

Investing in green ferries

Paul Melles talks to Jon Ingleton about Rederij Doeksen's order for two new eco-friendly 70-metre aluminium catamarans from Strategic Marine



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By [Jon Ingleton](#)

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Rederij Doeksen's two catamarans will certainly make waves when they debut in 2018. The vessels are also likely to enjoy significant acclaim, particularly for the residents of Harlingen, Terschelling and Vlieland in the Netherlands.

“We wanted to replace one old ferry and also increase capacity, specifically by offering more sailings in peak season to serve car passengers,” says Paul Melles, director of Rederij Doeksen, explaining the line's motivation for placing the order. “We already have catamarans in our fleet and we see that this hull form operates more efficiently in shallow water. But the ship will also get punched on the nose every now and then by unpredictable seas, so we had to have a vessel design that had inherent strength.”

To be built by Strategic Marine, Rederij Doeksen's eco-friendly ro-pax ferries have been designed by UK-based naval architects BMT Nigel Gee, while Netherlands-based company Vripack has created the concept and interior design scheme. Each vessel will have capacity for 600 passengers and 66 cars, and will mainly be powered by two single-fuel LNG engines from MTU. The engines will drive azimuth thrusters – which are manufactured by Veth Propulsion – each with fixed pitch contra rotating propellers through mechanical gearboxes.

Melles notes that although there are multiple options for both hull form and engine combinations, Rederij Doeksen's final vessel specifications were dictated by several factors. "Harlingen sits in the environmentally sensitive Wadden Sea, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and an area that also has draft limitations," he explains. "We wanted to move to a single fuel LNG vessel and luckily for us, MTU has developed a single fuel gas engine system that fits perfectly and combines well the vessel's efficient lightweight and shallow draft hull form."

The use of LNG fuels is becoming increasingly widespread in The Netherlands. "The Dutch government is very supportive of LNG as a transport fuel choice and there is an increasing network of trucks supplying LNG to the north part of the Netherlands which makes it possible for us," Melles comments. "Maintaining our sailing schedules is very important and so the trucking of fuel has to be reliable. So far, the preferred suppliers have never had one day when they've not been able to supply. With this reliability, plus some room for redundancy, we can be assured of continuous operations."

Strategic Marine recently confirmed that both vessels are on schedule for delivery in early 2018 in the Netherlands where they will undergo final commissioning and sea trials.

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