Tallink's new generation 36,250gt high speed ferry Star is now running on the Tallinn, Estonia to Helsinki, Finland, route. According to Tallink, the new shuttle service ferry is unique in the world, being the fastest conventional vessel ever built for such a short distance. The ferry can complete the 80km route between the two cities in two hours.

Today, Tallink is the largest Baltic ferry operator, having undergone rapid expansion during the last few years; it has three main brands comprising Tallink, Superfast and Silja Line (acquired from Sea Containers). The Estonian company currently runs both cruiseferries and ropax designs from Estonia to Finland and Sweden, Sweden to Finland, Latvia to Sweden and Finland to Germany, as well as high speed craft between Helsinki and Tallinn.

Its latest newbuilding is worth around €110 million and gave the Helsinki-based shipyard and its partners around 800 man-years of work. Star is the 19th ferry to be delivered by Aker Yards for the combined Tallink Silja company.

An ice-strengthened hull allows year-around operation. “The Tallink Shuttle service and its schedule will be stable all through the year, as the ship is able to operate under any weather conditions,” states the company. This reliability and increase in capacity on the route are the two main factors that the operator cites for its new service.

Operating at a service speed of around 27.5 knots, the ferry’s propulsion package comprises four MaK 12M43C medium-speed main engines, each with an output of 12,000kW at 514 rpm. These are coupled through reduction gearboxes to drive two Wartsila controllable pitch propellers with a diameter of 5.2m and turning at 145 rpm.

Star also has two 1,500kW Wärtsilä bow thrusters and a 1,000kW stern thruster from the same manufacturer. Manoeuvrability is enhanced by Becker flapped rudders turned by Rolls-Royce steering gear, and a set of Blohm +Voss stabilisers enhances passenger comfort in rough weather.

The new 186m ropax design has 11 decks and capacity for 1,900 passengers and 100 crew. Star can seat 410 passengers in its pizzeria on deck 9; 242 in the observation lounge on deck 9; 100 people in its à la carte restaurant on deck 8; 322 in the self-service restaurant and 450
General arrangement of Tallink’s newest ferry, the fast day ship Star
in the main restaurant on deck 8; 122 in the business lounge on deck 7; and 485 in the pub on deck 7.

The ferry also has a number of cabins so that the operator can offer short overnight cruises to and from Tallinn when required. The Finnish division of the Kaefer group delivered 161 cabins totalling an area of 2,500m², and Star’s cabin wet units were supplied by Parmarine. The cabins comprise: 64 x four-berth outside cabins; 65 x four-berth inside cabins; and 2 x two-berth outside cabins.

Roro access to the vessel is via a TTS-supplied 18.0m x 4.7m bow ramp and 11.0m x 18.0m stern ramp. With over 2,000 lane metres of vehicle deck space, the ship can carry up to 120 trucks/freight units or 450 private cars.

Star has three daily departures from both Helsinki and Tallinn. It departs Tallinn at 7am, 2pm and 8.30pm and Helsinki at 10.30am, 5pm and 11.55pm, and the price for a single passenger ticket starts at €20 with car packages from €70.

“Star introduces a totally new concept in Tallinn to Helsinki ferry traffic – in addition to high speed travel, passengers have various leisure opportunities on board. Amongst several restaurants, fast food outlets and pubs, the ship also features a business lounge, which allows passengers to work in comfort,” Tallink notes.

After delivering Star, Aker Yards’ cruise and ferry order book contains a further 21 vessels, 11 of which are cruise ships and 10 are ferries. The order book includes four of the world’s largest cruise vessels (Genesis class), the biggest cruise ferry (Color Magic for Color Line) and two of the world’s largest ropax ferries (for Stena). FT