

SunStone to open floodgates for cruise ship building in China

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SunStone Ships is beating the challenges of building cruise ships in China, allowing others to follow its lead

SunStone Ships is leading a huge influx of cruise ships to be built in China – they are bridging the Chinese shipyard gap in knowledge on the technology and hotel side.

The cruise owner has brought in European and US companies to combat these challenges. Tomas Tillberg Design is in charge of the interior design and Finland-headquartered Makinen is the interior outfitter. Norwegian company Ulstein Design & Solutions is in charge of design and technical equipment.

Tomas Tillberg Design chief executive Tomas Tillberg told me, “For them to build a cruise ship is not daunting from a technical or steel point of view. There is little or no experience with the hotel side – our job is to bring that to the shipyard.”

By working alongside these companies and learning from them, China Merchants Industry Holdings shipyard will gain the knowledge it needs to build cruise ships, especially as the cruise ships are in the smaller sector and are a series. Building smaller ships versus building a mega cruise ship is easier and simpler, plus being a series means they can learn as they move from one ship to the next.

China Merchants and other Chinese shipyards can build large and complicated tonnage including tankers. Once they can add to this the specific hotel and cruise design and technology knowledge needed, they will be winning many cruise newbuilding contracts.