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Edith Maersk Delivered and Final E-Name Revealed

It very much looks like Odense Steel Shipyard, a member of the Danish A.P. Møller Group, has been able to sort out the initial problems they had with building Maersk Line's giant E-class container ships. The yard has now handed over the series penultimate ship, Edith Maersk. The new ship will follow her previous sisters into Maersk Line's AE-7, a Far East to Northern Europe service, focused on southern Chinese ports. Edith Maersk will replace the 8,400 TEU Maersk Surabaya and add some 6,000 extra TEU slots per trip. The AE-7 is thus only one ship short of becoming the world's first-ever super loop, employing a homogenous fleet of ULCS. Edith Maersk will however, not be joining the AE-7 in Europe. The ship will perform a rather unconventional eastbound trip with calls at Bremerhaven, Zeebrügge, Tangerang, Port Said and Ningbo to Shanghai, where she takes over Maersk Surabaya's schedule slot in January. Furthermore, your editors stumbled across the designated name for the last unit of Maersk's series of jumbo

ships. After seven sisters, the ultimate E-class ship will finally be a brother: Yard number L-210 will come on stream as Eugen Maersk. In the past, this name had already been carried by an Odense-built double hull VLCC. A few years ago, this vessel was sold to Hyundai Merchant Marine for whom it presently trades as Ocean Hope. Eugen Maersk is scheduled to be delivered late in January. After the delivery of Eugen, Odense ship yard built six more container carriers for its parent company. These ships are believed to resemble the yard's G-class design, possibly with some slight modifications. After that, Odense will build a series of cape size bulk carriers for a Greek owner, as well as a number of ro-ro freighters.



**A unique view of Edith Maersk's maiden arrival at Bremerhaven, seen from the deck of an assisting tug.
photo: Christian Eckardt**

GL Statement Sparks Big Boat Rumours

Anyone closely following this year's ULCS order book developments will have come across two rather interesting statements during the last week: Firstly, Evergreen is rumoured to finally go ahead and charter a set of eight or nine ultra large box ships. Despite the group chairman Chang Yung-Fa's constant denials, Lloyds List recently reported that the Taiwanese carrier was close to signing a charter deal for an

octet of super jumbos. Presently it is not quite clear, whether the company tried to pick up a set of vessels from an existing – but still charter-free – order, or whether a new set of dedicated ships will be signed. The second interesting statement that could be overheard in the past week, came from Hamburg's classification society Germanischer Lloyd. Hermann Klein, director of GL's board, revealed that the pack of ultra-large container ships following on the heels of Maersk's E-class had taken another step up on the capacity letter: Klein claimed that one set of vessels in the present ULCS order book would in fact not weigh in at 12,500 TEU, but instead have a capacity of 14,600 TEU. Germanischer Lloyd did neither reveal the identity of the ship's owner nor the shipyard. Hermann Klein however confirmed that these jumbos are being built to GL class. Taking a wild guess, your editors dare suggest Hermann Klein might be talking of the Mediterranean Shipping Company's ships, slated for delivery as soon as late 2008. Containership-Info does not know for sure whether these vessels are GL-classed or not, but the dimensions of the series' first ship, MSC Daniela, suggest that this type of vessel might well be capable of stowing more than 14,000 TEU. Compared to most of the 12,500-TEU-ULCS in the world shipyard pipeline, these carriers are both one bay longer and one row of containers wider.

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New Terminal for Qinhuangdao

Shanghai, Hong Kong, Shenzhen and Qingdao are among the Chinese ports we regularly hear about, but so far the container shipping community rarely received news from Qinhuangdao. Today, the port in the Hebei province is China's main gateway for the transshipment of coal. It offers more than 300 hectares

of drybulk storage space with a capacity of 8.5 million tonnes – served by no less than 21 dedicated bulker berths. Now, the local port authorities have decided to build a large container port, too. In addition to today's small three-berth container terminal, a second facility is scheduled to be built until 2010. It will have an annual capacity of one million TEU and it will be operated jointly by Qinhuangdao Port Group, which holds a 55-percent stake, the China Shipping Terminal Development Corporation (30 percent) and the Dalian Port Container Corporation (15 percent). The new terminal will provide four berths for ships of about 5,000 TEU. It will be equipped with state of the art IT systems, ship to shore gantries and other container handling equipment.

A Roundup of the Most Recent Orders

After this summer's container vessel order spree, things have cooled down a bit in that last few weeks. Ever since autumn has come, few significant vessel order have been placed. Nevertheless, your editors believe that a number of recent newbuilding contracts are well worth mentioning: Danaos for example recently signed three 10,070 TEU vessels from Hyundai Samho HI . This contract brings the company's vessel pipeline to a total of 44 ships with an aggregate capacity of 332,000 TEU. Doubtless, one will have to acknowledge that Danaos has become one of the industry's big names. All three ships of Danaos' latest order are slated for delivery in 2012. No charter has been publicised yet, but your editors believe that the Greek already secured the ships' employment, before finalising the deal with Hyundai Samho. Another company that signed new tonnage was All Ocean Shipping, a ship owning subsidiary of Yang Ming of Taiwan. The company inked two 6,600 TEU bottoms from their compatriot CSBC shipyard. Quite likely, the vessels will be of similar design as two ships ordered some months ago. All Ocean's duo is slated for delivery in 2012. The company's quartet of vessels would this neatly fit together with five similarly-sized ships Yang Ming will receive from Danaos. The fleet of nine ships would suffice to equip a standalone Far East to Europe sling, for example. Over the next few years, Yang Ming will receive at least 27 new container ships with a slot capacity of about 205,000 TEU. Among these

will be many chartered units from Danaos. More recent vessel orders were placed by Vancouver-based Seaspan Ship Management. Late last week, some press reports linked Seaspan to a five-ship-order for 4,500 TEU vessels at Samsung. The first of these ships is slated for delivery in late 2010. The vessels will be post-panamax ships with a beam of about 35 metres, a length of 260 metres and a low draught of 12.50 to 13 meters. Such ships are becoming increasingly popular, now that the Panama Canal's present beam restrictions are about to fall. Seaspan will charter its new vessels to K-Line. Their low draught makes the ships ideally suited for ports in parts of Africa and South America, where even new terminals like for example the one at Navegantes will only have a clearance of 12 metres.

German Box Ship Costs Take A Leap

According to a study presented by Hamburg's HSH Nordbank earlier this month, operating costs for German KG container vessels have risen by 16 percent in 2006. This increase is much higher than commonly anticipated and far above the average of internationally owned ships. The rising costs are expected to further weaken the results of German KG shipping funds, which had already suffered from the ongoing depreciation of the US-dollar. In the last couple of years, a number of reputable German ship owners partially strayed from the 'KG' course and established ship owning and management offshoots abroad – preferably in Singapore. These owners claim that financing ships through institutional investors abroad presently results in significant savings, when compared to the present KG model.

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