

Full speed ahead

Georg Fischer capitalizes on new market opportunities in shipbuilding

The cruise industry continues its record-breaking run and is now one of the fastest growing segments in the leisure sector. A steady flow of new on-board attractions and the gigantic proportions of the latest ships keep the industry in the media spotlight. The astoundingly wide choice of recreational amenities and wellness and relaxation facilities eclipses anything provided hitherto. What many people don't know is that Georg Fischer has a long history of involvement in shipbuilding as a supplier of piping systems. And since plastic is also becoming increasingly established as a new material in this sector there is outstanding potential for growth.



When the cruise industry booms, the Swiss technology group Georg Fischer also has reason to be pleased. Georg Fischer has been a successful player in the water treatment sector for decades and now that new plastics are being used to an increasing extent in shipbuilding, this opens up additional market opportunities. Plastics have gained ground consistently since previous restrictions were lifted and new legislation also allows plastics to be used in the so-called non-essential area.

GF helps outfit the world's largest cruise ship

Georg Fischer was recently awarded a number of major orders in the face of stiff international competition and is working on some high-profile projects. One of the most spectacular new ships that Georg Fischer is involved in outfitting is the 'Freedom of the Seas', the world's largest cruise ship – or cruise liner as it is called. Georg Fischer supplied the hot and cold water piping to all cabins using the all-plastic system INSTAFLEX as well as the integral drinking water treatment systems - a total of ten systems in all, complete with PVC pipes, fittings and valves and drives.

The facts about the 'Freedom of the Seas' make impressive reading even for landlubbers. The new flagship of the Florida-based Royal Caribbean International line is 339 meters (1,112 feet) long and 56 meters (184 feet) wide with a draft of 8.5 meters (28 feet) and has a cruising speed of over 40 kilometres per hour (21.6 knots). The cruise liner has 15 passenger decks, 1,800 state guestrooms offering accommodation for 4,370 passengers with full occupancy, and up to 1,360 crew to look after their wellbeing.

A truly impressive array of recreational amenities is available for guests. These include numerous entertainments and shopping facilities as well as a rock-climbing wall, an ice-skating rink, a waterpark zone and games programs and minding service for children. Passengers can also communicate from anywhere on board by cell phone with the aid of state-of-the-art wireless network technology. The new supership will sail seven-night cruise itineraries to the Caribbean, all starting from Miami. The shipyard of the Finnish company Aker Finnyard is planning to deliver the spectacular cruise liner in summer 2006.

The key quote

Successful system strategy

"We also offer our customers in the shipbuilding sector technically perfected all-in solutions. These include the delivery of the fittings, valves and pipes, as well as a comprehensive training programme for installation engineers. Our system strategy has been very well received by the market and rewarded with some important orders."

Roland Steinemann, GF Piping Systems, Market Segment Manager Ship Building

Customers with illustrious names

Business: Cruises

Royal Caribbean International

The cruise line was founded in 1969 and is headquartered in Miami (Florida). The fleet comprises a total of 19 modern cruise ships and is added to continuously. Seven new ships have been put into service since 2001 alone. Total capacity is for 44,164 passengers.

Aker Finnyard

The Finnish ship yard is part of Aker Yards, one of the world's leading companies for the construction of cruise ships, ferries and other modern vessels. The 'Freedom of the Seas' is being built in Turku which ranks among the largest and most modern shipbuilding facilities in Europe.

Globally integrated in the sales companies

Own shipbuilding department

Specialists around the world GF Piping Systems has a separate department for shipbuilding which is based at the company's headquarters in Schaffhausen. The Group's own shipbuilding specialists are integrated in the regional sales companies all over the world and are responsible for order processing and customer service in close cooperation with head office. This decentralized structure allows optimum proximity to the customers.

A growth market

Georg Fischer has been active in the water treatment sector for many years and supplies the shipbuilding industry with on-board systems and components. The increased use of plastics opens up an attractive growth market. This gets an extra boost from the boom in the cruise sector and from the construction of numerous new cruise liners as well as cargo ships and oil and gas tankers.

«Adding Quality to People's Lives»

Clean water enhances wellbeing

Plastics make the running

A dependable supply of clean water of top drinking quality fed from the drinking water treatment plant to the hundreds of water taps is particularly important in shipbuilding and helps ensure the health and wellbeing of passengers and crew. Plastic systems are increasingly often the number one choice because of their corrosion resistance, inertness to chemical attack and their light weight.