

# A Different Kind of Cruise Ship: The Stad Amsterdam

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There is another flag displayed, red background with black bar and the white text 'XXX'. To clear up any potential misunderstanding: this is the flag of the city of Amsterdam, which owns and operates the ship together with the town of Randstad.

If you ever dreamt of taking a cruise, you know that there are many options. You could share huge floating resorts with up to three-thousand guests. Or you could go on a real adventure, which only a few have experienced.

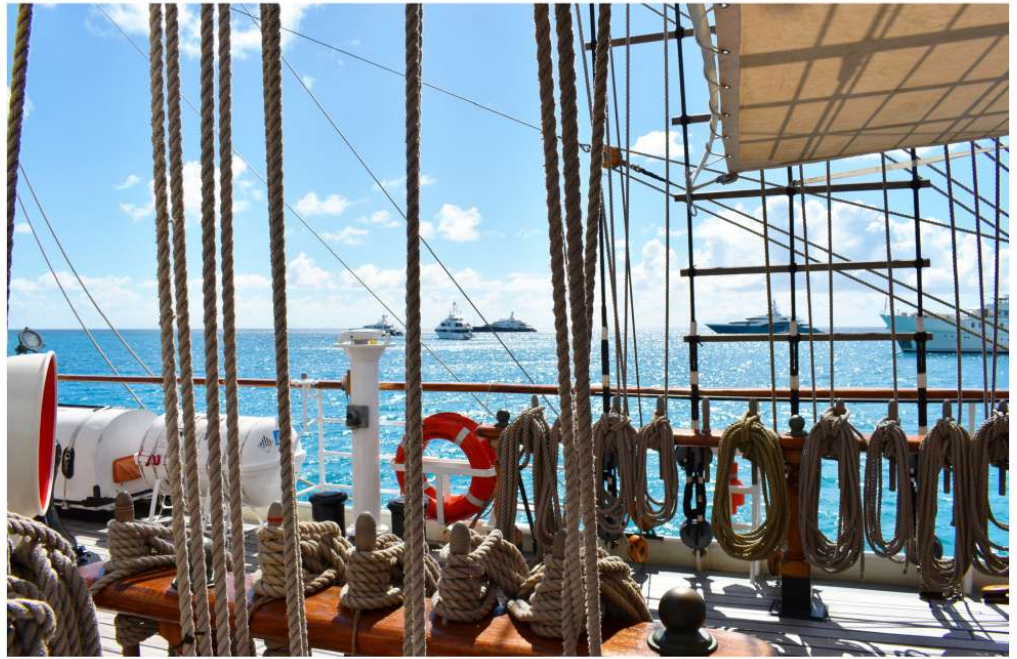
The Stad Amsterdam is a passenger ship with fourteen luxurious double cabins with private bathrooms. Part of the year, cabins can be booked like a cruise ship. The ship's itinerary includes ports of call around the world, representing The Netherlands in semi-official functions but also hosting events and day sails as business incentives. National naval forces operate most tall ships today; not so with the Stad Amsterdam, which balances operational expenses with cruises. There are other times, where she is used as a school ship to teach the art of sailing to young students.

Boarding the 76 meters (250 feet) long ship, the first impression is the overwhelming amount of rope visible; 16 kilometers (10 miles) of it are used in the rigging and to operate the twenty-nine sails. It takes a crew of thirty to handle the ship, but this includes the hospitality aspect as well.



*Andi Manser, Captain of the clipper Stad Amsterdam*

Captain Andi Manser is a Swiss national from the Lake Constanz region, commanding the ship for almost ten years. Asked about communication with crew and



*Stad Amsterdam anchored in Simpson Bay*

passengers, he explains: "The official language on board is English because we have an international crew. But yes, I do speak Dutch. The Swiss-German dialect I grew up with has similarities to Dutch, so it was quite easy to pick up for me."

Modern and much larger cruise ships with sails use them mostly for decoration. How often is the Stad Amsterdam really sailing?

"Almost always," responds Capt. Manser. "We have a one thousand horsepower diesel engine installed, but ninety-five percent of the time, the ship sails. She is fast, cruising with up to fifteen knots." Which translates into 29 km/h or 17 standard miles/h.

The outside helm station is to the aft, and visibility into the direction of travel is precisely zero, the view blocked by the massive masts and the raised bow.

"This is why we have to place one crew member on the bow, anytime we operate in close quarters. But the helmsman has a raised hatch he can stand on to see a bit more if needed."

The main bridge is protected from the elements, and here we find all the treasures of cutting-edge marine electronics installed. Walking down a mahogany staircase, we enter the longroom, considered the heart of the ship.

This is the room where dinner is served, where seminars are held and passengers can pass their time reading books and surfing the Internet while on a cruise. The central installation is a bar, and there is a separate space for a buffet.

Chef Mick Baumann is responsible for the gourmet meals served. In the past, he was a popular chef with a loyal following in Sint Maarten, where he lived and worked for seven years.



*The 'longroom' for dining and entertainment*

The interior shows beautifully executed wood-work, stylish and certainly not tacky by attempting to create a fake antique feel.

It should be noted that the crew quarters are outfitted and sized equal to the passenger cabins – mega yacht crews could be jealous.

The walk-in engine room hosts two massive generators and the main engine.

"But I feel that the Stad Amsterdam is a very green operation," states Capt. Manser. "As we travel mostly under sail, it is only the diesel generator running, and this is needed to power the amenities onboard."

"We do explore other cutting-edge solutions, and we have researched auxiliary propulsion with a hydrogen-powered engine. But at this point, running a diesel still is the most ecological way for us."