

News Release

23rd September 2002

Maritime Leisure wins Smyril project in cruise-ferry double

Austria's Maritime Leisure Group, the shipboard passenger departments specialist, has been retained by Faroe Islands-based Smyril Line to develop hotel and entertainment services for a new cruise-ferry due to link the Faroes, Denmark, Norway, Iceland and Scotland's Shetland Islands from next summer.

The consultancy and project management contract marks a further North Atlantic breakthrough for Salzburg-based Maritime, which opened a London office last year. The company has just completed a similar start-up role for NorthLink Ferries and has now won an operational contract from the Scottish newcomer which launches services to Orkney and Shetland in October (see page 2).

Work for Smyril Line will cover product design, operational standards and staffing on the 35,759 GRT M/F Norronna which is under construction at the Flenders Werft yard in Lubeck, Germany, and will replace a 12,000 GRT vessel of the same name. Capacity will be increased to 1,482 passengers and 800 cars on the newbuild compared with 1,050 passengers and 300 cars on the 1973-built predecessor.

Maritime will start by analysing the existing operation under a project team led by UK managing director John Bywater, who notes: "Smyril Line's expansion plans recognise the need to offer cruise-style facilities delivered by highly qualified crew."

Product development will include concepts and costings for catering, bar and entertainment services. The team will also devise stock, purchasing, statutory and financial control systems as well as on-board revenue and performance monitoring plans.

In an additional key element, Maritime will specify job descriptions and manning rosters, source and recruit personnel and carry out job-specific and safety training.

Since founding the Maritime Hotel Academy in Salzburg in 1989, the Maritime Leisure Group has provided operational, consultancy and training services for some 30 cruise and ferry lines worldwide.

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NorthLink contract signals Maritime's management plans



Under a second new contract, Maritime Leisure Group is to run hotel and entertainment operations on the three new cruise-style passenger/ro-ro vessels which launch NorthLink Ferries services between the Scottish mainland, Orkney and Shetland from October 1st 2002.

In a major extension of its established role, the Salzburg and London-based specialist will also be responsible for officer and crew manning in the deck and engine as well as hotel departments.

Maritime has won the contract after working on two start-up projects for the Caledonian MacBrayne/Royal Bank of Scotland joint venture. Since late 2001 the company has been acting as hotel services consultant covering product design, management systems, manning levels and training manuals.

A commissioning contract followed in April this year with a 26-strong team at Aker Finnyards to oversee the final stages of construction, create operating manuals, conduct sea trials and complete handover. The team, led by technical superintendent Stuart McCulloch, reports to Maritime's project director Jim Evans, the former P&O Cruises and Airtours marine director.

UK managing director John Bywater comments: "Our technical input for NorthLink, coupled with the deck and engine manning brief, marks a significant phase in Maritime's development in which we are increasing our capabilities to offer a full management service."

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Cruise ambience the key in drive for quality

Quality of passenger facilities was a key factor when the Scottish Executive appointed NorthLink to supply the lifeline Northern Isles services via a competitive tender which signalled the replacement of P&O Scottish Ferries after 30 years.

As Mr Bywater emphasises, Maritime aims to “create an atmosphere which makes passengers feel like cruise guests” on all three newbuildings - the 12,000 gt sisterships Hjaltland and Hrossey, sailing overnight between Aberdeen, Kirkwall and Lerwick; and the 8,600 gt Hamnavoe operating three return crossings a day between Scrabster and Stromness.

Menus devised under Maritime’s culinary director in Salzburg will combine local produce and modern recipes. Dinner choices such as fillet of salmon in a tarragon and Chablis sauce will be available in the self-service buffet, where a “Chef’s Theatre” will also offer carvery and cooked-to-order dishes.

Appetisers in the a la carte restaurant include haggis croquettes with red currant and port jus while main courses range from Orkney beef steaks to oven-baked cod in a herb crust. Pre- and after-dinner drinks will be served in the Club Lounge.

Entertainment will include live music, game and quiz shows, bar games and captain’s cocktail parties together with gaming areas and a 58-seat cinema showing latest releases.

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