



In May 2010, Carnival Corporation & plc announced the firm order for two prototype newbuildings for its Princess Cruises brand, from Italian shipbuilder Fincantieri. The letter of intent had been signed in February of that year. With an estimated gross tonnage (gt) of 141,000, the vessels were the largest to be built by Fincantieri and some 25% larger, in terms of gross tonnage, than the previously largest vessel in the Princess Cruises fleet. The all-in-cost per lower bed quoted, €155,000, indicate a price tag per ship of some €560 million (\$770 million).

The vessel is the third in the history of the company to be named ms Royal Princess. The first ms Royal Princess was built in Helsinki in 1984, and was the first cruise ship with all cabins facing the sea. The second ms Royal Princess was originally built as Renaissance Cruises ms R8. It became Swan Hellenic's ms Minerva II in 2003 and was subsequently renamed the Royal Princess in 2007 after a refit during a dry-docking in Gibraltar. This vessel left the Princess fleet in May 2011, when it joined P&O Cruises as the ms Adonia.

The ms Regal Princess, a forthcoming sister ship to the Royal Princess was launched on March 26 of this year. The eight months from launch to delivery it took for the Royal Princess indicates a delivery, in December of this year. The vessel is scheduled to enter service in 2014.

The Royal Princess is the 17th vessel in the Princess Cruises fleet. The current fleet consists of three Fincantieri-built Sun-class vessels registering 77,499 gt: The ms Sun Princess, ms Dawn Princess and ms Sea Princess originally built in 1995, 1997 and 1998 respectively. There are two 30,277 gt R-class vessels, the ms Ocean Princess and ms Pacific Princess, built

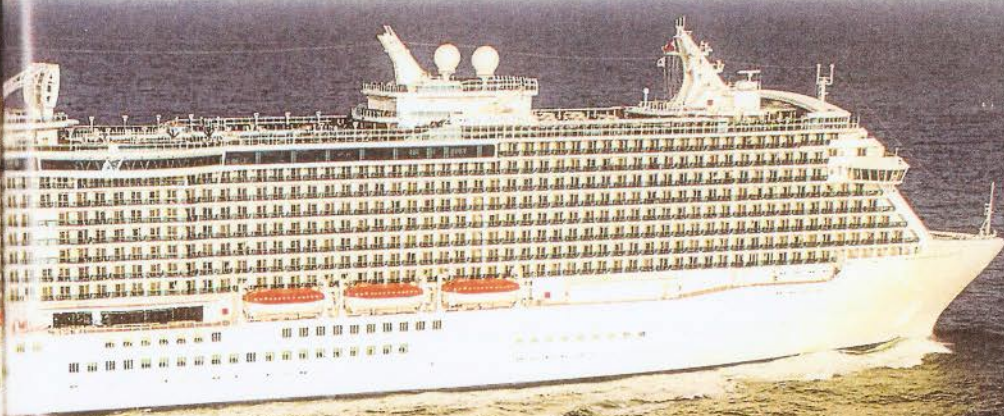
in France in 2002 and 2003. The Comrad-class, Panama 91,627-gt vessels the gt 208 Coral Princess and gt/ms Island Princess were built in France in 2002 and 2003. The biggest are the Grand class vessels, starting with ms Grand Princess, at 107,517 gt built by Fincantieri in 1998 and refurbished in 2011. The list continues with the ms Golden Princess (2001), ms Star Princess (2002), gt/ms Diamond Princess (2004), gt/ms Sapphire Princess (2004), ms Caribbean Princess (2004), ms Crown Princess (2006), ms Emerald Princess (2007) and the latest newbuilding, ms Ruby Princess, (2008, 3,080 passengers). The Diamond Princess and Sapphire Princess, both at 115,875 gt, were built by Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, whereas the others were constructed by Fincantieri, ranging between 108,865 gr and 113,561 gt.



Stuart Hawkins

Princess Cruises

Cruise Business Review talked with Stuart Hawkins at Princess Cruises' site office at the Monfalcone shipyard. As Vice President of Newbuildings, he is in charge of all newbuilding projects for Princess Cruises. Hawkins began his career as a seafarer, at the age of 16. He was graduated as Naval Architect in Southampton in 1987. He described how he worked at the shipyard in Monfalcone with the classification of the original Crown Princess, built in 1990, at that time



working for Lloyd's Register. He began working for Princess Cruises in 2000 and came back to the yard soon thereafter to work on the Golden Princess, delivered in 2001, and the Star Princess, delivered in 2002, after which he has worked on the design and construction of all consecutive Princess Cruises ships built at the yard in Monfalcone, including the Ruby Princess, delivered in 2008.

The ship concept

As one might expect the activities at the yard and in the offices were active as they should be, ten days before the delivery of a huge cruise ship. Ship officers, crew, and owner's technical staff, including staff from Carnival's technical office in the UK overseeing the project, all had some work going on in that office. CBR got the first glimpse of some food courses being planned, in the form of black and white photo copies

laid out on a table. Most importantly, everyone seemed to be on a good mood, which told much about the current status of the newbuilding project.

We talked about the new vessel and its bigger size. "Princess Cruises is basically destination led. The destination is very important for us, and our most important market is the Mediterranean. So we designed the ship actually to be the biggest practical ship for the Mediterranean, to provide the speed that we wanted," Hawkins explained. "We also sell many outside cabins. People want balconies today. They don't so much want window cabins. Our brief was to maximize the number of balconies. That is what we have done. The ship has roughly 81% balcony cabins. On a ship of this size that is a very high proportion. You can look at Celebrity Solstice—they have in the region of 90% balcony cabins, but they do not have anything like the cabin density we have on our ship," he pointed out.

"This is really an achievement actually, to get 81%," he con-

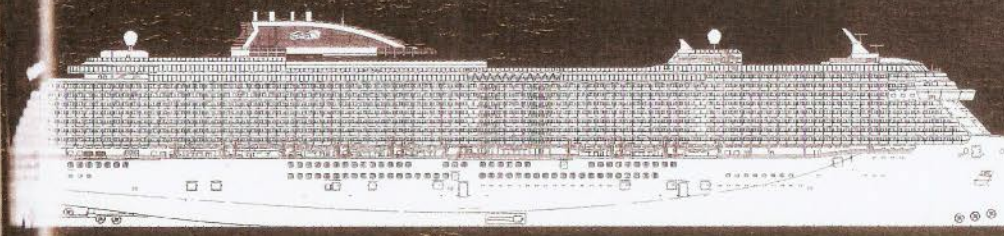


Photo credits: All photos: Fincantieri, Princess Cruises, Hamik, Significance and John Muench