

DRYDOCK OFFERS A DIVERSITY OF SKILLS

BY PETER BARCLAY



Jacquier Cartier in dock



Main engines removed



The versatility of the yard is demonstrated with three vessels in dock

New Zealanders have never been shy of a challenge but when VT Fitzroy tendered for one of its latest contracts, some might be forgiven for thinking it was more by cheek than chance.

The fact that the company won the work against stiff international competition is noteworthy in itself but when you consider that its latest client was once at substantial odds with the New Zealand Government, it becomes a seafaring tale with something of a curious political twist.

It's also a tale which seems to have gone unnoticed by a younger generation of media moguls who, for some unexplained reason, have made little of the fact that a French Navy light transport ship has been housed in our navy drydock for several weeks.

And, those that recall, won't have lost sight of the fact that the *Jacques Cartier* now lays almost opposite the wharf from which the original tale began. But surely, even if all connection with the politics of the past has now been lost, the significance of the commercial contract won here must not.

VT Fitzroy have managed the drydock and marine engineering facilities at Devonport for the Royal New Zealand Navy since July 2004. Since then they have carried out many ship repair and drydocking projects for the NZ Navy and for New Zealand and overseas commercial ship owners but this is the first time that an overseas navy vessel has been refitted.

Quite apart from the political irony the circumstance, the *Cartier* contract surely represents a clear acceptance of New Zealand's

growing toehold in the international boatbuilding arena. For VT Fitzroy, the work is seen as a natural progression as it allows the dockyard's skilled workforce to apply quality systems developed by working closely with our own navy. Maintaining vessels for a navy fleet is one of the most demanding roles in the marine industry. It requires technicians to work with some of the most advance instruments currently put to sea.

VTF's service is supported by world class, state-of-the art equipment. A recent acquisition was an industrial coatings facility consisting of a fully enclosed grit blasting booth, two fully enclosed spray painting booths and associated areas. The grit blasting booth has internal dimensions of 11.55m (L) x 5.59m (W) x 4.4m (H) while the two painting booths are 11.35m x 5.33m x 4.4m. Access to all booths allows full size work pieces to be take in. Within the building is an overhead traveling crane for lifting full size work pieces off transporters. The grit blasting booth use ISO compliant premium "B" grade garnet. The painting booths allow two painters to work in each booth simultaneously and can be heated to 110C. There is an adjacent undercover preparation area/workshop also with overhead crane and there is an adjoining mixing room and on site dangerous goods storage.

The work range carried out by the yard this year is significant and reflects the wide range of skills available. It includes a work package for the steam tug, *William C Daldy*, involving renovation of the foredeck area, including removal of the deck fittings, windlass etc and deck timber, partial replating of the deck

The *Christine Mary* and *Hautura* are up on the 200 tonne syncro lift



house deck connections and more. Research vessel *Discover II* was in drydock in April for overhaul of its compressor engines and removal for survey of twin rudders and tail shafts. Steelwork on this contract included installation of additional tank manholes and repairs to service tanks. Deck work included overally of deck cranes, installion of a fire fighting foam system and modification of potable water systems.

Preservation work on this vessel includes painting of the underwater hull and ultra high pressure water blasting and painting of fresh water tanks. The vessel spent two weeks in dry-dock followed by approximately four days on the repair berth for completion of engine overhauls and preparations for departure. In all this took more than 9,000 hours of work and was completed in the 25 day repair period. And the final outcome? Happy owners who were "pleased with the volume of work completed in such a condensed timeframe."

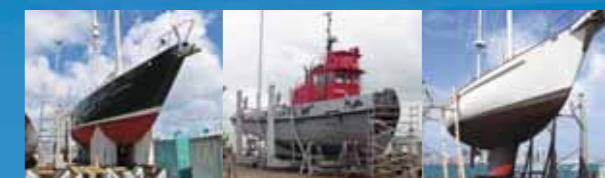
VT Fitzroy has a team of over 200 and is now seen as a leading contender for ship repair contracts in the south west Pacific. The facility, and its strategic location is complemented by competitive prices and a proven track record for providing high quality work to their military and commercial customers. While the navy are one of the companies larger customers, VTF offer premium engineering services across a broad spectrum, but focusing primarily on the commercial shipping, defence sectors, fishing factory boats, research and cargo vessels and the super yacht market. The variety or work undertaken at the yard is essentially driven by the need ensure that commercial work is what underwrites operations rather than navy work alone.

The dry dock itself, is 170 metres long with a 24.43 metre entrance breadth, and can support a gross weight of 14,000 tonnes. This makes the Devonport dock a third larger than the next largest dry dock in New Zealand. Early next year the dock will play host to a number of commercial vessels including a cement carrier and a stern trawler as well as a Papeete based passenger vessel. NZ Navy work will include a major upgrade to one of our ANZAC frigates. The ANZAC Frigate work will include installing new engines into the ships, upgrading their diesel propulsion and other engineering systems.

Future plans include continued improvement to the services provided to the NZ Navy, NZ commercial vessels, developing the company's navy partnership and extending the current Dockyard Management Contract. Further development will also take place in the companys marine and engineering design and consultancy services. Effort is also being put into better maximizing the use of the yard's 200 tonne syncro lift and haul out facilities while providing ongoing repair services to overseas commercial and military vessels.

VT Fitzroy

NEW ZEALAND'S LARGEST MARINE ENGINEERING FACILITY



VT FITZROY LIMITED
DEVONPORT · AUCKLAND · NEW ZEALAND
PH: +64 9 446 1957 · FAX: +64 9 446 1730
EMAIL: SHIP.REPAIR@VTFITZROY.CO.NZ
WEB: WWW.VTFITZROY.CO.NZ

VIPS66