



A QUEEN AT TARIFA

Above : A rare capture of PT.50 Queenfoil after it left Norway in 1979. It is seen here alongside at Tarifa, Spain in March 1984, three years prior to its withdrawal / ED SIJMONS photo

THE NORDIC COUNTRIES were early takers-on of the Supramar hydrofoils. Already the same year that the first PT.50 was launched by Rodriquez in Italy, in 1959, orders for two were placed with the Messina shipyard by Finnish and Norwegian operators. Both vessels were delivered in May 1960.

The Norwegian PT.50, *Vingtor*, entered service with Det Stavangerske Dampskibsselskab and Sandnæs Dampskibs Aktieselskab on the 109-nautical mile route between Stavanger and Bergen in June. With a journey time of a little over 3½ hours, one daily roundtrip was operated until late November when the service was discontinued for the winter.

A second PT.50, *Sleipner*, followed from the Rodriquez shipyard in the spring of 1961 by which it was possible to timetable two daily departures in each direction. While only a year apart, the vessels were not identical, the most visible difference being a restyled wheelhouse on *Sleipner* offering better space and visibility. There were also some variations in the interior layout.

The Stavanger–Bergen hydrofoil service was maintained successfully by *Vingtor* and *Sleipner* until 1972 when a Rodriquez RHS 140 hydrofoil was added.

Two years later another of Norway's major ferry operators, Hardanger Sunnhordlandske D/S, became joint owner of the operation, now marketed as Flaggruten. Coinciding with this was the introduction of two Westamarin W95 catamarans as replacements for the PT.50s. As it was decided to give the new catamarans the names of the PT.50s, these were renamed *Princefoil* and *Queenfoil*, respectively, and both were put up for sale.

Princefoil was sold in Cyprus in 1976 whereas it would be another three years before *Queenfoil* left the north for a warmer climate. It was acquired by Transports Touristiques Intercontinentaux, Transtour, in Morocco in March 1979 to enter service across the Straits of Gibraltar between Tangier and Gibraltar and Tarifa and Algeciras in Spain. The company introduced its first Kometa hydrofoil across the Straits of Gibraltar in 1965 and had added another two since.

In September 1987 all four vessels were withdrawn. *Queenfoil* was laid up at the Crinavis ship breaker in the Bay of Algeciras where it is believed to have also ended its days.

Read more about the hydrofoil years in Norway in *CFF* 8, October 2003. **cff**