



The Cape Express on its maiden voyage to Cape Canaveral.

The good ship serendipity: And it's green!

Steve Ganoë had several reasons to be smiling. He had just sent the Cape Express, the 11th purpose-built G&G Shipping vessel on its maiden voyage from the company's St. Johns Shipbuilding shipyard.

Ganoë and yard boss Bobby Barfield built the 190-foot, five-story tall, welded steel-hull ship from scratch with all American components at the company's subsidiary shipyard. And it was about to enter trade from a new G & G terminal at Port Canaveral.

The Cape Express is the second new vessel from the yard on the east bank of the St. Johns River, just south of Palatka. It is the first company-built ship to be deployed for the use of G&G. And it represents several other firsts. It is the first in the fleet with a centerline mounted third diesel engine.

It is the first to use biodiesel. It is the first to be based at Port Canaveral. It is one of 10 G&G ships that can be easily manned by American crew members and fill a void in Jones Act, short-sea shipping when the opportunity presents itself.

The Cape Express and the new terminal are certainly causes for joy. But Ganoë had also just learned that his two sons would be joined next year by another child, perhaps a girl. Ganoë's wife saved the surprise until after the debut of the Cape Express. Ganoë celebrated by romping on the beach with two young sons. "Life is good," he said. "There are very few carriers that design and build their own ships." We counted two: A.P. Moller-Maersk's Odense Steel Shipyard and G&G Shipping's St. Johns Shipbuilding in South Palatka.

Life is good and getting better for the G&G partners, Ganoë and Mike Grandonico, because fate smiled on them and they were both ready and capable of capitalizing on serendipity. Beginning with a refitted tramp freighter, the two young men from the Space Coast have built a regularly scheduled cargo ship line calling a dozen Caribbean ports, primarily in the Bahamas. They build it on reliability, honesty and their unique ships that eschew deep-water ports and unload wherever the shipper wants and the local Customs officials are willing to stand.

For the past few years, the new liberalized foreign direct investment rules in the Bahamas have stimulated at least \$10 billion in new construction, primarily residential and resort community development. In the same way the ocean is always so close to the shore, resort developers build on the beach. When they can, they add a marina for yachts. They could not care less that the deep-water port is on the other side of the island or 100 miles away. When they want door-to-door delivery, they turn to G&G and don't worry about the cost.

Ganoë explains, "We have a growing business in the Dominican Republic because we can deliver to the construction site and the shippers don't have to worry about the ports, drayage, containers stalled in the ports or the time, effort and cost it takes to get to the building site."

It is the same business logic that stimulated the company's growth in the Bahamas. "For these resort developments, the shippers don't question the need to pay more per container or other cargo," Ganoë said. "They want it when they want it where they want it. And we can unload at any marina and certainly at any oceanfront location with an accessible beach."

Ganoë said the Port Canaveral terminal will be dedicated, at least in the beginning, to charter deliveries of containers and project cargo anywhere in the Caribbean offering the specialty of door-to-door service to building sites.

"The shippers we book don't want

to wait for the bigger ships, then wait at the port for their cargo to clear, and then wait for the cargo to be trucked and unloaded at their site," Ganoë said. "It is that simple."

And the business model is working so well that Ganoë envisions building other, larger ships and repowering the existing fleet.

"All our ships have twin diesels," he

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said. "They go out full but come back light. So on the Cape Express we added a third, center-line engine. We can use it on the return trip, shutting down the outboard engines and save fuel. We also are using bio-diesel so we are cutting our fuel consumption by at least 20 percent."

Ganoë said he expects that the company will add a third engine to most of its other ships when they come into the boat yard for service. "After all," he said with a smile, "Our ships are green!"

St. John's Shipbuilding

Ganoë and Grandonico have supervised construction of their 10-ship fleet in other yards. But as their business escalated to regular weekly rotations among the islands of the Bahamas and the Port of Dania, downtime became critical, and the partners were not always at the top of the list at Florida's

yacht-oriented yards.

So the team selected among the best craftsman working on their last new vessel and hired them to join Barfield at St. John's Shipbuilding.

Within months of revitalizing the moribund yard, St. John's Shipbuilding won its first contract to build a 165-foot, all-steel offshore supply vessel for Robert Perez, who will operate the ship in the Gulf of Mexico oil patch.

Barfield offers 30 years of experience, including 20 at that yard, the G&G partners are experienced managers and the 25 employees are also experienced shipbuilders and steel workers, Ganoë said. "We did not have much of a problem with a learning curve."

Ganoë said he can see a time in the future when the yard, is building as many as six ships at a time and employing more than 100, "especially if we can find a way to get involved in using the vessels we build in short-sea, Jones Act commerce."

The yard also has the capability to build steel barges and to repair steel hulls and diesel engines.

Ganoë said the Cape Express, like all the ships built at the yard, was inspected by the American Bureau of Shipping and the Coast Guard according to the Code of Federal Regulations. Each will qualify for a coastwise endorsement.

The current G&G fleet operates just below the 500-ton threshold but is still capable of transporting 660 tons with an on-deck loading area of 6,200 square feet capable of stacking fourteen 40-foot containers and twenty-eight 20-foot containers in addition to roll-on, roll-off cargo.

The Sea Express II, the Viking Express, Island Express, Caribbean Express, Emerald Express, Gulfstream Express and the Bahama Pride call at Bimini, Cat Island, Drigg's Hill, Exuma, Freeport, Fresh Creek, Great Harbour Cay, Governor's Harbour, Harbour Island, Long Island, Morgan's Bluff, Spanish Wells, West End and Providenciales on a regular rotation. 🐟