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NO ORDINARY FLEET

From its inception 107 years ago, innovation has been a striking feature of Italian fleet owner Mediterranea di Navigazione. "We are a family company, and survive by giving excellent service and with everything 100% under our control," said CEO Paolo Cagnoni. Report from Colin Chinery.

Innovation can be work in progress: for Mediterranea di Navigazione spa, it's in the genes. Formed in 1910 as a passenger and cargo shipping line, its debut three-vessel fleet included the first to be diesel-powered in Europe, and almost certainly the world.

Fast forward a century and the launch of King Arthur gave the Ravenna family business the fastest ethylene carrier in the world, while the bitumen/asphalt/pitch carrier Black Shark was the first to transport cargoes from -103°C (ethylene) up to 250°C (pitch) – a 363°C difference.

"We are always looking to bring in innovation," said CEO Paolo Cagnoni. "It's a distinctive feature of our company."

Mediterranea di Navigazione focuses on highly specialised niche markets in the oil and gas sectors, with a diversified fleet of ten chemical carriers and oil tankers, with total capacities ranging from 5,000 to 45,000 DWT.

Impressive majors

Major clients – including Eni, Saras, Cepsa, Repsol, Lukoil, Shell, Total, Exxon and BP – are drawn across an operational area including the Mediterranean, Black Sea, North Sea, the Baltic, Atlantic, and South and Central Americas.

"Our vessels are built and operated according to the highest industry standards of quality to meet our customers' needs and offer safe transport solutions," said Mr Cagnoni. "We have never had a wish to develop a huge fleet, but rather keep everything under our control within the dimensions of a family company."

Concentrating chiefly on markets within the chemical trade, Mediterranea di Navigazione has developed designs specific to its segment clients. For instance, the company has built vessels with unique advanced technology, including an industry-leading 'green' tanker designed for speed and lower consumption.

"We don't go to the shipyards and have a vessel built on the yard's specification; we design our own vessels. We prefer to develop the design and optimise the body line to get the best results," said Mr Cagnoni, great grandson of the company founder, Andrea Cagnoni. ▀



"We are a family company with my son, Federico, and my daughter, Elena, also working in the company. We survive by giving excellent service and with everything 100% under our control. In this bad market especially, you can survive only through the development of long term relationships."

"We work a lot with major companies, and they appreciate the fact that when they work with us they receive the full picture of the situation."

The business was established in 1910 as a shipping line between Ravenna, Fiume and Trieste, with Romagna the global pioneer in the switch from steam to diesel propulsion, using a marine engine built by the Swiss Sulzer company.

During the Fascist period of Benito Mussolini (1922-1943), Mediterranea di Navigazione was nationalised. However, the departmental management remained in its hands until the Second World War when all shipping activities ceased.

In 1960, and no longer under state control, the company was re-established with the construction of a small oil tanker named Ravenna after its first vessel launched 50 years earlier.

In-house prowess

"The main benefit of our company is that everything including crewing is undertaken in-house," said Mr Cagnoni. "In the area of



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Paolo Cagnoni, CEO



Federico Cagnoni

technical knowledge, we have invested a lot in unit remote control so that we can evaluate speed, consumption, engine condition and discharging condition. This extensive monitoring enables us to optimise the operation."

With savings-induced higher earnings critical within the challenged cargo sectors, Mediterranea di Navigazione's investment in fuel consumption reduction has seen significant cost savings and performance improvement.

These include major changes to the hull – such as bulbs and ducktail – the use of cutting edge fluoropolymer paints, heat exchangers for the recovery of un-optimised heat sources, and the increasing use of telemetry.

By 2015, these advances across the fleet had delivered an estimated total annual saving of 2,500 tons of bunker, the equivalent of 175 tons of NOx emission and 8,000 tons reduction of CO2 emissions.

Certified by ISO 9001:2008, ISO 14001 and BS OHSAS 18001, Mediterranea di Navigazione has always given the highest priority to safety, quality and environmental protection.

In 2006 for example, the 27,300 DWT Ottomana was the first tanker in the world of its size to be built with a 30 years life notation, becoming the first Green Passport holder issued to an Italian ship by the Royal Institute of Naval Architects (RINA). More recently, new projects including

Saracena and Barbarica have also been awarded RINA's long life criteria.

"We have always operated for customer satisfaction and to establish long term relationships. And this was made possible by offering quality, high standards and specialisation," noted Mr Cagnoni.

In this way, the company has developed an avant-garde fleet ahead of its time, with a particular emphasis on safety, respect for the environment, constant crew technical training care and understanding, and a very high level of ship maintenance.

"We invest a lot in our own distinctive culture," said Mr Cagnoni. "We were one of the first companies to establish our own school, and we continue to invest in the development of skills."

With fleet enlargement a primary goal, Mediterranea di Navigazione is currently thwarted by an acrimonious \$25 million court case involving Indonesian state-owned shipbuilder PT Pal.

A long-running dispute over an order for two chemical tankers should have ended last year when a London arbitration court ruled in favour of the Italian shipowner. But Mr Cagnoni said his company is yet to receive a penny.

"\$25 million is a big amount for our company, and we are facing problems since the Indonesian Government is not pushing its state-owned company to honour the contract. Clearly the arbitration result should be mandatory."

For the future, Mr Cagnoni strongly believes in two parallel shipping industries: the traditional markets more easily attacked by private equity funds, and on the other hand, the niche segments, with companies such as Mediterranea di Navigazione providing tailor-made services to charterers through high quality ships and crews.

Third party management too?

While the company is currently and has traditionally been a solely own-fleet manager, Mr Cagnoni said third party management is an operational extension now under review.

"This is something we are looking at for the future; using our expertise across niche markets for specialised vessels for customers that are looking for hand-made qualified management."

History, longevity, and distinctive family values continue to shape this consistently innovative company.

"We have a very good, highly motivated team who are proud of who we are and what we do. This is a human aspect that is very important. If everybody brings something to the company it brings strength to the company."

"My grandfather, Paolo Cagnoni, believed that shipping must be guided by ethics, the long-term view, and respect for people. And that is a philosophy that continues to guide our company."



ASK THE TEAM THAT DID IT

Success for Dutch ship management company Kroezen Ship Support comes from a knowledge-based strategy of 'onboard/on shore.' "We know the issues from the viewpoint of the crew and the viewpoint of the owner, and we put this together," said joint Managing Director, Captain Peter Kroezen. Report from Colin Chinery.

Good ship management is enhanced by working inside out, contends Captain Peter Kroezen and Martin Kroezen, joint Managing Directors of Kroezen Ship Support.

A young, dynamic Dutch company focusing mainly on technical management as well as support, maintenance and ISM/ISPS/MLC, Kroezen Ship Support operates on a mariner's equivalent of being street-wise; in ship management, nothing can compensate for personal ocean-going on-board experience.

"What is distinctive about us is that we give the very best support from a captain-owners, point of view," said Peter Kroezen. "When people ask us why they should choose to work with us, we say we have three keywords: commitment, teambuilding and communication."

