africa is concerned.

Following up on its group effort in the recent President's Trophy Air Race (PTAR), Virginia Airport-based Durban Wings Club has booked out ten entries that will be filled by its team of roving flyers led by last year's winners, Mary de Klerk and Barry de Groot, who have issued a challenge to other flying clubs to come out in force to assist in getting the flying club spirit of days past going again.

In what is sure to be an extremely loud and expensive contest, the Marx brothers, once more racing their immaculate Piaggio P166 Albatros, will possibly face up to another P166, that of George Brink. He was recently placed second in the PTAR, and will be competing in the RoC provided his aircraft has completed its MPI in time.

Other larger twins in the race at the time of going to print included a Cessna 340, some Cessna 402s, a Piper Chieftain, and the usual throng of Beech Barons.

Noticeable by their absence, is the usual gaggle of single-engined speedsters, such as Lancairs and Mooneys, although last year's third placed, husband and wife team of Kiewiet and Gail Vlok's Mooney M20J had been one of the first on the list.

Once more, Air BP, has sponsored all of the race fuel, keeping individual racing costs down to a minimum, and, as was the case last year, the race will appear on television. The entire race will also be broadcast on the big screen at the airfield, utilising the onboard aircraft loggers to bring spectators a real-time, moving map display, where they can watch the competitors' every move.

At time of going to press, 71 out of a possible 100 race positions had already been filled, with interest growing as race time creeps closer. The 2008 event will be the last that the race

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is hosted by the Letaba Flying Club, at least for the time being. The venue for the next year's race has not yet been decided, although

interest has been shown by various flying clubs which wish to carry forward the tradition and levels set by the Letaba club. →

## ALX TAKE-OFF

**ALSIM, A French company, recently officially launched its ALX simulator, which is compliant with JAR STD 3A (FNPT2 MCC).**

The ALX offers a generic light jet flight model in a jet-orientated environment featuring glass cockpit, FMS, autopilot on the glare shield and complex systems on the overhead panel.

The principle involved is not to learn to pilot and manage one specific aircraft, but to

understand the logic and procedures common to each class of aircraft.

This means that the instrument panel had to be designed with this in mind. It must not reflect the design of any particular aircraft, but must provide all the systems that may be found in each aircraft class.

This type of simulator should be of interest to those training units introducing MPL and VLJs, offering high standards of training with economic solutions. →

