

'Elite'

By PETER MURPHY

Wang Tak delivers a new fire boat in Hong Kong

Wang Tak Engineering & Shipbuilding is one of the old established shipbuilding and repair yards that has grown with Hong Kong, keeping pace with the increasing commercial importance of the port. First established in 1938, Wang Tak has been providing efficient ship repair, ship conversion and new construction services to overseas and local clients.

In October 1993 Wang Tak relocated to new facilities at Stonecutters Island, now part of West Kowloon through land reclamation, where its facilities include mooring jetties and a ship hoist gantry for lifting vessels of up to 300 tonnes onto a docking platform for overhaul and underwater repair. This capability means that Wang Tak is able to service most of the coastal ferries, high speed craft, catamarans, tugs, barges and work boats on which the people and port of Hong Kong increasingly depend.

As one of the busiest ports in the world, Hong Kong requires a 24 hour repair and service facility for commercial shipping and Wang Tak's reputation as an expert afloat repairer is well established. To service this vital side of the business, Wang Tak has its own dedicated marine fleet of tugs and work boats, which is on constant standby to carry out urgent repairs whether at the anchorage or elsewhere.

In the year 2000, the Hong Kong SAR Government was looking to bolster the port's marine fire-fighting capacity and to replace the aged 'Alexander Grantham' fire boat. Wang Tak was selected over a fierce international competition to design and build the new multipurpose fire boat 'Elite'. The vessel entered into service in 2002.

With a displacement of 650 tonnes, length of 42.5 metres and beam of 9.60 metres, 'Elite' is the latest addition to the impressive range of marine fire-fighting equipment operated by the Hong Kong SAR Fire Services Department.

'Elite' is powered by twin Caterpillar 3516B engines rated to 1,772kW each, giving it a service speed of 15 knots. It carries a crew of 15 and has a capacity for up to 100 passengers/survivors. A Unitor external fire-fighting system of two fire monitors each of 40m³/min and a reach of 150 metres and six smaller water/foam monitors of 10m³/min, gives 'Elite' a total pumping capacity of three times 2,400m³/h. Full deluge is provided to protect the vessel during fire-fighting duties. This array of fire-fighting equipment and pumping capacity makes 'Elite' the world's largest dedicated fire boat.

To assist in salvage and wreck removal operations, a Southern Oceanics LG-360A diving cage system has been installed onboard, allowing for up to three divers at a time, working at a maximum depth of 60 metres.

A full array of electronics and navigation equipment is housed in the spacious and functionally designed wheelhouse. Other key facilities include a conference room seating 16, survivor cabin, sickbay and crew facilities. The vessel is fully air conditioned, with the provision of ventilation shutdown during transit through a hazardous atmosphere.

With the buoyant economy of China fuelling a surge in demand and with a total throughput of over 18 million TEUs in 2001, Hong Kong has overtaken Singapore to take the title of the world's busiest container port. With so much at risk, it is

vital that the commercial operations of the port are adequately protected and the additional fire-fighting capability provided by 'Elite', designed and constructed by Wang Tak, is further proof of Hong Kong SAR Government's commitment to safety.

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'Elite'

SPECIFICATIONS

Type of vessel:	Fire-fighting vessel
In survey to:	Marine Department, HK SAR
Home port:	Hong Kong
Owner:	Hong Kong SAR Government
Operator:	Fire Services Department, HK SAR
Builder:	Wang Tak Engineering & Shipbuilding
Length overall:	42.50 metres
Length, waterline:	39.60 metres
Beam:	9.60 metres
Depth:	4.20 metres
Draught:	2.50 metres
Displacement:	650 tonnes
Tonnages:	653 GRT, 196 NRT
Hull construction:	Steel
Superstructure construction:	Aluminium
Paints:	Hempel
Main engines:	2 x Caterpillar 3516B; 1,772kW each
Gearboxes:	2 x Nico MGN 1424V
Propellers:	2 x Stone; fixed pitch, 5-bladed, 1,700mm diameter
Thruster:	Schottel STT330T-LK
Thruster engine:	Caterpillar 3406E; 522kW
Service speed:	15 knots
Generator engines:	2 x Caterpillar 3406C; 245kW each
Fire-fighting engines:	2 x Caterpillar 3512B; 1,231kW each
Pumping capacity:	3 x 2,400m ³ /h
External fire-fighting system:	2 x Unitor monitors; 2400m ³ /h each, 6 x Unitor monitors; 600m ³ /h each
Diving cage:	Southern Oceanics LG-360A
Winches:	Plimsoll PR-HAW/SD-1T
Crane:	Palfinger PK 48000 MA
Magnetic compass:	Suunto D-165
Radar:	Furuno FR-1525 Mk3
GPS:	Furuno GP-3300
Plotter:	Furuno GR-80
Sounder:	Furuno FE-700
Radios:	Furuno FM-2510
Fuel:	80 tonnes
Fresh water:	22 tonnes
Passengers:	100
Crew:	15

