

RMS KIEL

A LEADING mover in the European shortsea and inland waterway trades, the Duisburg company Rhein-, Maas und See-Schiffahrtskontor (RMS), is set to phase in an innovative design of sea-river coaster for regular service between Germany and the UK.

Dubbed the Futura Carrier type, the 3,500dwt *RMS Kiel* is distinguished by a novel semi-catamaran hull form and multiple propulsion thrusters, and is the product of a modular build system. Improved operating efficiency and manoeuvrability, plus increased load on a shallow draught, are key benefits attributed to the unconventional design, developed by German technical consultancy New-Logistics.

Exhaustive hull model tests were carried out at SVA's test tank facilities in Potsdam, to evaluate hydrodynamic performance and ship-handling properties. The investigations gave weight to claims that the Futura Carrier concept offers reductions of 20–30% in fuel consumption relative to conventional inland-going vessels.

RMS has made a three-year charter commitment to the first of the new generation of coaster, owned by Reederei BWK Schiffinvest MS RMS.

Delivery of the *RMS Kiel* has been delayed as a result of the insolvency of the original build contractor Con-Mar Ingenieurgesellschaft at Brake, and the final stages of completion have been undertaken at Wilhelmshaven. In the interim, other operators have adopted the Futura Carrier concept for coaster and inland vessel versions.

The optimisation of the hull is evident in the cargo hold's length of 68m and width of 11.8m within vessel dimensions of 97.5m overall and 13.6m breadth.



The cargo space is particularly well suited to steel and paper products – important constituents of the direct seagoing traffic of the Ruhr – and the vessel also offers a container intake of 230teu. The maximum draught of 4.15m corresponds to a full cargo load of around 3,300 tonnes, and a load of about 1,400 tonnes is attainable at a draught of just 2.5m.

The unconventional look and nature of the Futura Carrier derives from a tunnel in the hull, to reduce the wetted area and frictional resistance, and from the special geometry of the bows and stern. The fore and aft shaping is the consequence of optimisation for extreme water flow conditions in shallow and restricted waterways. ■