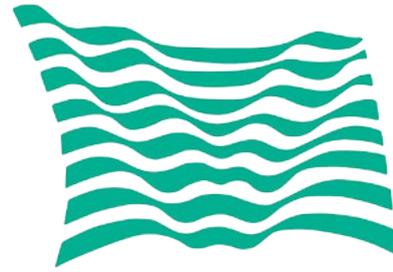


A legacy to treasure - Genoa's Galata Naval Museum will inspire a new generation of shipping men and women



V. Ships

The venue delivers a positive message about the history of shipping, from the galley era to the present day

Roberto Giorgi - October 2013

Visiting museums and art galleries has never been one of my priorities. As my closest friends are aware, I prefer to spend my time travelling, building relationships and creating business, rather than expanding my academic knowledge.

So when members of the Association for the Promotion of the Maritime Museum of Genoa approached me to offer me the presidency of this entity, I thought the proposal was, at the very least, bizarre.

I could not understand how a shipmanager with my personality, unsophisticated in the culture of art and literature, could add value to the association's mission, which is sponsoring and lobbying to develop the activities of the Genovese Maritime Museum.

But before declining the offer, I decided it would be beneficial to pay a visit to the museum. As happens with a lot of my compatriots, I discovered a true gem hidden in the place where I was born and grew up.

Perhaps because walking through streets of an Italian city is like walking through history and through the culture of the country, most Italians are the last to know about treasures hidden behind a wall or inside a church.

Within minutes of visiting the museum, I was in love straight away.

I have always felt proud to be Genovese and I realised I could be a good ambassador for the museum during my travels around the world.

What impressed me most — and what got me thinking — related to those who were queuing to enter the museum; most of them were elementary students or from primary schools. Seeing this gave me a completely different view of the opportunity offered, and a very good reason to accept this new role.

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What better chance to promote our industry than this vehicle for reaching the younger generation, using the museum's positive message of the history of shipping, from the galleys era to the present technology of today?

To most people around the world, with no discrimination on age or sex, our industry is invisible unless something really tragic happens. The great stories of our navigators, merchants, traders and explorers are ignored, or only last the time it takes to read a book.

Most shipping executives who promote the role of our industry, looking to give a better image impact of the shipping world, have difficulty finding the right tools for reaching a much wider audience.

Is a maritime museum one of the starting points to educating and engaging our young generation? It certainly is, I believe.

I probably need to tell you a little bit of my story for you to appreciate the reasons for my statement and what lies behind my decision to help this process.

A few years ago, during one of my skiing trips in the wilderness of Jackson Hole, Wyoming, I thought about how life has been good to me: a mixture of passion, ambition, commitment, gut feeling, being there at the right time and a good dose of luck has made my journey extremely exciting and successful.

Almost 50 years ago, when I decided to enter the Nautical College in Genoa, pushed by my friends' stories of adventures, I never imagined in the best of my dreams that I could reach this level of fulfilment in my career.

The journey started as third officer on board a cargo vessel named Monfiore, owned by Navigazione Alta Italia, in a single trip from the Mediterranean to an Asian port.

It was the beginning of a truly revealing story of what I believe are the essential ingredients to a young shipping man. Qualities such as being open-minded, open to communicating, listening and learning; appreciating working as a team, respecting colleagues at every level — all these need to be developed at an early stage, when you are young and ready to start your journey.

Putting objectives above your dreams, pursuing them with strength and vigour, never giving up when things become difficult — these are all essential ingredients to finding your limits to your dreams.

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With the above in mind, happy with how life has treated me, I really believe it is time to give something back to the industry and especially to the young generation, who will be the new leaders of the world.

It is our collective duty to help the new forces of our industry any time they need: motivating them, listening when they need to talk, sharing our experiences, both negative and positive, stimulating them to think independently, freeing them to be young and different.

The shipping industry gave me success, financial reward, global exposure and happiness — what could have been better for the dreams of a cadet officer?

I shall certainly be happy to participate in and to be part of building this story.



Roberto Giorgi is president of V.Ships

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