Hong Kong yard sees growing demand for CTVs

Hong Kong-based Cheoy Lee, which builds vessels at its shipyard in Zhuhai, China, is fielding a growing number of enquiries from companies that want to build CTVs

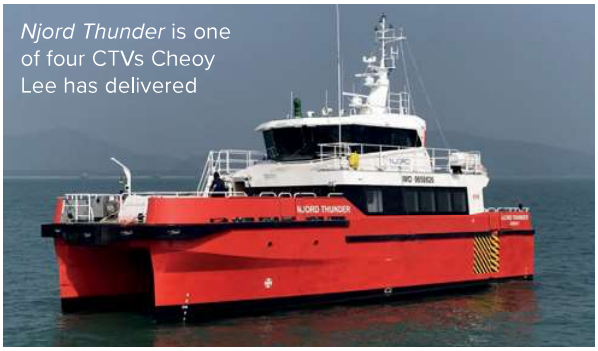
As the offshore wind industry goes global, opportunities for shipyards to build vessels for that market are growing, even in parts of the world with no obvious link to the industry.

A prime example is Cheoy Lee, which has its headquarters in Hong Kong and a production facility on the Pearl River at Doumen, Zhuhai, in southern China.

All of Cheoy Lee's vessel construction takes place at the Zhuhai shipyard facility, which is approximately 72 km to the west of the Hong Kong site. One of the only yards in the world to routinely build in steel, fibreglass aluminium and various combinations of these materials, Cheoy Lee has a varied client base which now includes crew transfer vessels (CTVs). The company builds to internationally recognised standards and regulations and says its client base "is as varied as our production" and ranges from government agencies to shipping companies to entrepreneurs.

As Cheoy Lee senior sales manager Jonathan Cannon explains to *OWJ*, the company has long recognised the importance of partnering with specialist design firms to fully harness its own capabilities.

Over a number of years, it has worked with Robert Allan Limited to build tugs and has become one of the leading builders of azimuth stern drive harbour tugs. It also builds composite-hull yachts, having established a close working relationship with structural engineering firm Gurit. More recently, it has teamed with BMT, one of the best-known designers of CTVs. Doing so has worked well, with CTVs already built and delivered to leading CTV operator Njord Offshore.



Njord Thunder is one of four CTVs Cheoy Lee has delivered

Mr Cannon tells *OWJ*, "In addition to the four CTVs we have already delivered to Njord Offshore, we are building two 27 m quad Volvo IPS vessels to the same design as the first two. We recently launched the first vessel in the new pair and will launch the second very shortly. We are also building two 27 m quad jet powered units for Japan."

Mr Cannon says the company has observed the fast growth in the offshore wind industry and had been intending to establish a foothold in the market for some time.

"Now that we are becoming recognised in this field, enquiry rates are increasing," he tells *OWJ*. "Our expertise in rugged offshore commercial vessel construction – such as aluminium crewboats, catamaran passenger ferries and luxury yacht-building – converge perfectly with the needs of the offshore wind industry, allowing us to offer the rugged but refined and dependable product this sector needs."

Mr Cannon says all of the vessels for the offshore wind industry the company has built so far have been BMT designs, "and the results have been good."

He explains that the company has also bid for a few projects using Incat Crowther designs, although it has not yet built one of their CTV designs.

"We build a lot of Incat Crowther designs for other markets, from ferries to crewboats and even a 63 m cruise vessel for Sydney harbour, which is currently in build," he explains. "We also have a well-staffed inhouse design office, but we only use designs from internationally known naval architects."

Asked what he regards as the company's 'USP' when it comes to competing in the offshore wind vessel market, Mr Cannon mentions the broad range of capabilities the yard has and long-term collaboration with leading designers, combined with competitive pricing, "but we don't really have unique selling points," he says, "we just strive to be that much better than other yards in every area in which we work."

Asked if the company is targeting offshore wind owners and designers in specific parts of the world, Mr Cannon says the company had always built for global markets and its approach to offshore wind is no different.

"It is a pretty competitive market," he concludes, "but we compete in many different fields and every market is competitive." *owj*