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August 2004

CLASSIC *FAST* FERRIES



Soulful 70s and 80s catamarans

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Familiar faces with changed looks in Sicilian waters



There has been some reshuffle on the fast ferry scene in southern Italy in recent months. The most significant development is the acquisition in June by Ustica Lines of the routes and vessels previously operated by SNAV Sicilia.

The deal involves all of SNAV's routes to/from Sicily and a total of 8 hydrofoils and catamarans. Five of these are RHS 160F hydrofoils delivered by Rodriquez to Aliscafi

SNAV during 1990–92. The remainder are one Fjellstrand 38.8m and two Kværner Fjellstrand FlyingCat 40m catamarans built in Norway for other customers in 1991 and 1992 and acquired by SNAV between 1996 and 2002.

At this point the vessels are in various stages of transition from SNAV to Ustica Lines identity. All now sport the company logo of Ustica Lines but, for the time being at least, continue to

& DEVELOPMENTS

TOP+RIGHT:
Alijumbo Messina is one of five RHS 160F hydrofoils taken over by Ustica Lines from SNAV Sicilia. The last of the type to be completed by Rodriquez, the vessel entered service with SNAV twelve years ago /ENZO ANNUARIO photo, both



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NEWS AND ARTICLES ABOUT CIVIL HYDROFOILS, HOVERCRAFT & CATAMARANS ■

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COVER PHOTO: A HYDROFOIL IN TRANSITION – RHS 160F ALIJUMBO MESSINA SPORTING BOTH SNAV AND USTICA LINES COMPANY LOGOS THIS SUMMER / ENZO ANNUARIO photo

carry their original SNAV names – and in some cases also the SNAV logo. At least two of the catamarans have had the Ustica Lines corporate colors of yellow and light blue applied to them. Since right now is the tourist high season and vessels are needed in service, repainting of the rest of the newly acquired craft presumably will be carried out over the winter months.

Before these acquisitions, the Ustica Lines fleet comprised eighth Rodriguez hydrofoils; four Foilmasters, two RHS 160Fs and two RHS 160s, four FlyingCat 40m catamarans and a single WaveMaster International 38m monohull. The company's sole RHS 140, *Spargi*, which was also the first hydrofoil it purchased, was sold to Alimare, the newly established hydrofoil operator based in Reggio on mainland Italy (see reports in previous issues), earlier this year. One of the RHS 160s, *Calarossa*, is currently leased, also to Alimare, and operated on routes linking Reggio Airport and Sicily and the Eolian Islands, and two of the FlyingCats are in service in Gran Canaria with associate company Garajonay Exprés.

Ustica Lines was formed eleven years ago, the first service was operated in 1994, using a leased former Australian RHS 160F, and now, ten years on, the company has twenty-one fast ferries at its disposal which it currently operates on a vast number of routes, both seasonal and year-round, in and around Sicily as well as Spain.

SNAV goes back to the mid-1950s when it was established by Cantiere Navale Leopoldo Rodriguez as the yards' operating company. The alliance with Rodriguez came to a halt in 1995, and in more recent years SNAV slowly but surely has reduced its hydrofoil fleet and gone for catamarans instead. Twelve passenger-only catamarans of various designs from builders in Norway, Sweden and Australia and »



A B O V E : *Kværner Fjellstrand FlyingCat 40m catamaran SNAV Aldebaran in Ustica Lines colors alongside in Lipari last month ...*

B E L O W : *...and the sole Fjellstrand 38.8m catamaran so far in the Ustica Lines fleet SNAV Aquarius in Messina. Visible behind, apart from Tiziano, is the top of one of the new Foilmasters for Siremar currently nearing completion at the Rodriguez yard*
/ ENZO ANNUARIO photo, both



One vessel which has gone the other way, so to speak, is Ustica Lines' RHS 160 Calarossa which is being leased by the company to newly established operator Alimare this summer
/ ENZO ANNUARIO photo

*RHS 160Fs Moretto Primo and Citti Ships, seen here approaching and reversing from the berth in Lipari last October, are owned by Ustica Lines since June this year
/ NICK PATRICK photo*



previously operated in Europe, Canada and the former USSR thus have been acquired from other operators since 1996.

After the recent selling off of its Sicilian business, SNAV presently concentrates its assets in the Gulf of Naples and the Adriatic where several routes between Italy and Croatia, both established and new ones, are being operated this summer. Contrary to Ustica Lines, SNAV also operates three car-carrying fast ferries, two of which in cooperation with Sea Containers on cross-Adriatic routes to Croatia. ■

*This summer's network of routes in southern Italy is the most extensive so far operated by Ustica Lines
/ USTICA LINES image*



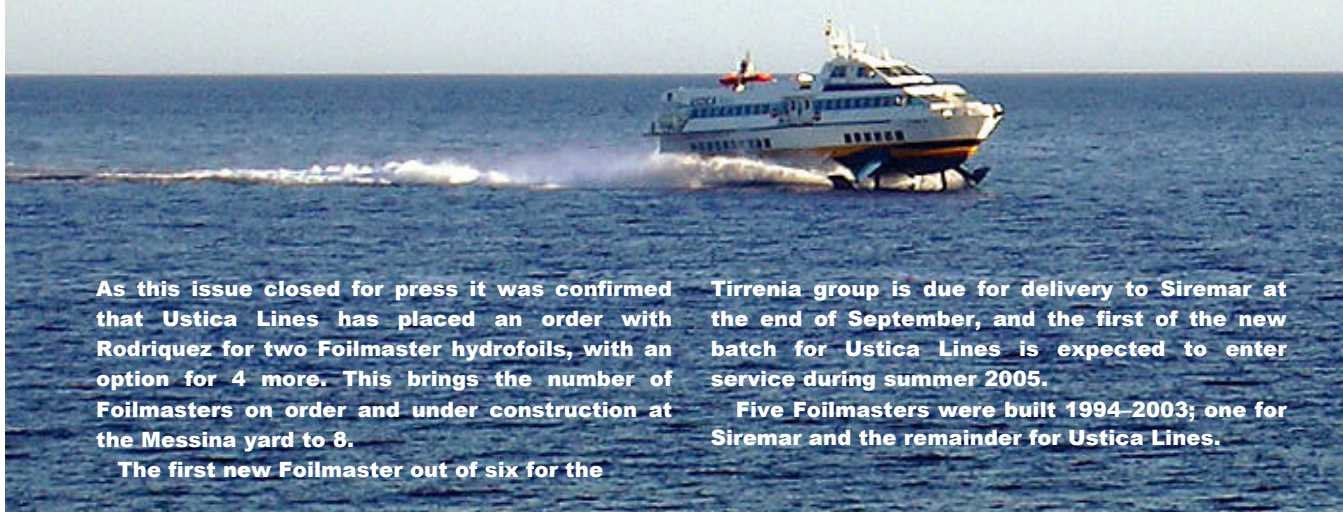
Ustica Lines orders two more Foilmasters

As this issue closed for press it was confirmed that Ustica Lines has placed an order with Rodriguez for two Foilmaster hydrofoils, with an option for 4 more. This brings the number of Foilmasters on order and under construction at the Messina yard to 8.

The first new Foilmaster out of six for the

Tirrenia group is due for delivery to Siremar at the end of September, and the first of the new batch for Ustica Lines is expected to enter service during summer 2005.

Five Foilmasters were built 1994-2003; one for Siremar and the remainder for Ustica Lines.



DANIELE ALLETTO photo

Hydrocruisers arrive in south France

Two Hydrocruiser foil assisted catamarans built by VT Shipbuilders arrived in Nice in the south of France in June. The vessels, *HC Milancia* and *HC Olivia*, are two of a trio launched last year by the Southampton yard and expected to enter service this summer with Rapid Explorer along the Côte d'Azur to Monaco, Cannes and St. Tropez. As of yet a provisional timetable, the first service will leave Nice for Monaco at 08:00, then travel south to Cannes and St. Tropez before returning to Nice where it arrives at 12:20. A second service, this time southbound, departs Nice at 12:35.

The composite hull/aluminum super-structure Hydrocruiser has a length overall



of 27m and beam of 9m and carries up to 150 passengers and four crew at a service speed of 35 knots. It was developed from the prototype Teknicraft Design 22.5m 95-seat *Sea Shuttle 1* launched by MK International in South Africa in 1994. Having since been operated in six very different locations in Europe, this is now in the Dutch Antilles along with the first 27m Hydrocruiser completed, *HC Katia*, operating out of St. Maarten to St. Barths and Anguila. ■

TOP + LEFT : Hydrocruisers *HC Milancia* and *HC Olivia* in Nice and being prepared for shipment at Southampton in June / HYDROCRUISER photo, both



Tru Blu

Correcting the info given in the caption on page 8 in the July CFF, the photo did not show RHS 160F Fast Blu but RHS 150F Salina delivered by Rodriguez to Aliscafi SNAV in 1990. The text as such was correct though, and here's the true Fast Blu, captured last October in Lipari by Nick Patrick.

This hydrofoil was not part of the recent Ustica Lines take-over of SNAV's Sicilian business reported on page 2, and remains with SNAV in the Gulf of Naples.



NICK PATRICK photo



Linda Line sells foil assisted catamaran

Estonian operator Linda Line has sold its only two year old Superfoil-40 foil assisted catamaran *Linda Express* to a company in China.

The 284-seat 50+ knot catamaran left Tallinn as deck cargo on the Schiffahrts-kontor Altes Land container ship *Wiebke* on July 5 with destination Rotterdam where it was reloaded onto another SAL ship, *Wilma*, on July 17. The transport is due to arrive in Shanghai sometime between August 23–29, weather permitting

The sole of the type built, the Superfoil

was launched by Almaz Marine in St. Petersburg in April 2002 and entered service on Linda Line's seasonal Tallinn–Helsinki route in July. However, teething troubles had the craft grounded for most of the 2002 season.

The company continues to operate its pair of 182–192-seat Olympia hydrofoils built in the Ukraine in 1993 and 1994, *Laura* and *Jaanika*, with departures from each port every other hour throughout the day between 08:00 and 22:00. ■

ABOVE: Former Estonian foil assisted catamaran *Linda Express* about to be reloaded at Rotterdam on July 17 /ROB DE VISSER photo

RIGHT: The vessel passing through the Øresund en route from Tallinn to Rotterdam on July 6 /GÖRAN STENBERG photo



Don't miss out on our **CFF 8/October 2003** 24-page Theme Issue!

All you always wanted to know about
All of Norway's hydrofoils
www.classicfastferries.com

While we wait for the sequel to our theme issue about all of Norway's hydrofoils (*CFF 8/October 2003*) – here are some evocative up-to-the-minute accounts of vessels in the Bergen area in days gone by. Not that the early 80s were really that long ago when you think about it, and when considering the speed with which the first few years of the 2000s seem to have raced by.

Still, it's twenty plus years ago, and a lot has changed.

Although vehicle fast ferries of any notable size are yet to enter service on domestic Norwegian routes (some combined passenger/cargo vessels able to carry one or more cars on deck do exist) and the catamarans currently in service around Bergen are still life-size and nicely designed for the most part, today's fast ferry scene and individual vessels seem to lack that certain soul of the designs of the 80s and earlier.

THE GOLDEN 80s



OF SOULFUL CATAMARANS IN BERGEN

Of course, this is all in the eye of the beholder, and the same eyes may see things differently in another twenty or so years from now when these vessels too are gone!

Beautifully situated on the south-west coast of Norway surrounded by fiords, mountains and islands and with direct access to the North Sea and beyond, Bergen goes back to 1070. In the Middle Ages it was the largest town in all of the Nordic countries and by the fourteenth century Bergen had become an important commerce centre and trade port within the Hansa community. Its importance and economic growth have continued to this day, to a great extent thanks to the North Sea oil industry. Still, Bergen has been wise (and fortunate) enough to preserve and treasure its past and the city is full of historical and cultural buildings and thus today is on UNESCO's World Heritage list. The first fast ferry in scheduled service, a Rodriguez-built Supramar PT.50 hydrofoil, appeared in Bergen in July 1960, however owned and operated by a Stavanger based company, and these days in the region of fifteen fast ferries are to be found in the area.

ABOVE: Westamran 86 Tjelden in the Byfjord, Bergen in June 1981 / OLE KRISTIAN KNUTSEN photo



Westamaran 86 *Tedno* was delivered by Westermoen Hydrofoil to Hardanger Sunnhordlandske D/S on June 15, 1973. While the first catamaran ordered by HSD, it was not its first fast ferry as three hydrofoils had entered service with the Bergen based operator since 1961. In 1992 HSD took delivery of a new *Tedno* and the W86 was renamed *Tedno 1*. Four years on the interior was extensively rebuilt and the Westamaran entered service as *Hardangerfjord* on excursion trips in the namesake fjord. It was sold to another Norwegian company in 1998, and two years later was exported to Iceland and renamed *Ísafold*. Having changed hands once more, the catamaran was sold in Senegal in June last year. In this view *Tedno* is seen departing Bergen in spring 1980.



Another HSD profile was *Sunnhordland*. Of the marginally larger W95 type, it entered service in May 1975. Except for a short spell with Danish operator Bornholmer Pilen, to which it was leased in 1989, this W95 was far less of a rolling stone than *Tedno* and stayed with HSD for twenty-four years before being acquired in 1999 by a company in Gibraltar, Sun Costa Line. Renamed *Mons Calpe*, it was put into service between The Rock and Tangier, Morocco where it seems to have been less successful. Below *Sunnhordland* is approaching Bergen in May 1981.



ALL PHOTOS IN ARTICLE BY OLE KRISTIAN KNUTSEN



W95 *Sleipner* and PT.50 hydrofoil *Teisten* alongside at Bergen on a spring day in 1981.

The 180-seat *Sleipner*, along with twin vessel *Vingtor*, entered service on the Stavanger–Bergen Flagggruten service in 1974, replacing a pair of PT.50s carrying the same names. In late 1987 it was renamed *Tranen* pending the delivery of a new *Sleipner* (which failed to materialize in the first instance), and two years later sold in Spain to Flebasa Lines and introduced between mainland Spain and the Balearic Islands as *Rápido de Formentera*.

PT.50 *Teisten* was delivered by Rodriguez to HSD in 1970, and after having changed hands a couple of times in 1987/88 returned to Italy in late 1988 having been acquired by Aliscafi SNAV. Renamed *Freccia di Casamicciola*, it stayed with SNAV until withdrawn from service in the late 1990s

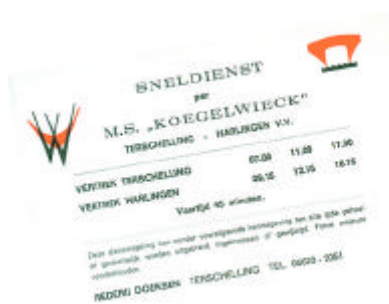


Certainly a magnificent shot of a W86 at speed.

Fjordglytt was the first Westambran completed by Westermoen and delivered to Fylkesbaatane i Sogn og Fjordane on June 1, 1971. It remained with FSF for almost two-and-a-half decades before being sold to Swedish tour and commuter operator Koster Marin in fall 1995. Extensively rebuilt inside out and renamed *Kosterfjord*, the former W86 entered service, as a medium-speed vessel, on the north-west coast of Sweden in spring 1997 where it is still to be found.



ALL PHOTOS IN ARTICLE BY OLE KRISTIAN KNUTSEN



Early Dutch Westamaran



ABOVE:
W86 Koegelwieck
as delivered in
1973. This was
Westermoen's first
W86 export order
/ REDERIJ DOEKSEN
photo

LONG BEFORE the present day Voskhods of Connexxion Fast Flying Ferries on the Velsen–Amsterdam route and Fast Ferry's catamarans in Rotterdam, a Hovermarine HM.2 sidewall air cushion vehicle and Westamaran 86 catamaran entered service in the Netherlands.

The 65-seat 35-knot HM.2 arrived in the country in the summer of 1969. However, being a relatively unproven design – the HM.2 prototype had been completed only the year before – teething troubles occurred and the service came to a premature termination.

Then the W86 had a much longer life.

REDERIJ DOEKSEN, based in the Dutch Frisian island of Terschelling, entered the passenger ship business in 1923 across the Waddenzee linking Terschelling and Vlieland and the mainland port of

Harlingen. The failed HM.2 project in 1969 did not cause any disappointment in the corridors of Doeksen as the company had not taken part in it. Still, this attempt by others sounded a bell and prompted the management to examine closer whether a fast ferry should be added to the fleet.

With the HM.2 now out in the cold, at least until the design would prove itself, focus was set on hydrofoils and fully amphibious hovercraft. That was until the company learnt about a new design which had been developed in Norway by Westermoen Hydrofoil – the light-weight asymmetrical hulled Westamaran, the first of which had been completed by the yard in the summer of 1971.

When about a year later it came to the attention of Doeksen that a rival company had advanced plans of introducing hydrofoils across the Waddenzee, action was taken and following closer studies on location in Norway an order for a W86 was placed with Westermoen in October 1972.

THE NEW CATAMARAN, the first, and, as it would prove, last Westamaran to be delivered to a Dutch operator, *Koegelwieck*, was handed over to Doeksen at Mandal on September 25, 1973. It arrived in Terschelling a few days later and entered service in October. With a service speed of around 30 knots, the trip time between Terschelling and Harlingen was now reduced to 45 minutes. However, contrary to the conventional ferries, *Koegelwieck* did not call at the neighboring island of Vlieland.



With the sky and clouds to match, Koegelwieck shows off its new striking paint scheme in 1988
/REDERIJ DOEKSEN photo

In the first few months of operation four round trips were scheduled on weekdays between 07:00 and 19:15, on Sundays two return journeys were operated. Later in 1974, as more experience had been gained as to the actual travel pattern on the catamaran, the timetable was adjusted accordingly so that three services were operated each way on all days of the week. Fitted out for 170 passengers, the load factor per crossing in the early years was 35–41%.

YEARS LATER, in 1988, as part of a new corporate image, *Koegelwieck* received a new striking paint scheme of white and blue, with stripes that continued across the hulls and superstructure/wheel house. But at the same time Doeksen felt the time had come to replace the fifteen-year old Westamaran with a somewhat larger and more cost-effective fast ferry.

In fact, already five years earlier, in 1983, replacement discussions had surfaced when a British Hovercraft Corporation AP 1–88 hovercraft visited the West Frisian Islands as part of a promotional tour of Continental Europe. While an interesting craft in many aspects, it was felt however that the AP 1–88 was not suitable for the Waddenzee service.

After having thoroughly studied what else was being offered on the fast ferry market, in October 1989 Doeksen was ready to place an order for a second catamaran. As with the W86 in 1972, this, too, was of a new design, developed by another Norwegian yard, Harding Verft.

With the arrival in June 1990 of the new 250-seat *Stuifdijk* Vlieland, too, got a fast ferry connection with the mainland. But not for very long as in August the vessel hit some mud and

grounded off Vlieland. The incident not only prolonged the life for the W86 with Doeksen, but also gave rise to discussions whether to refit *Stuifdijk* with waterjets in place of its conventional propulsion. Something the company had decided against when ordering the catamaran. Since this would be quite costly, it was later decided to order a new and larger still catamaran from Harding and sell *Stuifdijk*. This newbuilding was given the name of the W86, which was renamed *Stortemelk* in June 1992 and put on the market

After twenty-one years with Doeksen the former *Koegelwieck* was finally sold in 1994 in Tanzania to Azam Marine and, renamed *Kilimanjaro*, entered service between the island of Zanzibar and Dar Es Salaam. ■

The W86 entered service between Dar Es Salaam and Zanzibar as Kilimanjaro in 1994. The craft visible at right is the former RHS 160F hydrofoil Condor 7, originally delivered to Channel Islands operator Condor and sold in Tanzania, also in 1994
/REDERIJ DOEKSEN photo





CLASSIC SHOT

Frog's view of the official launching of Westamaran 86 catamaran Koegelwieck for Dutch operator Rederij Doeksen at the Westermoen Hydrofoil yard at Mandal, Norway in September 1973

/ WESTERMOEN HYDROFOIL photo

The Westamaran catamarans became very popular with Norwegian operators in the 1970s and 80s and were everyday stuff in the fjords and along the country's west coast. But looking back, these were – and still is as several remain in service, particularly outside Norway – rather soulful vessels and in fact looking far less alike than one might think or remember.

On page 7–9 we show but a few of the Norwegian W86s and W95s and on page 10–11 is the story of the first unit to be exported, in 1973.