



## THERE HAVE BEEN

some visual changes on the fast ferry scene in Sicily in recent months.

In April 2016 Ustica Lines acquired Siremar's hydrofoil fleet consisting of a pair of RHS 160Fs and seven Foilmasters. That same month Ustica Lines changed its name to Liberty Lines and the adoption of the new company name started immediately, including the former Siremar vessels.

Coinciding with this, a completely new livery was revealed on *Ammari*, the second Admiral 250 hydrofoil built by then Ustica Lines' own shipyard in Trapani in 2015. Since April last year, the majority of Liberty Lines' thirty-three catamarans, monohulls and hydrofoils, including the Siremar ones, have received the striking new paint scheme of mainly dark blue and white with diagonal stripes in light blue and yellow. The rather extensive work is being carried out by Liberty itself in Trapani

**Above :** *Antioco* is one of three former Siremar Foilmasters currently sitting in Trapani awaiting the new Liberty Lines livery / ETTORE MORACE photo

**Below :** *RHS 160F Fiametta M* sporting the new Liberty Lines paint scheme / VINCENZO ANNUARIO photo





*Mirella Morace is one of twelve Foilmasters owned by Liberty Lines.  
/ VINCENZO ANNUARIO photo*



and in the Rodriguez shipyard, now part of the Intermarine group, in Messina.

At this writing there are three former Siremar Foilmasters in the Trapani yard, *Antioco*, *Atanis* and *Eraclide*, still in the classic red and white colours awaiting the new paint scheme to be applied. Obviously, this is not done in a jiffy but may take up to a little less than three weeks per vessel.

Of the two RHS 160F hydrofoils acquired from Siremar, *Mantegna* sports the new livery since some time whereas *Masaccio* was written off following an incident in Stromboli in June last year. A third RHS 160F, *Fabricia*, was not part of the Siremar take-over and currently sits on dry land in Napoli still wearing Siremar colours. Once the three former Siremar Foilmasters have been repainted, this is the sole active hydrofoil in Italy carrying red as Caremar in Napoli switched to blue some time ago.

However, the RHS 160F most likely will not stay red and white for very much longer, assuming that it will re-enter service with a yet to be disclosed operator in the Bay of Naples or elsewhere in a not too distant future.

## EXPANSION

This is the second acquisition by Ustica/Liberty Lines of part of another operator's fleet and business. In June 2004 the ever expanding company acquired the routes and vessels operated by SNAV in Sicily. In this deal were five RHS 160F hydrofoils, two Kværner Fjellstrand FlyingCat 40m catamarans and one Fjellstrand 38.8m catamaran.

Siremar, or Sicilia Regionale Marittima, introduced its first hydrofoil, a PT.50 originally delivered to a Yugoslavian customer in 1961, in Sicily in 1967. Up until the acquisition by Ustica Lines of Siremar's hydrofoils and the routes these served, all major Supramar and Rodriguez designs were introduced; PT.20, PT.50, RHS 140, RHS 160, RHS 160F and Foilmaster. Siremar continues to exist but no longer operates any hydrofoils. **CFF**

**Below :** *Former Siremar Foilmaster Eschilo displaying the new Liberty Lines paint scheme at Rodriguez earlier this month / VINCENZO ANNUARIO photo*





The days of the classic red, white and blue on hydrofoils in Italy are numbered.  
Sitting on the premises of Liberty Lines in Trapani earlier this week are former Siremar Foilmasters *Atanis* and *Antioco*  
/ ETTORE MORACE photo



RHS 160F *Fiametta M* in the Strait of Messina in March this year  
/ VINCENZO ANNUARIO photo







Kværner Fjellstrand FlyingCat 40m catamaran *Federica M* passing by the Rodriquez shipyard in Messina earlier this month.

Among other vessels in the shipyard are the pair of Rodriquez experimental fully submerged hydrofoils *Hydrofoil 2* (in the water on the left) and *Hydrofoil 1* (next to the large building on the right), Foilmasters *Eschilo* and *Eduardo M* in the new Liberty Lines livery and original Ustica Lines colours respectively, Rodriquez

Monostab monohull *Princess of Dubrovnik* and finally – and unusually at

Rodriquez – a Brødrene AA Cirrus 120P surface effect ship, *Zenit*

— / VINCENZO ANNUARIO photo