

JESSE MARTIN'S TRIUMPH



HERO HOME



ROUND-the-world teen sailor Jesse Martin returned home a hero yesterday, to reveal he is planning his next odyssey.

The 18-year-old who captured the hearts of Australia insists he is "nothing special" after his record solo sail.

But 25,000 people who lined the bay at Sandringham gave him a special welcome — a wild cheer as he set foot on land for the first time in 11 months.

At the head of a queue of well-wishers was Jesse's mother Louise, whose rib-cracking embrace ended his world-beating voyage.

"I'm just the proudest mum there could be," she said, tears streaming down her face.

But Mrs Martin must make the most of the time together. Jesse plans to sail his boat *Lionheart* to Fiji early in the New Year.

"There are other things to do. Antarctica, for instance," he said yesterday after he stepped ashore.

A family friend said the young hero might even consider a round-the-world voyage in a 5m yacht, half the size of the *Lionheart*.

But that seemed a long

By ED GANNON
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way off last night as Jesse contemplated his greatest culinary adventure in 11 months — a roast dinner with his family.

After nearly a year of dried biscuits, nuts and canned tuna, he was looking forward to it.

Jesse officially became the youngest person to sail around the world solo and unassisted when he passed through Port Phillip Heads at 6.28am yesterday.

He then embarked on the final leg of his epic journey, a 6½-hour triumphant sweep up the bay with a flotilla of well-wishers.

Behind him lay savage storms, raging seas and crushing loneliness, with just birds, fish and pet barnacles to keep him company.

Tired almost to the point of exhaustion, Jesse looked stunned at yesterday's huge welcome, occasionally breaking into a grin as wide as the oceans he had conquered.

"It's a bit unreal. I'm still in a bit of a blur," he said.

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World beater: Excited mum Louise Martin helps Jesse ashore after a flotilla of well-wishers escorted him up the bay to Sandringham Yacht Club and a thunderous welcome.

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