



THE FRENCH LINE'S VILLE D'ALGER OF 1935 A MEDITERRANEAN NORMANDIE & ALGERIA'S MOBILE COLONY PRESENTED BY JOHN H. PERRY FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 6:30 PM (ET) ZOOM MEMBER MEETING

In September 1935, the French Line placed into service its Mediterranean flagship VILLE D'ALGER. The new liner was the fastest, largest, and most luxurious ship yet built for the company's colonial service between Marseille and the North African colony of Algeria, a route the company had been operating since 1880. The VILLE D'ALGER also basked in the glow of the French Line's North Atlantic flagship NORMANDIE whose record-breaking maiden voyage occurred in May-June of that same year. The company publicized the Mediterranean liner's speed, appointments, and appearance as drawn directly from the NORMANDIE. Far from exaggerated advertising, the VILLE D'ALGER incorporated technical components from its North Atlantic fleet mate but more importantly signaled the French Line's recovery from the Depression as well as symbolized the French Line's role in Algeria's colonial order. French Line officials described the VILLE D'ALGER as a mobile colony, with its diminutive hull containing the symbolism of imperial propaganda and reinforcing the French Line as a business serving both nation and empire. This presentation examines the conception, construction, and maiden voyage of the VILLE D'ALGER.



John H. Perry is a consulting historian for WSP USA. He is also an independent researcher and writer. He has a Ph.D. in history from Ohio State University, earning his degree in 2019 and specializing in the colonial history of Algeria and Mediterranean shipping in his dissertation "From Sea to Lake: Steamships, French Algeria, and the Mediterranean, 1830-1940." He has presented his research in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and Algeria, and has also published his work in academic journals and edited volumes.

(Image: eBay.com)

THE ORIGINAL CHELSEA PIERS NEW YORK'S MARITIME GRAND CENTRAL TERMINAL PRESENTED BY WILLIAM ROKA SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 10AM (ET) ENCORE PRESENTATION

**25 YEARS OF NAUTIQUES - WHAT'S HOT, WHAT'S NOT,
WHAT'S CHANGED & WHAT THE FUTURE WILL BRING
PRESENTED BY DON LEAVITT
FRIDAY, MARCH 27, 6:30PM (ET) ZOOM MEMBER MEETING**

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(Photo: Denise Dacey)

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COLLECTIBLE CORNER (Part II of II)

MESSAGERIES MARITIMES MAIDEN VOYAGE MEDALLIONS

BY ALAN ZAMCHICK

As a refresher from Part I shared in last month's issue, the 22 Compagnie Generale Transatlantique/Sudatlantique "French Line" Maiden Voyage medallions were covered in some detail in the July and October '25 issues of *The Porthole*. But there was another French flag passenger line that operated long before the CGT/CGS with as notable a history that virtually matched the same number of passenger ships (30 vs. 29) of more than 10,000 tons as the combination of CGT and CGS. The Messageries Nationales was founded in 1798 for land transport, adding maritime transport as Messageries Impériales under Napoleon III in 1853. By 1871, it was known as the Compagnie des Messageries Maritimes or Messageries Maritimes for short (or simply MM). Its ships originally served Middle Eastern routes that quickly expanded to cover French colonial holdings in southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean as well as Australia via both the Suez and Panama Canals as France shifted from empire to republic. Having issued rare line-celebratory medallions at various times in their history, we've already seen that Messageries Maritimes first issued a ship-specific Maiden Voyage medallion in 1931. All of its post-WWII passenger ships over 10,000 tons were celebrated with medallions. All were issued by the Paris Mint and all were struck in bronze. What follows is a review of the remaining ships not already featured in Part I (December '25 *PORTHOLE*). Again, the medallions are listed in "launch date" order.



CALÉDONIEN (1952): Built by Chantiers de France at Dunkerque, France. Launched April 24, 1952. Tonnage: 12,712. Dimensions: 520' x 68' (548' overall length). 16.3 knots service speed, 19.7 max. Motorship. Her Maiden Voyage: Marseilles-Panama Canal-Sydney, Australia, October 1, 1952. Passengers: 71 1st Class, 84 tourist, 86 third and initially 122 "rationnaires." She was sold to Efthymiadis in March 1972 and was renamed the NISOS KYPROS, later becoming the ISLAND OF CYPRUS (Efthymiadis was a Cypriot company based in Famagusta). She was laid up beginning in September 1972 through 1975 when she was resold to

a bank, then sold again to a Taiwanese ship breaker where she was broken up by 1977. Engraved by: Roger Bertrand Baron. Sister Ship: TAHITIEN.

(Ship photo: *Caledonien.net*, M. Caracatzanis collection.
Medallion photo: *vcoins.com Numis Corner*.)



PIERRE LOTI (1953): Built by Arsenal de Brest, France. Launched May 3, 1952. Tonnage: 10,944.



Dimensions: 492' x 64'. Service speed 17 knots. 18.5 max. Motorship. Passengers: 78 first, 112 tourist, 48 third. Her Maiden Voyage was July 17, 1953. Service: France-Mauritius via the Suez Canal. She was sold to Efthymiadis in 1970, becoming OLYMPIA then renamed PATRA in 1972. She was converted as a car ferry for the Ancona, Italy – Patras, Greece service in 1973-1974. Later names included CHRYSOVALANDOU II (1978) and EROS (1979). She was scrapped in 1986 at Salamis,

Greece. The medallion obverse features the image of Pierre Loti (1850-1923), which was actually a pseudonym for Louis Marie-Julien Viaud, a French naval officer and novelist. Many of his books featured writings of French Polynesia. 97.5g weight, 60.3mm width. Engraved by Andre Lavrillier whose name appears along the edge on both sides of the medallion. Sister ships: JEAN LABORDE, FERDINAND DeLESSEPS, and LA BOURDONNAIS.

(Ship photo: Great Passenger Ships; A. Kludas)



CAMBODGE (1953): Built by Chantiers de France at Dunkerque, France. Launched July 8, 1952.



Tonnage: 13,217. Dimensions: 507' x 72' (532' overall length.) Service speed 21 knots, 24.5 max. Parsons geared turbines. Her Maiden Voyage: Marseilles-Yokahama via the Suez Canal, July 31, 1953. Passengers: 117 1st Class, 110 tourist, 314 third. She was sold to the Greek owned Sun Line Inc. in December 1969 and was temporarily laid up as their STELLA V at La Spezia, Italy. She was completely rebuilt as the extremely popular cruise

ship STELLA SOLARIS in Perama, Greece beginning February 1971 and by June 25, 1973, made her initial Mediterranean cruise from Piraeus providing service to 750 passengers with her tonnage reduced to 10,595. One of the very few passenger ships to see service for 50 years, she was withdrawn in December 2003 and broken up at Alang. The obverse of the medallion features the image of the Buddha being protected by Mucalinda, the (naga) Serpent King. This is a popular subject in Buddha art, particularly in South and Southeast Asia. Engraver Roger Bertrand Baron's name appears around the edge to the left and on the right edge under the issue year appearing as MCMLIII. Reverse: MM's logo with R. B. Baron initials below year of issue. 59mm; 96.2g. Sister Ships: VIET-NAM and LAOS.

(Medallion photo: Midcollection.com)



JEAN LABORDE (1953): The last of the DeLESSEPS class. Built by Forges & Chantiers de la Girone, Bordeaux, France. Launched July 12, 1952. Tonnage: 10,909. Dimensions: 459' x 64' (492' overall length). Service speed 17 knots, 18.5 max. Motorship. Her Maiden Voyage began July 31, 1953, Marseille-Mauritius. Service: Marseilles-Madagascar and other Indian Ocean colonies. Passengers: 78 first, 112 tourist, 48 third. Sold to Efthymiadis in 1970 she became MYKINAI and '71 ANCONA. Transferred to a subsidiary line, Helite Hellenic Lines, based in Panama, she became their EASTERN PRINCESS in 1974. By 1976 she



went to Epirotiki Lines and was refurbished as the OCEANOS. She became infamous when she sank off South Africa on August 3, 1991, without any loss of life. A seam break in one of her propeller shafts was indicated at the time as cause of the sinking. Capt. Yiannis Avranas, who abandoned ship under the pretense he was organizing the rescue from land was arrested and found guilty of negligence but was never incarcerated. Subsequently, Epirotiki even went so far as to give Yiannis command of a ferry where he served until his retirement. Moss Hills, a musician from Zimbabwe who had been performing aboard the OCEANOS was instrumental in directing passengers during the South African Coast Guard helicopter rescue and was hailed as one of the heroes. All passengers and crew were plucked from the afterdeck of the sinking ship and some from the water around her. The obverse of the medallion features Jean Laborde. Laborde was a noted adventurer and industrialist in Madagascar. Shipwrecked there he organized 20,000 forced laborers to build an industrial complex in Mantasoa, the image of which appears over his right shoulder in the background. Engraved by Roger Bertrand Baron whose initials typically appear on both sides of the medallion. 100g; 59mm. Sister ships: FERDINAND DeLESSEPS, LA BOURDONNAIS, and PIERRE LOTI. The JEAN LABORDE medallion shown is from the 1960's when Messageries Maritimes ships featured the "MM" logo on their funnels.



TAHITIEN (1953): Built by L'Arsenal de Brest, France. Tonnage: 12,614. Dimensions: 529' x 68' (548' overall length). 16 knots. Motorship. Launched October 4, 1952. Maiden Voyage May 4, 1953, Marseille-Panama Canal-Sydney, Australia. Passengers: 71 first, 84 tourist, 86 third, 122 "rationnaires." Service: Marseilles-New Hebrides – New Caledonia – Australia via Panama Canal. Sold to Aphrodite Cruises, Limassol, Cyprus on December 14, 1971, and renamed ATALANTE



for the ANCONA – PATRAS service. After the OCEANOS sinking in 1991, she was leased to Epirotiki Lines and was briefly renamed HOMERICUS reverting again to ATALANTE in 1992 after her purchase by Paradise Cruises. She was very popular in that role as a Mediterranean cruise ship but despite that metal prices skyrocketed in the summer of 2004, she sailed off to Alang, India where she was scrapped in 2005. The obverse is of a Tahitian woman seated holding a lei with other tropical plants around her. The background is a volcanic mountainous landscape. The reverse is the MM logo with her maiden year in roman numerals. Her



medallion is a collaboration by engravers Jacques Boullaire (1893-1976) and Raymond Tschudin whose names appear on the obverse side. 103.2g weight; 59mm width. Sister ship CALÉDONIEN. (Ship photo credit: *Great Passenger Ships*; A. Kludas)

LAOS (1954): Built by Chantiers Navals de la Ciotat, La Ciotat, France. Launched December 21, 1952. Tonnage: 13,212. Dimensions: 501' x 72' (532' overall length). 21 knots (24.5 max). Steam turbines. Service: Marseilles-Far East. Maiden Voyage July 28, 1954. Marseilles-Yokohama, Japan. Passengers: 119 first, 110 tourist, 52 third, 260 "rationnaires." Sold in 1970 to Cia de Nav Abeto SA, Panama and became the EMPRESS ABETO then MALAYSIA RAYA in 1971. She suffered a major fire and beaching at



Port Kelang (Klang), Malaysia August 23, 1976, and was declared a complete loss. Scrapped by 1977. A beautiful Laotian woman is featured on the obverse surrounded by tropical flora and a Lao (also known as Naga) Dragon. This was another Boullaire and Tschudin collaborative engraving. 102g; 59mm. Sister ships: VIET-NAM and CAMBODGE.



PASTEUR (1966): This medallion collection would not be complete without including this small souvenir bottle opener in medallion format from the last large Messageries Maritimes passenger ship, the PASTEUR. She was launched out of the Chantiers de Dunquerque et Bordeaux yard on April 28, 1964. Tonnage 17,986. Dimensions: 571' x 79'. 24 knot max. Motorship. Passengers: 163 1st Class, 266 tourist. She was originally ordered in 1963 and was to be named AUSTRALIEN for MM's Australia service but was renamed prior to launch. Maiden Voyage: From Hamburg, Germany on November 2, 1966, to Buenos Aires, Argentina. She was sold in 1972 to The Shipping Corporation of India, Ltd. and renamed CHIDAMBARAM. She suffered a devastating fire in February '85 resulting in 34 deaths and was sent to the breakers in Mumbai.

An image of PASTEUR appears on the obverse, and the name A. Augis appears on the reverse with the MM logo. Metal.

(Medallion Photos: Alan Zamchick Collection except where noted. Ship Photos: *Historique de la Flotte Des Messageries Maritimes 1851-1975* except where noted.)



SHIP'S LOG
CARNIVAL CRUISE LINE NEW BUILD DEVELOPMENT:
BEHIND THE SCENES LOOK
PRESENTED BY GLENN APRILE
RECAP BY TIM DACEY

Our October member meeting presentation was “Carnival Cruise Line New Build Development: Behind the Scenes Look.” It was presented by Glenn Aprile, the Assistant Vice-President Guest Experiences and Product Development at Carnival Cruise Lines. Glenn has sailed on over 140 cruise ships. He joined the World Ship Society PONY Branch when he was just 13 years old and said that when growing up, he always wanted to work for a cruise line. Glenn has been with Carnival for over 25 years and loves his job because he gets to provide input into the newest ships that are being planned for the company.

The presentation started with a discussion about “Developing the Carnival Excel Class”. There are going to be five ships in this class, all named after former Carnival Cruise Line ships. The lead ship was the MARDI GRAS which entered service in 2021. The basic platform for this class is used for ships operated by P&O Cruises, Costa Cruises, and AIDA Cruises. The interior arrangement is standard as to locations of elevators, stairs, crew areas, operating areas, and technical areas. The passenger cabins, public spaces, open deck spaces, dining facilities, and lounges are all arranged and designed for the company that will operate the ship.

Glenn explained how the growth in ship size has changed the planning for a new ship. Carnival Cruise Lines has about six current classes of ships in its fleet. The first is the Fantasy Class which came out in the early 1990's. The next class introduced in 1996, the Destiny Class, is 45 percent larger than the Fantasy Class. The Conquest Class, launched in 2002, is 10 percent larger than the Destiny Class. The next to enter service in 2010, the Dream Class, is 18 percent larger as compared to the Conquest Class. The Vista Class, launched in 2016, is 5 percent smaller than the Dream Class. The Excel (XL or Excellence) Class entered into service in 2021 and is 35 percent larger than the Dream Class.



Carnival ships have always shared the same general layout. The ships have a forward lounge and an after lounge. They have two dining rooms and a lobby area and bars and a casino on one or two decks. As the new classes were developed, the designers just enlarged the public rooms to match the size of the ship. When atriums were added, they replaced the main lobby, even when they grew to three or four decks high. The basic layout of the ships remains the same.

The Excel Class, Carnival's largest, had to be designed using a different approach. The team needed to consider more public areas, dining options, spas, casinos, bars, and areas for children and to develop new guest experiences onboard.

Carnival called this new way of planning the "Experience Design Development." It encompasses all aspects of the guest experience and includes architectural design, operations, food and beverage offerings, entertainment programming, branding, signage, and menus.

The MARDI GRAS is divided into six entertainment zones, each with its own flavor. Carnival used an industrial designer to develop efficient cabin designs and used five interior designers to make the ship as open, airy, and efficient as possible.

The ship was built in blocks that were then assembled at the Meyer Turku shipyard in Turku, Finland. Once the steel structure was complete it was fitted out on the interior, which took about a year to complete. MARDI GRAS is the first cruise ship to be based in North America that is fueled by LNG. It is also the first Carnival ship to be painted in the new design with the blue wave at the bow. The ship is 180,800 gt., carries 5,282 passengers. Following its delivery in 2020 and then pandemic-related lay up in Spain, the MARDI GRAS sailed on her maiden voyage on July 31, 2021.



The MARDI GRAS while under construction at the Meyer Turku shipyard.



The MARDI GRAS undergoing LNG refueling in Miami.

Glenn next spoke about the CARNIVAL CELEBRATION, which is the second ship in the Excel Class. Carnival Cruises celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in 2022 and wanted to add some history about the company onboard the CARNIVAL CELEBRATION with the “Golden Jubilee Lounge” that included original fittings from some of their earlier ships. The company partnered with ocean liner historian and journalist Peter Knego and purchased the bridge wing telegraph from the CARNIVALE, a large glass panel with beautiful doors from the original MARDI GRAS, and tables from one of the Fantasy Class ships. The lounge also has reproductions of drawings and blueprints that were made by Joe Farcus, the original designer of the early Carnival ships. In the passageway near this lounge is a large model of the CARNIVAL CELEBRATION as well as a model of the original CARNIVALE. There is also a timeline of the company on the bulkhead which has scenes from early Carnival ships.



The Golden Jubilee Lounge pays an elegant tribute to Carnivale’s history.

The last part of the presentation was about the CARNIVAL FESTIVALE which is under construction and will enter service in the spring of 2027. The biggest change on this ship compared to the MARDI GRAS, CARNIVAL CELEBRATION, and CARNIVAL JUBILEE is on the outer after decks. The first three ships had an exceptionally large roller-coaster placed on the aft deck behind the funnel. The CARNIVAL FESTIVALE and CARNIVAL TROPICALE will replace the roller-coaster with a large water park. It will have slides, pools, splash pads, and an area for families and even an area for babies in diapers. The water park concept seems to appeal to more people than the roller-coaster concept.

Glenn’s outstanding presentation provided a highly informative look at how a cruise line decides what features to implement into new builds. It was readily apparent he loves his job and the cruise industry. Thank you, Glenn Aprile, for an excellent presentation.

(Images: Glenn Aprile and Carnival Cruise Lines)

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SHIPS IN PORT
ACROSS THE NORTH ATLANTIC ON THE MEYER LINE
BY BILL MILLER



The handsome, engines-aft freighter HAVJO docked at Furman Street in Brooklyn on a winter's afternoon in January 1966.

I well remember the Meyer Line from New York harbor, from its pier at the north end of the Brooklyn waterfront, located at the foot of Furman Street. Often, there were two of their sturdy, handsome, always immaculately-kept ships at berth. One was inbound from Northern Europe and was about to go off on a quick, 10-day round of other US East Coast ports (Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore and Norfolk) while the other was taking on its final loads of freight before heading back onto North Atlantic waters. Usually, the outbound sailing was fixed for a Friday afternoon, just before the to-be-avoided-at-all-costs high, weekend overtime charges went into effect on those then busy, highly unionized New York docks.

Meyer was a well-known name in shipping circles back in the 1950s and '60s, but it was not German as many thought. It was in fact a Norwegian firm, P. Meyer & Company, based in Oslo, but which rarely traded to Norwegian ports. Meyer had a large tanker fleet as well. The freighters on the New York run were often quite large for the time, often over 10,000 tons, and they usually had a vast collection of masts and booms to handle their cargos. Meyer used a "Hav" nomenclature and so their gray-hulled ships had names such as HAVJO, HAVHOK, HAVMANN and HAVPRINS. A large, white "M" was displayed on their funnels as well as on the tips of their bows. Represented in the United States by the Lower Manhattan offices of one of the then great shipping agents, Boyd, Weir & Sewell, the Meyer Line had weekly sailings to Antwerp, Hamburg and/or Bremen. Rotterdam and Le Havre were sometimes included as well.

The passenger quarters on the Meyer Line ships, for twelve guests or less, were said to be very comfortable and included a small dining room (shared with the officers), a lounge with soft chairs and sofas, and single as well as double cabins. Fares in the Sixties were \$210 to Holland or Germany in winter; \$235 in peak summer. Meyer had a strong and loyal following, including businessmen, who wanted a rest during an ocean crossing, government personnel and their families being reassigned overseas and also for travelers who disliked the big, fancier, passenger-filled ocean liners. In the freighter-passenger trades to Northern Europe, Meyer competed directly with the likes of the Belgian Line, United States Lines, Holland-America Line, Black Diamond Line and the Cosmopolitan Line, which was also Norwegian-owned.



*Left photo: Meyer Line occupied Pier 2 in Brooklyn Heights.
Right photo: Looking across the East River from Brooklyn to Lower Manhattan.*

Meyer began to carry some of the more efficient cargo containers, which were stowed on the open, outer decks by the late Sixties and even relocated to more spacious loading facilities over in Port Newark, New Jersey. They did not, however, follow the likes of Cunard, the French Line, Holland-America and Swedish American by investing in large containership consortiums. Instead, by 1972, they were gone completely from trans-Atlantic freighter service and consequently so was their interest in carrying 4-12 passengers aboard their ships. Eventually, Meyer pulled out of the tanker and tramp-charter trades as well. The business of shipping had been through a virtual revolution with the coming of the container age and, rather sadly, the Meyer Line was lost in the shuffle.

(Photos: Bill Miller Collection.)

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SHIP NEWS
LONG-TERM PRESERVATION EFFORTS ANNOUNCED
FOR HIKAWA MARU
COMPILED BY PAT DACEY



HIKAWA MARU in Yokohama.

On January 8, 2026, NYK (Nippon Yusen Kabushiki Kaisha) announced that an expert committee specializing in ship preservation met to determine best strategies for the continued preservation of their 95-year-old liner HIKAWA MARU, which is on permanent display in Yokohama, Japan. HIKAWA MARU was the largest Japanese passenger ship to survive World War II, and, since 1961, has served as a floating symbol of NYK and Japan’s maritime heritage.

These efforts will include creating technical and conservation policies, and best practices for future upkeep of the vessel as well as exploring options to help revitalize the Yokohama waterfront area where the ship is located. NYK has stated that since 2024, surveys have been conducted on the hull to assess its safety and structural integrity in preparation for large scale repairs.

“This long-term preservation project aims not only to ensure the ship’s structural soundness but also to enhance public engagement with the ship’s rich historical legacy,” reports NYK.

HIKAWA MARU was built for NYK Lines by the Yokohama Dry Dock Company and made her maiden voyage from Kobe to Seattle on May 13, 1930. One of three HIKAWA MARU class motor ships, she ran a regular liner route between Yokohama, Vancouver and Seattle. Known for her beautiful art deco interiors, she was nicknamed “The Queen of the Pacific.”



Left: A poster from the time when HIKAWA MARU was under the control of the Civilian Merchant Marines Committee (CMMC).

During the early days of World War II, prior to Japan's entry into the war, HIKAWA MARU brought hundreds of Jewish refugees who had fled Germany through Japan to the United States and Canada. In October 1941, HIKAWA MARU became the last NYK ship to visit a US port before the United States and Japan entered into a state of war following Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor.

Her wartime service as a hospital ship included HIKAWA MARU surviving three instances where she was damaged by mines with repairs being made after each incident.

HIKAWA MARU was one of only two Japanese large passenger ships to survive the war and was requisitioned by the Shipping Control Authority for the Japanese Merchant Marine (SCAJAP) to repatriate Japanese soldiers and civilians from the Pacific islands, Korea, the Dutch East Indies and China until 1947 when she was returned to NYK Lines.



A current view of a Deluxe Cabin.

By 1953, after working as a general cargo ship, she returned to her pre-war passenger service until 1960. HIKAWA MARU was saved from scrapping as part of an effort to revitalize the port of Yokohama, serving as a museum, classroom and youth hostel. In 2006, she was closed and her future uncertain until NYK Line underwrote her restoration in 2007 reopening to the public in 2007.



A current view of the First Class Dining Saloon.

Also, in August 2016, *HIKAWA MARU* was officially designated as an [Important Cultural Property](#) by the [Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology](#) of Japan.

(Sources: The Maritime Executive and Wikipedia. Photos and image: NYK)

Members may submit the following for consideration for publication in The Porthole: member photos with descriptions and dates taken, ship news, and maritime articles that may be of interest to your fellow members. Please direct submissions to wsspony@gmail.com. Please note published materials are subject to editing and, if printed, are not necessarily the opinion of the WSS-PONY Branch.

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