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## GOING BIG

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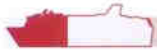
Saint Lawrence's  
grand cruise plans



Boxy and compact  
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"A bazaar, that's what  
these big ships have become"





# Canadian attraction



Quebec increasingly targets cruise ships and their passengers.

Quebec is coming of age in the cruise industry. The rate of development has been extraordinary with ports along the Saint Lawrence river gearing up to welcome ships, small and large, to their communities. **By SUSAN PARKER**

**J**ust last year the Quebec government announced its commitment to the development of international cruises in the region by allocating CAD 52.5 million within a total budget of CAD 156 million to the project. The balance of funding will come from the federal governments and local communities, which means that everyone is 'buying into' the project.

The government's objective is twofold:



increasing tourism revenues in Quebec and diversifying and stimulating regional economies.

Recognising the need to provide itinerary possibilities rather than individual ports of call, investment is taking place in Saguenay, Sept-Iles, Baie-Comeau, Gaspesie, Havre-Saint-Pierre and Iles-de-la-Madeleine. Through the realisation of these ports, Montreal and Quebec City are more likely to become homeports or turnaround ports.

In this respect, Costa Cruises is making its maiden voyage on the Saint Lawrence river this year with COSTA ATLANTICA. Also turning round in Quebec City are Holland America Lines' EURODAM, Princess Cruises' CROWN PRINCESS and Norwegian Cruise Lines' NORWEGIAN SPIRIT. More used to transit calls, the city has doubled its turnaround calls this year over last.

Carnival Cruise Lines was due to begin sailing the region next year but has delayed its entrance to 2011. Cruise the Saint Lawrence, the region's marketing organisation, nonetheless says development

is moving in the right direction.

"The cruise line's decision does not call into question the development potential of these ports. The Canada New England 2009 Cruise Symposium held last June 16 to 18 in Saguenay and attended by some 200 representatives of port authorities, the tourism industry, and the largest international cruise lines, was very encouraging for the entire St. Lawrence."

MSC Cruises will be offering cruises into and out of Quebec City/New York for the fall next year for the first time. Although MSC MAGNIFICA will not be calling at any of the ports on the Saint Lawrence river in 2010, the company says this may change in 2011 depending on the success of the inaugural season.

Cruise the Saint Lawrence, an association instrumental in promoting the region to international cruise lines, estimates that there will be 200 calls to its nine member ports - Montreal, Trois Rivieres, Quebec City, Saguenay, Baie-Comeau, Sept-Iles, Havre-Saint-Pierre, Gaspesie, Iles de la Madeleine - this year with a lower berth capacity of 178,824 passengers and crew of 80,120.

In 2008 there were 155 calls carrying 125,100 passengers and 47,068 crew which ▶

An aerial view of Montreal, which, like Quebec, is aiming at more turnaround calls.



► demonstrates just how fast cruising in this part of the world is growing.

Judging by the number of cruise line executives attending the Canada New England (CNE) 2009 Cruise Symposium in Saguenay in June this year, there is no doubt that the region is very much on the agenda of many of them. Due to the sailing distances involved the ports of both Canada and the US need each other to make this work, particularly for the larger ships.

With weekly itineraries being the most popular, cruiselines can operate itineraries from for example New York to Quebec City and back. Calling Canadian ports on one leg and US ports on the other, passengers

The First Nation called the Saint Lawrence river 'the way that walks'. Discovered by Jacques Cartier in 1535, it is fed by the Great Lakes and flows 12,000 km eastwards along the shores of Montreal, Trois-Rivieres and Quebec City. From there it widens into the largest and deepest estuary in the world.

The Saguenay cruise terminal.



Photo: Sufi Parker

also have the option of doing the round trip without calling any port twice.

Holland America Line (HAL) first called in Gaspé in 1960 but has been sailing regularly since 1995 and now visits 16 ports in the region. Ben Atherly, director tour services HAL, said: "Guest ratings have been pretty consistent since 1995 and yields have always been strong." He added: "We are all challenged by the economic situation ... we look carefully at where we are going and CNE has performed

consistently."

There is only one thing that may stop this success story in its track. In July the International Maritime Organization's Marine Environment Protection Committee approved the joint US-Canada proposal from environmental agencies to designate coastal areas as an Emissions Control Area. This means putting controls on emissions of nitrogen oxides, sulphur oxides and particulate matter. Should this be finally approved it will come into effect in 2012. The resulting costs on ships operating within 200 nm of the two country's coastline would skyrocket, possibly leading to ships being deployed elsewhere.

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# Ferries keep things going along the St Lawrence

For many communities along the St Lawrence, ferries act as a bridge or route continuation and for this reason what amounts to a public service is being provided on the majority of domestic routes.

By **SUSAN PARKER**

**G**eorges Farrah, president Societe des Traversiers Quebec (STQ), explains: "All the provisions etcetera are delivered to the communities. They are totally reliant on these services."

STQ was founded in 1971 to provide a ferry service between Quebec and Levis that private enterprise could no longer offer. Since then it has taken on four more year-round routes: Sorel/Saint-Ignace-de-Loyola; Isle aux Coudres/Saint-Joseph-de-la-Rive; Tadoussac/Baie-Sainte-Catherine; Matane/Baie-Comeau/Godbout.

In addition it is partnering with private enterprise on three summer-only routes: Clarke Company on the Riviere-du-Loup to Saint-Simeon ferry route which owns TRANS-SAINT-LAURENT; CGR and CTMA on the Ile d'Entree to Cap-aux-Meules route and the municipality on L'Isle-aux-Grues to Montmagny.

STQ owns twelve of the 13 ships operating on these eight routes (see table).

How these routes should be best operated has been under discussion for some time. One of Mr Farrah's first initiatives on being appointed three and a half years ago was to conduct a study into what was being done and by whom.

The service was being handled in part by the Department of Transport and in part by STQ. His theory was that if STQ could prove its capability of handling the services, the entire maritime sector could fall under the Societe.

He succeeded and STQ - a crown company owned by the Quebec government - is now the maritime branch of the government falling under the responsibility of the Transport Minister. There are 550 employees.

Final contracts should be completed for additional routes that will be joining STQ in a partnership arrangement in a month or so. These are Harrington-Harbour to Chevery; Saint Augustin; and Isle-Verte to Notre-Dame des-Sept Douleurs.

Discussions are now underway which may result in STQ having involvement with additional ferries but it could not

disclose details as CFI goes to press.

STQ now has a budget of CAD 100 million. All the services require subsidies although on some routes there is a charge (see box below). In order to maintain the service level and to breakeven, within the agreed budget, these subsidies are vital to STQ, says Mr Farrah.

When CFI spoke to Mr Farrah in June he said increasing fares is a tough option for a government-owned company but at the same time it is being tasked to be more self-sufficient.

In the past a charge was levied on non-residents travelling on the free services according to Mr Farrah but after six months this was dropped as the locals felt it was keeping tourists away.

In 2009, he says STQ will carry 5.2 million passengers with the majority (48 per cent) travelling between the end of May and September/October. With 80 per cent of passengers in the summer being tourists, it is not difficult to see how appealing a charge would be.

The next big challenge for STQ is fleet replacement with plans on the table to invest CAD 600 million over the next 15 years. The first three newbuildings are due in 2013 and 2014 but which ships are to be replaced is still under discussion.

As to where the ships may be built, this has still to be decided. Mr Farrah says: "We have to respect the government rule [re newbuildings] so we don't know if it will be a Canadian or international bid."



As to ship details, he says: "We have to take the long term decision. We have to plan the next 15 to 20 years of the trends, demographics, economics. For sure it will be bigger ships but we don't know what yet. We have a sustainable development action



plan on the table and we expect to build a green ship." All the ferries are ice-class and the new ships will be no exception.

## Private companies

There are a number of private companies operating on the St Lawrence. These include CTMA which has been running a ferry service between Souris on Prince Edward Island and Cap-aux-Meules on Iles de la Madeleine (Magdalena Islands) since the seventies. It provides the main access to the islands (Les Iles) and the voyage takes five hours. MADELEINE has a length of 122.05m and ▶

company profile	 <b>Société des traversiers du Québec</b>
	• Operates ferries on Canada's St
	<b>Number of employees:</b> 550
	<b>Owner:</b> the Quebec government
	<b>President:</b> Georges Farrah
	<b>Address:</b> Société des traversiers du Québec, 250, rue Saint-Paul, Québec (Québec) G1K 9K9, Canada
	<b>Tel:</b> +1 418 643-2019
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<b>Web:</b> www.traversiers.gouv.qc.ca	
 <b>Shippax Database</b>	



Plans are to replace the CAMILLE MARCOUX with a newbuilding by 2014.



Built in 1985, the CATHERINE-LEGARDEUR is one of the ferries operated by STQ.

▶ a beam of 18.6m. The 6,807gt vessel has two vehicle decks and travels at 20 knots.

In addition the company runs a weekly service on 12,000gt CTMA VACANCIER, which has 220 cabins. She is 126m in length and 22m in beam. The vessel docks in Montreal, Chandler, Les Iles, and Quebec City.

The company does receive subsidies from the Quebec government for cargo on CTMA VACANCIER and from the federal government for MADELEINE.

Groupe Desgagnés operates the 1,748gt NORDIK EXPRESS on the low north shore between Rimouski and Sept-Iles, Port-Meunier, Havre St Pierre, Saint-Augustin and Harrington Harbour. With a length of 69.5m, a beam of 13.4m and a draught of 4.25m, she can carry 268 passengers and 60 teus. STQ says it will be taking over the handling subsidies from the Ministry of Transport for both the above in the future.

There are a number



STQ's Georges Farrah



Between April 2007 and March 2008, just over 1 million passengers travelled between Sorel and Saint-Ignace-de-Loyola. Of these 710,683 were fare paying. Of the 569,315 vehicles crossing, 565,966 were paying. A total of 13,206 bicycles made the crossing!

For Quebec to Lévis there were 1.9 million passengers for the same period, of which 887,760 were paying and 389,166 vehicles (of which 380,159 paid).

Passengers on Matane/Baie-Comeau/Godbout numbered 208,894. Cars numbered 75,841 and trucks 15,202 all fare paying.

There were 600,031 passengers on the Ile aux Coudres/Saint-Joseph-de-la-Rive route and 287,031 vehicles. On the Tadoussac/Baie-Sainte-Catherine crossing there were 1.52m passengers and 807,283 vehicles. As these two are continuations of the road, and the government wants to open up the region, these routes are free.

of companies operating without subsidies as the government does not consider the services to be essential. These include Traverse Rimouski-Forestville which operates catamaran CNM EVOLUTION on the 55-minute crossing between the two communities at a speed of 30 knots. She carries 175 passengers and 30 vehicles and makes the crossing three times a day between May and October. The vessel has been in operation since 1997 and is owned by Michel Journault; Compagnie de Navigation des Basques' L'HERITAGE 1 makes the 90-minute trip between Trois-Pistoles and Les Escoumins twice a day between May and October. The 436gt vessel has a length of 39.10m, a beam of 10.66m and a draught of 1.9m. She carries 200 passengers and 42 vehicles at a speed of 11 knots. ■

**Societe des Traversiers du Quebec fleet as at July 2009**

	Year of build	Length	Beam	Ton-nage	Draught	Pas-sengers	Ve-hicles	Speed	Route
* CAMILLE-MARCOUX	1974	94.52	18.45	6,122	4.36	600	126	16.0	Matane/Baie-Comeau/Godbout
ALPHONSE-DESJARDINS	1971	66.47	21.80	1,741	4.44	700	55	12.5	Quebec/Lévis
LOMER-GOUIN	1971	66.47	21.80	1,741	4.44	700	55	12.5	Quebec/Lévis
** RADISSON	1954	53.66	22.43	1,183	4.20	400	50	11.0	Relief vessel
** LUCIEN-L	1967	67.37	18.30	886	3.35	375	60	11.0	Sorel/Saint-Ignace-de-Loyola
GRUE-DES-ILES	1981	47.51	12.00	477	4.96	184	23	12.0	Ile aux Grues/Montmagny
ARMAND-IMBEAU	1980	81.97	21.80	1,702	5.75	400	75	12.5	Tadoussac/Baie-Sainte-Catherine
JOS DESCHENES	1980	81.97	21.80	1,702	5.75	400	75	12.5	Tadoussac/Baie-Sainte-Catherine
JOSEPH-SAVARD	1985	62.71	21.90	1,445	5.17	400	59	13.7	Ile aux Coudres/Saint-Joseph-de-la-Rive
CATHERINE-LEGARDEUR	1985	62.71	21.90	1,348	5.17	400	57	13.0	Sorel/Saint-Ignace-de-Loyola
FELIX-ANTOINE-SAVARD	1997	83.00	21.50	2,489	5.10	400	70	15.0	Various crossings
IVAN-QUINN	2009	25.65	8.20	250	1.90	45	2	10.5	Ile d'Entree/Cap-aux-Meules

\*Newbuilding replacement planned for 2014

\*\*Newbuilding replacements planned for 2013