

Text: Philip Dawson

AM&A comes of Age, Super- fast!

From right to left:
Yiannis A. Pikrodimitris (Arch.)
A. Molindris (standing Arch.)
Yiota Kainari (Arch.)
Marina Strovolidou (Arch.)
Alexandra Amourgis (Graphic Des.)
Evangelina Kintou (Arch.)
Dimitris Kalatzakis (foreground, Artist).

The recent newbuilding programmes of lines such as Superfast Ferries, Celebrity Cruises, Royal Olympic Cruises, and Minoan Lines once again **bring Greece to the forefront of world shipping**. With these progressively modern fleets there have also emerged many of the requisite specialties behind their creation. Shipping is a highly global enterprise where the Greeks are asserting themselves in a leading position, not only in their traditional roles as ship owners and brokers, but also as ship designers.

THE ATHENS-BASED FIRM of Apostolos Molindris & Associates, Architects & Designers (AM&A), has been putting its creative signature to some very prestigious shipboard interior designs since 1998, when it was established in its present form. Compared with others worldwide, this office is still relatively young. Yet, its list of references is very substantial, also encompassing a wide variety of commissions ashore.

Until now, most of AM&A's work has been in Greece and for Greek ship owners, primarily Superfast Ferries. This already sets a remarkably high world-class standard, setting the pace for things to come. Superfast Ferries has gained global recognition for its exceptional business accomplishments as well as for the outstanding quality of its product. With its expansion into the Baltic market over the following few years, its AM&A-designed ferries will continue to attract global attention. CHRISTINA O, Onassis' former yacht, also on the boards of this office, is sure to likewise attract attention in its own class, when completed later this year.

The group was set up by Apostolos Molindris, who carries with him the bulk of marine interior design experience, dating as far back as 1988. Apostolos considers himself very fortunate that, after graduating with

Honours as an Architect from the University of Thessaloniki, he was given the opportunity to work with well-known design offices in Greece, such as TZONOS, HOIPEL & HOIPEL Architects and AMK Architects and Designers. Coming to maturity next to the unique taste and artistry of Michael and Agni Katzourakis of AMK, he learned how to feel colour and material textures with an artist's sensitivity. Through numerous collaborations with them on several cruise ship designs, he became familiar with how large projects are set up and had the chance of getting to know the owners, their needs, visions and dreams. In tandem with these activities, he also maintained an individual practice, through which he took on other smaller projects.

The years went by and small commissions began getting bigger, until the time was ripe to set up a full-fledged design team. More architects gradually joined-in, an already existing network of outside consultants was expanded and strengthened, and AM&A was born. Today, the core group of AM&A's staff is composed of six resident associates, all Registered Architects. Outside consultants (naval architects, engineers, health/food consultants, graphic designers, artists, computer specialists, etc.) supply additional expertise, with their services available on an as-needed basis, enabling AM&A to offer a complete range of services, from design to signage.

The credo and modus operandi of this practice is very simple, but strictly adhered to: always maintain as much contact with the client as possible, make him part of the

team and get him involved with the project as an active participant through all of the creative phases. So far, it seems to have worked pretty well, as the end results show.

As Apostolos Molindris put it "...we were extremely fortunate to get to know the heart and soul of Attica Enterprises, parent company of Superfast Ferries, Mr. Pericles Panagopoulos and his son, Mr. Alexander Panagopoulos, President and Managing Director of Superfast Ferries. If Alexander hadn't introduced himself as a client, we would have thought of him as a colleague. He blended in with the group very quickly, contributing his very sharp perception of space, colour and texture, as well as valuable business insights. Thus started a breakneck race to realise an endless stream of very exciting projects. Today, seeing some of the fruits of this labour in their complete, mature form, it is truly beautiful to know that we have shared all this with him in the form of thoughts, sketches and drawings that would constantly go back and forth, from one team member to the other, each time becoming better and better."

Recently, two more of AM&A's projects, Strintzis Lines Blue Star Ferries 1 and 2, built by Van der Giessen de Noord, at Rotterdam, started making the run from Greece to Italy. It is a project this office is really proud of, completed in the record time of three months and proving to be extremely successful and popular. This, again, was the result of a very fruitful and close collaboration and one more opportunity for the team to grow, since, in their words, "...we got to meet another great gentleman, Mr. Gerasimos Strintzis, owner of Strintzis Lines, whose input and insights were invaluable."

AM&A finally wants to credit one more individual for greatly contributing to its success with Superfast Ferries: "Extremely demanding as it may be, our job is also very enjoyable, an exciting creative game that is fun to play. In this game there are also other key people, who are experts at prioritising and filtering things to their essence, holding the conductor's baton and keeping the correct tempo. Mr. Costis Stamboulis, Director of the Operations Department, is just that man at Superfast Ferries: an iron gentleman, unwavering, precise, yet fair and with a very good sense of humour, he has become an essential member of our team."

Despite their young age as a design practice, AM&A already has a substantial list of projects, either completed, or in progress. They work fast and it shows. There is the Superfast Ferries fleet, presently six, soon to be twelve: They are doing remodelling work on SFF I-II and SFF III-IV, have completed SFF V-VI, finished the design of SFF VII-X and have already begun work on SFF XI-XII. SUPERFAST V, our theme ship, was the first in the class where AM&A was commissioned to carry out the whole accommodation design, introducing a higher overall standard of passenger luxury than in the earlier ships. Apostolos Molindris was, however, himself already familiar with the Superfast fleet through his earlier work in collaboration with AMK on SUPERFAST III and IV. There is Blue Star Ferries fleet: BLUE STAR 1 and 2, already in service for a few months, and Blue Star Ferries Mykonos, Chios and Santorini, now on the drawing boards (AM&A became involved following the acquisition of Strintzis Lines by Attica Enterprises). Their ship design work encompasses all public and crew areas, including the bridge. It involves layout, fabric, colour, furniture and artwork selections, custom furniture design, lighting, logos and signage.

Additionally, there are projects for ferry passenger terminals in Greece, Germany and Sweden, as well as several Superfast and Blue Star Ferries ticket agencies, all of them strongly reflecting characteristics of this firm's shipboard designs. There are also projects of a more traditional venue, such as the recent interiors completion of the 7-storey Chandris Hellas headquarters building in Piraeus, interiors for Nedship Investment Bank, Hitachi Hellas and Atheneum Intercontinental Hotel, two new office buildings for Superfast Ferries in Athens, as well as several homes throughout Greece.



"Demanding as it may be, our job is also very enjoyable ...a creative game that is fun to play."

Apostolos Molindris

The modern marine styling of Superfast's ticketing agency in Athens makes a significant link architecturally with the ships that passengers board once they have bought their tickets. AM&A's design work aboard SUPERFAST V is extensively illustrated in our Onboard Report, page 14-35.



The new passenger terminal proposal for the Port of Patras, when realized, will bring the shoreside and shipboard sides of AM&A's work together in a single experience for Superfast's passengers.

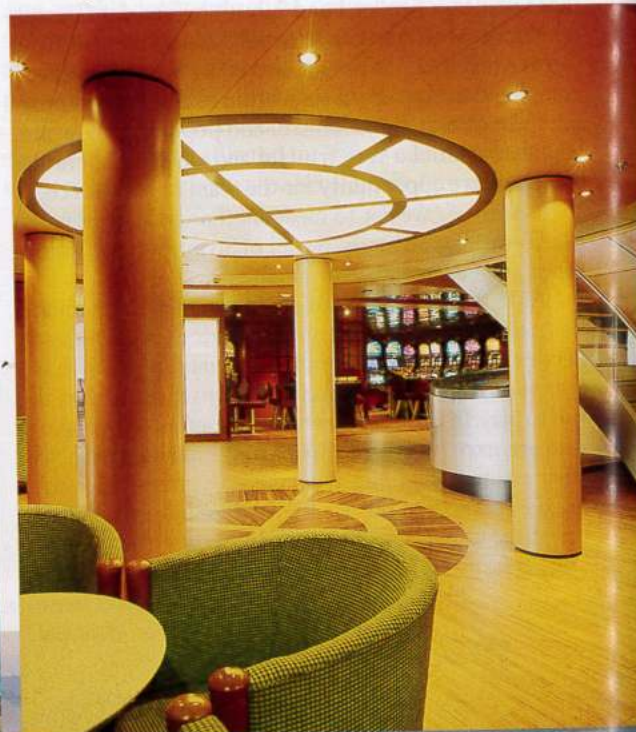
Then, there is a very special project for this team, one they refer to as "a beautiful gem". It is the conversion of the legendary private yacht of Aristotle Onassis into a megayacht accommodating thirty six passengers, the CHRISTINA O. "Here, again, our in-house team expanded to include Mr. John Paul Papanicolaou, the new owner of the vessel, his wife, Elina and Ms. Maria Lisetta Apostolou, who worked closely with all of us on the decorative aspects of our design. This project has been a true challenge: we had to retain links and references to a glorious past, while designing a new layout, adapted to new functions, and creating completely new, elegant interiors that respond to the needs of today", Apostolos Molindris said.

When asked for their preference as to the types of projects they would rather work on, they respond that they make no distinctions and that "...whether it's designing ships' interiors or buildings, we are all involved in each of our projects, which makes it more fun. There is great value and responsibility involved in protecting, guiding, relaxing and entertaining large groups of passengers on a vessel. It is also just as interesting doing an office building that shelters the enthusiasm and visions of a company, along with the feelings of its employees, or a home to house the concerns of a family."

It takes more than design talent to sustain an office such as this and to ensure its survival and success. We asked Apostolos Molindris about what he thinks has contributed to AM&A's success for the past three years. In his words, "...we have worked very hard at creating and nurturing to maturity a modern architectural practice. Besides producing good, sensible design, we make a point of keeping abreast of relevant computer technology, new methods, materials and organisational techniques, con-

tinuously improving our product. As an example, we have recently embarked on an effort to organise our specifications for shipboard designs in a more comprehensive manner, along the lines used by the American Construction Specifications Institute for building projects, with a view towards ensuring better quality control. Today, all of our design work is routinely carried out on the computer, down to the production of numerous perspectives. We also pride ourselves for the speed with which we respond to our clients. We are looking forward to the challenge of future growth and plan to continue approaching each project without any preconceived ideas, giving it our utmost effort. Our goal is to offer to our clients the best possible service and fast, or, let's say ... superfast."

AM&A already has enough work from Superfast Ferries to keep them busy until late in the year 2001, but they are also pursuing other opportunities beyond that. Since its birth, this new Greek design practice has grown swiftly through its adolescence and has now come of age, exuberant, energetic and ready for more challenges.



The Blue Star ticket agency in Patras (left), remarkably sets a link between its location in a heritage building with the shipboard contemporary of BLUE STAR 1's main entrance lobby (right). AM&A are also participating in the revamping of Strintzis Lines corporate image and the refurbishing of their older vessels.



AM&A PROJECT REFERENCE LIST

SHIPS

- Superfast Ferries I & II, owner: Superfast Ferries S.A.: complete redesign of all public spaces on decks 7 and 8.
- Superfast Ferries III & IV, owner: Superfast Ferries S.A.: redesign and remodelling of Shop and Boutique areas
- Superfast Ferries V & VI, owner: Superfast Ferries S.A.: newbuildings, luxury passenger/vehicle ferries; scheduled delivery date: September 2000
- Superfast Ferries VII - X, owner: Superfast Ferries S.A.: newbuildings, Ice Class IA Super, similar to V & VI, with expanded space for vehicles and cargo; scheduled delivery date: April 2001
- Superfast Ferries XI - XII, owner: Superfast Ferries S.A.: newbuildings, ferries, similar to V & VI; scheduled delivery date: February 2001
- Blue Star Ferries 1 & 2, owner: Strintzis Lines: newbuildings, passenger/vehicle ferries; delivered June 2000
- Blue Star Ferry Ithaki, owner: Strintzis Lines: partial remodelling of public spaces, addition of shop and outdoor bar, signage
- Blue Star Ferries Mykonos, Chios & Santorini: owner: Strintzis Lines: newbuildings, passenger/vehicle ferries for service in the Aegean.

SELECTED CONVERSIONS AND BUILDINGS

- Interiors Remodelling, Chandris Hellas Headquarters Building (7 floors), Piraeus, Greece
- 'Christina O.', owner: Christina Yachting Inc.: total conversion of Aristotle Onassis' former yacht into a luxury megayacht, accommodating up to thirty six passengers; scheduled delivery date: October 2000
- Interiors Remodelling, Superfast Ferries S.A. / Magna Marine S.A. Headquarters Building, Voula, Athens.
- New Satellite Office Building for Superfast Ferries S.A., Voula, Athens, Greece
- New Office Building for Superfast Ferries S.A., Voula, Athens, Greece
- Interiors Remodelling, Superfast Ferries Central Booking Office, Athens, Greece
- Proposals for Infrastructure Improvements for the Ports of Igoumenitsa and Patras, Greece; commissioned by Superfast Ferries, S.A.
- Proposals for New Passenger Terminals for the Port of Patras, Greece; commissioned by Superfast Ferries, S.A.
- Proposals for New Passenger Terminals for the Ports of Sodertalje, Sweden and Rostock, Germany; commissioned by Superfast Ferries, S.A.
- Interiors Remodelling, La Pergola, Atheneum Intercontinental Hotel, Athens, Greece

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ONE OF THE MOST UNUSUAL and potentially prestigious projects Apostolos Molindris & Associates has ever undertaken is the conversion of Aristotle Onassis' former yacht, CHRISTINA. She was built by Canadian Vickers in 1944 as the frigate HMCS STORMONT and used for anti-submarine duty. When rebuilt by HDW in 1954 as CHRISTINA, she was one of the best appointed and most luxurious private yachts in the world. She was also considered to be ultra modern at the time. Undoubtedly the most famous area aboard CHRISTINA was the lido bar and adjacent swimming pool, where Onassis liked to entertain his guests, and where Carolyn and John Kennedy Junior played when they were children. The bottom of the tiled pool was built so that it could be hydraulically raised for use as a dance floor.

CHRISTINA could carry Onassis and his guests anywhere in the world and had the range to remain at sea for long periods if need be. There was a strong room aboard with enough hard currency to buy whatever fuel and provisions were needed, and the entire crew were trained militia personnel, equipped to defend the ship and her guests against any peril. Indeed CHRISTINA was a veritable state yacht in her heyday whose fame was surpassed perhaps only by the British Royal Yacht BRITANNIA.

After the death of Onassis, ownership of the famed yacht passed on to his daughter, Christina, who, eventually, donated the ship to the Greek State for use in government functions. Due to the high cost of upkeep, however, she was sold again and eventually laid up. After many years of decay and neglect the vessel was bought by John Paul Papanicolaou, who, as a youngster, used to be a guest on board, and who is now rebuilding her as the luxury private-charter cruise megayacht CHRISTINA O.

This is a conversion demanding a very sensitive approach on the part of the architects, who must retain the historic character of a very famous ship. CHRISTINA O's clientele will expect to experience the essence of a time when Jacqueline Bouvier-Kennedy-Onassis lived aboard and when Winston Churchill, Marilyn Monroe, Margot Fonteyn, Rudolf Nureyev and Paul Getty were guests, but not at the cost of compromising present-day standards of ultra-luxe accommodation and service.

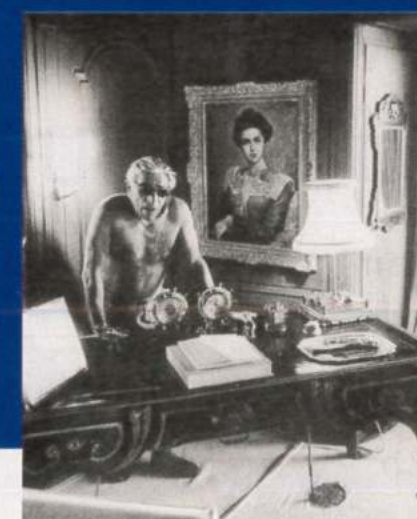
The "Christina O." Story



The conversion involves effectively gutting the ship and rebuilding the superstructure and everything inside. The famed guest accommodations and reception rooms are being rebuilt in their original style. Much of the new infrastructure is being accommodated "behind the scenes," thanks largely to carefully planned relocations of the machinery, galley and other services, improving the overall layout. The practically new CHRISTINA O. will accommodate up to thirty six passengers and will be SOLAS and USPH compliant. Naval engineering for this project is being carried out by the Athens-based office of Constantine Karabelas.



Onassis behind his famous Louis XIV desk.



CHRISTINA O. ship's specifications

length overall	99.15 m
beam	11.12 m
draft	4.63 m
GRT	1,602.0
brake shaft power, kilowatts	4850.0
speed, knots	21.0
cruising range, miles	12,000
classification	ABS
flag	Panama

When in GUIDE 96 we featured the first Superfast generation, we witnessed the birth of the modern ferry service across the Adriatic.

Already introducing its third generation of vessels, Superfast Ferries is **not even half way through** their unprecedented expansion, which is comprising another seven newbuildings in addition to the five now in service.

As if this was not enough, Superfast has also acquired a controlling stake in Blue Star Ferries, which is also building both for the Adriatic Sea and domestic Greek ferry services.



WITH THE SUPERFAST V, Superfast Ferries is taking another bold step forward. The prevailing impression of the vessel is that she is indeed a further development on the past series. Whereas SUPERFAST III and IV represented a larger version of the first pair, it was our impression at that time that not everything was for the better. But we left the SUPERFAST V with the feeling that we registered improved scores all over.

Especially the passenger flow seems to have benefited from a better solution. The first impression, which is so important for the well being of the passenger and ultimately therefore the on board revenue, is enhanced by the reception area which has been brought to a more natural location, close to the escalators bringing passengers from quayside to the public areas.

Although SUPERFAST V was delivered late from her shipyard, Howaldtswerke Deutsche Werft in Kiel, she was not finished in a hurry. Instead, there is a charisma of high-quality finishing in all details. Much of the delay was caused by a malfunctioning gearbox, and as the peak season would have been missed anyway, much effort was put into reaching perfection.

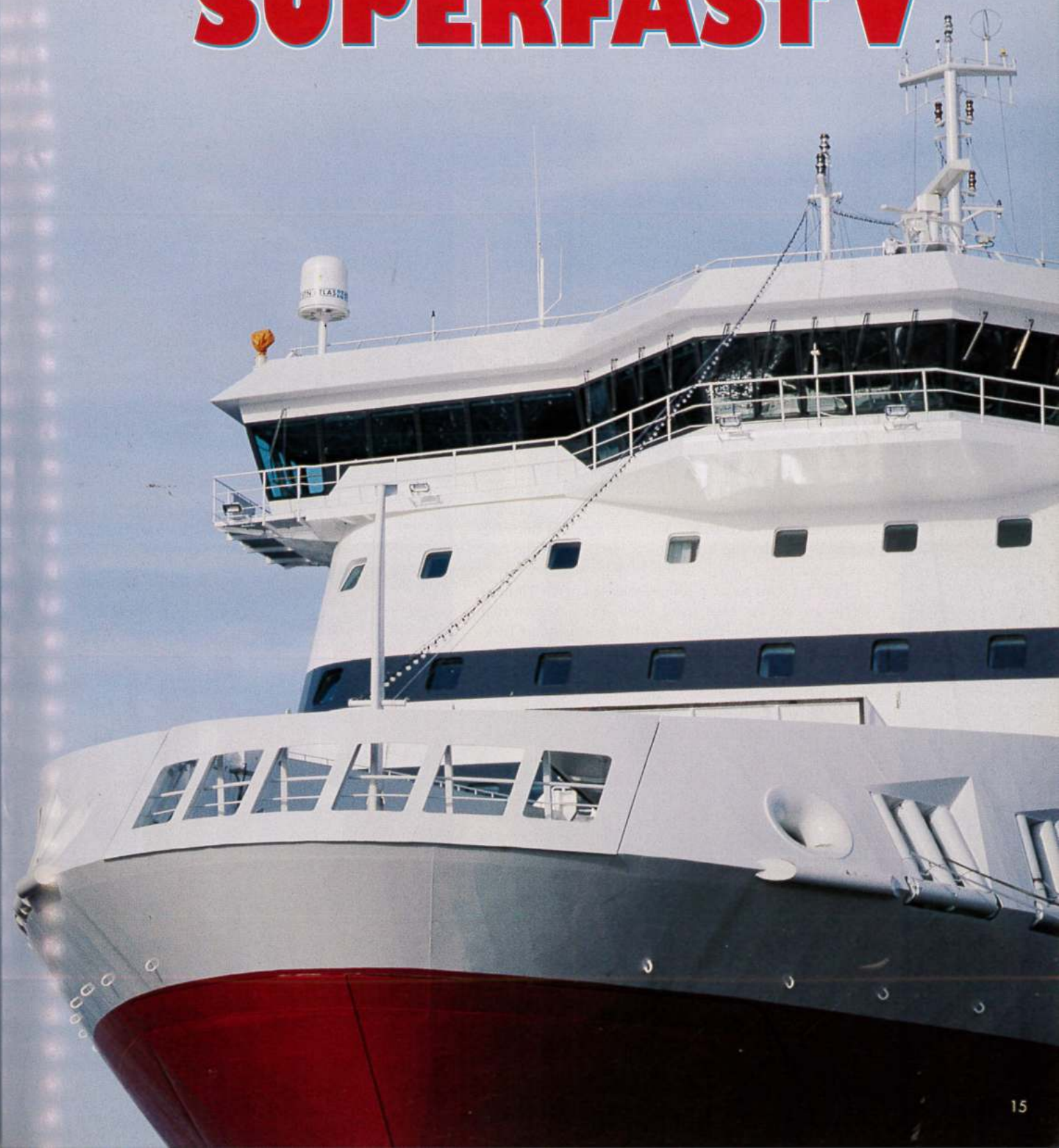
At the time SUPERFAST I and II were delivered, the slogan used by Superfast was "2 days more holiday", to describe the benefits of the speed. Since then, competitors have brought in a few almost equally fast vessels. But no others are Ferrari-red, to symbolise speed. And as we said already in GUIDE 96, the success might have faded away if the company was named Panagopoulos Ferries. Only one can take advantage of the speed image, and that is Superfast.

M. Louagie

Text Klas Brogren

Photos Mike Louagie, Frank Behling

Onboard Report SUPERFAST V



Traffic concept

The instant success of the Superfast product was due to the speed introduced by the first two newbuildings, SUPERFAST I and SUPERFAST II, delivered by Schichau Seebeckwerft (now SSW Fähr- und Spezialschiffbau in Bremerhaven) in 1995. The record speed achieved provided one more weekly single crossing between Ancona and Patras than any contemporary competitor could provide. And by introducing six weekly evening departures the company won the prestigious freight customers as well as the heart of demanding travellers. The standard introduced was at the time superior to any other vessel, which perhaps was not surprising since they were the first newbuildings introduced to the trade in decades. All other ships were converted tonnage bought secondhand from Scandinavia, the North Sea or to an increasing extent, Japan.

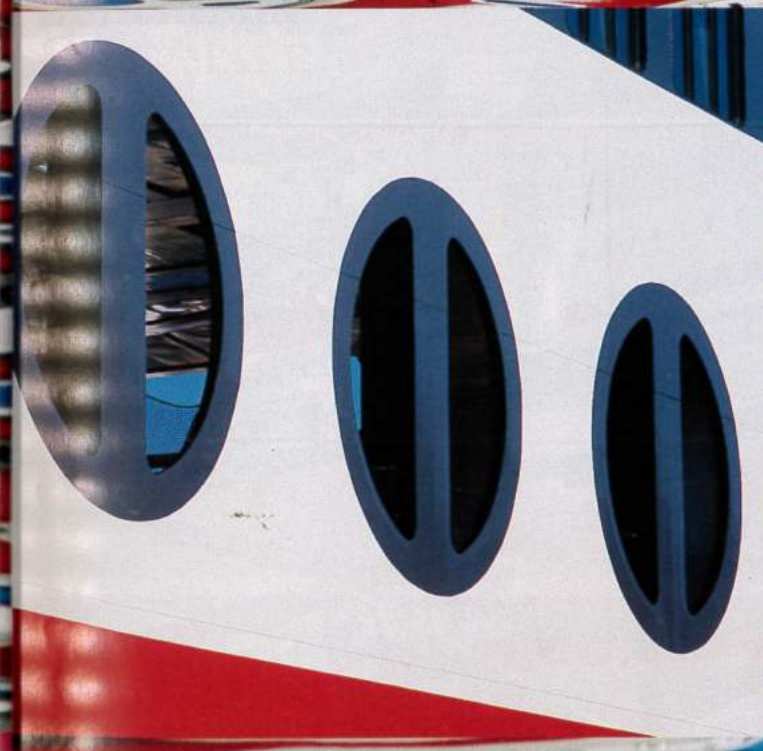
Others followed path when noticing the instant success. But Superfast had gained foothold on the important Ancona – Patras route, without calling at any intermediate ports. When taking delivery of SUPERFAST III and SUPERFAST IV from Kvaerner Masa Yards in 1998, the predecessors were sent to the shorter Patras – Igoumenitsa – Bari route, establishing a firm foothold also in the southern corridor.

The new SUPERFAST V and SUPERFAST VI are intended for the Ancona – Igoumenitsa – Patras route where they will provide additional capacity and double the frequency of the Superfast service. The following four newbuildings from HDW will represent a drastic change, with the Superfast management having developed a dedicated Baltic ferry concept. The new services between Rostock – Hanko and Rostock – Sodertälje will be covered in a separate article in this book.

Further two newbuildings, booked with Flender Werft, are not yet earmarked, though it is known that Superfast have looked further east to the burgeoning Turkish trade. Through the acquisition of Strintzis/Blue Star Ferries, no doubt the domestic services to Greek islands will also be explored within the group. One newbuilding for the Blue Star operation was taken over from a Korean shipyard in the summer of 2000, and three more units are booked with domestic Hellenic Shipbuilders.

With four vessels on the core Ancona – Patras route, Superfast offers an unrivalled itinerary with thirteen departures a week from each port. The ships are leaving at 5 p.m. and 7.30 p.m. respectively, the latter via Igoumenitsa. Return times from Patras are at 5 p.m. and 9 p.m., with the first departure including a call at Igoumenitsa. Due to the ship maintenance, the ships stay in port a full day at rolling intervals, resulting in the odd figure of thirteen departures a week instead of fourteen.

The port situation leaves a lot to be desired. Superfast have long fought for dedicated berths with double-level loading facilities. Still, after more than four years in service, nothing has yet been achieved. The poor facilities offered by Mediterranean ports and lack of interest for investment in infrastructure is dealt with in a special article in this book.



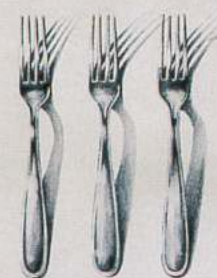


*Planets
Night Club*



The Coast Restaurant

T H R E E



F O R K S

BUFFET-RESTAURANT



Reception Lounge



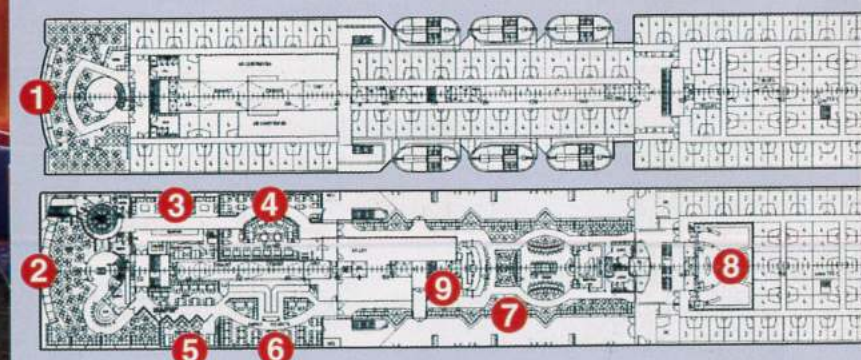
Reception

Drivers Lounge

Childrens Playroom



Colours Casino Bar Lounge



- 1 - Planets Night Club
- 2 - Disco
- 3 - Reception Lounge
- 4 - The Coast Restaurant
- 5 - Driver's Lounge
- 6 - Three Forks Buffet
- 7 - Casino Bar
- 8 - Shops
- 9 - Kids Club

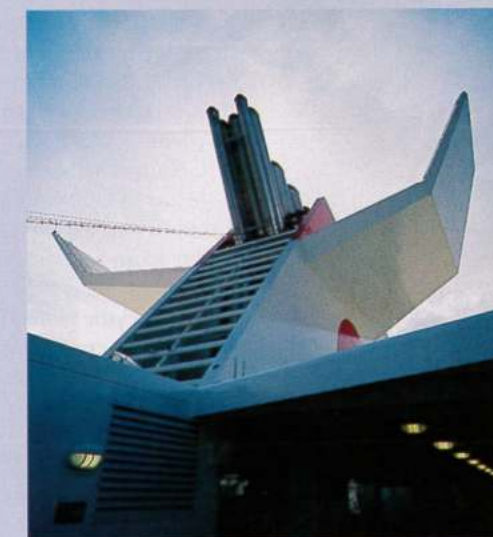
*My Way Boutique
5th Avenue Shop*



Internet Links

Below is a list of some advertisers in this book which have supplied equipment to, or participated in the SUPERFAST V project. By visiting our home-page www.shippax.se, we will link you to these companies!

American Bureau of Shipping	Classification
Amico	Flooring
Apostolos Molindris & Associates	Interior designer
Blohm + Voss	Bulkhead seals
CC Jensen	Ship's windows for deckhouse
Consilium	Fire detection
GEHR Möbelfertigung	Interior contractor
Howaldtswerke Deutsche Werft	Shipyards
International Paint	Paints coating material
Ippokamos	Outfitting
Knud E Hansen	Naval architect
Kvaerner Masa Yards	Cabins
Leistritz	Screw pumps
List	Interior contractor
MacGregor	Ro ro equipment, lifts
MAN B&W	Auxiliary engines
Viking Lifesaving Equipment	Marine escape systems
VingCard	Cabin locks



Interior touches

SUPERFAST V and her identical sister, yet to be delivered, indicate a new direction, yet with a distinct feeling of belonging to the "family". Whereas the original concept was developed in conjunction with the Norwegian firm Yran & Storbraaten, the assignment to decorate and produce the interior design of SUPERFAST III and IV went to the Greek company AMK Architecture, with Michalis Katzourakis himself taking a major part in the process. As will be noticed from another article in this edition, one of his staff members later left to create his own firm, and the SUPERFAST V as well as the other newbuildings contracted have been assigned to this company, Molindris & Associates.

The original concept is still noticeable from the deck layout. Without exactly duplicating the interior impressions of AMK, Apostolos Molyndris is wandering in the footsteps cleverly not breaking with the tradition but still introducing some new elements and innovation.

The ships have become larger in size compared to the predecessors, but the major refinement in public rooms of the current three generations is the utilization of the aft areas for lounge spaces. SUPERFAST V takes this feature a step further, however, the SUPERFAST VII through SUPERFAST X will represent a break in this trend. These ships, intended for the new Baltic services, are presented elsewhere in this book.

Colour schemes in the interior of SUPERFAST V include lots of light wood panels, floor coverings are a mix of wall to wall carpets, granite and laminates. The vessel is a bit more Scandinavian in her flavour than the proceeding pair. This is further emphasised by the modern artwork and the more Western-like naming of public areas. There is a consistent high standard in both design and construction, which is noticeable throughout the vessel.



Comments

Our scores for the comments are as follows:

- +2** Very high standard with an element of innovation
- +** High standard
- o** Acceptable standard
- Non-acceptable standard

Rating system

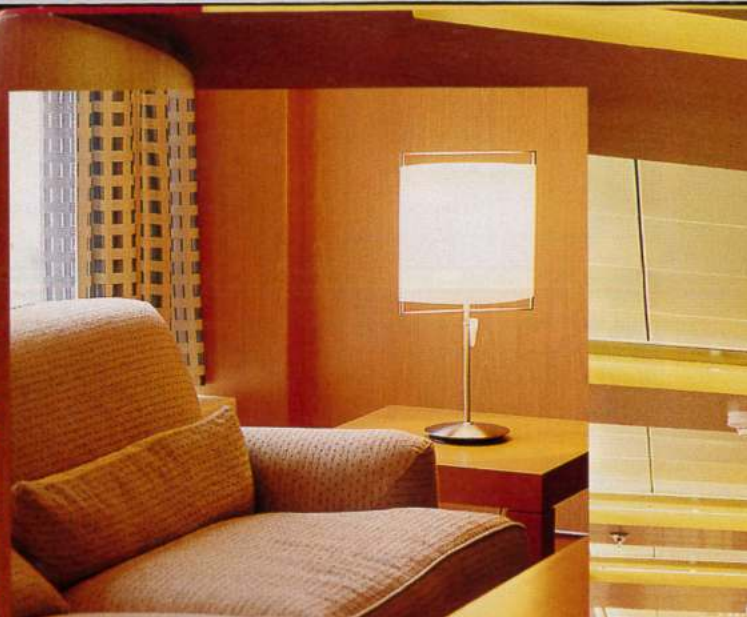
As usual, we want to convey our impressions by means of a rating system. When giving the ratings, we are not comparing with a Caribbean cruise liner but of course a contemporary ferry in the same Adriatic service.

EXTERIOR

Having already established a special Superfast trademark, the SUPERFAST V follows the same design school with a distinct profile and livery. The superstructure looks "softer" than the first generations though.

ORIENTATION

Virtually being ropax ferry, there are no excessive public areas. Still, lots of improvements have been done from the previous generations in the flow. Add thereto the large sized figures in the stairway halls, indicating the deck you are on.



Arrival

Passengers without their own cars board in accordance with the Mediterranean standard via escalators from the stern entrance. The ship can also load the car decks through the bow, with the side along the quay and there is an additional entrance ramp from the port side with access to the stern lobby. Two sets of escalators running parallel the ordinary stair lead to a circle-formed entrance hall aft on deck 7. Decorated with an illuminated and rotating compass in the ceiling as well as a compass rose in the floor, the passengers have the option of either turning left for the reception or right for the disco. Both areas belong to the more positive surprises on board SUPERFAST V.

The Reception Lounge has been modelled to resemble a hotel lobby rather than the stereotype utilitarian purser desk it used to be on ferries. With thick marble counters and an astonishing set of comfortable seating units along the windows, this represents really high-class comfort. The chairs and sofas are placed one step up, protected by a very elegant railing. This "lounge" also holds twin earth globes. The ceiling is oval shaped to add extra spacious feeling.

Three telephone booths are available at the reception, and a number of TV screens make a selection of information available for the passengers. A touch screen computer close to the above-mentioned compass roses also offers some guidance.

The Planets Night Club Lounge extends in two levels to the aft panorama windows, offering a unique sea-view. With an open atrium, a rounded stair leads to the upper level along a colourful illustration showing the earth and the moon in the stars and solar system, with the stars actually lit up by flashing optic fibre. With the dance floor located immediately below the atrium, the degree of activity of the room is pulsated throughout the two decks. A more tranquil section of the room is available at the starboard side thanks to the angled protruding arrangement of the bar counter.

On the upper level of the night club, the two wings can be closed by a retractable wall system to allow the use as conference rooms, though the furniture is rather consisting of comfortable chairs than anything else. On the port side, one section is dedicated for video games. According to the GA-plans, the two conference rooms can without too much trouble be converted into airplane seat lounges with a total of 101 chairs.



RECEPTION

+2

As already mentioned, this is no longer a shipboard counter for service but rather an elegant hotel lobby in its own right. The comfortable chairs and sofas (they are just awesome) offer a pleasant stay to overlook either the sea or the activity of the reception.

PLANETS NIGHT CLUB

+2

The location is ideal and the two deck arrangement enhance the view over the stern. Hence, the day-time use of a night-time function really makes it multi-purpose, also emphasised by the possible use of the upper level wings as conference rooms.

Continuation

Apart from the extended night club to deck 8, the public services available throughout the crossing are concentrated to deck 7 unless the sun draws one's attention to the upper decks. Consequently, the lay out of the decks follows the principles set already by SUPERFAST I.

In view of the long crossing time between Ancona and Patras, despite the impressive speed, there is no rush to get to the various functions. The dining capacity can therefore be kept at a modest seating number, since the flow will generate flexible dining times. The self-service buffet seats 148, whereas the à la carte holds 145 seats.

Immediately forward of the reception area is the elegant The Coast à la Carte restaurant, which is split by an arcade walkway, allowing access to the areas in the more forward located saloons. The interior style of the dining room is sober, with lots of light wooden panels. Decorations along the walls show different paintings from different beaches.

Although the Drivers' Lounge is reserved for passengers with commercial vehicles, the way the room opens up into the other public areas makes it possible for them to mingle with other passengers without feeling discriminated. Similarly, since the partition is only half way up the ceiling, passengers still get a good share of daylight into the arcade behind.

The cafeteria, appropriately named Three Forks Buffet-Restaurant, is decorated with many pieces of art all imaging a food theme. A multitude of cutlery, plates and corkscrews are among the framed illustrations in quite a fresh approach. Behind the self-service counter, the paintings reflect shelves and drawers with all the equipment used in a kitchen. A set of five raffles-inspired lamps/fans are placed above the seats along the windows only.

The saloon arrangement of the à la carte and buffet restaurant, with the arcade making a slight deviation, only helps to break an otherwise too straight impression.

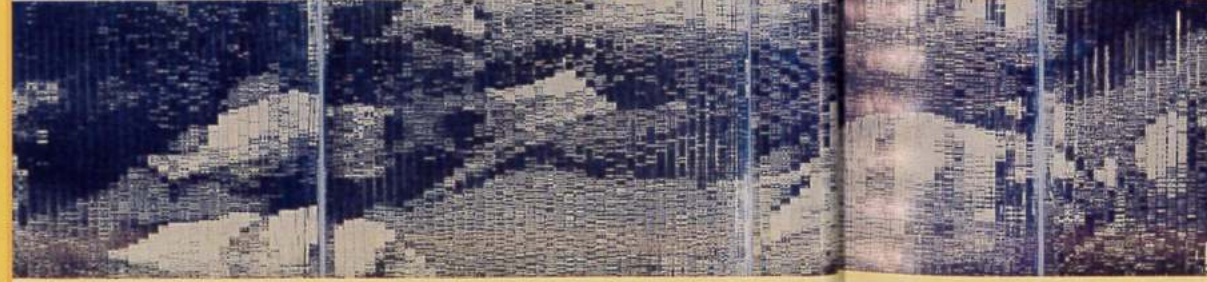
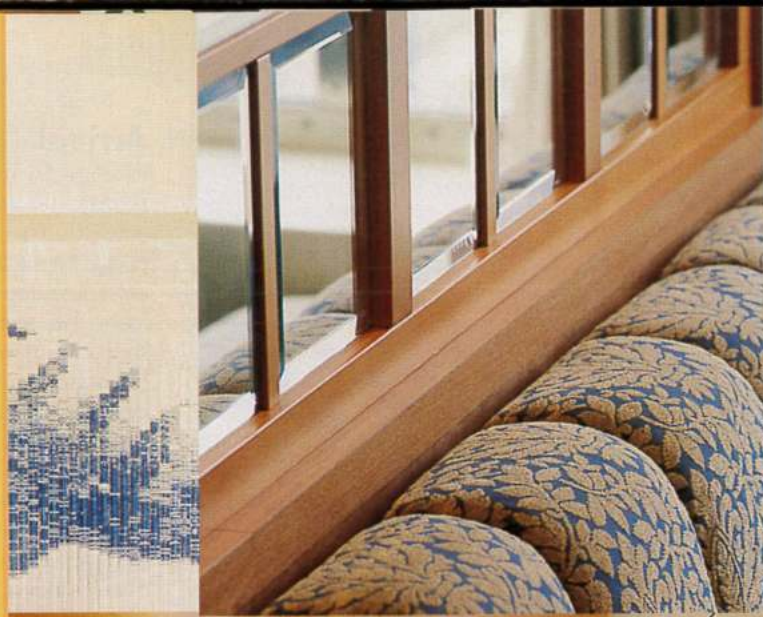
The bottleneck on SUPERFAST V is the narrow passage from both the à la carte and buffet on port side and starboard side respectively, to the Colours Bar Lounge midships. But to reduce the cramped feeling, the passage extends out onto the lifeboat promenade deck in angles, also to maximise the intake of daylight.

On the port side, the arcade is decorated with relief glass tiles, behind which is a blue painting illustrating water and fish. When you walk along the art-piece, thanks to the relief form of the tiles, one gets the impression that the fish are alive and are swimming around in the water.

On the starboard side, at the exit of the midship staircase, is a children's playroom. Decorated with a light-house, the equipment is fairly standard with the now traditional ball-pool, TV and a slide. The parents can observe their kids through the glass-walls while they are sitting in the arcade.

Where the two wings of arcades meet into the lounge, a bar counter is found immediately aft of the circular section which houses the casino with slot machines only. The arrangement offers a prime location for this revenue-earning facility, but the noise is fairly well kept within a confined area.

At the forward part of the public section of deck 7 are the shopping areas, including My Way Boutique and 5th Avenue Shops. Again, the flooring is a pleasant mix of teak deck and granite. The latter shop being the end of the passageways on this deck is U-formed as to mark the beginning of your next tour around the ship.



THREE FORKS BUFFET +2

Although similar to the previous generations in furniture and lay-out, the artwork makes it a very interesting spot. Especially the fake glass cabinet in the wall dividing the area is a masterpiece.

DRIVER'S LOUNGE +

Not so special in the design, but the location is prime.

THE COAST À LA CARTE +

Similar to previous restaurants but like the buffet, it gains from the art concept which has also given the name of the saloon, The Coast.



KID'S CLUB

Elegant in details but lacking the right playing tools for those who shall use the room. The plus comes because of the sundeck facilities for kids.

CASINO

The combination is clever made and you never know whether this is a bar or a casino, the truth it is both yet people sipping their drink are not disturbed by the activities in the casino. Also, the lighting in general and in the Colours Bar Lounge in particular is a delight to the eye. For instance the curtains are indirectly lit by a lamp hidden in the ceiling, rather than the traditional neon light at the window.

SHOPS - My Way & 5th Avenue

Fairly small in size, thanks to the crossing time, the two shops stands out with an elegant interior. Furthermore, the location of them is an advantage in as much as any of the other public services on this deck would have suffered from being here, but for the shops it is almost an advantage.



Seeing the sea

Again, the outer decks are offering an improved design. Whereas the first generation had a pool on the aft deck with a small bar, it was brought to a more wind protected area midships on the SUPERFAST III and IV. On SUPERFAST V and VI, there is a bit more space and the Blue Marine Bar has been increased to a full-fledged self-service cafeteria, not just a bar.

Quite unique is also the Kid's Summer Club, a dedicated open deck area for children, which must be a ferry industry first. A decorative front bulkhead shows a submarine in Superfast livery among turtles and seals ... Subfast? For the kids, there is also a splash pool immediately adjacent to the ordinary swimming pool for adults.

Along the pool area and further aft are ample seating arrangements behind well wind-protecting glass screens. A secondary outdoor service function is found on deck 9 aft, where the Belle View offers a bar service. The neighbourhood to the couchette department means it provides an easily accessible waterhole for the backpackers and budget travellers.

The stairs to the open deck (deck 10) are enclosed, as new regulations do no longer allow open-air passage.

The number of seats available on board the SUPERFAST V and VI exceeds the previous generations considerably. The new Baltic generation differ a lot in saloon deck layout, and the number of seats clearly indicate the new service is more geared towards freight traffic than anything else.

Number of seats

Superfast generations	I+II	III+IV	V+VI	VII-X
Panorama	0	0	148	0
Bar	0	0	0	33
Front bar	0	0	0	235
Card room	0	0	0	28
Conference	0	0	0	42
Disco/Bar	153	205	156	22
Reception lounge	0	0	27	6
À la Carte	85	112	145	98
Driver	46	46	44	66
Buffet	102	136	143	93
Casino bar	202	246	329	90
Total	588	745	992	713



Good Night

To indicate what deck you are on in order to facilitate the orientation, the cabin doors are colour coded. Deck 9 is kept in yellow, orange on deck 8 and burgundy on deck 7. Also, all staircases cleverly indicate the deck which you are arriving at thanks to large figures placed on the bulkhead.

Four de-luxe cabins are found at the forward corners of deck 7 and 8. These are more spacious than the others and hold extended amenities such as a refrigerator, television set, hairdryer, large shower and a sofa group with front windows. Another four somewhat smaller de-luxe cabins, boasting identical extras, are placed at the forward end of deck 7. The balance of the cabins is made up by 2-bed cabins outside on the forward part of deck 8 whereas without exception the rest are 4-beds. This is in accordance with Mediterranean practice, whereas cruise ferries in the Baltic would be more inclined to provide a substantially larger share of two berth cabins.

Two handicap cabins are placed immediately at the forward stair-house on deck 7 and are therefore easily accessible from the elevator and located on the same deck as other major passenger services.

As dealt with in a specific article, Superfast has been a trendsetter in providing a budget alternative for overnight accommodation. The couchette department is found on the aft part of deck 9, with the men's department at starboard and the women's rooms on port side. Showers and toilets are provided in each section. There are six beds in each room, which are fitted with bunks in three layers. The flooring is again of teak laminate, providing a high quality feeling. For each of the guests, there is a big locker for rucksacks etc along the corridor, which according to the location of deck 9 is in yellow colours.

As on previous Superfast vessels and some other Adriatic ferries, campers can stay in their vehicles on the aft part of upper deck throughout the night. Electrical outlets are provided, and in addition shower rooms and toilets are located in this section.

Contrary to the previous Superfast vessels, the SUPERFAST V does not offer a saloon with airplane type reclining seats.



Cabin configuration of SUPERFAST V

	Couchettes	de luxe	2-bed out	4-bed out	4-bed in	handicap	total beds
Deck 9	22		33			264	
Deck 8		2	28	78	41		536
Deck 7		6	29		25	2	174
Total cabins	22	8	57	111	66	2	974



CABINS

Cabins are good standard without nothing newsworthy. The plus goes to the elegant solution with the couchettes, providing pleasant overnight accommodation also for backpackers and alike.



Cardeck

While cardecks on fast ropax vessels have become rather similar, Superfast have done their best to make the loading and unloading process as easy as possible. The twin stern ramps are wide enough for 4 lane loading and if twin level ramps are ever introduced, the process is further simplified. At the moment, however, only stern loading is used. Trucks drive on the vessel over the starboard ramp and drive right forward, make a 180 degree turn at the bow and then drive back along the portside. The traffic rotation is both fast and safe. The trailer lanes are very generous in width causing no problems for access in or out of the driver's cabs and the whole deck is well lit. Access to the upper trailer deck is via a hoistable ramp on the starboard side of the centre casing. The ramp is rather narrow but is not unduly steep. Plugs for reefer trailers, very common on the Adriatic, are strategically located on the deckhead and deck sides. Superfast have tried very hard to please their most important customers, the truckers, and it seems that they have succeeded.

Cars can be parked in the two cardecks beneath the maindeck. Access is very easy with well radiused ramps and generous headroom even for roof luggage boxes. Once parked, access from the car/truck decks to the passenger spaces has been much improved both with an extra lift as well as a greater number of wide stairways. Hoistable cardeck panels are also provided on both sides of the centre casing forward on the upper trailer deck. The aft area on the upper trailer deck is reserved for campers who are able to stay in their vehicles throughout the voyage. Free electrical connection points are provided and there are toilets and showers located adjacent to the parking area.



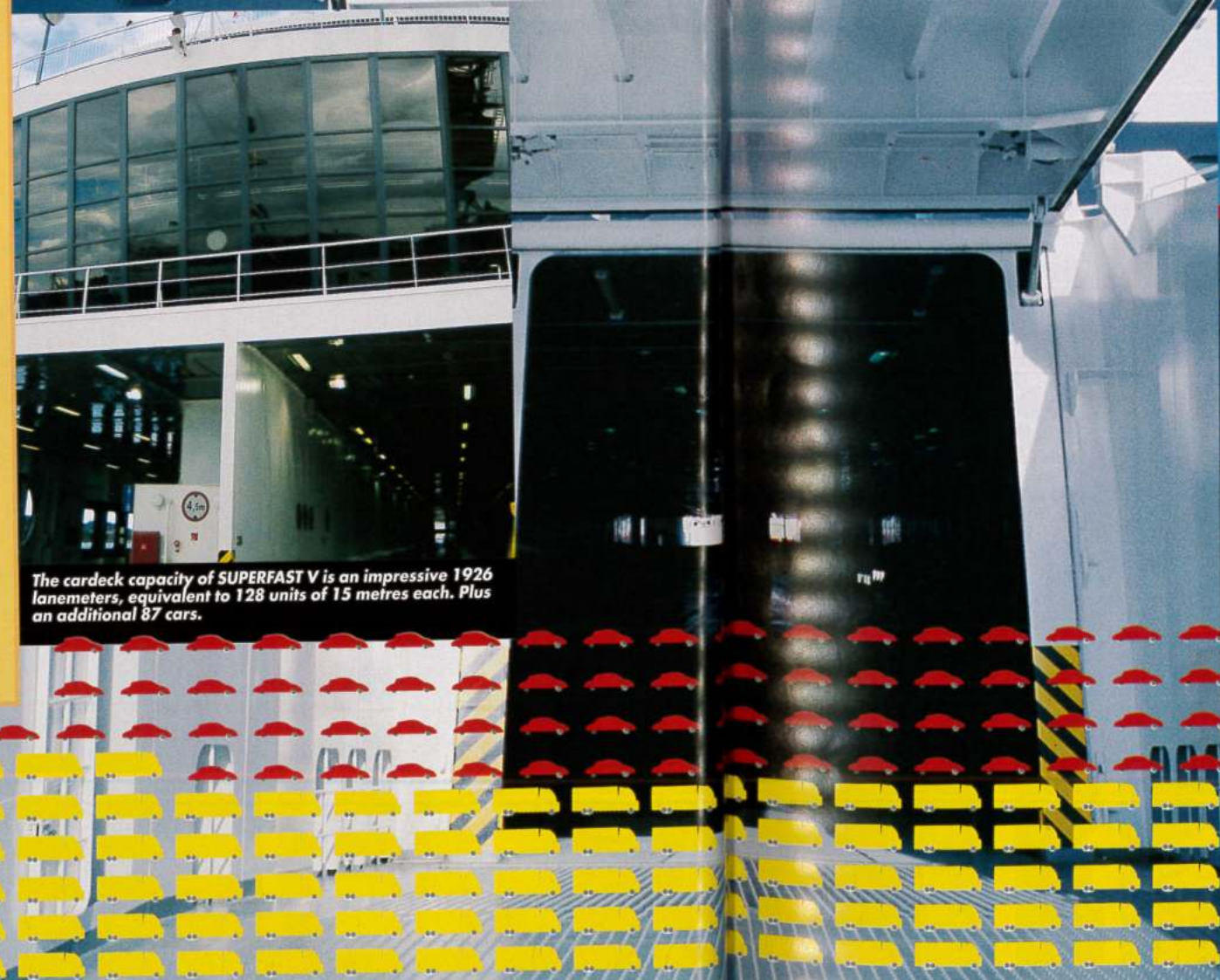


Machinery

Superfast have remained very faithful to the Wartsila New Sulzer Diesel (NSD) ZA40S type engine. Of course, it is very advantageous to standardise machinery within a fleet of Superfast's size but Superfast have now reached the limit of power output with the 16 cylinder ZAV40S engine which each develop 11520 kW, slightly up from the 10560 kW output engines supplied to SUPERFAST III and IV. With a desire to reduce the length of the main engine compartment for damaged stability reasons, there is room for little else. The engines are positioned very close together, especially at their aft ends where the turbochargers are located, only leaving space for access on port and starboard sides. Other designs have chosen to address the space restraints in a different way. Blue Star's new vessels, built by Van der Giessen, have opted for two main engine rooms. While Minoan's vessels also incorporate a four engine plant in a single compartment, the two inner engines are equipped with turbochargers at their forward ends, solving some of the space and exhaust casing problems. Considering the huge power output, the designers not only needed to consider the space requirements for the exhaust casing but also for the supply air, requiring much ducting within the constrained confines of the compartment.

The twin input, single output gearboxes, manufactured by Schelde, have been one of the sources of SUPERFAST V's lengthy delay. They were chosen by virtue of their compact size and low noise characteristics. The 5.2m diameter highly skewed propellers have been supplied by KaMeWa, as on all Superfast's vessels. By virtue of its unquestioned experience, the Rolls Royce subsidiary has now gained a dominant position in the supply of highly loaded propellers for fast ropax vessels. A great deal of model testing was carried out also in KaMeWa's own Kristinehamn facility with the goal of reducing the pressure pulses without compromising the efficiency. It seems that they have succeeded again as the measured vibration levels on the trial trip were perceptibly low. The engines are also resiliently mounted to reduce all possible sources of noise.

Aft of the main engine room, the auxiliary engine room houses the 3 MAN B&W 8L28/32H gensets, each with a 1640 kW output at 720 rpm. While many owners are now choosing package deals where the main engine supplier also provides the gensets, Superfast has chosen a genset from a rival manufacturer, albeit having great experience with HFO operation.

A thermal oil heating system has been chosen, the boilers and exhaust gas economisers supplied by PWT. On Superfast's upcoming Baltic vessels, considerably larger boilers will be fitted, requiring additional space in the casing. With all the workshops, machinery stores, stabiliser rooms, fuel treatment rooms, etc, space beneath the main vehicle deck is intensively used. Forward of the main engine compartment, a total of 11 insulated and refrigerated food store rooms are supplied via a lift. Here, the food is unpacked and prepared before being taken via the service elevator to the galley on deck 7 which serves the passenger cafeteria and restaurant on deck 7 as well as the crew/officer messes on deck 9.



The cardeck capacity of SUPERFAST V is an impressive 1926 lanometers, equivalent to 128 units of 15 metres each. Plus an additional 87 cars.





SUPERFAST V
PATRAS
4

Safety & Crew

The crew accommodation is of an unusually high standard. All crewmembers have access to not only lockers for luggage and clothing, but also a working desk and a drawer which can be locked. For each staff member for whom the operation of the vessel is a responsibility, a Valmarine alarm unit is available in the cabin. Here all information about the status of the alarm or operational condition can be read.

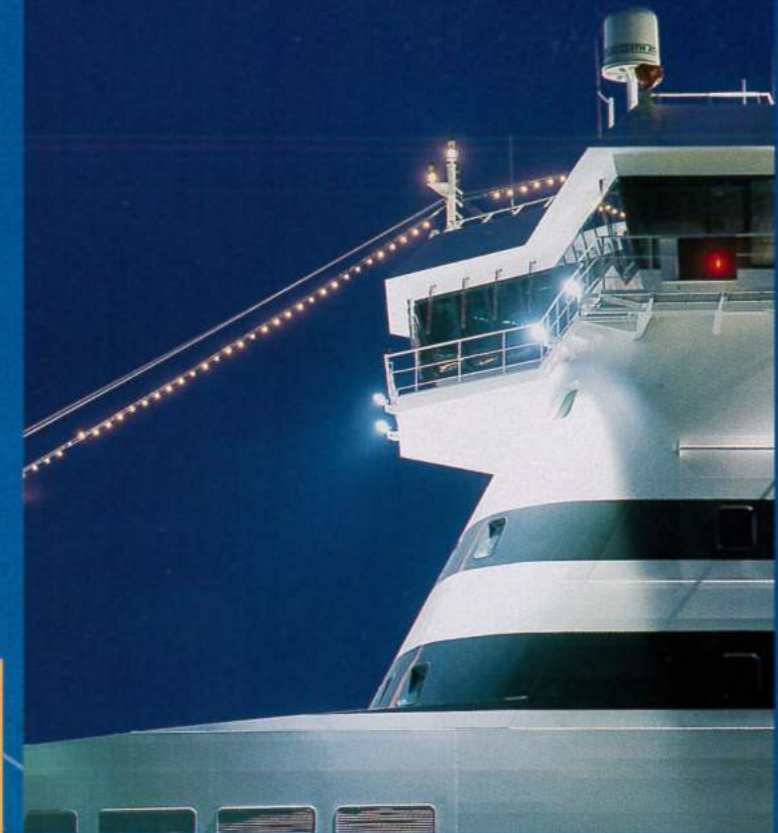
Only peak season staff is accommodated in four berth cabins. Yet these cabins are also equipped with private facilities.

As compared with the previous Superfast ferries, the bridge layout is more spacious. The chart room is more separated than on the other ships, to provide a better working condition.

With all its recent experience, the SUPERFAST V incorporates many practical lessons learned and must be therefore one of the safest ropax vessels afloat. Constructed to the highest SOLAS requirements, B/5 longitudinal bulkheads are featured in most of the compartments beneath the maindeck. 150 person Fassmer lifeboats have been chosen again, but with 6 boats instead of the 4 supplied to the SUPERFAST III class. As on all their vessels, the embarkation deck is well placed with wide access from the public rooms. The inflatable slides and liferafts have been supplied by Viking. The high pressure sprinkler system in the accommodation areas has been supplied by Marioff while Consilium supplied the very advanced fire detection equipment.

At last

The Superfast concept has come to stay. Developed as a means of fulfilling a logistical concept, it also combines the pleasure and comfort of a liner service. It took an innovative Greek former cruise shipowner to realise the need and develop a product, which instantly became such a success that for most of today's new ferries, Superfast is the reference. By virtue of this development, an area which previously was known as absorbing whatever was available second hand, is now really the center of development and newbuildings. Whatever the name of the yard or whatever colour of the shipowner has painted on the hull, this recognition is fully deserved father and son Panagopolos and their team, the inventors of a new ferry generation.



Klas Brogren (left) wrote, Mike Louagie (right) took the pictures and Philippe Holthof (middle) assisted them both.

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