



OPTIMUM SHIP MANAGEMENT SERVICES

# OPTIMISED MANAGEMENT FOR THE CRUISE INDUSTRY

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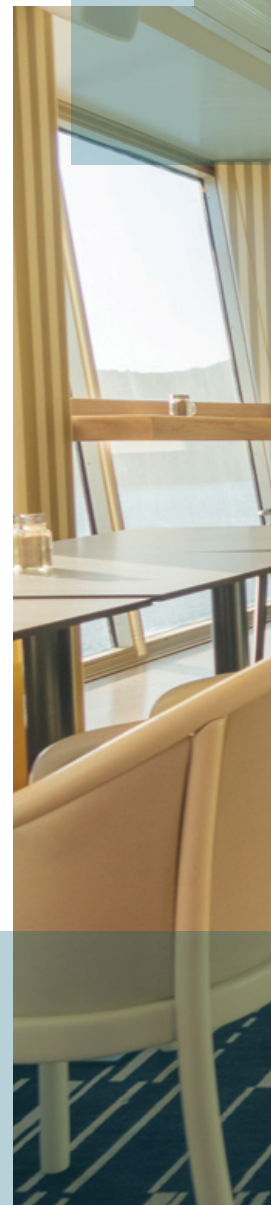
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# Optimised management FOR THE CRUISE INDUSTRY

*Over the last decade, Optimum Ship Management Services has deployed excellent technical and hotel management services within the cruise industry. Having recently added two more vessels to its fleet, the company's COO Captain George Koumpenas sat down with Inside Marine to explain more. Report by Imogen Ward.*



**O**ptimum Ship Management Services was established in 2014, to provide top quality technical and hotel management services for its sister company, Celestyal Cruises.

“We were founded with the intention of supporting Celestyal Cruises, who are part of our parent group,” said COO Captain George Koumpenas. “At the same time, we had a vision to provide the very best third-party management to other groups and operators.”

From there, Optimum went on to gain its ISO 9001 and ISO 14001 certifications and successfully manage a number of different vessels over the years with the support of its 1,200 crew members out at sea and 40 office employees in its headquarters in Greece and Cyprus.

### **A focused fleet**

The company is currently managing a fleet of three vessels, owned by Celestyal Cruises and two more vessels owned by Seajets.

The two new vessels of Celestyal were delivered early last year, ready for renovation: Celestyal Journey (previously named Pacific Aria and operated by P&O Cruises) was acquired in February and Celestyal Discovery (formerly AIDAaura) from AIDA Cruises was acquired in November to replace the two older vessels (The Celestyal Olympia and Celestyal Crystal). Both vessels are planned for cruises to and from Turkey, the Greek Islands and other East Mediterranean destinations while currently, Celestyal is looking into expanding in the Persian Gulf and the Adriatic Sea.

“These are very well-designed vessels, perfect for cruising in our area, with a good space ratio for passengers,” Captain Koumpenas continued. “Also they both also have a lot of open space, which is a must-have for Celestyal, and because of their size, they fit in perfectly with the cruise line’s preference for medium-sized vessels.”

The Celestyal Journey recently underwent an extensive upgrade, with fresh



## PROFILE

ARCO Ltd is involved in shipbuilding and repairing and in the ship industry in general. It was established in 2008 with its registered office based in Perama, Greece. Its executives have an experience of over 30 years in the ship industry, which makes the company one of the most reliable companies in the field.

## SERVICES

ARCO's primary expertise is steel & piping works, specified in treatment of various metal types such as aluminum, stainless steel, etc. It also undertakes great and difficult ship conversions and "all inclusive" projects such as accommodation works (interior design and constructions), outfitting, mechanical/electrical works, cleaning, hydro/sand blasting, painting, etc, for all ship types. ARCO also undertakes projects all over the world and "on board" when required.

### Activities:

Ship Studies – Drawings • New building • Ship Repairs • Ship Conversions • Industrial Works

### Main Services:

Steel & Pipe Renewals • Special Aluminium & Stainless Steel Constructions • Voyage Repairs • Hatch Covers • Davit Repairs • Boilers  
Dry Docking Works • Steel Outfits • Hull Treatment • Gas Freeing • Ultrasonic Thickness Measurement

### All Inclusive Works:

Accommodation Works (interior design & construction) • Outfitting • Electrical Works • Ventilation Works • Insulations • Mechanical Works



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## TARGET/PHILOSOPHY

Our philosophy is to provide a continuous, efficient and prompt service, in order to offer our customers a complete product line. Our quality of services comply with the standards of quality control systems, since ARCO Ltd is certified by ABS ISO 9001:2015, 14001:2015 and 45001:2018 and carries certificates (welders, welding procedures, etc.) by the strictest certification societies.

Responsibility, organisation and punctuality; these are the three elements of ARCO's success during all these years of its operation, as it provides quality work and services on the basis of the lowest possible cost and the shortest delivery time. All the above-mentioned lead to the recognition of our company as the most reliable one in the field of repairs in the domestic market.

The aim and the duty of ARCO are to stand by the client, not only during the assigned project but also after its completion, providing technical support in order to meet any needs. The company's staff is highly professional and at the client's disposal whenever required, 24 hours a day. Moreover, the constant updating on technological developments allows the company to face and meet any requirements and challenges in the modern world.





public spaces and upgraded dream suites, including the stargazer suite. This exterior penthouse stateroom features 88sqm of pure luxury, which can be enjoyed by up to four guests. "The stargazer is the perfect suite for special moments and the initial feedback from passengers has been very positive," said Captain Koumpenas.

"The dream suites offer guests special amenities, including exclusive access to a secluded sunbathing and relaxation area, and the Poseidon Lounge,"

This entire upgrade cost more than €26 million and is being followed by a second renovation project.

"Following the acquisition of Celestyal Discovery last year, renovation is planned to take place in two stages, with the initial stage pencilled in for the first quarter of this year," Captain Koumpenas explained. "The second stage will be implemented towards the end of 2024 and the beginning of 2025."





“The first stage of this project will mainly focus on the passenger and public areas of the vessel, including the cabins. We will focus on creating an experience like that on the Celestyal Journey, with some added Greek and Mediterranean touches.”

### **Cruising collaboration**

The company relies on a chain of valuable suppliers and partners, all of which understand Optimum’s needs and requirements.

“We have chosen to work with the same suppliers for many years,” said Captain Koumpenas. “We have maintained relationships that are built on trust. Our suppliers know exactly what we are looking for, and in return, we understand their strengths and can seek help with these

in mind. As an additional bonus, most of our partners are based locally, so turnaround is quick.”

The company also relies on a team of highly dedicated and skilled individuals who have been given extensive training to ensure the health and safety of everyone on board.

“It is very important to get the right people on board,” Captain Koumpenas added. “That’s our priority, and we always make sure we are providing our crews with the correct training. We are very lucky to have long-standing officers, the majority of whom have been with us since the company’s inception.

“Of course, when it comes to ensuring health and safety, we have to play our [▼](#)



part as well. We remain prompt and ready to assist in solving any problems and maintenance needs that our clients have.”

Keen to provide its crews with ample opportunities for progression and success, the company offers in-house training several times a year. Optimum also sends trainers on board to ensure everyone is given the chance to train.

### Facing the future

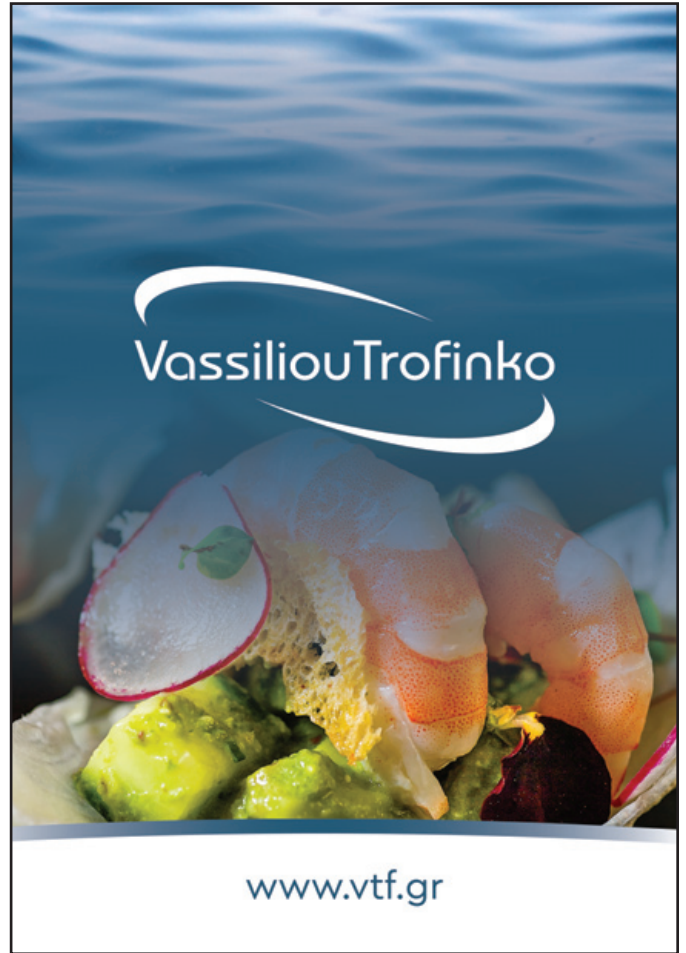
Optimum appreciates its obligation to look after the environment within which it operates. The company has implemented a total fuel management system that has helped reduce the fuel consumption of its vessels by 30%.

“When we first implemented the system, it was focused also on waste treatment

and the conservation of fresh water,” said Captain Koumpenas. “We have done a remarkable job of reducing our fuel and fresh water consumption. Over the last 10 years, we have also successfully reduced our waste production by 30 per cent.”

Determined to continue improving the carbon footprint of its vessels, Optimum, amongst others, is now investigating the practicality of biofuels. With tests ongoing, the company would like to





begin implementing the use of biofuels in the near future.

As 2024 continues to roll forward, Optimum is also on the lookout for new third-party management opportunities:

“We are committed to providing the most reliable and efficient service to Celestyal Cruises,” said Captain Koumpenas. “In doing so, we hope to attract some other customers that would like to utilise our services. We have the resources and expertise to offer an efficient and effective service.”

Optimum is dedicated to ensuring the very best experience for everyone involved, and takes customer, crew and passenger feedback seriously. With surveys in place, the company actively reads all responses from passengers to see what is going well and what can be improved. This is an ongoing practice that helps the company improve continuously.

“Our main task is to operate the Celestyal Cruises vessels”, Captain Koumpenas concluded. “Having worked on board vessels all my life, I have a keen understanding of the business. Ultimately, having happy customers is what drives Optimum, and we always make sure that everyone on board leaves with a smile on their face.” ■





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