

Shipyard de Hoop



been involved in the inland as well as the offshore industry. Over the last few years there were a lot of projects and enquiries, but these queries did not materialise due to this sector being hit very hard by the credit crunch. Offshore ship owners had difficulty getting finance for their vessels even though there were interesting projects going on. The sector still has strong demand but financial issues, even with major oil companies, have caused projects to stall."

Fierce competition between shipyards developed due to these changes in the industry and shipbuilders could no longer repeat copies of their previous works, instead having to come up with bold and innovative new designs that can offer solutions to the economic, environmental and comfort demands of its customers, as Patrick explains: "In general terms there has been a war in shipbuilding and to survive you need to be flexible in your building of high-spec ships with the lowest possible price, while keeping the process as simple as possible and highly economic. For example, due to competition, we recently moved from conventional ship lighting to only LED lights; comfort demands are also increasing, with very strict rules being enforced for noise and vibration as well as on-board entertainment systems and internet connections in all cabins. It is these kinds of innovations that lead to competition in the industry."

Flexibility and knowledge of local rules and regulations is key when working for industries that have a global presence in a world that is changing rapidly. "We build the inland cruise vessels mainly for the European sector, with a large amount of these ships sailing from Amsterdam to the Black Sea and back. Right now we are building ships in both yards, with one yard focusing on vessels for a client in a country with very strict regulations related to



Management de Hoop

environmental protection, so it is challenging at times," says Patrick.

A major project for the company is the building of two ships for Riva Waterways, the new brand under the Australian company Scenic Tours. The first vessel on order, due for delivery in the first half of 2014, is a 110 metre River Cruise Vessel, for which de Hoop is producing a completely new design in the style of the five-star Scenic Tours fleet. Boasting luxury features, it will set a new standard on the river Seine. "Traditionally it was American cruising companies coming into Europe but there has recently been an influx of Australian clients entering these waters," says

Patrick. "On top of the two boats we are building for Scenic Tours, we were also recently awarded a new contract for a ship in the North Sea, which will operate a lot in the offshore renewable energy market for windmill installations and offshore installations. For this project we have come up with a completely new design and have developed a completely new standard for the offshore sector in relation to the comforts of engineers and higher skilled personnel who will be spending more time offshore. It is a new market, but we have the advantage of our expertise in the cruise industry to give our clients what they want."

Over the coming years, Shipyard de Hoop aims to continue its reign as one of the leading yards in Europe for constructing small cruise ships; it will also continue to focus on developing innovative new solutions for the offshore sector. Furthermore, the company is keen to become more of a one-stop-shop for its clients through its ship repair service and soon-to-be-open financing department. "Our finance department will allow us to help ship owners get finance for renewable projects, which will help our clients adapt in a market that banks are moving away from," says Patrick. "Because we are selective and have long-term relationships with our clients, we will not market this to a wide variety of customers. Our focus is not on growth, but on consolidation, continuity and quality." ❖

### Shipyard de Hoop

[www.dehoop.net](http://www.dehoop.net)

- Designer and builder since 1989
- Completed a large investment programme
- Currently building three ships for an Australian client



# Managing growth

*Under the terms of the agreement, Vela will transfer to Bahri the full ownership of its entire fleet of vessels, which consists of 14 very large crude carriers (VLCCs), a floating storage VLCC, one Aframax tanker and four product tankers*

**B**ahri (formerly known as The National Shipping Company of Saudi Arabia or NSCSA) is today one of the biggest shipping companies in the world and occupies a pre-eminent position among its industry peers at national, regional and international levels in all sectors of its business.

Since Bahri last appeared in *Shipping and Marine*, several exciting developments have occurred, not least of which was the announcement in November 2012 that Bahri, the Saudi Arabian Oil Company (Saudi Aramco) and Vela International Marine Limited (Vela - a wholly owned subsidiary of Saudi Aramco) have executed definitive and legally binding agreements to merge the fleet and operations of Vela and Bahri.

Under the terms of the agreement, Vela will transfer to Bahri the full ownership of its entire fleet of vessels, which consists of 14 very large crude carriers (VLCCs), a floating storage VLCC,

one Aframax tanker and four product tankers. In addition, Vela's vessel-based personnel and a number of shore-based personnel will transfer to Bahri. Post-transaction, the shipping businesses of Vela will be integrated within Bahri's corporate structure.

Pursuant to the terms of a long-term shipping contract, which has an initial term of ten years, Bahri will become the exclusive provider of VLCC crude oil shipping services to Saudi Aramco for crude oil sold by Saudi Aramco on a delivered basis. Bahri intends to satisfy Saudi Aramco's annual VLCC transportation requirements relating to crude oil sold on a delivered basis, which Bahri estimates to be around 50 VLCCs. This will require employing, following completion of the transaction, 31 VLCCs owned by Bahri and 19 VLCCs chartered-in. Saudi Aramco will continue to manage all crude oil marketing and sales directly with its customers, and Bahri will provide reliable transportation services to Saudi Aramco on competitive terms. Furthermore, the two