

CRUISE & FERRY Info

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**THE BULL AND THE BEAR
THE MARKET FOR SECOND HAND
RO-PAXES REACHES ITS ZENITH?**



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AMADEUS PRINCESS
and
AMADAGIO



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Same dimensions, different ships

Dutch shipbuilders rank first when it comes to the design and construction of river cruise ships that ply Europe's major rivers. Amongst the ships delivered this year, Cruise & Ferry Info had a closer look at the AMADEUS PRINCESS and the AMADAGIO, operating for Lüftner Cruises and Amadeus Waterways respectively.

By PHILIPPE HOLTHOF



Courtesy: Shipyard Grave



Courtesy: Shipyard De Hoop

Despite identical dimensions, the differences between AMADEUS PRINCESS (left) and AMADAGIO (above) are noticeable. It's not only the exteriors that are different: the AMADAGIO caters for a more upscale clientele than the AMADEUS PRINCESS

There is almost a continuous stream of river cruise ships delivered from Dutch shipyards. In 2006 alone more than ten river cruise ships have been made in Holland, a feat that only a few shipbuilding nations can match. During the last decade, the largest output of all has come from Shipyard De Hoop. Located in Lobith, Tolkamer on the borders of the river Rhine it first entered into the river cruise ship market with the refurbishment of ships operating for the then KD River Cruises (currently Viking River Cruises). The first newbuilding was the REGINA RHENI, completed in March 1993 for the Kamphuisen family.

13 years and 22 river cruise ships on, De Hoop is still at the top, but several compatriot shipbuilders have followed suit with many ship models being derived from a design initially developed by De Hoop. Actually, when leading Dutch shipbuilder Merwede Shipyard stepped into the river cruise market in 1999, it bought an

existing design from De Hoop. De Hoop's latest project, of which the AMADEUS PRINCESS is the lead ship, once again shows evidence of the yard's pioneering work.

The European river cruise market has grown dramatically during the last decade, yet due to increased competition, tariffs have come under serious pressure. Operators traditionally want to get maximum return on investment. However, unlike their deep-sea colleagues, river cruise operators can hardly benefit from economies of scale: the dimensions of the ships are limited not only by restrictions in draught and length but also by constructions such as bridges and locks.

River cruise ships have grown bigger, i.e. from two to three full decks, but then again the lock system of the so important Rhine-Main-Danube canal limits the ship's overall length to 135 metres and its width to 11.60 metres. Maybe even more important is the magic 110-metre length

limit when it comes to safety regulations. A passenger ship of up to 110 metres does not have to comply with a whole set of regulations imposed on ships exceeding that length. Among other things, a ship that is longer than 110 metres shall have the strength of its hull certified by a recognized classification society, notably Lloyd's Register, Bureau Veritas or Germanischer Lloyd.

Even more strict rules with regard to buoyancy and damage stability apply for 110+ metre Rhine ships passing Mannheim and further upstream, i.e. where the river gets narrow and a sunken ship of over 110 metres could block the fairway. Consequently, the most "all-round" type of Rhine and Danube class river cruise ship is 110 metres long, this length also allowing for ships to be deployed on more remote rivers.

Additionally, a 110-metre long ship is much cheaper to build, even if this is at the expense of passenger capacity and, hence, revenues. Even so, both shipyards and operators have been inventive to maximise the passenger intake, yet staying within the dimensional constraints. Probably one of the best examples of this is the TwinCruiser series built by Neptun Stahlbau for German Premicon AG. The patented TwinCruiser consists of a barge which is pushed by a tug similar to cargo barge-pusher combinations. It is no coincidence that the barge that contains the accommodation ▶

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- block with cabins and public spaces is 110 metres long.

Ship shape

Also De Hoop was inspired by the design of inland cargo ships when developing the AMADEUS PRINCESS. With its box shaped bow, reminiscent of inland container craft, the ship's 110m length has been used to full advantage to maximize the passenger capacity to 162 passengers in 81 cabins. Interestingly, the AMADAGIO has the same hull dimensions but accommodates 150 passengers in 75 cabins.

With her blunt bow the AMADEUS PRINCESS is anything but a sexy lady but, cleverly, the bow structure houses the galley with cold stores. On the forecastle, an open terrace has been created which is accessible to passengers. The ship's Dutch interior designer, Groendijk Design, was inspired by a fifties Cadillac frontage to give the bow a more handsome look. To determine the minimum air gap between the overhanging deck and the water surface, full scale tests were performed in rough weather.

The AMADEUS PRINCESS stems from a "speculation design" developed in-house by De Hoop. A lengthened version of the AMADEUS PRINCESS, to be named RIVER DISCOVERY, is currently nearing completion and will sail under the banner of American tour operator Vantage Travel.

The so-called "Cadillac bow" river cruiser was designed with two main objectives in mind: firstly to carry 15 per

cent more passengers within the same dimensions and, secondly, to comply with the new 2006 Rhine regulations. These regulations call for two-compartment passenger ships, but ships delivered before 31 December 2006 are exempted from this and other, more stringent, regulations. The "Cadillac bow" prototype as initially designed by De Hoop meets the latest regulations, but to save money - believed to be some seven per cent of the total building cost - and to gain additional cabin space, both Lüftner Cruises for the AMADEUS PRINCESS and Vantage Travel for the RIVER DISCOVERY opted to build the vessel in accordance with the "old" Rhine regulations.

As regards damage stability, there is a transitional period of 40 (!) years, by which time the ships will be amortized, if not already scrapped. Also the AMADAGIO and her sister ship AMALEGRO - due to be delivered on 22 December - have been built under the "old" regime. Unlike the AMADEUS PRINCESS, the latter ships do not have three full decks, but rather two mezzanine decks in the fore part and three decks aft.

AMADEUS PRINCESS

The AMADEUS PRINCESS is the sixth river cruise vessel built by De Hoop for Austrian family-run Lüftner Cruises. Typical Lüftner trademarks such as the eye-catching sun awning on the open top deck and the paddle wheel-like arch so as to focus one's attention on the ship's entrance,

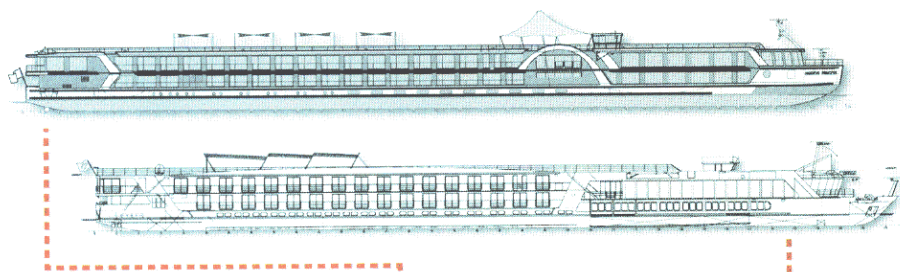
have been adopted once again.

Much attention has been paid to the ship's operation performance with a low draught and air draught, a speed of over 25 km/h, as well as passenger comfort with low noise levels obtained through Veth Z-drive contra-rotating azimuth propellers which are driven by twin resiliently mounted Caterpillar 3508B type engines. In the typical Lüftner Cruises tradition, the three decks have been appropriately named "Haydn", "Strauss" and "Mozart Deck". With the exception of the two suites on the upper "Mozart Deck", all staterooms are similar in size (15 square metres) and 84 per cent of the cabins have French balconies with sliding floor-to-ceiling windows. Oy Parmarine Ltd. supplied the prefabricated wet units, the suites having a bath rather than a shower.

The contemporary decoration throughout the ship is rather minimalist in style with dark wood effects, cream, burgundy and blue colour schemes predominating for the carpets and fabrics. In addition to the lowest grade cabin accommodation, the "Haydn Deck" boasts a well-equipped fitness room on the starboard side of the central corridor as well as a beauty parlour with massage and bathroom on the portside of it. A stair leads to the entrance hall with reception desk and small shop.

By virtue of the ship having a modified GA plan with three full decks, as opposed to a "two deck fore & aft and three deck midbody configuration" for the earlier Lüftner generation, the location of the public spaces has somewhat changed. Forward on the middle deck, immediately accessed from the reception & entrance area with atrium, is the 152-seat restaurant. The picture windows make for a very light atmosphere and hence spacious impression. One deck up is the ship's main lounge and bar, the rounded forward section being different in style than the central part with Chesterfield-like seating arrangements.

A door on the portside gives access to the forecastle's wide terrace, with imitation teak deck covering. Uniquely, the terrace stretches to the prow, with the mooring equipment being on either side of the terrace platform. An exterior stair connects the forward platform with the upper deck. Aft of the bar is the entrance hall with travel desk and sitting area. Sliding doors give access to a portside and starboard platform with stairs leading to the open sun deck. A fountain just aft of the bridge functions as a skylight for the atrium, the movements



AMADEUS PRINCESS

AMADAGIO

Facts & Figures

Builder	De Hoop	Grave
Operator	Lüftner Cruises, Austria	Amadeus Waterways, USA
Flag	German	Swiss
Delivered	March 2006	March 2006
Length o.a.	110.00m	110.00m
Breadth mid.	11.00m	11.00m
Draught (ballast)	1.60m	1.60m
Air draught at ballast draught	6.00m	6.00m
Propulsion power	2 x 783 kW	2 x 808 kW
Type of engines	Caterpillar, 3508B	Cummins, KTA 38 M1
Max. speed	25 km/h	23.5 km/h
Number of pax/cabins	162/81	150/75

ShipPax Database

of the water being reflected on the goldplated atrium wall.

On the "Mozart Deck" aft is the 38-seat Amadeus Club with bar and internet station. Two pairs of floor-to-ceiling windows open onto a small open platform. As always, there

is ample open deck space, the sun deck – complete with Jacuzzi and deck bar – spanning almost the full length of the upper deck. To pass under low bridges, the wheelhouse can sink into a trunk and also the railings can be hydraulically folded.

De Hoop is confident that more repeat orders will come their way, the 166-passenger RIVER DISCOVERY already illustrating the flexibility of the design. Catering for the American passenger market, the RIVER DISCOVERY will be more upscale than the AMADEUS PRINCESS, offering an increased space ratio with larger public spaces and a greater choice of suites.

AMADAGIO

Unlike the AMADEUS PRINCESS, the AMADAGIO of US-based Amadeus Waterways caters for a more sophisticated and demanding American, clientele. The AMADAGIO is hence of another class with an abundance of high quality materials being used for the attractively decorated cabins and public spaces.

Amadeus Waterways was launched in 2002 when former Viking River Cruises' President Rudi Schreiner joined forces with Jim Murphy, owner and CEO of Brendan Worldwide Vacations. AMADAGIO is the amalgamation of Amadeus and adagio, sister ship AMALEGRO referring to Amadeus and allegro. The name of Amadeus (Mozart) is all too often used in European river cruising and prospective passengers must somehow get puzzled. The AMADEUS PRINCESS is not connected with Amadeus Waterways, however, but rather with Lüftner Cruises.



Left: A suite on board the AMADAGIO. A sister, the AMALEGRO, will be delivered at the end of the year. The operator, Amadeus Waterways, also has an option for two more vessels.

Right: the entrance hall on board the AMADEUS PRINCESS. The vessel is the sixth river cruiser built by the De Hoop yard for operator Lüftner Cruises.

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Courtesy: Shipyard De Hoop

Being fairly new in the market, Amadeus Waterways teamed up with experienced Dutch entrepreneur Kurt Kamphuisen to get things organised in Europe. This included the basic design of the GA plan, negotiations with shipyards and supervision of the ships whilst under construction. Having disposed of his own river cruise shipping company, Holland River Line, to Uniworld in spring 2004, Mr Kamphuisen now offers his experience to third parties through his Kamphuisen Shipping company.

Mr Kamphuisen's wife took care of the AMADAGIO's interior design, just like she did at the time of Holland River Line. Actually, the role of Kamphuisen Shipping vis-à-vis its principals, i.e. Amadeus Waterways, is that of a turnkey supplier, with Kamphuisen being given carte blanche as long as he stayed within the budget.

The EUR 20 million double-order was signed with Shipyard Grave in early 2005, the AMADAGIO being delivered in March this year. The total building cost exceeds EUR 10 million per ship since furniture, flooring, galley equipment etc. was directly supplied through Kamphuisen rather than through the shipyard.

Grave Shipyard has built several river cruise ships in the past, including the prestigious RIVER CLOUD and RIVER CLOUD II, but the hull design of the AMADAGIO is based on the RIVER SYMPHONY class of ships, built by Grave in the 1998-1999 period. In comparison with the RIVER SYMPHONY, the layout of the accommodation has been much improved. The all-glass front structure with skylights further adds to the "extrovert"

character of the AMADAGIO. In front of the glass extension is a teak covered terrace with genuine teak furniture, more teak furniture being found on the spacious open top deck.

The AMADAGIO follows the popular "two decks fore, three decks aft arrangement" with the restaurant and main bar being in the forward end. The three cabin decks are named after music instruments, i.e. Piano for the lower, Cello for the main and Violin for the upper deck.

With the exception of the four suites, the richly decorated cabins on all three decks are identical. However, the cabins on the main and upper deck boast French balconies reminiscent of the AMADEUS PRINCESS. A nice detail in the balcony-cabins is the subdued cove lighting. Access to the Internet is possible from the cabin, the screens doubling as a TV screen. Clearly, a large number of passengers are young pensioners and thus still rather active, the onboard bicycles being in great demand.

The spacious entrance hall divides the restaurant and bar section from the cabins. Next to the reception lobby is a small shop, the bar being accessed through glass doors on the starboard side. The flexibly mounted aft end of the ship holds a Veranda Lounge with adjacent fitness room and sauna. The teak deck covering combined with the rattan chairs makes for a very attractive and popular rendez-vous bar. On hot summer nights the panoramic windows remain open till late.

The AMADAGIO will be followed by the AMALEGRO at the end of the year. An option for two more newbuildings is attached to the contract between Amadeus Waterways and Kamphuisen Shipping, but as Mr Kamphuisen pointed out, it is as yet unclear where the ships will be built. ■

Selection of suppliers

AMADEUS PRINCESS	AMADAGIO
Veth Motoren BV – Bow thrusters & contra-rotating azimuth propellers	Veth Motoren BV – Bow thrusters & contra-rotating azimuth propellers
Droste Elektro BV – Full electronic installation	Willemsen interieurbouw & scheepsbetimmering – Complete boarding
Smits-Neuchatel Marine Department BV – Floor systems	Fa. P.A. Paans & Zn. – Curtains
G.J. Wortelboer Jr. BV – Anchors and chains	Alewijnse Marine BV – Entertainment solution
Pon Power BV – Supply of Caterpillar engines	Markerink BV – Supply of Cummins engines
Creemers Compressors BV – Compressors	Axces Industrial Exhaust Systems – Passenger elevator
Anzo BV – Sliding French windows, sliding windows & - doors	Rafa BV – Windows