

The future Sestri Ponente mega-shipyard

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State-of-the-art technology and know-how made in Genoa, the next-generation cruise ships will be built in the future new mega-drydock under construction in Sestri Ponente. It will rank amongst the largest facilities in the Mediterranean, catering for the construction of high-tech vessels over 350 metres in length and up to 150,000 gt.

The Sestri Ponente shipyard is the focus of a range of major projects divided into three phases designed to consolidate Genoa's leadership in the shipbuilding industry worldwide, whilst simultaneously incorporating new levels of technology in sustainability and safety.

Phase 2, which kicked off in the autumn, will equip the shipyard with a new mega-drydock: 400 metres in length, 80 metres in width and 11 metres deep. The facility will showcase as one of the largest in the Mediterranean and accommodate the construction of ships up to 150,000 gt, 380 metres long and 50 metres wide. The mega dry dock will be flanked by a new outfitting pier and a high-load capacity yard.

The overall plan is designed to optimise the on-site shipbuilding process: the new layout of the expanded area will accommodate, extending from west to east, the entire manufacturing cycle of the wide variety of manufactured products used in shipbuilding, the production of semi-worked articles and assemblies, followed by outfitting, sea trials and the final launch of the vessel out at sea.

Within this framework, a Ports of Genoa working group, including Coastguards and Pilots, conducted real-time vessel navigation simulations of the future newbuilds planned at the mega-drydock, at the HR Wallingford Ship Simulation Centre in the UK. Conditions of vessel accessibility and navigation in full safety, in response to varying degrees of wind, waves and currents, were assessed; the manoeuvring simulation system also allowed for potential emergency situations which may require the newbuilds to return to the shipyard following trials out at sea.

A range of public utility works are now underway, prior to the effective installation of the mega-drydock, to ensure minimal disruption to daily port activities in the designated site during construction. The overall project is a feat of sophisticated engineering and the complexity of the planned works requires the dedication and commitment of a qualified team of engineers and highly skilled workers.

With the new mega-drydock in Sestri Ponente and the new breakwater in Sampierdarena, the Port of Genoa is onstream to meet the future challenges posed by the advent of the next generation ultra-large ships.