

Article in de Telegraaf, the Netherlands, August 26th 2023

LONDON - Within the foreseeable future, the 'largest party boat in Europe' may be sailing around London. The arrival of the Oceandiva, built in the Netherlands, is already causing the horror of many residents along the River Thames.

Kathleen Ehrlich has been fighting the possible arrival of the Oceandiva for over a year. She fears that the huge party boat will cause chaos in her neighborhood. She lives in an apartment in Shad Thames, a popular neighborhood near London's Tower Bridge, which is teeming with tourists during the day.

"But it is quiet at night," says Ehrlich, who chairs the neighborhood committee. "That peace will be over when the Oceandiva is actually allowed to moor around here. Can you imagine how long it takes to drop off 1500 drunk people at this tiny wharf in an old neighborhood with narrow streets

and no facilities for long queues of taxis and buses. That will take hours. And they want to be able to party until two in the morning. It's going to be a big mess."

"Silly idea"

The Dutchman Ferry van Dijk lives in the same area. He completely agrees with his neighbour. "It is mainly the large scale of the Oceandiva that will cause problems. We are already suffering enough from much smaller party boats on the river. The noise echoes over the water. Let alone that they will also use our yard for picking up and dropping off guests. It really is a completely silly idea. We therefore work together with other neighborhoods bordering the river to prevent this."

It's all about a party boat built in the Netherlands. At over 85 meters, the colossus is longer than a Boeing Dreamliner and when the three floors are added together, you come close to a football field.

There are already two Ocean Divas active in Europe, one in Amsterdam and a second in Düsseldorf. But they are smaller than the London giant. With its length, it would be the longest ship that sails up and down the Thames near London and, according to owner Smart Group, it is 'the largest party boat in Europe'.

'Revolutionary'

The boat will be 'revolutionary' for London nightlife, according to Smart Group. The company has forecast that the £25 million boat will boost London's economy by £77 million over the next five years. That would be a welcome stimulus after the heavy corona years. Smart Group states that no house parties or other wild events will be held at the Oceandiva. According to the company, it will mainly concern private company parties.

The plan for the party boat has been around for several years. However, previous plans were constantly shot down because the party boat would not resemble a ship enough. A new design has ensured that at least these bumps were overcome. Smart Group also claims that the Oceandiva is the first climate-neutral party boat floating around in Europe. No expense has been spared to optimize the eco-content of the Oceandiva.

Alcohol license

However, there are still some problems. For example, the company still does not have an alcohol license. The application was withdrawn early this year after a thousand Newham residents protested against the presence of the Oceandiva. According to the owner, the boat was not yet finished at the time. In recent months, in the Royal Docks near City Airport, a lot of work has been done to complete the party boat.

But there are new problems. The Oceandiva was recently in the news again after it damaged another ship when it wanted to dock. Repairs are currently underway in Chatham harbour, near where Michiel de Ruyter once lived to teach the English a lesson. Many Londoners hope that this time they will be left alone by a Dutch ship.

NOTE FROM WIKIPEDIA

Michiel Adriaenszoon de Ruyter (24 March 1607 – 29 April 1676) was a Dutch <u>admiral</u>. His achievements with the <u>Dutch Navy</u> during the <u>Anglo-Dutch Wars</u> earned him the reputation as one of the most skilled naval commanders in history. ... In 1667, De Ruyter executed the highly

successful Raid on the Medway, where he destroyed much of the English fleet and captured the English flagship HMS Royal Charles, facilitating a favourable peace for the Dutch.