

Adventure calls as Africa Mercy begins new mission

If you are looking for a new adventure, maybe Mercy Ships has the answer.

The operator of the world's largest civilian hospital vessel is seeking chief, second and third officers to join its crew.

Age is not an issue, as many volunteers have already enjoyed a career at sea but still feel they have something to offer — in this case, helping provide much-needed free medical care to the poor.

Mercy Ships' 16,572-gt Africa Mercy (built 1980) left Las Palmas in Gran Canaria in the Canary Islands on 5 August for the seven-day journey to Guinea, West Africa, where it will begin its latest field service.

Strapped to the top deck were 25 vehicles — sturdy, rough-terrain four-wheel-drives that are vital wherever Mercy Ships has been in Africa.

TRAINING PROGRAMME

During the ship's previous field service in Cameroon, vehicles covered 395,000 kilometres (245,440 miles) transporting patients and to help with the charity's medical capacity training programme. Mercy Ships says the "trustworthy trucks" are certainly worth the deck space.

Around 450 volunteers — nurses, surgeons, dentists, schoolteachers and catering and administrative workers — are onboard the Africa Mercy at any one time.

But as Mercy Ships Global executive director Bryce Wagner has told TradeWinds in the past: "It is much easier to get a nurse to come than a chief engineer."

The Africa Mercy was in Gran Canaria for annual maintenance after 10 months in Cameroon, which campaigns director Sarah Balseg described as its "biggest venture yet".

After the ship arrives in Guinea, initial patient screening days will begin on 20 August, with a second-



MERCY MOTORS: Mercy Ships' fleet of all-terrain vehicles carry the message 'bringing hope and healing'

Photo: Geoff Garfield

ary screening programme scheduled for 22 to 24 August.

Wards on the ship open on 3 September, with the first surgeries scheduled for the next day.

The cost of the various programmes on the Africa Mercy and

general vessel operating expenses come to around \$16m per year.

TradeWinds continues to partner the charity in its annual Cargo Day fundraising involving the shipping industry, which is scheduled for 3 October.

Last year, \$672,341 was raised thanks to participation by 24 charterers, 20 shipowners, 24 ship-brokerages, seven port agents and nine service companies.

For more information on volunteering, visit apply.mercyships.org

Burger that's fit for a Princess comes ashore

The Ernesto, the signature burger of the Salty Dog gastropub onboard some Princess Cruises ships, has made its way to land.

The burger will now be available at the Electric Owl, a Los Angeles neighbourhood bar owned by its creator, chef Ernesto Uchimura.

The Ernesto, voted Best Burger at Sea by Cruise Critic, is piled high with a rib-eye and short-rib beef patty, grilled pork belly, caramelised kimchi, beer-battered jalapeno and charred onion aioli. The whole thing is then topped with cave-aged Gruyere cheese.

Argentina-born Uchimura is an award-winning chef, and corporate executive chef and partner for mega-brand Umami Burger.

He is also founding chef and partner of Plan Check Kitchen + Bar, where he garnered Los Angeles Magazine's "Chef of the Year: The Comfort Master" and LA Weekly's "Best Burger" awards.

The Salty Dog was unveiled in 2016 as part of Princess' Come Back New Promise, its \$450m multi-year product innovation and cruiseship renovation campaign.

ANEK asks beachgoers to butt out

Greek ferry operator ANEK Lines has joined the ranks of beachgoers fed up with finding their sand and seas full of discarded cigarette butts.

In an effort to wipe out the scourge of used cigarettes that end up on the beaches and in the waters of its home island of Crete, ANEK is distributing 200,000 disposable ashtrays onboard its ferries and on the island's popular beaches.

The cone-shaped ashtrays, made from recycled materials, are designed to stick in the sand so they won't get blown away.

The initiative is being conducted in conjunction with the Cretan Aquarium.

According to ANEK, Greek smokers, along with tourists, produce 22 billion butts per year, many of which end up in the sea.

Cigarette butts are the most common type of litter on Earth and are the most common item retrieved by clean-up activities in public areas such as beaches.

Cigarette filters are made of cellulose acetate, a form of plastic that takes up to 10 years to degrade. The butts also contain highly concentrated levels of toxins that poison fish, seabirds and ultimately humans.



LIGHTER TOUCH: One of the beach ashtrays Photo: ANEK Lines

Malaysia puts superyacht up for grabs

If you want to upgrade your superyacht, the Malaysian government has one that might be of interest.

And, like all famous superyachts, it comes with a degree of notoriety.

The 3,000-gt Equanimity (built 2014) was seized by Malaysian authorities last week as part of a clampdown on the mass looting and corruption that allegedly took place on the watch of previous Prime Minister Najib Razak.

Built in the Netherlands at a reported cost of \$250m, the 26-passenger Equanimity is at the centre of a tug-of-war between current Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad and financier Low Taek Jho, who Malaysian and US authorities allege was the mastermind behind the theft of hundreds of millions of dollars of



TUG OF WAR: The luxury yacht seized by Malaysia

Photo: Scanpix

government money. They claim the yacht belongs to Low.

The Equanimity was seized in Indonesian waters at the request of US authorities in February. It is among the \$1.7bn of assets that

US investigators claim were illegally bought using money diverted from state investment fund 1Malaysia Development.

Last week, the Indonesian authorities agreed to put it in the

hands of their Malaysian counterparts, which are seeking to recover the missing money. It was duly delivered to Port Klang, where authorities said the plan is eventually to auction it off.

A legal team representing the vessel's owner has opposed the seizure by Malaysia, claiming that due process has not been followed. Mahathir has said that if the owner wants it back, he should show his face and evidence of where the money used to buy it came from.

Low has not been seen publicly in months and his exact whereabouts are unknown.

Malaysia's attorney general says the yacht was seized under admiralty jurisdiction, meaning the buyer can relax in the knowledge that it will be sold with a clean slate.