



WHAT MAKES YACHT TRANSPORT SUCH A SPECIALISED SERVICE?

by Marieke Derks

“Yachts are one of the most difficult cargo types to handle”, says John Kamp, Manager Operations. John, a former Spliethoff cargo vessel master, is overlooking Sevenstar’s thirty-odd staff in the operational team, consisting of technical and logistics experts both at Amsterdam Headquarters as well as in global offices, including a full crew of dedicated Loadmasters.

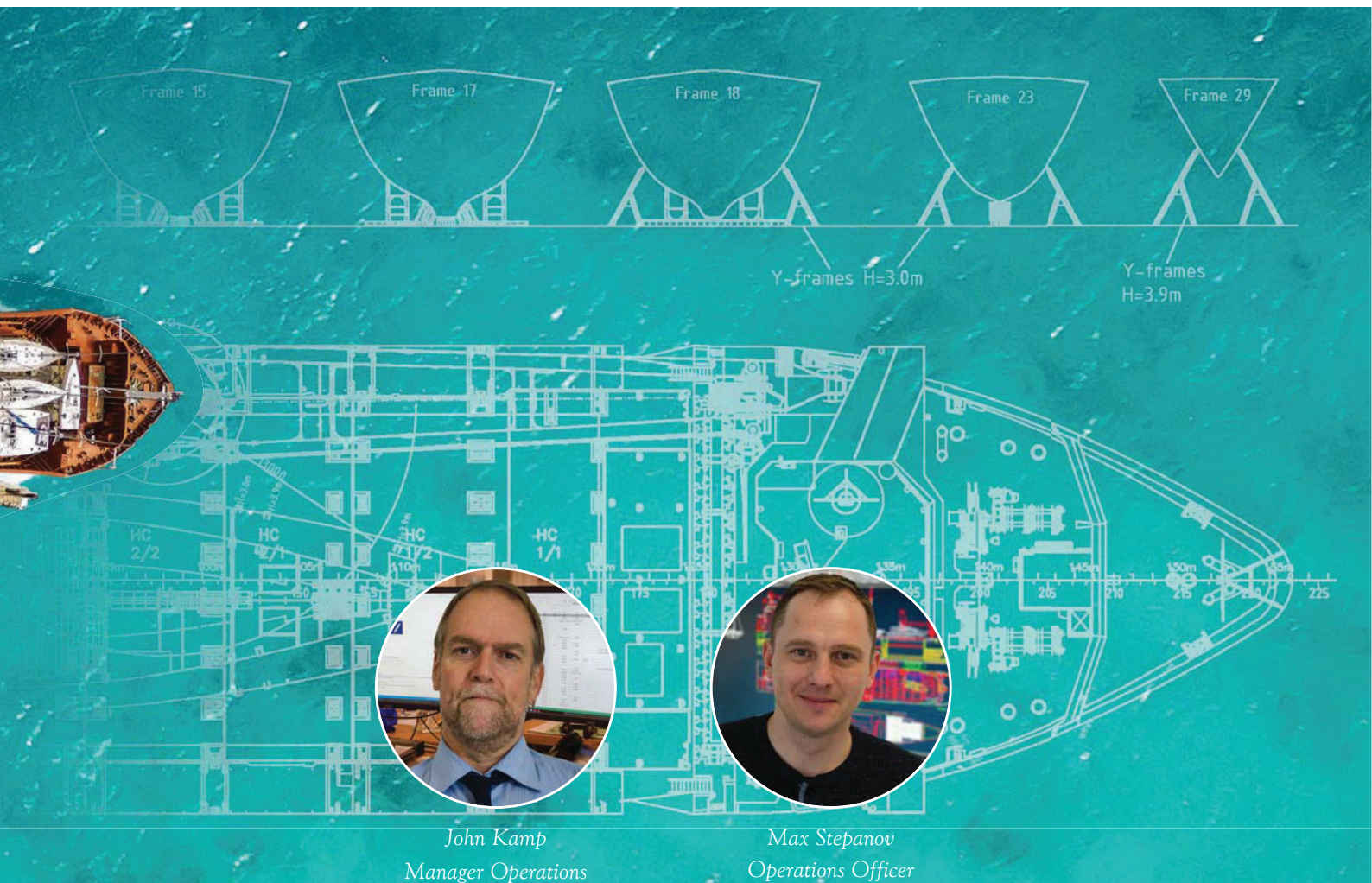
The team manages Sevenstar’s around 730 global port calls on a yearly basis. This means that on average, every single day of the year two cargo vessels are calling into a port somewhere in the world to load or discharge one or more yachts. All technical issues, logistics and paperwork need to be in place to make things happen.

Sevenstar is a member of the Spliethoff Group, one of the largest shipping

companies in The Netherlands, operating a modern fleet of more than 100 multipurpose cargo vessels for specialised services like dry cargo, breakbulk & project cargo, project & heavy lifts, container & Ro-Ro cargo and last but not least: the shipping of yachts through both Sevenstar Yacht Transport and DYT Yacht Transport.

WHAT IS INVOLVED IN OPERATIONS?

“Operations involves a lot more than most people are aware of”, says John, “We need to get the right ship, the right people (Sevenstar Loadmasters, external agents and yacht owners or -captains), the yachts, lifting and stowage materials and all related paperwork in place at the right time at the right place.”



BEHIND THE SCENES: SEVENSTAR OPERATIONS

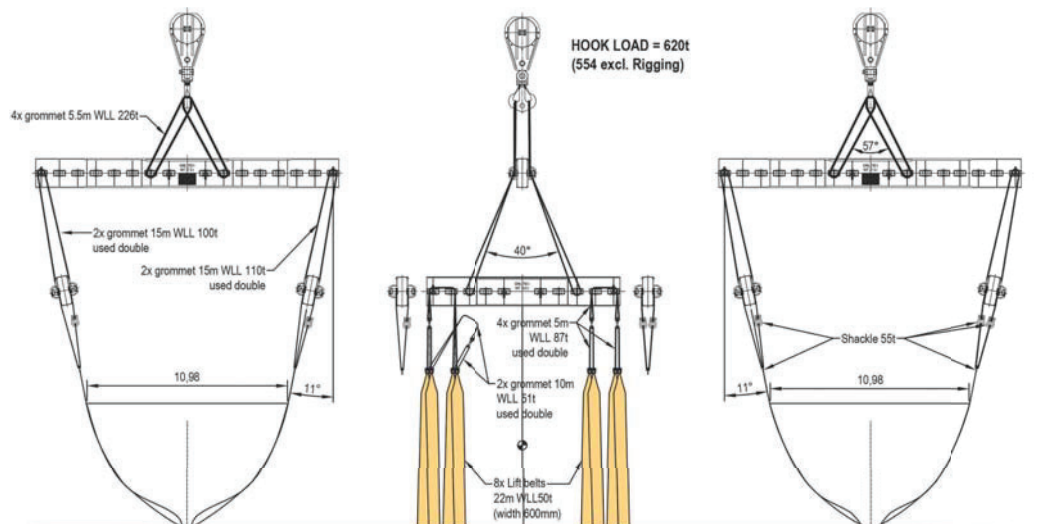
We are talking to John Kamp and Max Stepanov of Sevenstar Yacht Transports' Operations Team about the challenges of shipping yachts around the world, how this is influenced by trends in yacht design and construction and the role of engineering.

"A multitude of tasks needs to be performed", adds Max Stepanov, Operations Officer and also an ex-Spliethoff captain. The Operations team prepares lifting, stowage, cradle and lashing plans for each yacht and even sometimes travels to the yacht for on-site inspection. They assess cargo vessels' load conditions, stability and deck strength and provide technical information and give advice on cargo handling restrictions. Cargo operations are prepared in conjunction with Loadmasters, port agencies, stevedores and other parties involved. The team provides voyage - and Loadmaster instructions and oversees port operations. Max: "Sevenstar uses its own lifting and cradling materials that need to be engineered, manufactured and warehoused. The sheer logistics of these items is already a job apart."

Additionally, the team coordinates all paperwork and instructions for port- and customs agents, contracts, insurance documents, cargo receipts and many other required papers. Often local sub-contractors are appointed, for instance for fumigating yachts for quarantine or the local manufacturing of technical solutions, for instance for cradling. The department handles cargo claims with the insurance company as well in case of damages.

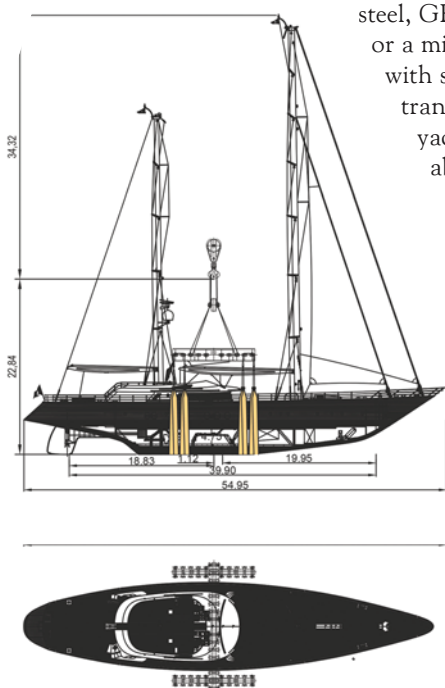
Max comments: "Next to looking after the day-to-day operations, the team develops improved techniques and procedures for cargo handling, stowage and care. We need to constantly improve on efficiency, time spent in port, damage prevention and overall cost-reduction. Costs of operations have a direct impact on the company's bottom line."

"Next to daily operations, the technical team constantly works on improving techniques, technology and procedures"



WHY IS SHIPPING YACHTS A LOGISTICS SPECIALTY?

Above and Below: sections from Sevenstar's Lift Plan for 50+ meter, 550 mt Perini Navi sailing yacht.



"Shipping yachts means that we are always dealing with a unique piece of costly cargo"

"First of all, yachts are delicate, expensive and not one single yacht is the same. We are always dealing with a unique piece of costly cargo", says John. There are many kinds of hull shapes and yachts are constructed from different materials such as steel, GRP, aluminium, modern composites or a mix of those. There are motor yachts with stabilizer fins and sailing yachts are transported mast-up, some of the larger yachts have masts of over 45 meters above deck."

"The second challenge is the overall lack of technical information that we need to prepare the lifts, cradling and stowage for. For quite a few older yachts, drawings are completely missing and even for production boats, when we do have access to drawings, in practice things are never the same. For instance, the capacity or location of the tanks is not always the same, or how much fuel or water is still on board, it all influences the actual lift. It happens from time to time that we need to help clients with calculating the weight of their yacht, based on photos and rough dimensions".

"Thirdly, the lift is often from water onto an anchored vessel. Both yacht and vessel are moving objects, influenced by weather, tide and waves. For instance: a seemingly small swell can make the hook swing over deck from side to side. Also, the yacht is in the water when we position lifting belts and we use divers to check for underwater protrusions and positions."

John concludes: "On the commercial and customer-service side of things, in the yachting world we are dealing with high-end clients who are not used to shipping and who often have little understanding of the technical and logistical aspects involved. This requires a lot of explaining, building trust and 'managing expectations' from the start, as so many influencing factors make shipping very different from for instance booking 'a train ticket to get from A to B.'"

THE INFLUENCE OF YACHT DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION TRENDS

Says Max: "The majority of yachts was never designed for shipping in the first place. There is no comparison with project cargo like windmill blades, where shipping is a given from the start." Max continues: "A yacht is designed with in-water forces, hydrodynamics and aesthetics in mind first and foremost. This is luckily changing to some extent: we recently worked together with a shipyard client on transport requirements during the design and engineering stage for a new yacht model and sometimes yards are selling dedicated shipping cradles with the yacht."

"As specialists, we need to constantly keep innovating. We are shipping (and thus lifting) much larger yachts than we used to. Another big trend in our industry is the demand for greener and lighter yachts, resulting in the use of lighter materials and constructions. Not only are the yachts lighter, but the application of modern materials allows for yachts to be designed with ever more refined' aesthetics and design features. Large glass windows, moving hull parts, specialised coatings are just a few examples. We now get requirements for lifting belts not touching any part of the hull above the waterline."



SHIPPING NEWS FOR SOUTHEAST ASIA

"There are many opportunities to ship your yacht to and from Asia in the coming period", says Peter Staalsmid, Sevenstar's Sales Manager for Australia, New Zealand and Asia Pacific.

"We are noticing a **shift in shipping patterns**, directly and indirectly caused by COVID-19. Now the concept of yachting is increasingly adopted as a safe and fun family pastime, the yacht sales and brokerage industry is booming globally with many first-time owners entering the market."

"In Asia, especially in Hong Kong and China, yacht sales have gone through the roof, as reported by yacht brokerage companies. And also worldwide dealers are running out of stock: factories cannot keep up with demand and clients and brokers are now searching for pre-owned brokerage yachts globally. At the same time, we see that many owners are wanting their yachts closer to home, to be able to go out and explore local waters, now that they cannot travel easily to their yachts and remote destinations."

Penang Loading. "In order to accommodate owners with yachts in Malaysia, we have added Penang as a regular port call to our sailings, both from and to the Med and from and to Australia and New Zealand. With limited border entry and travel options, owners told us they could not easily move their yachts to Phuket or Singapore."

Responding to demand. "When you take a look at our upcoming sailings to and from the region (end of this article), you will notice that there are many 'out of season' sailings this year. For instance we have quite a few sailings from the Med to Asia in the coming months, where as normally the peak for this route is between September and November."

Promoting cruising destinations. "We keep closely watching developments for opening marine borders and travel options in Asia Pacific, as we anticipate a demand for cruising in safe and unspoilt waters away from the crowds. Together with the regional yachting industry and bodies, we will keep actively promoting this fantastic destination."

"It means that we need to keep innovating our lifting approach and materials, applying engineering-based technology. 'Cowboy-style' yacht shipping certainly does not work anymore, and not only for the larger or more vulnerable yachts. We frequently develop custom-made transport solutions for a specific yacht or model."

"3D modeling brings new possibilities as well. Although 2D drawings working perfectly well for our technical experts, they are not always easy to interpret for our clients. For the larger and more complex yachts we develop 3D simulations of the lift for clients to see how their yacht is handled", adds Max. "With yards increasingly producing 3D drawings and software tools getting more powerful and efficient, we will use 3D more often."

LOADMASTERS: "HIGHLY SPECIALISED CARGO SUPERINTENDENTS"

Sevenstar Loadmasters both work on lift-, stowage-, cradle- and sea fastening plans as well as supervise the actual loading and discharge operations on the vessel on site. They play a major role in operations as specialized cargo superintendents, with ample training and experience in handling yachts as complex cargo.

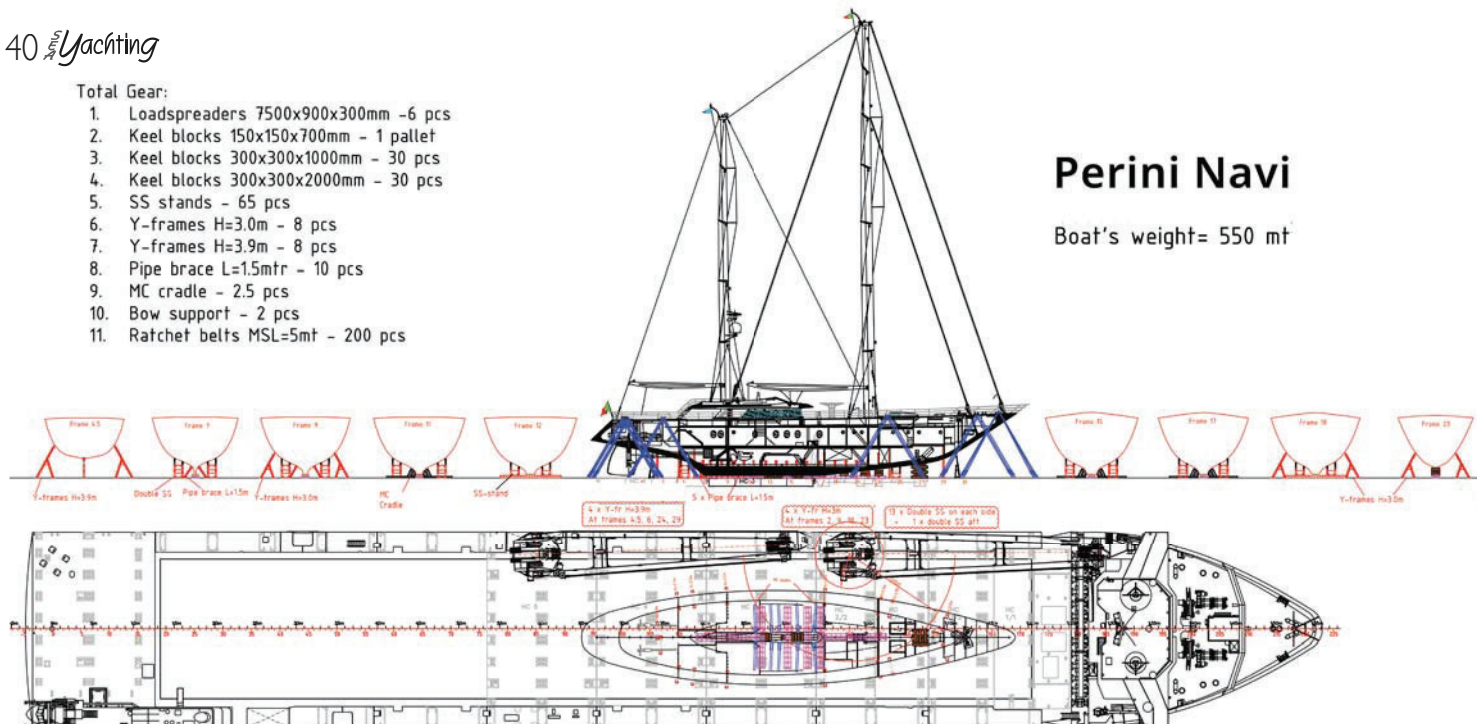
John says: "Because of this experience, on location, Loadmasters are able to add their 'Fingerspitzengefühl' to carefully prepared technical preparations and procedures. They understand local conditions for loading and discharge and supervise port operations to run as smoothly

Total Gear:

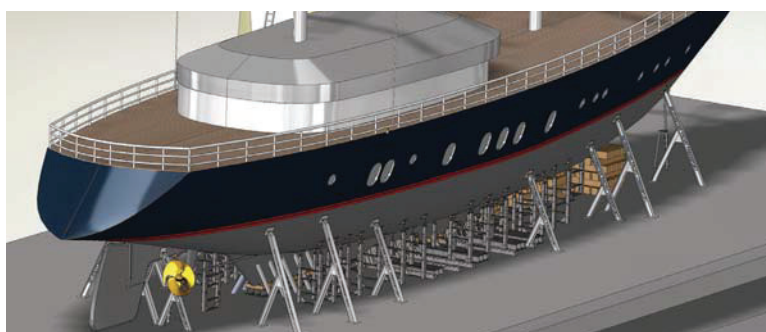
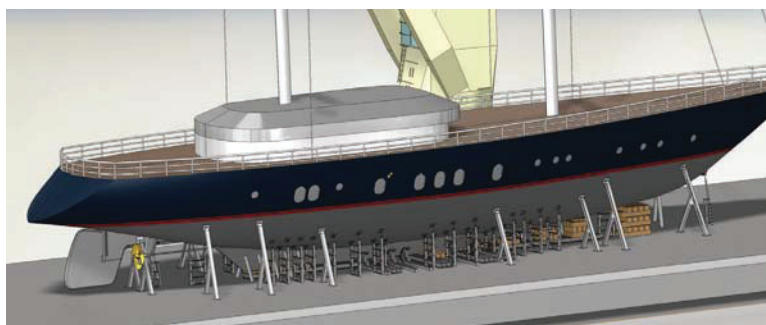
1. Loadspreaders 7500x900x300mm - 6 pcs
2. Keel blocks 150x150x700mm - 1 pallet
3. Keel blocks 300x300x1000mm - 30 pcs
4. Keel blocks 300x300x2000mm - 30 pcs
5. SS stands - 65 pcs
6. Y-frames H=3.0m - 8 pcs
7. Y-frames H=3.9m - 8 pcs
8. Pipe brace L=1.5mtr - 10 pcs
9. MC cradle - 2.5 pcs
10. Bow support - 2 pcs
11. Ratchet belts MSL=5mt - 200 pcs

Perini Navi

Boat's weight= 550 mt



Above: Example of a Cradle Plan, as prepared for a 50+ meter, 550 metric tonnes Perini Navi sailing yacht shipping with Sevenstar on a heavy lift vessel. Below: 3D renderings of the Cradle Plan for same yacht.



as possible with an emphasis on safety on board. Loadmasters have local knowledge about weather, waters and tide and together with Sevenstar's extensive network of offices and local agents, they are quick to react to changing conditions."

"As Sevenstar we have a big additional advantage over competitors. With our access to the large fleet of Spliethoff vessels, we were able to train the crew on board of these ships in the handling of yachts. This year with all the challenges of COVID-19 that has proven a big pro: we have been able to keep providing shipping options to clients working with reliable and skilled crews on board of the vessels, while sometimes monitoring and controlling operations remotely in real time."

WHAT DO YOU ENJOY MOST ABOUT YOUR JOB AT SEVENSTAR OPERATIONS?

John starts: "The main challenge is that there are always new situations or problems to find solutions for: this year COVID-19, a new yacht model, a new loading situation ... even after 12 years in this job there is never a dull moment. I guess this is also what I most enjoy: to encourage the team to come up with new solutions all the time, as we don't like to say things can't be done!"

Max fully agrees: "Most job satisfaction comes from being able to constantly push and shift boundaries and do things that have never been done before, focusing on real, solid incremental steps that enable us to keep up with and anticipate developments in the yachting industry and stay ahead of the game and the competition."

UPCOMING SAILINGS TO & FROM ASIA

EUROPE - ASIA

FEBRUARY - MV HAPPY DYNAMIC

Southampton Alicante Genoa Lavrion* Fethiye* Phuket Singapore Hong Kong Changshu

MARCH - MV DELTAGRACHT (OR SUB)

Southampt. La Rochelle* Genoa Lavrion/Fethiye* Male Phuket Hong Kong Busan* Changshu

APRIL

Southampt. La Rochelle* Genoa Fethiye Male Phuket Hong Kong

ASIA - EUROPE

FEBRUARY - MY HAPPY DRAGON

Hong Kong Singapore Penang Phuket Male Fethiye Genoa Esbjerg IJmuiden

APRIL

Hong Kong Singapore Penang Phuket Male Fethiye Genoa Palma Amsterdam*

MAY

Hong Kong Singapore Penang Phuket Male Fethiye Genoa Amsterdam*

EUROPE - ASIA - AUS - NZ

MARCH/APRIL

Genoa Lavrion Fethiye Phuket Laem Chabang* Fremantle* Newcastle Auckland Cairns*

MARCH/APRIL

Hong Kong Brisbane

MAY

Genoa Lavrion Fethiye Phuket Penang* Brisbane/Newcastle Auckland

*) Port calls on demand



YOUR CONTACTS FOR SHIPPING

Are you considering to ship your yacht? Welcome to contact the Sevenstar Yacht Transport Asia team for Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore. We will be happy to assist you.



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