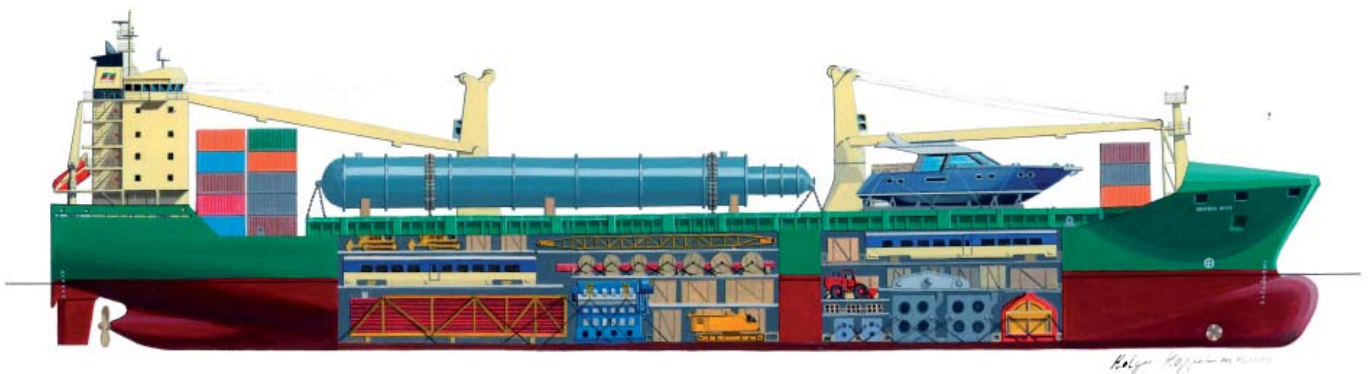




Press Information

Rickmers-Linie in brief



Hamburg-based Rickmers-Linie is one of the world's leading specialists in global sea transportation of project and heavy lift cargo. With almost 175 years to its name, the company now provides a world-wide network of liner services for the transportation of breakbulk, project and individual heavy lift pieces, such as transformers, generators, railway locomotives, pressure vessels and yachts. Rickmers currently owns or long-term charters 19 specialist vessels, spot charters others and has a series of ten multipurpose heavy-lift vessels on order. The company is also investing in part-ownership in several breakbulk terminals.

World on a string

In April 2003, the German liner company inaugurated its innovative Round-the-World Pearl String Service with its unique concept offering fortnightly sailings, fast transit times and reliable schedules. With the Pearl String Service, Rickmers has revolutionised the shipment of heavy-lift and project cargoes, enabling customers to plan their cargo flows more easily.

The base ports served every fortnight by the service are Hamburg, Antwerp, Genoa, Dubai, Singapore, Jakarta, Bangkok, Haiphong, Ho Chi Minh City, Kaohsiung, Shanghai, Dalian, Xingang, Qingdao, Masan, Kobe, Yokohama, New Orleans, Houston, Philadelphia and again Hamburg. In addition, Rickmers offers a link between Europe and Australia, the Pearl String ships connecting in Singapore or, alternatively Shanghai with sailings operated by AAL/PAS.

The Pearl String Service is served by nine new identical 30,000dwt purpose-built Superflex Heavy Multi-Purpose Container (MPC) ships, which were designed primarily with project cargo in mind and constructed in China between 2002 and 2004. In summer 2008, a tenth vessel, the 30,000dwt Rickmers Houston, is due to be phased into the Pearl String service. The vessel is a near sister of the Rickmers Hamburg class and thus fits well into the schedule. Due to the vessels' relatively high speed of 19.5 knots, the service can include selected ports on inducement without any adverse effect on the schedule.

The nine Superflex vessels are equipped with four large cranes, the two heaviest of which can be twinned for a lifting capacity of up to 640 tonnes. The Rickmers Houston is capable of lifting units up to 200 tonnes unitweight. The main hatches are 32m in length to allow long loads to be accommodated below deck. Meanwhile, adjustable tweendecks allow for variations in cargo height. Furthermore, a dehumidifying system controls the air in all holds, ensuring protection from condensation for all types of cargo.

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Middle East and Indian subcontinent

Following the success of the Pearl String Service, Rickmers applies the same winning formula to its Middle East/Indian subcontinent service. Since 2006 Rickmers has taken full control of the round-trip of the vessels employed in this trade and offers westbound sailings from India and the Middle East to Europe, in addition to its service from Europe to the Middle East and the Indian subcontinent, which was established in 1991. The company handles the transportation of non-containerised cargo and heavylifts from European ports to the Middle East and the Indian subcontinent with a regular liner service of four vessels, Rickmers Dubai, Rickmers Mumbai, Rickmers Chennai and Rickmers Doha. The first three ships are 22,000dwt in size and have 250 tonnes lifting capacity, whereas the 23,000dwt Rickmers Doha has a lifting capacity of 150 tonnes. In addition, the vessels of the Round-The-World Pearl String Service are regularly calling Dubai once per month, thus bringing their maximum heavy-lift capacity of up to 640 tonnes to the region.

Expanding fleet

In order to secure tonnage availability, and to manage the growing volumes of transported cargo, Rickmers has chosen to build ten new multipurpose heavy-lift vessels for delivery between December 2009 and April 2011.

Further, Rickmers-Linie will add a tenth vessel to the Round-The-World Pearl String service. For this purpose, the company has chartered a near sister of the Superflex Heavy MPC (Rickmers Hamburg Class), which has a lifting capacity of up to 200 tons combined. The Rickmers Houston as the vessel will be renamed upon entry into service in June/July 2008, has the same speed and thus fits perfectly into the schedule. Her entry into service will increase the frequency of the Pearl String from fortnightly departures to sailings every eleventh day.

Transpacific westbound service

Broadening the range of services Rickmers provides to its customers, the line has a chartering agreement with Eastern Car Liner Ltd, Tokyo. ECL provides a monthly liner service from Japan to the US East Coast and delivers its multipurpose vessels after the end of each eastbound voyage to Rickmers. These ships are used to provide Rickmers with a westbound service from the US East Coast and Gulf to Northern China, South Korea and Japan. The cooperation started in January 2006.

The four 11,000 dwt vessels involved in this cooperation, Fortune Epoch, Reina Rosa, Millennium Falcon and Gold Indus, come with heavylift gear capable of lifting loads of up to 120 tonnes. They were built between 1995 and 1998 and are equipped with RoRo ramps. Regular loading ports within Rickmers' westbound service are e.g. Philadelphia, Charleston and Houston, with discharge ports Busan, Xingang, Qingdao, Shanghai and Yokohama.

In addition, Rickmers-Linie employs two conbulk vessels, the Sophie Rickmers and the Marie Rickmers in this trade. These two vessels are in addition enhancing capacity on the eastbound voyage, thus supporting the Pearl String Service.

Subsidiaries in Japan and Korea

Reflecting the significance of the Japanese market, as well as Rickmers' long-term commitment and objectives of providing dedicated services to its Japanese customers, the company established its own subsidiary company, RICKMERS (JAPAN) Inc. in Tokyo on 1 June 2006. The subsidiary acts both as agent for Rickmers-Linie and as representation of Rickmers Group in Japan.

Korea is one of the most important markets for Rickmers-Linie in the Far East, thus the company decided to establish its own subsidiary company in Seoul. On 1 November 2007, Rickmers-Linie inaugurated its own subsidiary company in South Korea, RICKMERS (KOREA) Inc. The office has taken over the role as Rickmers-Linie's agent and moreover as the representation of Rickmers Group in Korea.

Co-ownership in breakbulk terminals

In order to secure berth availability to its ships and access to breakbulk handling facilities, Rickmers-Linie has started to invest in breakbulk terminals. Initially, shares have been acquired in Hamburg, Antwerp and Genoa. The participation in Antwerp is a joint venture with DP World and Conti-Lines, forming DP World Breakbulk. As a consequence, Rickmers-Linie vessels call at the terminal of DP World Breakbulk in Antwerp since the beginning of 2008.

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For further information about Rickmers-Linie and its services and for high-resolution photographs, please email us on marketing@rickmers.net or log on to our new website at www.rickmers-linie.com