

# The AM&A input

BEING ASKED TO COMPLETELY REDESIGN the interiors of BLUE STAR 1 & 2 at extremely short notice and when the project had already reached a very advanced construction stage would be a daunting task for any design office. The architects of Apostolos Molindris & Associates talked to us about the complexities and challenges they faced in the course of completing this difficult assignment.

## How did your collaboration with Attica/Strintzis on this project get started?

As you know, the original architectural design was part of a package deal with van der Giessen - de Noord. Immediately after the merger of Attica Enterprises and Strintzis Lines, it was decided that, although adequate, it should be brought in line with the standards and business philosophy of Attica Enterprises. Although we had a more than full workload then (we were well into the SUPERFAST V-VI and VII-X projects), we were asked to take on BLUE STAR 1-2, as well, precisely because of our experience.

Time limitations were more than apparent to everyone involved. Sea trials for Blue Star 1 had been planned for the beginning of May 2000. All the work would have to be completed in roughly three months. We began work on a new proposal for public spaces on the first weekend of October and presented it 2-3 days later. It was accepted with minor modifications. In the following few days, we put together a materials specification and another presentation for a complete redesign of passenger cabins, which was also enthusiastically endorsed. By mid-October, the race was well under way.

## What was the scope of work for your office in the BSF project?

"The same as for any other project we have done for Attica Enterprises: a complete interiors design and materials specification for all public spaces, stair towers and passenger cabins. All fabrics, colors and hard materials were selected anew and new carpet designs, tailored to this project, were produced. We also comprehensively redesigned the sign system, produced new logos and graphics for public spaces, as well as all the artworks installed on board. In terms of lighting design, we intervened in the original design as much as possible within the fixed budget available, attempting to add variety and more visual interest. Finally, our work included intensive on-site supervision.

Yiannis A. Pikrodimitris

## What were some of the requirements posed by the owners? How did you approach the problem from a design standpoint?

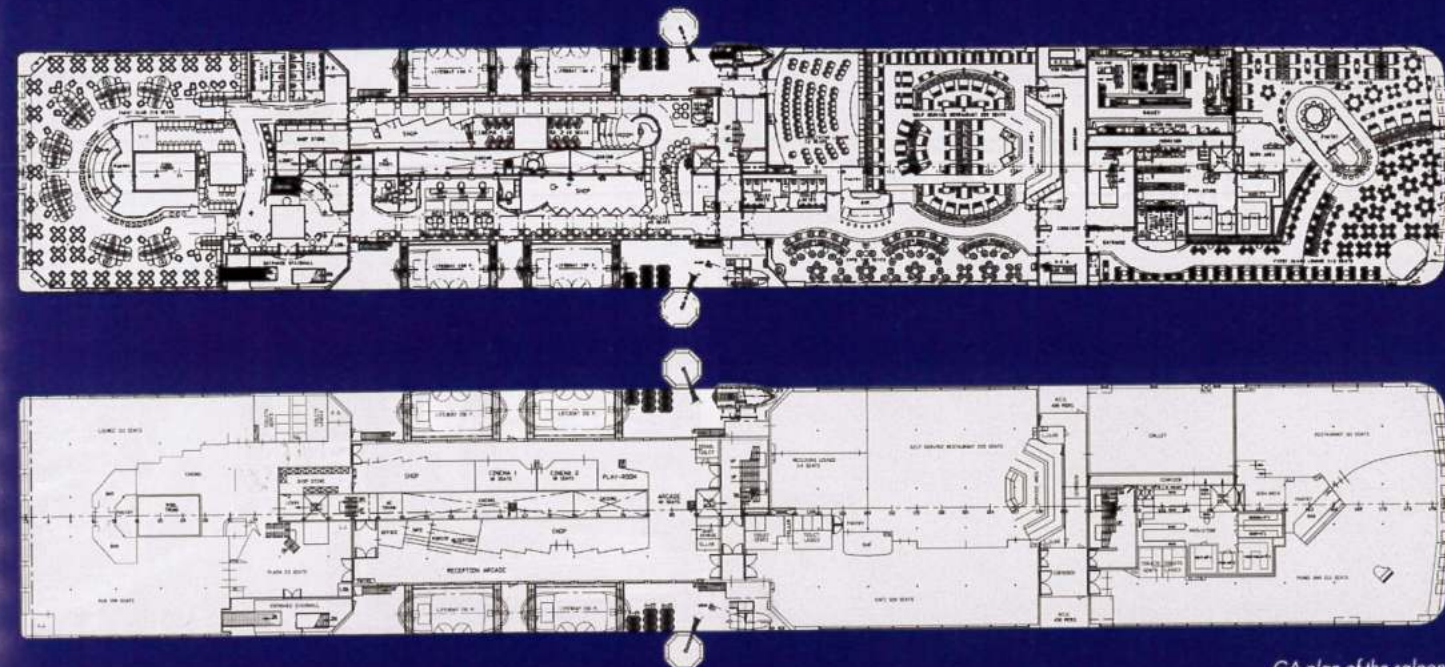
In general terms, we were asked to raise the design standard of all areas, unofficially using SUPERFAST V-VI as the reference. The main concern was to improve passenger flow in public areas, increase functionality and make spaces more interesting, lively and inviting.

Typically, we try to design a circulation pattern that encircles all public areas, without a clear beginning and end, inviting the passenger to smoothly stroll through every space. We also try to take maximum advantage of windows and views. In this case, it was a bit more difficult, since we had to work with a finalized general arrangement. We managed, however, to come as close as possible and are satisfied with the end result. On the positive side, we were blessed with huge, floor-to-ceiling windows and large, open spaces that were fun to work with.

In terms of livening up the circulation, we introduced curves and color splashes, ceiling variations, differing floor patterns and varying lighting effects. We also tried to show off individual spaces to their maximum effect. For example, we foresaw the potential of the starboard café next to the buffet and consciously emphasized it by introducing low curved walls and round pillars. We wanted to simulate a European-style café opening up to a busy sidewalk. Our success first became evident during sea trials, when the majority of those aboard constantly gravitated there during their free time. Passengers also proved us right by making it a favorite hangout.

## What was your approach as far as passenger accommodation was concerned?

Our directive was to standardize accommodation throughout the SFF/BSF fleet to promote product familiarity and lower maintenance costs (this also applies to ferries for domestic service). Therefore, carpets, fabrics and furniture are of similar philosophy and quality as those of SUPERFAST V-X. One difficulty we faced here were the rather small and asymmetrically located cabin windows; we solved it by designing a full-height, symmetrically placed window box, which gives the impression of a large picture window and also helped keep curtain sizes uniform.



GA plan of the saloon deck before AM&A took over (bottom), and the final outcome (top).

## What were the toughest challenges you faced on this project?

Quite a few, to tell the truth. We nicknamed this project MI II (Tom Cruise had only done Mission Impossible I at that time). The hardest thing was trying to find creative solutions, with so many basic parameters having already been firmly fixed before our involvement. "The Yard" had almost completed all the coordination work: A/C, plumbing and wiring was in place. It was important, for example, to redesign and liven up public area ceilings, but all of this had to be done around pretty much fixed light locations.

Time was the enemy to beat. Schedules had to be respected at all costs; otherwise the vessels would miss the peak travel season commencing in May. Therefore, all our proposals had to be carefully weighed before being submitted for implementation.

Cost restrictions were another major factor. Of course, it is impossible to do a complete redesign without incurring additional costs. However, the directive was to do the best job possible for the least expense. This put severe limitations on the range of materials we could use. For example, synthetic granite flooring, used on board Superfast Ferries was ruled out from the very beginning. Details had to be kept as simple as possible (but without appearing too simple) and less expensive materials had to be combined in ways that would contribute to the desired design effect, not detract from it.

Finally, we had to work with pre-selected interior contractors that we were not familiar with, a fact that forced us to adapt our work to their level of expertise. Coupled with time constraints, this created the need for in-

creased on-site visits for direct interfacing and problem solving. Frequently, we would get up at 5:00 am, catch the 7:00 am flight to Amsterdam, work at the yard until late in the evening and, sometimes, return the same day after midnight, bringing more work with us.

## Were there any factors making your work easy?

Definitely yes! It wouldn't have been possible otherwise. The most important factor, hands down, was the pre-existing familiarity between Attica Enterprises and us. We worked with them like hand in glove. As an added bonus, the constant stream of bright, fresh ideas and suggestions we received from them gave our confidence and energy levels a much-needed boost. Mr. Gerassimos Strintzis, with whom we were collaborating for the first time, proved to be a source of invaluable advice and expertise, warmly embracing our effort and supporting us to the end.

When it came to design proposals, we were right on target, usually with the first try, and approval came immediately. Fabric selections and carpet designs specific to this project were done and accepted in record time. It was also a great help to have the complete trust of our

client to make numerous decisions on our own, which saved additional time.

The other factor, of almost equal importance, was the willingness of the yard to work closely with us to get the best possible results. A multitude of issues was dealt with and design problems solved during face-to-face meetings, shortening the time that would otherwise be required.





# Onboard Report BLUE STAR 2

BLUE STAR 2 is not just another greyhound on the Adriatic Sea.

Her sleek profile combines speed with high-volume capacity.

Among the assets of the ship's design are a variety of public rooms that stretch a full deck from stem to stern. Initially earmarked for

the Brindisi-Patras run of

Greek Strintzis

Lines, she was

eventually introduced out of

Ancona (with a stop over in Brindisi)

following the acquisition of Strintzis

Lines by Attica Enterprises.

Sailing under the upmarket Blue Star Ferries banner,

BLUE STAR 2, together with BLUE STAR 1,

pilots Strintzis Lines into a new era.





## Facts & figures

The 176.10-metre-long BLUE STAR 2 has ten decks. The lower two decks comprise the machinery rooms in the aft part and car decks in the front. Tilttable ramps, on the port side of the stair casing, connect the lower holds with the main vehicle deck. The four MAN B&W main engines, each developing a maximum output of 11,120 kW at 428 rpm, are housed in two separate compartments. The three auxiliary engines are equally a product of MAN B&W. With a service speed of 27 knots the distance between Ancona-Brindisi and Patras is covered in less than 21 hours. Twin Kamewa bowthrusters, with a power of 1,200 kW each, improve manoeuvrability in port.

Access to the main deck, which has a headroom of 4.9 metres, is either through two 12-metre-long by 6.2-metre-wide stern ramps or a single bow ramp folded behind the clam-type bow doors. Access equipment has been supplied by Hamworthy KSE. There are three freight lanes at either side of the casing, the main vehicle deck having a total capacity of 850 lane metres. A 46-metre-long tilttable ramp with a 3.3 metre driveway leads to the upper deck, with an additional parking space of 895 lane metres. Some fifty plugs for reefer trailers are distributed over the main and top deck, another 150 electrical sockets being provided for campers on deck five.

Lifesaving equipment consists of four semi-enclosed Mulder & Rijke lifeboats. At 11.6 metres in length, each lifeboat has a capacity of 150 persons. The MOB boat on the starboard side is equally from Dutch Mulder & Rijke, whereas the fast starboard rescue boat is a Zodiac. Two RFD-made MES stations can evacuate up to 430 persons each.

## Some Interesting Suppliers



The BLUE STAR 1 + 2 project, as a modern ferry prototype, involves several interesting supplies. Information about these are found in several advertisements in this edition. In addition, we can refer to the web-sites of these suppliers. Links to them are available at our own homepage, [www.shippax.se](http://www.shippax.se)

Supplier	Product	Adv. Page
Dampa	ceiling	15
MAN B&W	engines	37
Molindris	interior designer	14
Norac	panels	208
Premec Industries	bathroom units	12
Rolls-Royce Marine Kamewa	propulsion	36
Uson Marine	waste compactor	51
van der Giessen	builder	39
Ving Card Marine	locks	9



# Blue Star 2





THE NAME OF BLUE STAR FERRIES, brain-child of Superfast Ferries supremo Alexander Panagopulos, has been adopted for Strintzis Lines' newbuildings, including the BLUE STAR 1 & 2 and the domestic ferry BLUE STAR ITHAKI. The remainder of the Strintzis fleet is marketed as Blue Ferries, a name likely to disappear sooner or later when the regeneration is completed. Strintzis Lines was one of the early car ferry pioneers on the Adriatic Sea. The impressive 1995 debut of Superfast Ferries, saw Strintzis Lines teaming up with Minoan Lines, a joint-venture which proved, however, to be short-lived. Strintzis Lines went its own way again, further modernised its fleet and ordered twin fast, luxurious ro-pax ferries with Dutch van der Giessen-de Noord (GN). An order for a domestic ferry was placed with Daewoo Heavy Industries, with two more domestic ferries being contracted to local Hellenic Shipyards. Strintzis Lines already had some experience with GN tonnage, having taken over the Dutch-built VIA LIGURE from Viamare in the early nineties. After an extensive refit at Perama, which saw passenger accommodation being added, the former freighter took up service on the Adriatic Sea as the IONIAN STAR. However, she was subsequently sold to French Compagnie Mériidionale de Navigation in late 1998.

With the order of the BLUE STAR 1 and BLUE STAR 2, Strintzis Lines followed in the wake of Superfast Ferries and Minoan Lines, that both pioneered fast conventional ferry services in the Adriatic Sea back in 1995.



## A Star is born

The annexation of Strintzis Lines by Attica Enterprises in the summer of 1999 came at a time when work was progressing on the BLUE STAR 1 and BLUE STAR 2. With a desire to adopt conformity between the concepts, father and son Panagopulos embarked on a new course with the management team of Strintzis Lines. The registered trademark of Blue Star Ferries was to appear on the dark blue hulls, the funnels being painted orange with a stylised blue star. The driving force behind this face-lift was Alexander Panagopulos who himself devised the new logo.

With quite a rush, Athens-based Apostolos Molindris & Associates (AM&A) was appointed as interior architect for the BLUE STAR 1 and 2, taking the place of Claus Peder Horn. Mr Horn of Denmark was previously engaged in other



## Rating

Although we had a feeling of déjà-vu from SUPERFAST V, the theme vessel of our sister publication DESIGNS 00, the BLUE STAR 2 still makes an overall good impression. The last-minute change of designer has not caused any interruption. But the fact that we reviewed SUPERFAST V before has had the unfortunate effect that automatically, BLUE STAR 2 can not as easily achieve the +2 top score for innovation. Even if she entered service long before her counterpart!

## 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



successful GN newbuilding projects including the ISLE OF INNISFREE, STENA JUTLANDICA, DEUTSCHLAND and COMMODORE CLIPPER to name but a few. The interior plans of the BLUE STAR 1 were redesigned only one month before the ship slipped into the water. The last-minute change of designer and interior concept did still not cause any delay of the vessel, but it contributed to a superior result.



## Via Brindisi

When Strintzis Lines ordered its first newbuilding with GN in July 1998, it was intended to put the new ship on the Brindisi-Patras run, a link not yet served by fast conventional tonnage. Both Superfast Ferries and Minoan Lines concentrated their high-speed operations on the popular but longer Ancona-Patras route. The former added a fast Bari-Patras service via Igoumenitsa in 1998, while the latter launched its 25-knot ARETOUSA out of Venice in the same year. Minoan Lines' Venice-service is currently in a state of flux, with new high-speed tonnage being delivered from Samsung Heavy Industries. Superfast Ferries, for their part, are further strengthening their position on the Ancona-Patras axis with the introduction of the SUPERFAST V and SUPERFAST VI. With the new pair, two daily departures will be achieved in each direction, taking nineteen and twenty-one hours respectively. The longer crossing includes an intermediate call at Igoumenitsa.

Under the Attica Enterprises management, the itinerary of Strintzis Lines' brand new ferries was reviewed. Although only 430 passengers can be accommodated in 161 cabins (enough for the intended crossing from Brindisi to Patras), it was decided to deploy the BLUE STAR 1 and 2 on the much longer Ancona-Patras route, with only a short stop over in Brindisi. By doing so, Blue Star Ferries killed two birds with one stone. Not only are two different markets being catered for, it should also be an alternative for the saturated Italian motorways. At the time of our crossing, however, the Greek ships were not yet allowed to move traffic in Italian waters from Ancona to Brindisi and vice versa.



## Red and Blue

With Blue Star Ferries now belonging to the Superfast family, we can not pass over to compare the BLUE STAR 2 with the Superfast sextet in operation on the Adriatic Sea. Whereas

## Exterior

+2

The rounded contours give the BLUE STAR 2 a modern and soft look. The shape and colour of the funnel embody speed. Contrary to many other ro-pax vessels, the ship has no open vehicle deck at the stern. Still, the Blue Star twins do not look top-heavy, amongst others enhanced by the grey band wrapped around the superstructure. We also appreciate the modest size of the funnel in these environmental-minded days

## Orientation

+2

This is an example of how easy orientation can be, by virtue of the ship having only two passenger decks. All public areas are concentrated on one deck, cabins on the other. Large figures in the colour-coded staircases indicate the deck number you are on. Even the most absent-minded professor will not lose his way.

## Entrance Plaza

+

It gives a good first impression of the ship, with full use being made of light wood materials. Once at sea the doors to the escalators and stairs are closed, the Entrance Plaza becoming an integrated part of the accommodation.



Blue Star 2  
ΠΕΙΡΑΙΕΥΣ

# Blue Star Ferries

STRINTZIS LINES



all Superfast ships follow the vertical division with the majority of the cabins in the forward part and public spaces at the stern, BLUE STAR 1 and 2 are horizontally divided. Bars, restaurants, cinemas, reclining seats and shops are concentrated on deck number seven only, deck eight housing all 161 cabins. Such a layout of course eases orientation for the average traveller, not to mention the bonus of having a forward view in the front lounge and restaurant. Passengers really want to see where they are sailing to without having to pay for a forward-looking cabin. Whilst the original interior of the SUPERFAST I and II was laid-out by Norwegian Yran & Storbraaten, the SUPERFAST III and IV were designed by Greek AMK Architects & Designers, active in the cruise and ferry business since 1974. Apostolos Molindris & Associates was appointed as the interior designer for the SUPERFAST V and onwards. Apostolos Molindris had gained his spurs in shipping design when working together with Agni and Michael Katzourakis of AMK.

Evidently, the BLUE STAR 1 & 2 – also a design of AM&A – show some similarities with the SUPERFAST V & VI and to some extent the AMK designed SUPERFAST III and IV. Full use is made of veneer beech which give the vessels a sober, yet warm and cosy atmosphere. The spacious public rooms make the BLUE STAR 2 an attractive and relaxing ferry to sail with.



## All aboard

Because of the simple lack of land infrastructure in both Greek and Italian ports, foot-passengers usually embark via a separate stern ramp. Although being equipped with both stern and bow doors, most of the new ferries berth stern-in at both sides of the Adriatic Sea. The BLUE STAR 2 is an exception to the rule, berthing bow-in at Patras. Because she is docked alongside the quay, foot-passengers can embark or disembark either via a port or starboard side-loading door at the stern. The Thyssen escalators and stairs that bring the foot-passengers from the main freight deck to the passenger accommodation on deck seven are situated on the starboard side.

Six lanes cover the 25.7-metre-wide freight decks, which are partly split by a central casing. A tiltable ramp leads to the upper freight deck that features wide circular cut outs in the sides. These rounded side-openings provide daylight and fresh air to the people who are camping on board, a popular, yet controversial way of travelling on Greek ferries. At the time of our trip, the BLUE STAR 2 ploughed her way to Greece in a wind-force nine. Although she took the first autumn storm pretty well, our car – coincidentally

EXCHANGE			
US DOLL	37592	38941	
D MARK	199.15	175.22	
FR FR	50.43	32.24	
STERLING	550.29	570.04	
SWISS FR	216.81	228.59	
BELG FR	8.20	8.49	
D S	24.04	24.00	
LIRE IT	17.00	17.69	



## Bella Blu Yacht Club

A spacious bar lounge with comfortable seating in pleasant surroundings. Vehicles do not obstruct the backward view through the large panorama windows, the ship not having an open car deck. The Bella Blu Yacht Club doubles as a nightclub with disco. The small tables with metal legs and white tabletops are a little bit boring if compared with the modern tables (boasting illuminated tabletops) in the Planets Night Club Lounge on the SUPERFAST V.

## Monte Carlo Casino

A genuine casino with twinkling lights, but without real gambling tables. It links up with the Entrance Plaza and is separated from any other public spaces.

## Reception Lounge

Maybe not as striking as on the SUPERFAST V, the Reception Lounge is a continuation of the Entrance Plaza. Once again, there is an abundance of light veneer wood. The illuminated opal glass frames behind the information desk are a nice touch.

## Boutique Voilà - Agora Self Service Shop

In a post duty-free era, one is a bit surprised of seeing two separate outlets, but it gives variation.





parked on the top deck – was covered with salt upon our arrival at Patras.

The BLUE STAR 2 can easily be converted for simultaneous double-deck loading. However, as long as specially adapted shore-facilities are not available, vehicles have to drive on and off the vessel via the twin stern ramps or the single bow ramp. On our outward trip, cars and campers were parked opposite one another, hampering smooth discharging operations. Getting off the BLUE STAR 2 on our return crossing proved to be as frustrating. This time, though, our car was parked on the undermost car deck that, together with the second deck, has space for 106 cars. After twiddling one's thumbs for more than half an hour in a sweltering hot car, vehicles finally started to move. Sad to say, but this was not a good final impression! Unfortunately, this practice of putting tourist cars on the lower car decks is also the order of the day on Superfast Ferries' and Minoan Lines' vessels.



## Main deck

Foot-passengers embark the ship via the stern and enter the vast accommodation area in the Entrance Plaza. Centrally is a recessed circular neon skylight, the mirror view of which is duplicated in dark wood colours on the pale wood laminated floor. Just in front of the sweeping stairway to the sun deck, is a chart pilot screen from STN Atlas, giving information about the ship's position, speed etc directly linked to the wheelhouse equipment.

At the rear of deck seven is the well-appointed Bella Blu Yacht Club, a huge bar and lounge area with many comfy armchairs and soft couches. The large illustrations on the dark red-brown bulkheads depict a yacht sailing on a map of the Cyclades. At both entrances hangs a picture of a lighthouse on a rock. Although the pictures are identical, the colour schemes are different. Through the large tumblehome windows at the stern, you get a spectacular view of the ship's wake, no campers or trucks obstructing this view. The dance floor is located in the starboard corner.

As an integrated part of the Entrance Plaza, between the starboard and port side entrance doors to the Bella Blu Yacht Club, is the Monte Carlo Casino, a gambling den with the standard one-armed bandits and other games of chance such as an electronic roulette table.

At both sides of the engine casing, an attractive arcade connects the stern section with the mid-ship stairways and further on to the front lounges. The port side arcade is narrower than the starboard one and appears to be less frequented because of the starboard arcade being the short cut between the Bella Blu Yacht Club, the Entrance Plaza with adjacent Monte

## Cinema 1 & 2

Films are shown on an ordinary TV screen, rather than being projected on a large screen. The floors are not sloped, each cinema having a capacity of only eighteen persons. Admission to the cinemas is free of charge, which is a real bonus.

## Children's Playroom

An 'auditorium-style' TV room, a slide and a ball-pool is what the youngest passengers have to make do with. No special facilities are available for children on the open decks.

## La Caffettiera Café

According to the Greeks, this is the place to hang out and be seen. The La Caffettiera Café is an open-plan coffee shop and bar along the arcade. It is an alternative to the bars at both ends of the ship and seems to be very popular amongst Greek passengers.

## Conference Room

A euphemism for a room which is in fact little more than a reclining lounge. It is, however, not a 'dark cavern' and with its large windows it is certainly one of the better such lounges we have seen, hence the '+'





Carlo Casino and the forward areas. Both arcades have pleasant seating areas, partitioned by display cases, next to the windows. Two eighteen-seat cinemas, unimaginatively named Cinema 1 and Cinema 2, are accessed via the port side arcade.

The Boutique Voilà also on the port side arcade, sells shoes and ready-to-wear clothing from famous store chains like Benetton. At the end of this arcade is the small Children's Playroom with ball-pool, slide and television set. Parents can easily supervise their children from the nearby group of chairs. The port side arcade terminates in the mid-ship stairwell, however, a by-pass with video games and even more chairs, continues into the starboard arcade.

The information desk in the Reception Lounge, entered via the Entrance Plaza, is modelled on the smart counter of the SUPERFAST V. A mobile phone would not work in mid-Adriatic so for this reason three (satellite) telephone sets are available at the entry to the Reception Lounge.

The well-stocked Agora Self Service Shop on the starboard side sells a selection of perfumes, spirits, luxury goods, sweets, etc. Compared with the supermarket-style shops on some Scandinavian ferries, the Agora is small. The abolition of duty-free sales is not the reason for this. Contrary to their colleagues in Northern Europe, ferry-operators in the Adriatic have never depended so much on duty-free revenues. Passengers take the ferry to travel from A to B and not just for fun. Pairs of pale green chairs are placed at the window-side of the shopping arcade. The light-coloured floor and wall coverings, combined with the flood of daylight that comes through large windows, makes the Reception Lounge and the shopping arcade a bright and airy place during the daytime. In the evening and at nighttime, however, the artificial lighting is a bit too fierce.

The starboard arcade flows into the La Caffettiera Café, undoubtedly the Greek passengers' most favourite port of call. Passengers are either watching TV, playing party games (which can be borrowed from the reception desk) or just sipping an Ouzo. We were told that the place is so popular because of its prime mid-ship location. Seated in a comfortable chair, the Greeks apparently like to see fellow passengers going back and forth to the front and back of the ship. On the port side is a Conference Room, the name of which is rather misleading for a room full of reclining seats and a television screen. In practice, the Conference Room is only rarely used for seminars, the 72 seats mainly accommodating budget travellers. Unlike the SUPERFAST V, the BLUE STAR 2 has no couchettes, the true backpackers attempting to sleep under the awning on the sun deck.



### Il Verdi Buffet Restaurant +

This is a modern, efficient self-service restaurant without too many frills. The sober interior, with its wooden laminated floor, is easy to keep clean and gives a fresh impression.

### Red Wine à la carte +2

Eating à la carte with a view; this must be one of the few ferries boasting an à la carte restaurant with a forward view. Even in a wind-force nine I enjoyed my octopus whilst I witnessed the ship taking another wave. By the way, the octopus was excellent, not to mention the Greek salad!

### Horizon Observation Lounge +

The Horizon Observation Lounge, next to the Red Wine à la carte restaurant, offers excellent front views as well. The decor is rather dark to reflect a more formal, nautical-style environment, balanced by lighter fabric colours. It earns a '+' also because of its prime location.





## Bon appétit

The continuation of the starboard shopping arcade splits the La Caffettiera Café with the 225-seat Il Verdi Buffet Restaurant on the port side. Contrary to what the name suggests, it is a self-service cafeteria with counter service, offering a good selection of Greek and international dishes that tempt every palate. The paintings behind the serving counters portray vegetables and fruits used in the kitchen. The wooden laminated floor in the dining room is very easy to keep clean and gives a fresh impression. Partitions split the dining-saloon up into several small areas, however, no separate drivers' lounge has been provided.

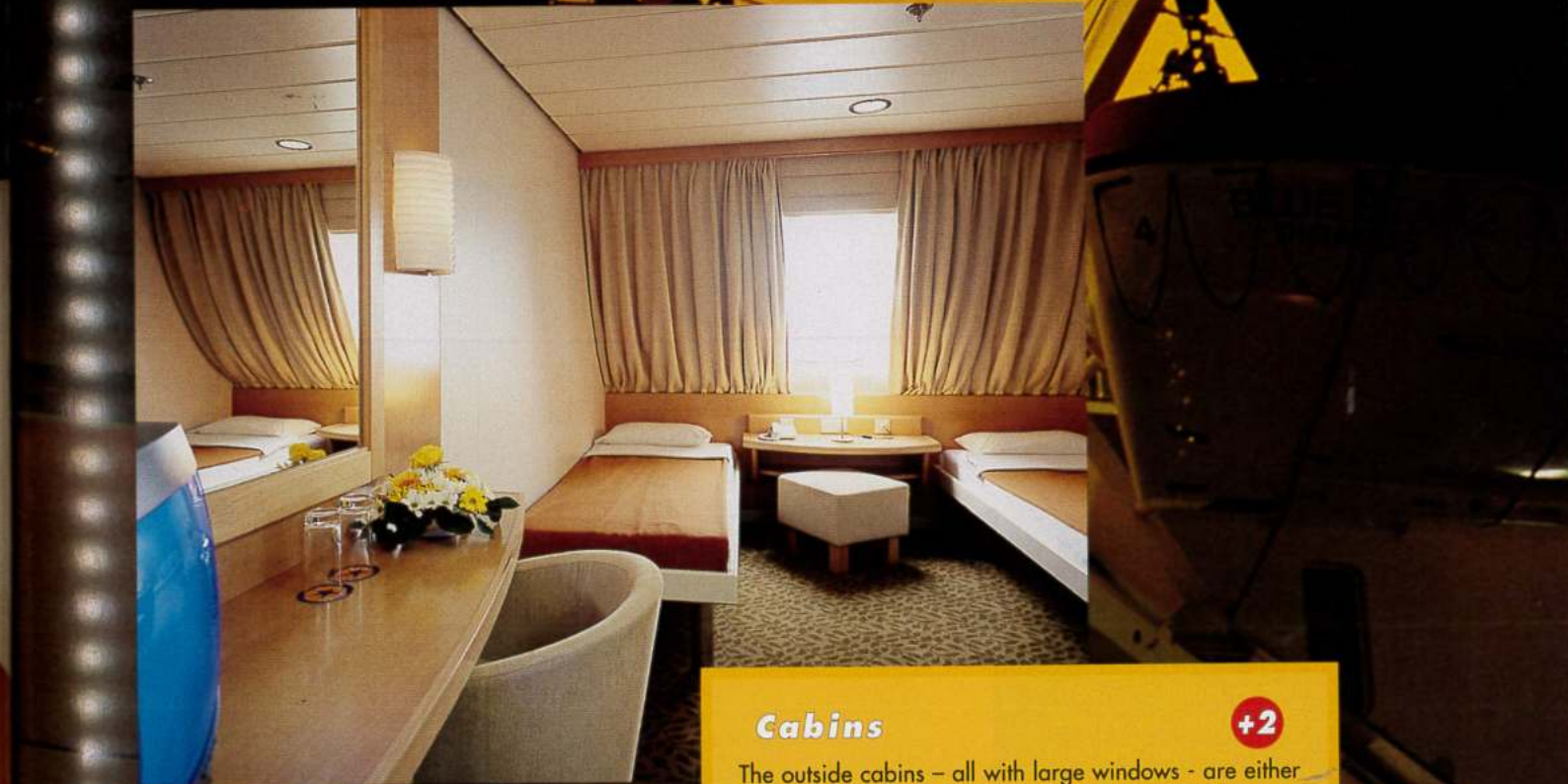
At the opposite side of the port side galley, in the very front of the ship, is the stylish Red Wine à la carte. A partition at shoulder height separates the à la carte restaurant from the Horizon Observation Lounge. The Superfast vessels have an open-plan à la carte restaurant, which makes eating less intimate because of other passengers walking by. This is not so in the Red Wine, where you can eat in peace and tranquillity. Carpets, laminates, as well as wall and ceiling panelling are dark-coloured. The burgundy leather chairs are placed around rectangular and round tables. The painted illustrations refer to the theme after which the restaurant has been named.

The Horizon Observation Lounge, next to the Red Wine à la carte restaurant, is equally finished with dark materials. The single wall, i.e. the bulkhead of the provision stores, is a patchwork of abstract paintings in flashy colours. Like the waiter-service restaurant, the Horizon Observation Lounge offers excellent forward and side views through large windows. Pre-dinner drinks can be ordered from the U-shaped bar at the entrance to the Red Wine waiter service restaurant.



## Cabin deck

Easy orientation is an absolute plus point of the BLUE STAR 2. No fuss about ending up on the wrong cabin deck. The single cabin deck on deck eight is reached via three colour-coded stairwells (lemon, burgundy and blue). There are 24 two-berth deluxe cabins in total, which is a remarkably large number for a ship with berths for only 430 passengers. The forward-viewing cabins are somewhat larger than those with side views, however, all deluxe cabins boast extra amenities such as satellite TV, refrigerator and nice, modern night lamps. The spacious cabins at the forward corners are even turned out with a two-seater sofa. The walls in the deluxe cabins are not decorated; a painting would not have hurt though. With the exception of the two disabled cabins (located close to the burgundy stairways and single passenger elevator), the remainders of the outside cabins are four-berth



## Cabins

+2

The outside cabins – all with large windows – are either two-berth deluxe or standard four-berth cabins. There are 161 cabins, no less than 24 of which are deluxe cabins with extras such as satellite TV and refrigerator! Soft colourings are the name of the game in the staterooms.



cabins. The 81 inside cabins have two bunk beds. All cabins are similarly furnished as the ones on SUPERFAST V; even the carpets in the passageways are identical.

Travelling the Mediterranean way means that many people, especially youngsters, simply do not book cabin accommodation. Couchettes are not available on the BLUE STAR 2, but the budget traveller can either opt for a reclining seat (on deck seven) or just sleep outside on a bench.

Camping on board, a concept launched by Minoan Lines in the early nineties, is another affordable alternative for people travelling with their own camper or caravan. Sanitary facilities are available in the engine casing and the starboard casing that holds the escalators.



### Sun deck

There is nothing new under the sun, literally! The swimming pool is located at the rear of deck eight. Large glass screens protect the area from splashing water and wind. A small kiosk, the Blue Water Pool Bar, serves drinks and light refreshments. Deck chairs are at a premium on sunny days. Shower- and toilet blocks for both sexes are located close-by, which is very convenient for the deck passengers who spend the night on the benches under the awning. The only door from the aft sun deck to the lower deck is not marked. We caught passengers who mistakenly opened the locker door rather than the door that gives access down to the Entrance Plaza. More deck space, the greatest part of which is covered, is available on deck nine. Unfortunately, the small stair to deck ten was roped off during our crossing. Nonetheless, this could be a nice and large sun deck providing it had a windscreen at both sides.



### Prosperous voyage

The BLUE STAR 2 is the frontpiece of both the yard and the owner. She joins a trade that has seen a dramatic change during the last five years. We wonder how much longer the small independent companies can survive now that Minoan Lines and Attica Enterprises as the absolute market leader are ruling the roost.

Hellenic Shipyards will deliver two domestic vessels to Blue Star Ferries this and next year, with two additional ferries to follow from Daewoo Heavy Industries. However, it is not all roses. As previously pointed out, handling of the ferries at both sides of the Adriatic leaves a lot to be desired. The determined ship-owners have invested in both hard- and software, the port authorities can no longer rest on their laurels now!



### Sun deck

The protected sun deck at the rear of deck eight is rather small for a ship with a passenger capacity of 1,600. The holiday feeling is very apparent when you can drink your favourite cocktail at one of the tables around the swimming pool. Although easily accessible from the reception area, passengers are lost when they want to exit – signage please! This is an area, which could easily be improved considerably before the second season.

