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MSC secondhand splurge nears 400 ships in four years

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MSC

Gianluigi Aponte's Mediterranean Shipping Co (MSC) has continued to cement itself at the top of liner rankings with additional secondhand tonnage that take the Swiss-based carrier's purchases in the last four years to nearly 400 ships.

The liner giant has been tied to a double buy from German owners, boosting its 4-year shopping spree of secondhand boxships to a "mind-blowing" 383 units.

Alphaliner, which forecast that MSC's market share will be equal to Maersk and Hapag-Lloyd's combined come the launch of the Gemini Cooperation early next year, said the company had picked up the 2006-built 1,440 teu *Cape Flint* from Germany's Schoeller Group and the 1999-built 2,526 teu *Jan Ritscher* from fellow owner Reederei Gerd Ritscher.

No price tag has been revealed for the duo that is expected to be renamed *MSC Manasvi II* and *MSC Shivalika III*, respectively, but the online pricing platform VesselsValue estimates their combined worth at just over \$25m.

MSC has had a busy year snapping up a raft of mid-sized secondhand vessels, but it has also made moves in the newbuilding market. Splash reported last month on how MSC has been in touch with lesser known yards in China for its next series of newbuilds, while in July the company picked up two 14,000 teu boxships under construction at Jiangnan Shipyard from BAL Container Line in a deal worth more than \$330m in total.

The Soren Toft-led MSC has a fleet in excess of 6m teu, commanding a 20% share of the global operated container fleet. The company's massive orderbook currently stands at about 130 ships, which according to Alphaliner figures is projected to boost the fleet by an additional 1.8m slots in the coming years.

In related MSC news, the Hamburg Parliament is set to make a final decision on the company's controversial investment in the port logistics company HHLA. The deal was originally supposed to be approved before the summer recess but was postponed to September 4 due to an objection from the opposition. Industry sources suggest the red-green coalition will likely push the deal through in the second and final reading with its two-thirds majority.