

A dynamic partnership

Rebecca Gibson speaks to Shipyard De Hoop's owner and CEO Patrick Janssens about the yard's partnership with Lüftner Cruises and work on Amadeus Silver II

When Lüftner Cruises decided to commission the 135m Amadeus Silver II, Netherlands-based Shipyard De Hoop was the obvious choice of contractor. Not only did De Hoop construct the newbuild's sister ship Amadeus Silver in 2013-2014, the yard has been the operator's trusted construction partner for many years.

"Amadeus Silver is the eleventh river cruise ship we've constructed for Lüftner, which shows that the company values our ability to create ships with innovative onboard features and cost-effective operating systems," explains Janssens.

Working on a newbuild almost every year since the beginning of their partnership, De Hoop and Lüftner have conducted joint research into increasing fuel efficiency, reducing onboard vibrations and noise, and developing an onboard climate control system.

Amadeus Silver II will benefit from this technology, says Janssens. "Like other Lüftner ships, the newbuild will also have a shallow draft and large ballast capacity, enabling her to sail when river levels are low, or pass under bridges when the water is high."

The final stages of interior fit-out for any newbuild are a demanding period and this was certainly the case with Amadeus Silver II during the run-up to her April launch. "We have a fully assembled ship fitted with engines, piping and cabling systems, and other large onboard machinery on our slipway," says Janssens. "After levelling the floors and fitting the interior walls, our team will make the final interior adjustments to prepare the vessel for her Amsterdam debut."

Designed with the same dimensions, equipment and propulsion systems as Amadeus Silver, the newbuild also features many familiar public spaces. These include the open-air River Terrace lounge, the Panorama restaurant, Café Vienna, a fitness studio and more. Noting that the décor will be updated on Amadeus Silver II, Janssens adds that the guest accommodation area has also been reconfigured.

"Lüftner wanted to offer guests more space, so we reduced the total number of guest rooms from 90 to 84," explains Janssens. "We've also developed various solutions to ensure that the piping, cabling and machinery, which usually takes up a lot of space, is contained behind interior walls, ceilings and flooring."

Each of the ship's 12 larger Amadeus Suites will feature a separate lounge area, an expanded walk-in closet, a balcony with sliding doors and a more spacious bathroom. The 72 standard cabins will have walk-in closets and larger shower units.

"We researched how we can use more innovative materials to ensure Amadeus Silver II is aesthetically pleasing and comfortable for passengers, yet remains cost-effective to build," says Janssens. "We've enjoyed working on her and she will be a joy to sail on."

In an industry where customer demand for high quality and the growing number of regulations is increasing competition between shipyards, Janssens remains confident that De Hoop will maintain its partnership with Lüftner.

"Considering how well our relationship has evolved over the years, I'm certain that we'll continue to work with Lüftner," says Janssens. "Together we have constructed a fleet of award-winning vessels and made some innovative breakthroughs, so I have no doubt that we'll replicate this success in future."

While Lüftner is yet to commission another newbuild, Janssens and the De Hoop team will be kept busy by various projects this year.

"Not only will we be completing Amadeus Silver II, we will be making adjustments to Emerald Waterways' Emerald Star and Emerald Sky and more," concludes Janssens. "We have always been a very active shipyard and 2015 will be no different." **C&F**



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