

MSC Cruises, STX France signs fifth Meraviglia class cruise ship

MSC Cruises has expanded its fleet plan, in conjunction with STX France, with the signing order of a fifth Meraviglia class cruise ship. The vessel, which will be equipped with a new generation of dual-fuel engines designed to run on liquefied natural gas (LNG) is due to be delivered in 2023 and will feature environmental technologies inclusive of advanced wastewater treatment system compliant with the world's most stringent regulatory standards, including the provisions enshrined in Resolution MEPC.227 for the Baltic Sea.



MSC Cruises Executive Chairman Pierfrancesco Vago and CEO of STX France Laurent Castaing cut the first steel of the newly named MSC Virtuosa.

The announcement was made at a ceremony held at the Saint-Nazaire shipyard in the presence of Bruno Le Maire, the French Minister of the Economy and Finance.

STX France and MSC Cruises celebrated three major shipbuilding milestones: The Steel Cutting Ceremony of the 4th Meraviglia class vessel where MSC Cruises announced that the ship will be named MSC Virtuosa; the Coin Ceremony of MSC Grandiosa; and the Float-out of MSC Bellissima.

For the first time in Saint-Nazaire's history, three cruise ships belonging to a single cruise brand are under simultaneous construction at the shipyard.

Speaking before opening the valves to flood the dry dock where MSC Bellissima has been assembled, MSC Cruises' executive chairman, Pierfrancesco Vago said: "With the announcement of yet another new vessel, the thirteenth under our 10-year investment plan, we are affirming our commitment to sustainable growth for our company. I say this while three more next-generation MSC Cruises are now simultaneously under construction."

Vago added: "Our fifth Meraviglia class cruise ship will bring a new generation of cutting-edge environmental technology to the market, benefiting from a new generation of LNG-powered engines. This will help us further reduce our environmental footprint and advance in our journey of constant improvement. She will be joined at sea by up to four World Class LNG-powered ships, as part of our overall commitment to environmental stewardship through this and other next-generation technologies and solutions deployed fleet-wide."

The agreement for the additional Meraviglia-Plus ship represents an additional investment of €900m.

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