

# River wide, newbuilds high

Luxury river cruise newbuilds emerging from Shipyard De Hoop feature a specialist design for the Seine estuary and a multifunctional swimming pool concept, says owner and CEO Patrick Janssens

**S**hipyard De Hoop is a Dutch designer and builder of custom-built vessels. The yard has four river cruise vessels on order, three for this year and one for 2015.

Two of the river cruise vessels nearing completion at the Lobith yard in the first quarter of 2014 are luxury vessels for Australian operator Emerald Waterways, formed in 2013. The two 135m, 182-passenger ships, Emerald Star and Emerald Sky, will cruise in Europe from spring this year.

Both ships will incorporate a number of innovative conceptual twists. "There are some very special design features in the vessels, such as a swimming-pool area that can be converted into a cinema," says Janssens. The upmarket design will debut a revolutionary mid-level 6x4m pool with a bar, located in a multifunctional area at the rear of the ship. By night this area will convert to a cinema with seating for over 30 people. Each of the ships will feature 91 cabins and will be outfitted with large luxury suites, most of which include a balcony.

The third river cruise vessel completed by de Hoop in the first few months of 2014 is Scenic Gem, a 110m ship that will be the latest addition to the five-star fleet of the Scenic Tours brand.

Scenic Gem will have many luxury features and is expected to set a new standard for cruising on the river Seine. A specialised design was required due to the particular demands of the estuary area which will form part of the new vessel's itinerary, explains Janssens. "For the last part of the Seine up to Honfleur, the river becomes very wide and is almost open sea. For this part, the ship has to comply with

additional rules. It will have more strength to take on larger waves, and more safety devices such as life rafts."

After the three luxury vessels have left the yard, there won't be much opportunity to rest before work begins on the next project. Janssens says: "We have just contracted a new 135m river cruise vessel for Lüftner Reisen (for delivery in 2015). This is the eleventh vessel that they have ordered from us."

De Hoop is currently investing in research to build ships at the highest levels of comfort, says Janssens. "We have been doing research in construction to prevent vibrations and in the area of noise absorption and noise insulation. Also we have developed a unique climate control system, whereby the air flows at low speed through the corridors and other areas, instead of using noisy, unhygienic and

**"We've developed a unique climate control system with air flowing at low speed through the corridors"**

intrusive ducts." In addition, the company is upgrading its carpentry workshop with computer guided machinery to fulfil custom designed furniture orders (such as bars, reception desks, buffets and other interior pieces) for clients. **C&F**



Emerald Waterways' two new river cruise ships feature a swimming pool that converts to a cinema area; Emerald Star and Emerald Sky are the first ships in the luxury Emerald Waterways fleet