


June 2001, No. 6

Floating fun  Compagnie des Iles du Ponant  Irish Ferries' Eamonn Rothwell  MEGA EXPRESS  Hi-speed on order

# CRUISE & FERRY Info

FUN  
AND  
FITNESS





# Stepping up competition

With the STENA FORWARDER, Stena Line increases its capacity in terms of lanemetres and speed on the route Holyhead - Dublin. The vessel has a few disadvantages, though, and will face stiff competition from Irish Ferries' parallel service with the new ULYSSES.

**T**he STENA FORWARDER is the latest delivery from the Italian Cantieri Navale Visentini(CNV) shipyard located on the River Po delta just south of Venice.

The unique family owned yard employs a limited number of permanent staff, relying to a large extent on subcontractors. The complete design was made by NAOS in Trieste while final outfitting is carried out in Chioggia near Venice.

Following the completion of the STENA FORWARDER, Visentini is building another sistership of the same design as there seems to be a steady demand for fast ro-pax vessels with good freight capacity. Significantly, the two ro-pax vessels under construction at Stocz. Szczecinska for Lloyd Sardegna are very similar in size and layout to CNV's vessels reflecting the demand for faster ro-pax vessels with high freight capacity.

The STENA FORWARDER is the fourth vessel built with this hullform by CNV. It is an improved version of the MERSEY VIKING, which was built by Visentini in 1995. The vessels have proven to be a success by virtue of their good service speed and low fuel consumption.

Also owned by one of the shipowning companies within the Visentini group, the STENA FORWARDER has a very striking exterior dominated by an unusual sail-shaped funnel and streamlined accommodation block. Externally, the vessel is not dissimilar to the Van der Giessen-de Noord built ISLE OF INISFREE combining an attractive 2040 lanem freight capacity with a useful passenger intake.

Stena, of course, runs the parallel HSS service from Holyhead to Dun Laoghaire carrying mainly passengers and cars so the STENA FORWARDER's cabins would mainly be occupied by truck drivers on night sailings. However, day and weekend sailings which are not so well occupied with freight traffic, are being successfully marketed by Stena as a slower, relaxing and cheaper voyage compared with the HSS.

## Not ideal, but available

As the vessel has been chartered by Stena for a two year initial period, the vessel is not ideally suited to Stena's needs. Rather, the

company took the opportunity to sell the STENA CHALLENGER at a time when her service speed was becoming uncompetitive on some of its European routes.

Stena quickly stepped in to charter the STENA FORWARDER as she was one of the few ro-pax vessels of that size and speed to be available on the charter market. The design of the vessel therefore reflects Visentini's experience gleaned mostly on Mediterranean services. With no double level linkspans so far available in Mediterranean ports, the owner understandably chose an access configuration that would be most suitable for the widest variety of ports.

Access into the vessel is via a 16.5m wide stern ramp/door with a length of 13.9m plus 3 m flaps. The starboard side of the ramp leads to the 4.9m high maindeck while the portside can be used for direct access onto the wide fixed internal ramp leading to the upper trailer deck which has a free height of 5.1m under the accommodation. Employing such a wide ramp permits two-way traffic, considerably expediting the loading or unloading of ro-ro cargo.

Ideally the cardeck should be completely separate from the freight areas so that loading and unloading can take place independently. The new PRIDE OF ROTTERDAM has a completely separate cardeck with side access from the shore. This is clearly the best option if shore facilities permit.

The ULYSSES has an exclusive internal ramp system both fore and aft for cars which permits them to drive directly to the cardeck closest to the accommodation. The previous ro-pax built by Visentini, the ALYSSE, also had a separate cardeck but for the STENA FORWARDER, the cardeck beneath the maindeck was deemed sufficient.

Access to the lower car deck and tanktop is via a 3.7m wide fixed ramp on the starboard side. The opening is covered by an end-hinged watertight cover. The fixed cardeck has a free height of 1.95m and has sufficient area for about 70 cars to be parked. The fixed ramp arrives at the 4.35m high tanktop at the forward end of the space leaving little room for manoeuvre. There is no space for trucks to turn so vehicles will either have to reverse up or down the ramp.

Visentini has again specified a pair of

MAN/B&W 9L48/60 main engines for the STENA FORWARDER, each with an output of 9,450 kW at 500 rpm. This compares with the MERSEY VIKING's two 7,800 kW Wärtsilä 8R46 engines. At a draft of 5.6m, corresponding to a normal trailer deadweight of abt. 4,500t, the vessel is capable of a service speed of 23 kts.

The engines drive a pair of 4.8m diameter Lips cp propellers via vertically offset Renk Tacke gearboxes which are located within very narrow skegs. The unique hullform adopted by Visentini is a combination of free flow and twin skeg form offering a good compromise between high hull efficiency and low vibration levels.

With the engine room also squeezed between the B/5 longitudinal bulkheads, Visentini has chosen to locate a number of compartments including the engine control room, workshop and storeroom on the maindeck, underneath the fixed ramp aft. Three Caterpillar gensets each with a 1,360 kW output are located between the engines and are complemented by 2 x 1,370 kW

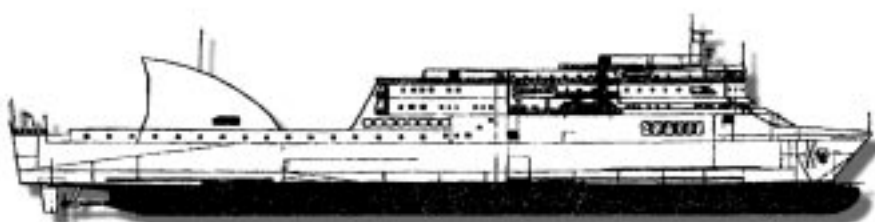




STENA FORWARDER is the latest delivery from the Italian Cantieri Navale Visentini(CNV) shipyard, which is currently building a sister vessel of the same design. The background is the high demand for fast ro-pax vessels with high freight capacity. Stena's service with the HSS EXPLORER between Holyhead - Dun Laoghaire, with its focus on passengers and cars, complements the STENA FORWARDER. The latter is however marketed as a slower, cheaper and more relaxing alternative compared to the HSS.



Photos courtesy of Stena



## STENA FORWARDER

### Facts & Figures

<b>Builder</b>	Cantieri Navale Visentini, Venice, Italy	..... 308 in cabins ..... 208 in aircraft seats ..... 434 deck passengers
<b>Tonnage</b>	GT ..... 25,000 tDW ..... 7,300	Lanem ..... 2,040 +75 cars
<b>Dimensions</b>	Length oa ..... 186.5 m Length pp ..... 169.5 m Beam ..... 25.6 m Draft ..... 6.5 m Depth (main deck) ..... 9.15 m Depth (upper deck) ..... 15.0 m	<b>Machinery</b> Main engines .. 2 MAN B&W 9L48/60 Output (total) ..... 18,900 kW Rpm ..... 500 Gensets ..... 2 x 1,360 kW Gearboxes ..... Renk Tacke Bow thrusters ..... Brunvoll 2 x 900 Propellers ..... 2 Lips Fin stabilizers ..... Fincantieri
<b>Capacity</b>	Pax (total) ..... 950	<b>Speed</b> Speed (service) .. 23 kts (5.6 m draft)



## just delivered

► shaft generators. Apart from the twin rudders, the STENA FORWARDER is equipped with two Brunvoll 900 kW bow thrusters.

A pair of Fincantieri fin stabilizers is also fitted for passenger comfort.

### **Mariotti carried out outfitting**

The accommodation area is the largest ever so far built and outfitted by Visentini. While the yard has built a number of cruise liners, the Mariotti shipyard in Genoa carried out most outfitting work. The vessel is certificated for up to 1,000 day passengers but overnight sailings are restricted to the available reclining seats and cabins.

While typical for Mediterranean ferries, the incorporation of a Schindler escalator aft on the starboard side is unusual on a ro-pax operating in Northern Europe. Foot passengers can walk over the stern ramp, proceed to the upperdeck by escalator and then via a closed passageway forward to the passenger lift and stair casing which gains direct access into the entrance hall of the accommodation.

While the public areas are necessarily limited, their quality is very high. The aft lounge/bar has seating capacity for 200 persons and incorporates panoramic windows



**STENA FORWARDER** has a very striking exterior, dominated by an unusual sail-shaped funnel and the streamlined accommodation block

facing aft. On the starboard side, a separate slot machine/gaming area has been provided. Forward, the self-service restaurant is split into a number of sections including an exclusive dining area for truck drivers.

The cabins, located on the deck above, are comparatively spacious and can accommodate up to 308 passengers in 76 cabins. At the aft end of the deck, the reclining seat area is divided into two sections with 90 first class seats and 118 second class seats.

### **Speed a major plus**

Compared with its predecessor, the STENA CHALLENGER, the new vessel offers both

advantages and disadvantages. The major plus factor for Stena is the extra four knots speed which will reduce the sailing time and be competitive with Irish Ferries parallel service with the new ULYSSES.

Stena has also found that it has been very limited with freight capacity on peak sailings and will therefore welcome the extra lane metres.

On the other hand, the lack of a bow door requires driver accompanied vehicles to turn within the vessel or reverse in which adds to the turnaround time. Double level loading is not possible even though the port of Dublin has been building a new linkspan for Stena with that capability. ■