

# SA and Russia break the ice

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A NEW square stern was one of several modifications made to South Africa's research vessel SA Agulhas, before she was recommissioned in Table Bay harbour on Monday after a R14 million refit.

Globe Engineering made several changes to the vessel which apart from the stern included, a new bow fender, 25 ton crane repositioned, more accommodation and installation of highly sophisticated electronic equipment for marine and weather research.

The onboard function was attended by the Minister of Environment Affairs, Mr Louis Pienaar, the Chief Director of Sea Fisheries, Dr L Botha, the deputy MD of Globe Engineering Mr T B Bain, and the Director General, Dr C Cameron.

Mr Pienaar announced that South Africa and Russia were to combine sea research efforts.

Cape Town would in future become the base port for many Russian research and scientific vessels.

Joint ventures have been welcomed and Cape Town would benefit substantially once fully established as a base for Russian Antarctic voyages.

Other guests present were the Russian Antarctic expedition representative, Dr Vasily E Kariazin, now based in Cape Town, and the master of the Russian icebreaker Kapitan Khlebnikov, Captain Petr G Goligov.

After the ceremony Mr Pienaar accepted an invitation by Captain Goligov to visit the Russian ship.

Russia has seen an opening in the tourist market for voyages to the



□ **BREAKING THE ICE:** The Russian icebreaker Kapitan Khlebnikov which left Cape Town for the Antarctic on Monday with 59 passengers on board.



□ **IN ATTENDANCE:** At a function for the recommissioning of the SA Agulhas in Cape Town harbour this week were, from left, Captain Petr Goligov, master of the Russian icebreaker Kapitan Khlebnikov, Captain Bill Leith, Master of the SA Agulhas, the Minister of Environmental Affairs, and Captain Bill Shewell, port captain.

polar regions and Kapitan Khlebnikov underwent a conversion in Germany to have passenger cabins added.

When she departed from Cape Town on Monday she carried passengers, including three South Africans who boarded the ship in Cape Town. The 31-day cruise will end in Fremantle from where the vessel will undertake two further Antarctic cruises.

Besides visiting the islands of Crozet and Kerguelen, the passengers will have an opportunity to see a number of polar bases and Antarctica from the vessel's helicopters and launches.

Russia has a fleet of 52 ice breakers and Cape Town could see a number call. Several are permanently employed around the Russian coast to keep shipping lanes open.