

Presse Ocean l'Eclair, December 2, 2006 Saint-Nazaire La Baule

The SMCN launches a 54m clipper

SMCN's (Société de Métallurgie et de Chaudronnerie Navale) hangar, situated at the round-about Penhoët, yesterday hosted the benediction of the *Clipper Paris*, a 54m riverboat commissioned by the 'Compagnie des Bateaux à Roue'.

Inspired by yachts built in the beginning of the 20th century, the superb clipper will be docked at the foot of the Eiffel Tower as soon as next year. But it won't be until Spring that the ship will host its first party for 160 guests, for a cruise on the Seine in the 200m² lounge.

"Weather permitting, the boat will set sail for Paris in January. Stops are planned in Lorient, Brest, Roscoff, Cherbourg, Honfleur, Rouen, Vernon and Gennevilliers", explains Didier Spade, CEO of the 'Compagnie des Bateaux à Roue', organizer of the evening cocktail-dinner.

The chimney stack may be lowered to 50cm

"The distinctiveness of this boat is with its wheelhouse on jacks that allow the superstructure to be lowered, to pass under bridges when necessary along the Seine", highlights Jean-Claude Pelleteur, president of the group SMC which employs 330 people full-time. The stainless steel chimney stack and wooden masts are all detachable and the chimney stack may be lowered to 50cm.

Able to cruise at 12 knots (21km/h) thanks to two 290hp engines each, the *Clipper Paris* required some "10 000 hours of work and around five months to build from the first steel cut to today", declared Jean-Claude Pelleteur.

(photo caption) The *Clipper Paris* was blessed yesterday afternoon by father Jean-Luc Tessier, priest in the Saint-Nazaire parish, joined by workers who participated in the construction. **(close-up view)** Didier Spade and his father Pierre, 83 years old, retired decorator on board ships built by Penhoët naval supply.

Sister-ships are planned

The Saint-Nazaire industrial may well be called upon to build sister-ships, as Didier Spade already foresees production for "a series of 4 or 5 vessels of this type". Which would provide work for the outsourced services in charge of building the *Clipper Paris*. "The interior design and décor will be done in Paris. There will be a blend of white and mahogany, with contemporary furniture, a bit off-beat/eccentric", confirmed the director of the Compagnie des Bateaux à Roue.

The president of the Pôle Marine (organization of 70 companies in the naval sector) hopes for more good news. "We are awaiting confirmation to build two 30m river craft to tour the île Saint-Louis, in Paris. This order may be announced at Maritima, the pleasure boat show in Versailles on December 6-9", confirms Jean-Claude Pelleteur, of which many employees work equally on board the *MSC Orchestra*.

The transfer operation for the *Clipper Paris* from Saint Nazaire is forecasted this Saturday from 8am, the launch should take place around noontime along the quay des Charbonniers.